

Phases Of Adversities: Understanding The Lived Experiences Of Teenagers Withstanding The Difficulties With Covid Positive Parents

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Abstract: Background: In times of familial crisis, especially in the absence of parent(s), commonly faced problems by teenagers include surviving daily, maintaining overall health, and balancing their social, academic, and familial responsibilities. In this regard, the purpose of this paper is to provide a broad understanding of how teenagers withstanding the difficulties of having Covid positive parents. This research also looks into the three (3) phases of teenagers' experience with COVID-19-positive parent(s). Methods: This qualitative study utilized the phenomenological approach. The central question is "How do teenagers withstand the difficulties of having Covid positive parents?". The necessary set of data was obtained in a semi-structured interview, and themes were formulated from the participants' responses. Findings: Findings showed the different phases the teenagers went through to withstand the difficulties with COVID-19 positive parents through a three-phase timeline. It is composed of three themes with three sub-themes each, namely: Initial reaction with the sub-themes of Academic Performance, Apprehension and, Awareness; Compartmentalization with the sub-themes of Optimism, Communication and, Self-management; and Recuperation with the sub-themes of Determination, Self-Growth and, Reassurance. Conclusion: In conclusion, the teenagers withstand the difficulties encountered through optimism, communication, self-growth, and reassurance that helped develop their problem-solving skills and independent capacities, leading them to overcome their fear, worry, and anxiety and manage their social, familial, and academic responsibilities. Recommendation: It is advised to future researchers to use the findings of this study as an introduction to a comprehensive study about the struggles of teenagers with COVID-19-positive parents.

Keywords: Compartmentalization, Coping Strategies, Familial Responsibilities, Initial Reaction, Recuperation

1. Introduction

Since the global spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which continues to pose a threat to society's public health, people's lives have never been the same. The increasing cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) worldwide have impacted the lives of families, workers, teenagers, the government, and the community [41]. Several issues arise in families when family members test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). Teenagers struggle greatly physically, emotionally, and mentally because of the separation from tested-positive COVID-19 parents who could not fulfil their responsibilities in the household and as guardians. During

the years 2020 and 2021, a vaccine was not available for people's safety just yet, and the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was relatively new to everyone.

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was identified in December 2019. The rapid emergence of the human-to-human transmission coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has created enormous fear during the years 2020–2021. People are experiencing distress and panic, which are continuously spreading across the globe (Wu and McGoogan, 2020) [57]. Some individuals even lost loved ones, while others had to be separated from family members who tested positive for

the disease. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) has also made workers jeopardize their health and well-being every day for the needs of others while also taking care of their families at home [42].

To stop the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19), precautionary measures were put in place. Nevertheless, the regulations had an impact on family connections. A survey conducted by Evans et al. (2020) showed different families had contrasting perspectives on the lockdown. Some family bonds weakened as members appeared to discover certain traits in each other, while others became stronger by spending more time together [16]. The pandemic affected immigrant families, separating them from their families in their home country due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Many people were unable to travel or pay visits to their homes. Rafieifar et al. (2021) stated that many immigrants had less government support during the COVID-19 pandemic [41]. It does not only affect adults but also kids, with the pandemic affecting both economic and mental issues. As the pandemic goes on, more fears get added to family situations.

Families are complaining about a loss of community and mobility as a result of lockdown procedures, according to Luttik et al. (2020). The pandemic also resulted in planned activities not being celebrated, a lack of income, restricted access to resources, and other issues [26]. Teenagers who witness those family members, particularly their parents, may also develop the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), which makes it difficult for them to deal with being separated during isolation. Spinelli et al. (2020) found that teenagers with parents who had coronavirus disease (COVID-19) had more difficulty adjusting to quarantine, which resulted in higher levels of stress. When all services are unavailable, such as babysitters and helpers, many parents also begin finding different tactics that simplify tasks around the house [52]. Though quarantine meant that time with loved ones decreased, it also created a crucial burden on parents' shoulders, as they are responsible for being educated while also trying to live their own lives and get on with their daily errands.

When parents are COVID-19-positive and quarantined, teenagers are separated from their parents. As stated by Dalton et al. (2020), any disruption in the form of isolation from parents can have long-term effects on perceived attachment to the teen; also, separation from the primary caregivers can make a teen more vulnerable [13]. Teenagers frequently feel isolated or alone because they lack the understanding and maturity to fully comprehend their situation. Similarly, a study by Sieh et al. (2012) found that teenagers whose parents have chronic medical conditions are at increased risk of developing health-related and social-emotional problems [49]. Teenagers with COVID-19-positive parents may be more susceptible, which is likely to have an effect on various aspects of their development and health.

