The Role of Parents in Times of Pandemic

S. Leite

ABSTRACT

The various transformations marked by social, economic and political life in the last decades, have given a prominent place to education, both in the education systems and in the institutions themselves as complex and modern organizations. In times of uncertainty, there are several proposals around education. It is also in this scenario that modality of distance education comes to assume a fundamental role for the development of education itself. Children were forced to adapt to a new teaching modality, the same was true of parents, who, in addition to accompanying students in their daily routines, also had to adapt to the telework modality, both involving technological challenges. Through an exploratory-descriptive investigation with a quali-quantitative approach based on the application of a questionnaire addressed to parents, it was our intention to assess the parents' perception about the change to their daily routine and the difficulties they faced with the transition to the telework modality involving changes not only in their routines but also in the support for the study of their children given the change in the teaching modality for distance education due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.

Keywords: Caregivers, Distance learning, routines, technological challenges, telework.

Published Online: July 05, 2021

ISSN: 2736-4534

DOI : 10.24018/ejedu.2021.2.3.96

S. Leite

Polytechnic Institute of Maia, Maia,
Portugal.

(e-mail: soniamariauao@gmail.com)

I. INTRODUCTION

The Portuguese population has shown a wide variety of concerns regarding the need to adjust to the radical changes that the COVID-19 pandemic caused in the organization of our daily lives. Parents, or guardians, are a segment of this population that has faced a significant demand to adapt to new family, educational and professional dynamics on an uninterrupted basis. The realization of diverse roles simultaneously and in the same physical and psychological space, reveals a state of overcoming and permanent reinvention. In this sense, there was an urgent need to adjust plans, roles, spaces, and time in relation to readjusting professional and family activity [1], [2].

By engaging in this investigation, from the perspective of parents / guardians, we intend to contribute to a more in-depth knowledge of their interests and motivations in view of the need and monitoring inherent in adapting to the modality of teleworking and distance education due to the Pandemic COVID-19. It is important, therefore, to understand and know how parents / guardians viewed the telework modality and its adaptation to it, in addition to the monitoring, often on a permanent basis, that had to be given to the students, also they to share the experience. same space (house) in distance education mode.

A. The Sudden Change in the Teaching Modality

According to Manuel Heitor, Minister of Science, Technology and Higher Education, higher education institutions and education itself must have the capacity to do

more and better and use the COVID-19 pandemic as an "opportunity to innovate", the transformation caused by COVID-19 will allow coordinating strategies to reinforce Portugal's position in Europe, reduce external dependence and "cooperate with third countries". Distance Learning through the telework modality arises, therefore, as a response to the pandemic situation experienced in our country since March 2020, representing a teaching modality that constitutes a quality alternative for students unable to attend the educational institution in person higher education, based on the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the teaching and learning processes as a means for everyone to have access to education [7]. From one moment to the next, teachers and students found it impossible to continue with the face-to-face classes, having to readjust to a new form of teaching, entering a new interlocutor in this process: the person in charge of education.

II. TELEWORKING

The process of global restructuring of the economy, leveraged by scientific and technological development, provided an acceleration in the development of relationships in the virtual world, announcing a new social organization, in which the development of various activities depends more and more on technology [3].

Jack Niles is regarded as the creator of teleworking, having advanced with the idea of reversing the classic relationship between workplace and worker about forty years ago, calling

himself. Initially, as telecommuting, evolving the concept to telework [3].

In this context, the ways of life and work are redesigned, imposing a new pace of development with regard to human activities. Work relations take on a new dimension, imposing a redefinition of time and space. Recognition of the working relationship characterized by the use of information and communication technology in the development of its activities has become inevitable [4], [5].

In the context of the European Employment Strategy, the European Council invited social partners to negotiate agreements to modernize work organization, including flexible working arrangements, with the aim of improving the productivity and competitiveness of companies and ensuring the necessary balance between flexibility and security [6].

As described in Ramalho [7], this new way of working breaks with the Aristotelian unity of place, time and work, allowing for the revitalization of rural centers, the possibility for workers to organize their own working hours and reach autonomously their own goals. On the other hand, teleworking, now with the use of electronic means, which translates into repetition, can represent lower wages and invasion of private life.

III. THE SUDDEN CHANGE IN THE TEACHING MODALITY

According to Manuel Heitor, Minister of Science, Technology and Higher Education, higher education institutions and education itself must have the capacity to do more and better and use the COVID-19 pandemic as an “opportunity to innovate”, the transformation caused by COVID-19 will allow coordinating strategies to reinforce Portugal's position in Europe, reduce external dependence and “cooperate with third countries”. Distance Learning through the telework modality arises, therefore, as a response to the pandemic situation experienced in our country since March 2020, representing a teaching modality that constitutes a quality alternative for students unable to attend the educational institution in person higher education, based on the integration of information and communication technologies (ICT) in the teaching and learning processes as a means for everyone to have access to education [7]. From one moment to the next, teachers and students found it impossible to continue with the face-to-face classes, having to readjust to a new form of teaching, entering a new interlocutor in this process: the person in charge of education.