This study attempts to answer the central question, "What did teenagers experience during the time their parents had Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?" by investigating the experiences of the teenagers during their parents' time of isolation and separation due to having Coronavirus disease

(COVID-19). The specific question, "What are the coping strategies that the teenagers applied during the time their parents had coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?" is linked to a teenager's coping mechanism for being apart from their parents for an extended period of time to help maintain teenagers' emotional and mental wellness. Questions were formulated to gather specific information from the participants. Teenagers with COVID-19-positive parent(s) are placed in a position where they are separated from their parent(s) due to quarantine restrictions. This situation can be stressful for teenagers, mainly because they have limited communication with their parents. The main objective of this study is to further understand the effects of being separated from one's parents for some time because of COVID-19.

In summary, this study offers future researchers, especially those who wish to conduct additional research on the subject, an in-depth analysis of teenagers' experiences during those times. Future researchers will be able to complete their tasks with the help of the data because it has been collected and processed, which adds additional knowledge.

2. Method

This study is qualitative and resolutely, a phenomenological research design, as it discusses the lived experiences of the participants. Bhandari (2020), indicated that qualitative research seeks to understand concepts, opinions, or experiences and is used to accumulate in-depth cognizance of a problem or generate new ideas based on the data collected. The goal is to gain a deeper understanding of social phenomena in their natural environment based on participants' narratives [6]. As discussed by Biemel (2017), phenomenology's primary objective is the direct investigation and description of phenomena as they are consciously experienced, without theories concerning their causal explanation and as free as possible from unexamined preconceptions and presuppositions [7]. Phenomenological research was used to understand how teenagers perceived COVID-19-positive parent(s) and separation. This research aimed to seek the natural and true narratives from the participants' perspectives based on their experiences by asking questions relatable to them and paying thorough attention to their responses. This way, the researchers gained credible information and knowledge.

3. Research local & sample

This research was conducted at the Philippine School Doha (PSD), a learning institution that provides foundational education based on the Philippine curriculum and also provides for foreign teenagers. A total of ten (10) participants were interviewed for this study. The researchers used a purposeful sampling strategy to choose ten (10) participants. Purposive sampling was used to identify cases that met the criteria (Denieffe, 2020) [12]. The participants were selected in accordance with the set of criteria for this research: [1] a senior high school student; [2] a student whose both parents were COVID-positive in the year 2020–2021 at the same time; and [3] either both or one of the parents was quarantined at home or at the quarantine facility.

4. Results

This phenomenological study aims to describe the lived experiences of teenagers withstanding the difficulties of

having a COVID-19-positive parent(s) in relation to the central question, “How do teenagers withstand the difficulties with Covid positive parents?” Furthermore, the study focuses on the specific question: “What are the coping strategies that the teenager applied during the time when their parents had acquired Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?”. Evidently, difficulties arise when trying to balance their academic standings while also considering their parents' well-being, and learning how to take care of themselves without the aid of their parents. As a result of all of these, the teenagers encounter three phases of overcoming difficulties as they learn to adapt to their new home environment.

Figure 3 shows the simulacrum, which focuses on the three phases: **Initial Reaction**, **Compartmentalization**, and **Recuperation**. These themes emphasize the stages the teenagers go through during the separation from their parent(s). Additionally, each of the three phases has a sub-theme with designated colours representing each category, specifically academic performance, apprehension, and awareness under Initial Reaction which is the first phase and is displayed in a black hue. The second phase, which is Compartmentalization, is displayed in a red hue and includes optimism, communication, and self-management. Finally, determination, self-growth, and reassurance are highlighted in green hue under phase three, Recuperation. The diagram is exhibited in a three-phase timeline which contains the stages of the research study. Each phase is represented by an icon that signifies their relevance to the phases and the simulacrum exhibits a timeline diagram to honour the chronological order of occurrences which marks the significant progress of how the teenagers withstand the difficulties with COVID-19 positive parents.

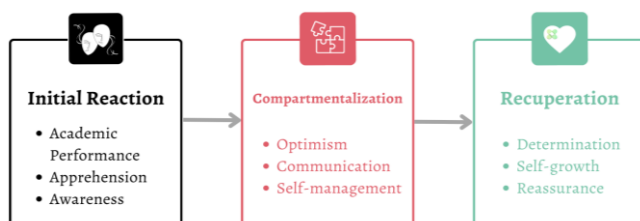


Figure 3: Three-phase timeline

To start with, the initial reaction refers to how the teenagers respond to the situation they face and deal with the shock, especially in the absence of their parent(s). In this stage, the teen becomes aware of the severity of the situation from their perspective on how the conflict-affected their mental health, academics, and relationship with their parent(s). At that point, the teenagers can learn to be flexible to the new environment and routine to be applied in their academics, where they will develop the coping mechanisms that will help them to stay optimistic despite the rising adversity, improve communications with their parent(s) and other social relations, and manage their time in their personal life and academics. These coping strategies that they develop, such as self-management, will be beneficial for them if they can apply them around their household too, such as being able to direct themselves on tasks without getting any help from their parent(s).

4.1 Initial Reaction

The first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic gave rise to fear among everyone who got infected. Being a teenager, adjusting to separation can be arduous to overcome without the presence of any parental figure, but relationships between teenagers and their parents are indestructible. Therefore, teenagers needed to become independent amidst solitude. Phase one (1) involves teenagers acquiring an understanding of the situation and how they are directly affected by the unexpected turn of events in the absence of their parent(s). The sub-themes under initial reaction are academic performance, apprehension, and awareness.

4.1.1 Academic Performance

A measurement of a student's achievement across various subjects, academic performance. Academics can be teenagers' way of distracting themselves from their parent(s) health condition; they tend to focus on things they can control. In a study, 96.7% of the 1,392 participants found it hard to maintain their academic performance during the COVID-19 lockdown [29]. Teenagers that were separated from their parent(s) have trouble concentrating on their academic performance. Not just the health condition of their parent(s) troubles them, but also the internet connection, which affects the communication between teenagers' classes and studies and can also affect teenagers' academic performance.

“The only way I coped up was thinking about my mother... academics will be a factor in making my mother feel better.”
(P2)

“My academic phase was kind of delayed because while I was having our quiz, the wifi kept on disconnecting and as a senior high school student, work got piled up.” (P5)

“I focused on my studies...I decided to focus all my attention on class instead of thinking about my parents.” (P9)

During the initial time that the teenager's parent(s) got the COVID-19 virus, the teens focused more on their parent(s) condition than their academic performance. Most teenagers find it hard to focus on their studies since they're thinking about their parent(s) health and if they're doing alright. The teenagers ended up using their parent(s) condition as a motivation for them to do better at school in order to lessen their parent(s) stress.

4.1.2 Apprehension

Apprehension may include anxiety, fear, worry, and comprehension of an unexpected event in life. As Sabir et al. (2022) mentioned, the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic has created fear among parents and teenagers that have had a long-lasting adverse impact on their mental health [45]. This feeling of anxiety can be due to sudden shifts in family roles as well as the addition of other underlying health conditions that the parent(s) might have on top of contracting COVID-19. Fear and anxiety can also be present when teenagers are separated from their parent(s). Teenagers begin to develop relationships outside of their immediate family as they get older. Separating from others and relying more on oneself, however, can be challenging for some people [49].

“I worried about her more and that really made me terrified because she’s literally the one who’s doing everything here and we were just so worried about her.” (P2)

“It was really scary. We just felt like things will be bad...I was left alone for about ten years or so, it did not affect me that much.” (P2)

“There was anxiety, especially how close my family and I are to each other. I was mostly in panic because if ever they don’t end up getting better, I would not be able to visit them” (P3)

The teenagers were more concerned about not being able to see their parent(s) and the sudden shift in household roles. The responsibility that their parent(s) placed on them after they became infected with the virus, forced the teen to carry out the responsibilities in the household on their own. The teenagers felt uneasy and uncertain because they couldn't freely visit their parent(s), which caused them to be concerned about the situation.

4.1.3 Awareness

Teenagers observing and acknowledging that their parent(s) are COVID-19 positive, as well as knowing what to do in such situations, corresponds to the next stage, which is compartmentalization. Being aware is a crucial indicator of success in a range of performance environments. Allowing teenagers to analyse and process the actions or decisions they must perform in the circumstances of their parent(s)'s absence. Furthermore, awareness is often described as the first step in the change process and in self-management [5].

“Only for two weeks. I think, for nine days he was in the hospital...He went to a quarantine facility.” (P1)

“They did not test positive at the same time but we requested the quarantine facility to put them together in a single house.” (P5)

“To be sure, we were quarantined so at that time, we were more cautious...We kept using hand sanitizer and alcohol but more careful and precise of that.” (P6)

The teenagers acknowledged their parent(s) condition during the time of quarantine. They were given the time frame of how long their parent(s) were gone and tried their best to make their parent(s) feel less lonely by making sure their parent(s) were in the same quarantine location together. After the teenagers became aware of how severe their situation is, they made sure to be very cautious about how they kept themselves safe.