IV. STUDY OBJECTIVE

The objective of this study was to analyze, through the application of a questionnaire, the perception of parents / guardians, in function exercises through the teleworking modality, about the change to their daily routine and the difficulties they faced in their professional practice in view of the change to the telework modality and in their routine and support to the study of their students in view of the change in the teaching modality to distance education due to COVID-19 Pandemic. Namely, we intend to understand the change in routines, wear and motivation of these parents in relation to the distance learning mode while they are in telework.

V. METHODOLOGY

The design adopted in the present investigation is of an exploratory-descriptive type with a qualitative and quantitative approach based on the application of a questionnaire, aiming at assessing the change in routines, wear, and motivation of parents in relation to the distance learning mode while they are in telework.

Theoretical sampling did not start with a defined number of participants, but with the harvest directed to a group, that of the parents of children attending the 1st CEB. We chose this cycle of studies because, at these ages, children still show little autonomy in need of help

A questionnaire was applied with the objective of the questionnaire was to obtain information taking into account the object of study of the present investigation.

VI. DATA COLLECTION

For systematic data collection, 50 questionnaires were distributed, of which 32 responses were obtained.

VII. SAMPLE CHARACTERIZATION

In the present study, a convenience sampling process was used, as it is not a random sample, focusing on the parents of children attending Primary School. We chose Primary School because, in this age group, children still show little autonomy needing the support / supervision of those in charge of education for the preparation of school tasks.

VIII. DATA ANALYSES AND DISCUSSION

Given that we are dealing with the analysis of open and closed questions, we chose to proceed with a quantitative analysis.

So, regarding the first question – “How did the pandemic and its confinement change your routines?” – 75% of respondents reported that there was a major change, 19% a slight change and 6% reported little or no change.

Regarding the second question – “Did you stay in the telework mode?” – all respondents answered in the affirmative.

Regarding the third question – “Did you accompany your student in school activities?” – 83% of the respondents answered affirmatively, with only 17% reporting that they did not accompany the students. As a justification for this, they pointed out the lack of time, the difficulty in following the contents taught and the fact that the students do not need help.

Regarding the fourth question – “What did you do to keep your student motivated?” – 75% mentioned that they differentiated the study area from the leisure area, 59% mentioned that they adjusted the workload proposed to the child, 85% mentioned that they promoted organizational and study skills, 93% chose to praise the child's successes and achievements and 79% reported that they respected the child's concentration times.

IX. CONCLUSION

After analyzing the results obtained, it was possible to conclude that the great majority of the guardians surveyed demonstrated a good adaptation to the new mode of teleworking and to the mode of distance learning, being notorious in the responses obtained the value given to the effort of their children, respecting their periods of concentration, opting, in most cases, for the praise and promotion of organizational and study skills. In general, the parents surveyed are satisfied with their adaptation to the challenges posed by the new teaching and learning modality.

REFERENCES

- [1] Diaz, V. L. Telework as a Way to Balance Work and Family Life: Good Practices in Argentina», in Work-Life Balance and the Economic Crisis. Some Insights from the Perspective of Comparative Law. *Adapt University Press, s.L.*, 2, 258–271, 2011.
- [2] Ramalho, M. R. P. Tempo de Trabalho e Conciliação entre a Vida Profissional e a Vida Familiar — Algumas Notas. In *Estudos Apodit 4* (pp. 101–116). Lisboa: AAFDL Editora, 2018.
- [3] Fernandes, F. Organização do trabalho e tecnologias de informação e comunicação: exhausted but unable to disconnect. *Questões Laborais*, (50), 7–17, 2017.
- [4] Ramalho, M. R. P. A Economia Digital e a Negociação Coletiva. *Centro de Relações Laborais*, 1–177, 2019.
- [5] Abrantes, J. J., & Silva, R. C. New Forms of Employment in Portugal. In *New Forms of Employment in Europe, Roger Blanpain e Frank Hendrickx (coord.)* (pp. 313–322). Kluwer Law International, 2016.
- [6] Dray, G. A Globalização e as Novas Tendências do Mercado de Trabalho. Teletrabalho e Deslocalização do Trabalho. O Caso Português. In *Análise Contemporânea do Direito em Face da Globalização e da Crise Econômica. 2.º CID - Congresso Internacional de Direito Brasil-Europa, Instituto de Direito do Trabalho da Faculdade de Direito de Lisboa, Programa de Pós-Graduação em Direito da PUC/SP e* (pp. 81–92). Coimbra: Almedina, 2010.
- [7] Messenger, J., & Gschwind, L. Three generations of Telework: New ICTs and the (R)evolution from Home Office to Virtual Office. *New Technology, Work and Employment*, 31, 195–208. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ntwe.12073>, 2016.