COVID-19 has been contracted by the parent(s) of some teenagers, and the teenagers have experienced difficulties concentrating in academics, as well as feeling apprehensive, which may include a feeling of fear, anxiety, and worry. This may make them stressed at home and at school, as they struggle to cope with the situation, which has helped them become aware of, accept, and recognize the conflict they face in the absence of their parent(s). Additionally, they developed coping mechanisms and learned how to manage themselves independently.

4.2 Compartmentalization

Mental and emotional health become the most fragile aspects of everyone. To avoid such regrettable actions, an individual would need to exercise a great deal of self-control and composure. Teenagers being separated from their parent(s) due to the COVID-19 pandemic caused a lot of stress, anxiety, and worry for both the teenager and the parent. Phase two (2) showcases the teenagers' perspectives on how they coped with and maintained their social relationships. The sub-themes under compartmentalization are communication, optimism, and self-management.

4.2.1 Communication

No matter how far apart you are from the other person, communication is always just a touch away. The use of technology has increased by 2.4% and the use of the internet by 7% as of January 2020 (Kemp, 2020) ever since the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic started, which is just a month after the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic began [24]. Teenagers use technology for daily updates with their COVID-19-positive parent(s), and with their friends to be accompanied. The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic showed everyone that communication is important, and it strengthened both teenagers' and parent(s) relations.

“My friends really helped during those times, one of my friends also experienced the same thing so she gave me advice and comfort ” (P1)

“We also had family, friends, and others that were also positive and they told us their experience and how they coped with it.” (P4)

“...Opening up with each other and of course talking with my father daily like every day....” (P6)

Teenagers surrounded by family or friends make the situation feel lighter on their shoulders. They were able to express their emotions freely in order to lessen the feelings of anxiety and pressure that they were feeling. With the help of the people around them, they were able to get distracted from the situation and it ended up becoming

4.2.2 Optimism

The coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic posed significant challenges. Despite becoming disoriented along the way, teenagers maintain their courage and hope. Even though the events are uncontrollable, teenagers maintain their faith and hope that everything will go as planned. Having positive thoughts is just one of the methods teenagers use to cope and regain focus. Having a positive mindset is scientifically proven to boost happiness and motivate an individual to achieve desired goals. When teenagers actively work to recognize the positive aspects of their current state, they will naturally start to see silver linings in challenging situations. The health benefits of positive thinking and optimism include reduced stress, better psychological and physical well-being, and better coping skills during stressful times [46].

“I believe in my parents capabilities, I believe that they will recover, it is more of an optimistic thinking...” (P3)

“The first thought was ‘they can do it’...I am just hoping and praying that they will get better soon, or the quarantine facility was treating them right...I guess the first thought was ‘we will get through this, we should think positive’.” (P5)

“There were no more negative thoughts because I know my father was a healthy and strong person and that he could overcome the sickness.” (P8)

Despite the severity of the situation that was presented to the teenagers unexpectedly, they were hopeful that their parent(s) would be well in the long run. The teenagers looked at the positive rather than the negative since they truly believed that their parent(s) would be able to overcome this obstacle in life. They used different methods to have this optimistic look towards the situation, like praying or motivating their parents to focus on their health and nothing more.

4.2.3 Self-Management

Self-management is when a person applies behaviour change strategies in a way that promotes a predetermined change in their behaviour [11]. It is imperative that people possess the ability to control their emotions, ideas, and behaviour, especially in situations that require great mental and emotional restraint. Self-management, often known as "self-regulation," is a useful tool for developing general management. That supports people's development in both personal and interpersonal interactions, whether at work, at home, or in a strange setting. During the separation, the teenagers became independent and developed maturity during the time their parent(s) were separated from them due to being COVID-19-positive. Additionally, teenagers were able to separate themselves from happenings in life, whether it was in an academic environment or a social environment, in order to avoid overwhelming emotions as time went on.

“Never was there an unbearable difficulty such as in my academics...Instead of stressing about it... I push myself away from the assignments so I distance myself in order to relax and release my stress by playing or by sleeping so” (P4)

“No, We could take care of ourselves so no additional adults came and we handled it pretty well.” (P7)

“We have a neighbor that could help but it wasn't really needed because we could take care of ourselves and i'm old enough to take care of myself while my parents are away” (P9)

As one of the coping strategies applied by the teenagers, they have kept their mentality positive and had faith in their parent(s) that they would ameliorate. Through optimism and communication, the teenagers' mentality was aided because they obtained interpersonal support from their peers and relatives to distract themselves from their parent(s) condition. These have resulted in the teenagers developing independence during the absence of their parent(s) enabling them to handle emotional and mental difficulties.

4.3 Recuperation

Becoming independent of solitude means aspiring to be apart from loved ones while at the same time dealing with

conflicts alone. But it is during these obscure times that teenagers are given the opportunity to strengthen their skills, wisdom, and coping strategies learned from the experience that will aid them in future challenges. The last phase is the period of recovery, which includes how teenagers adapt to the change in their environment, see the world from a new perspective, and learn from the experience. The sub-themes under recovery include determination, reassurance, and self-growth.

4.3.1 Determination

Despite the difficulties, teenagers managed to balance their lives while their parent(s) were away; they demonstrated determination in developing not only their mindset in life but also their skills. They were motivated because they knew that their parents would be well. The ability to solve problems and the ability to set goals for themselves are two key skills in self-determination [34]. The teens were able to demonstrate the two key skills by identifying the problem at hand, which is the parent(s) getting COVID-19, and setting a goal for them to stay motivated, which was either graduating or making their parent(s) proud.

“I think, since my mother was with me during that time. She helped boost my motivation. We helped each other keep on track and supported each other like we tell each other “it is ok it is only two weeks”.” (P1)

“During that period of time, it did lower. But, as soon as things got better, I started to gain motivation in terms of my academics again.....” (P2)

“I was in grade 10 that time so I guess the thought of graduating was my biggest motivation to go through it. I just thought about continuing with what I need to do in my daily life....” (P3)

Motivation to surpass the challenges brought about by this unfortunate circumstance paves the way to regain one's self. The support of the other parent had a positive impact on the teen's recovery from this situation and influenced many aspects of the teen's life including academics. Moreover, voluntary motivation to redeem oneself has been evident in these trying times.

4.3.2 Reassurance

Teenagers might be filled with doubts and fears when they find out that their parent(s) got COVID-19 positive, especially when the virus was still new to society without the availability of the vaccine. Negative emotions can outweigh the positive parts of the situation, but the teenagers were able to surround themselves with people who made them feel safe and calmed their emotions for the better. The important thing is to help teenagers get through this process as healthy individuals. Several variables contribute to the fact that teenagers are able to continue this process in a healthy way, including having a secure attachment to their parents, having parents who have a democratic parental attitude, allowing children to act independently, and having family members stay together [8][53]

“They made me feel important or how they made me feel if I ever need someone to talk to, they were always gonna be there” (P3)

“Yeah definitely, because if I stayed too much thinking about what would happen to them, I would overthink it and think some negative thoughts about the situation....” (P7)

“I feel relieved knowing that they are doing alright, as for my father, I feel a little sense of panic since the further the days went his case became more and more severe....” (P10)

The encouragement teenagers received from the people close to them provided comfort and relief in their day to day struggles. Knowing that their parent’s health status had been doing well dispensed a positive impact on the emotions of the participants. Their well-being had improved as they realized that everything had come in one’s favour.

4.3.3 Self-Growth

Parincu (2022), stated that self-growth is an intrinsic process in which you develop and expand your abilities [38]. Self-growth can have positive implications for your career and personal life, as it helps you achieve your full potential. Self-growth is described as an independent, conscious attempt to improve oneself through intentional actions. One of the tasks, COVID-19, simulates a critical stage in a teen’s capacity to develop emotionally and handle difficult events. They gained maturity during the separation from their parent(s) since they had to take on the role that the parents left when they had to be isolated from one another.

“Looking at the bright side, I guess it would have to be that I have learned to be responsible. Since, when she wasn’t around, I was always the one who was doing the things here around in our house and it also taught me” (P2)

“I became more independent and more emotionally.” (P6)

“I have matured into a smarter and emotionally stronger person.” (P10)

Dealing with the crisis has boosted the sense of responsibility among teenagers. The situation resulted in independence and maturity in their behaviour and dealings with others. Besides the adversities brought about by the pandemic to the family, teenagers effectively reciprocated these with optimism and a favourable perspective on life.

During the compartmentalization period, teens applied a variety of coping strategies to endure daily. These have resulted in them utilizing the feeling of determination to stay on track to reach the stage of recovery from being separated from their parents. Thus, it inspired teenagers to grow and mature and be far from being dependent and reliant on others when it comes to their daily survival. The teenagers’ problem-solving skills and independent capacities improved, thus making them able to see the brighter side of the situation and be capable of standing on their own throughout the absence of their parent(s) has resulted in the assurance that their fear, worry, and anxiety, as well as their parents, have completely become manageable.

5. Discussion

Parent(s) being positive for COVID-19 makes it challenging for teenagers to balance their social lives, self-care, and academic obligations. The main goal of this study is to uplift

and inspire the kids who interact with the participants in similar ways. Participants have given their perspectives, coping mechanisms, and the changes they have been through.

5.1 Initial Reaction

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a significant global impact, leading governments and organizations to take extraordinary measures for virus control and mitigation. While the initial reaction to the pandemic was one of shock and uncertainty, people around the world have since banded together to help one another and adapt to the new normal [14]. From healthcare workers on the front lines to everyday citizens following guidelines and supporting local businesses, the response to the pandemic has demonstrated the resilience and strength of humanity in times of crisis. As the world continues to navigate the ongoing challenges of the pandemic, it is clear that its effects will be felt for years to come [31].

5.1.1 Academic Performance

The assessment of a student’s performance across a range of academic disciplines is known as academic performance. COVID-19 has affected people in several ways, and that includes teenagers’ academic performance. Since the COVID-19 pandemic began, educational institutions globally have been forced to embrace a non-face-to-face mode of instruction, searching for ways to leverage various technologies to enable synchronous and asynchronous contact between students and professors. Many media stories and projections over the past year or so have suggested that the COVID-19 pandemic will cause pupils to lose “years” of academic and social growth. Many of these allegations are based on the first-hand observations of school personnel who have seen significant increases in problematic student behaviours and declines in academic ability, including teachers, counselors, and school psychologists who are understaffed [27].

5.1.2 Apprehension

The feeling of worry and anxiety is common for teenagers to feel during this situation, especially if the parent(s) also has major health issues, which can add to the severity of COVID-19 in the body. Further, this adds to the unpleasant feeling of not being able to help their parent(s) during these challenges in their lives. This can affect the teenagers’ focus, which can further affect the stochastic and social parts of their lives, and if not dealt with accordingly, it can have a long-term effect on them [32]. As time went on, the feeling of worry lessened as the severity of the case lessened as well, and they started to feel calmer and developed hope about the situation.

5.1.3 Awareness

The teenagers were aware of the case of their parent(s), allowing them to process the truth about the situation at hand and not be led on about the case. Their awareness of the situation allowed them to prepare for being separated from their parents. The separation of teenagers from their parents prepared them for how to handle themselves when there is no presence of parental guardians near them. Furthermore, according to Agosti et al. (2018), awareness plays a significant role in everyday life to promote work-life balance and well-being [2]. Many people were unprepared for

COVID-19, which left some of them unsure of what to do when a family member tested positive for the virus. But with the help and constant support from people around them, whether family or friends, they were able to handle the situation easier since they did not feel alone during that time. They had people around them that gave them motivation and calmed their negative emotions while their parent(s) was healing.

5.2 Compartmentalization

Compartmentalization is defined as the defence mechanism by which an individual mentally separates conflicting thoughts, emotions, or experiences to avoid the discomfort of contradiction. Teenagers are prone to psychological disorders due to their inability to accept change. It is further exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic situation, which requires all activities to be carried out online from home and has caused distress to the health of teenagers [28]. Compartmentalizing is a way of organizing lives and thought processes [4]. Similarly, individuals compartmentalize their behaviour and unconsciously act in certain ways in different settings. This thought pattern also allows them to focus on getting a task done at work even when they are worried about something in their personal lives.

5.2.1 Communication

Distant communication is when two or more people are physically far away from each other and have to communicate, so they use devices and other methods in order to be able to talk with one another. Living apart temporarily may cause stress to both the teenager and the parents, but families can strengthen relationships and stay connected by employing strategies such as the use of networking apps that allow users to text and call, which makes communication easy and accessible. The findings of the study indicate that the students' communication with their parent(s) was mostly through messaging and video calls. According to Gentzler et al. (2011), individuals that make use of online communication to talk to their parents have a better parental relationship and help lessen loneliness and anxious attachment [17].

Regardless of geographical distance, social media has played a critical role in the development of close ties between individuals. Nevertheless, parents are reassured of their teenagers' well-being more quickly as a result of distant communication applications [16].

5.2.2 Optimism

In times when things can be easily overwhelming for teenagers to handle by themselves, which can cause their mental health to suffer. In retaliation, they found ways to have a more optimistic outlook on their situation to avoid overthinking their parent(s) case. Teenagers who show high levels of optimism have less chance of experiencing depression since optimism is seen as a protective shield for their mentality [44]. The teenagers either communicated with other people so their burden would lessen or they surrounded themselves with their friends or family who helped distract them from the situation.

5.2.3 Self-Management

It is significant for every individual to be able to contain their emotions, thoughts, and actions, especially in situations

that require strong mental and emotional composure. Self-management, also referred to as "self-regulation", can be a beneficial instrument in practicing our overall management. It helps people advance not only personally but also in their relationships with others, whether at work, at home, or in an unfamiliar environment. Self-regulation allows individuals to clear their thoughts to lay out ideas, execute plans, and create healthy relationships. According to Jeong (2020), self-management abilities are linked to behavioural control and school adjustment [23].

5.3 Recuperation

The term "recuperation" refers to a process that occurs when a person recovers from an illness or injury. In this case, it refers to the recovery process for teenagers whose parent(s) were COVID-positive. They feel alone and abandoned by society because they no longer have someone who can guide them through life. This can lead to depression and other mental health problems such as anxiety disorder or even suicidal thoughts for some individuals. Teenagers can cope with this loss by figuring out ways to feel better about themselves after such an event has happened in their lives. According to Iasiello et al. (2019), positive mental health may be an important resource for individuals to recover from mental illness and stay mentally healthy [20].

5.3.1 Determination

Determination is defined as an optimistic emotional state that entails pushing through challenges to achieve a challenging objective. A challenge like COVID-19 can test a person's determination by pushing them to face difficulties that they may have never faced before. A current study by Catling, et al. (2022), evaluated how COVID-19 affected students' mental health. Findings show that COVID-19 significantly affected smartphone use and addiction, as well as melancholy and anxiety [9]. Nothing can be accomplished without determination. Without the perseverance to carry them out, plans, ideas, and goals become stagnant [45].

5.3.2 Reassurance

Teenagers may find it unsettling to be unaware of their parents' true health, whether they are doing well or not. They may become less anxious and worry less about their concern(s) as a result of being reassured about the circumstance, which may calm their nerves and prevent it from negatively affecting their general way of life. Parents are the biggest factor affecting a teenager's development [22] and teenagers having their parent(s) by their side can affect them psychologically. However, teenagers can be reassured that everything will be in good hands, they have other people like family members and friends to openly talk to, ask for support from, and be accompanied by. With that, the separation of teenagers from their parent(s) is less traumatic because they are with individuals who serve as a solid foundation in their parents' place or out of loneliness.

5.3.3 Self-Growth

Self-growth is defined as an independent, self-conscious effort to become a better version of oneself via deliberate acts. COVID-19 is one of the challenges, which recreates a crucial role in a teen's ability to grow emotionally and cope with stressful situations [30]. Solitude during the pandemic triggers self-transcendence in the mentality of those individuals who are self-determined, spiritually inclined, and

who focus on the key things in life. These characteristics allow human beings to self-reflect and make use of the time and ability they possess for better improvement. As proven by Kim, et al. (2021), self-transcendent wisdom and perceived meaning in life demonstrated the strongest positive associations with change in perceived well-being when controlling for all other variables [25].

6. Conclusion

COVID-19 had a significant effect on people in the years 2021–2022, and the majority of victims were family members. We, the researchers, chose to conduct this study because it is relevant and timely to today's issues and needs to be addressed, as the respondents' families are concordant. Despite the difficulties and anxiety experienced by teenagers without parental supervision during the COVID-19 pandemic, they were able to learn to identify their strongest traits, which carried beneficial contributions to their adulthood and their duties independently in the household, academics, and their health. Along with identifying their weaknesses, they sought possible solutions to resolve negative aspects of their relationship with their parent(s) through distant communication and the support of individuals that closely surround them.

This broadens the understanding of the importance of having a parental figure for teens; their responses showed that their parents' physical absence was difficult for teenagers to handle. Some teenagers had to learn and handle some of the responsibilities of their parents while they were being quarantined, while others expressed that they were not worried and handled their responsibilities well. This goes to show how teenagers can learn independence by handling their daily necessities in the absence of their parent(s). The study showed how vital a parent's role is for their teenager and also expressed how the physical absence of the parents can reveal independence for some teenagers.

This study was constrained by the fact that some of the teenagers attended various schools and some even lived in the Philippines. Time was the major factor that delayed the study because the researchers and the teen were unable to meet on the scheduled date. The timing and schedule of the respondents did not match with the researchers' schedule due to the time zone or some of the researchers being busy with personal school work. In addition, researchers found difficulty finding respondents due to some not matching our criteria. Either some respondents' parent(s) got infected during 2022 and did not fit our spectrum, or they did not have the time for an interview. This caused the researchers to change various respondents and fall back on waiting and looking for replacements for the missed respondents. Since the data is confidential, it was not possible to determine which of the teenagers had COVID-19-positive parents.

This topic provided a broader understanding and comprehension of the worst-case scenarios that transpired for teenagers during the COVID-19 pandemic, specifically without their guardians. This phenomenological research studied the lived experiences of teenagers who got separated from their COVID-19-positive parent(s). The study's objective is to learn about how teens were able to maintain their well-being through coping with unexpected familial crises and how they overcame difficulties on their own,

considering that their parent(s) got quarantined for a certain time. In the responses, common aspects of how a teen handled the situation that was present were evident, considering their **initial reaction, compartmentalization, and recuperation.**

Future researchers advised using the findings of this study as an introduction to the comprehensive study about the experiences of teenagers with COVID-19-positive parents. Also, the researchers advise future researchers to do as follows. Respondents should be diverse in terms of their gender, age, and profile. This type of research focuses on how teenagers withstand the difficulties of having COVID-19-positive parents. At the moment of the study's position, the life of teenagers during the COVID-19 pandemic changed. The researchers recommend researching how COVID-19 impacts the lives of teenagers. Additionally, research on how the teenager went through the 3 phases of COVID-19.

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Author Profile



Eunice Bernadette T. Molina is from Daraga, Abay. She was born on February 26, 2005. She is currently pursuing the academic strand Humanities and Social Sciences (HUMSS). She is a consistent honour student and was part of the pilot section batch 2020-2021

during her grade 10. She is also a consistent Laureola awardee and earned an institutional award as Seventh Honors in school year 2021-2022. She is a talented artist who participated and won several awards in poster making contests held inside Philippine School Doha and other contests outside the school. She also actively participated in other school activities, and was a consistent class officer during her Elementary up to Highschool. She believes in the saying "There are no negatives in life, only challenges to overcome that will make you stronger".



Juan Miguel B. Lecaros is from Santa Maria, Bulacan, Philippines. He was born on September 11, 2004. He is currently studying at the Philippine School Doha as a Grade 12 HUMSS student. Since grade 10, he has been a consistent class achiever and aims to excel more to achieve his goals as a graphic designer .

He was a member of the future homemakers in grade 4, a performer in theater arts for the school years of 2017-2019 and became the masterchef champion in the school year of 2021-2022. He participates as much as he can in school activities and contests and a lot more outside of the school campus. He is a hardworking and talented individual and has a lot of plans for his future which he hopes to achieve. He believes in the saying that "You're the only one who can make your dreams come true".



Angelica Beatrice M. Alfonso is from Zambales, Philippines. She was born on December 24, 2004. She is currently taking up a Humanities and Social Science (HUMSS) academic track at the Philippine School Doha. She works hard and is amiable, loyal, and trustworthy. She received numerous awards during her elementary and senior high years, mostly in the field of sports. Such

as being the best rebuttal debater in grade 10 in 2019-2021, finishing third in table tennis, becoming the champion in swimming relay, and finishing third in swimming backstroke in 2021-2022. She has been a member of the Eco Project Committee under the Dahon Team since grade 11, where she shares her love and care for the environment and educates

others on how to protect it. She believes in the saying, "let bygones be bygones."



Mikaella Haika C. Apolinario is from Belo Horizonte, Brazil and Batanes, Philippines. She was born on July 24, 2006. She is currently a Grade 12 student under the HUMSS (Humanities and Social Sciences) Strand. She actively participates in a wide variety of activities in school such as debates where she received best speaker awards throughout grade 11 and 12. In

Addition to that, she has also participated in the Ultimate Dance Battle 2019- 2020 and won first place with her group. She always lives by the quote "There is always room for improvement".



Jone Gabrielle A. Malonda is from Olongapo City, Subic, Zambales. She was born on August 24, 2004. She is currently a grade 12 student under HUMSS (Humanities and Social Science) strand. A consistent achiever and class officer with above-average abilities from elementary to senior high school. She was a bronze Laureola Awardee during

the last semester in grade 11. She also received recognition as a mentor in CHUMS for Earth and Life Science during the first semester of 11th grade. She is also part of the school's volleyball varsity and currently a member of the Eco Project Committee, which works to improve environmental health inside and outside of the school. She seeks leadership and behavioral challenges as a starting point for improving her attributes and characteristics. She has a saying that goes 'I am the sole antagonist in my own story; I will not let others take over that role.'



Almyra B. Pangilinan is from Camiling, Tarlac City and Cotabato City, she was born on November 21, 2005. She is currently a grade 12 student under the HUMSS (Humanities and Social Science) strand and taking up the Science Bridge Program (SBP) to pursue nursing she is also a class officer taking the role as the business manager. She accomplished

being the best debater in their class debates in grade 7, 10 and 11. During her grade 11 she was a mentor for Earth and Life Science under the Classmates Helping Understand Mathematics and Science program (CHUMS). Aside from academics, she is also part of the environmental project Project Eco Committee as a Communications and Logistics member. She believes in the motto 'No same book has the same story, each book and page is different.'