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## Participation of parents in the remote teaching process – revealed problems and valuable innovation in the opinion of school principals in the Wielkopolska region (Poland)

**Abstract:** The findings presented in this paper are part of the comprehensive research carried out within the “Diversification of Social Attitudes in the Sphere of Educational Services during a Pandemic” project. This study examines the challenges that emerged during remote learning, focusing on parents’ involvement in their children’s learning process, as perceived by school principals. The conclusions are based on questionnaire interviews with principals of 36 randomly selected schools throughout the Wielkopolska region (Poland). The study spanned the second semester of the 2019/2020 school year and the first semester of 2020/2021. Several issues were identified in the interviews, including communication difficulties with students, lack of skills of teachers and students to work remotely, insufficient IT infrastructure at school and home, financial deficits impeding the purchase of new equipment, and a decline in students’ mental health. These problems were primarily related to the family (home) situation of students and the participation of parents in solving these problems. No significant spatial differences were identified with respect to the opinions of school principals from different poviats of the Wielkopolska region. However, differences in opinions were observed depending on the level of the school. A distinctive issue raised mainly by primary school principals was the participation of parents in lessons and their tendency to complete tasks or even write tests for children, as well as the frequent baseless excuses for absences and unfinished tasks. In contrast, principals from both general and vocational secondary schools generally agreed that parental assistance was marginal.

**Keywords:** COVID-19 pandemic; distance learning; school principals; students’ parents; Wielkopolska region

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## Introduction

The events at the start of 2020, marked by the rapid and unexpected spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus on a global pandemic scale, led to challenges in all areas of human activity. These were most often a consequence of the rapid adaptation measures introduced in the social, economic, and even political spheres. The extensive introduction of new forms of remote education and novel methods of knowledge verification created several challenges, while also opening up new opportunities for developing innovative ways of educating children and youth. Prior to the pandemic in Poland, distance learning<sup>1</sup> was used sporadically for extracurricular activities. The situation necessitated a rapid adjustment to entirely new, previously unrecognised conditions that led to a transformation in the operations of almost all educational institutions and affected the lives of many families. The experiences of teachers, students, school principals, and parents from this period can provide valuable insights that could be used to improve and streamline remote teaching.

In this context, this article aims to identify the attitudes of parents of primary and secondary school students towards new forms of distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. These insights are based on the opinions of school principals who were able to observe and assess parents' responses towards these new challenges in education in a primarily objective manner. The adopted research perspective, i.e. basing the analysis on the opinions of school principals, allows us to highlight some generalised and characteristic aspects of parents' attitudes. These insights are particularly useful from the perspective of the school itself and the organisation of the educational process outside its walls. However, it also reveals aspects of parents' behaviour that may have had a detrimental influence on the teaching process.

## Problems of e-learning in the first period of the COVID-19 pandemic raised in the literature

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic initiated various studies on the issues of remote education in primary and secondary schools. Typically, these studies were undertaken by sociologists, psychologists, or educators. A detailed review of publications from the initial period of the pandemic, namely from 2020–2021 in the form of articles or reports, is presented in our monograph published following the completion of a research project in 2021 (cf. Bogacka et al., 2021). An example of studies examining the experiences of parents of primary school students (from grades 1–3, 4–6, and 7–8) and secondary schools in this domain are two publications by the Librus sp. zo.o. group from 2020. Based on surveys they conducted, the authors highlighted issues such as the challenges the parents encountered during the implementation of online learning, the problems faced by children due to the changes in the mode of schooling, the challenge of providing equipment for children, the additional burden on parents and children associated with distance learning as well as comparing the advantages and disadvantages of distance learning with traditional teaching methods, i.e. in school.

The results presented in the publication indicated that at lower levels of education,

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<sup>1</sup> The terms “distance learning,” “remote learning,” and “e-learning” are used interchangeably throughout the text, although e-learning is primarily referred to.

teachers usually sent students materials from textbooks, resulting in much responsibility for the implementation of tasks falling on the parents. A significant proportion of parents assisted their children with homework, sometimes dedicating five or more hours a day. While not all classes were conducted remotely, parents expressed that students were overloaded with too many tasks, thus bearing an excessive burden. Parents also noticed a lack of independent work skills, such as planning and knowledge of various learning methods.

On the other hand, the research of Ptaszek et al. (2020) showed that parents were significantly affected during the pandemic by a decrease in mental and physical well-being. Parents also experienced symptoms of poor digital hygiene; particularly, being constantly ready to receive calls and notifications, spending too long on computers/smartphones, feeling overloaded with information, and using digital tools right before going to bed were found to be burdensome. However, they positively assessed the preparation of teachers and schools for remote teaching and the tools used. Additionally, the publication by Gorzeńska et al. (2020) highlighted the problem of digital exclusion for both children and parents, which manifested in various forms, such as a lack of appropriate equipment, limited access to the Internet, lack of necessary competencies, unsuitable learning conditions, or issues with access to services and educational resources.

A particular subset of publications also explored the difficulties experienced by school principals in relation to the need to reorganise the didactic process. The publication by Sobiesiak-Penszko and Pazderski (2020) pointed out that in most schools, principals acknowledged new opportunities for remote lessons, such as by using various communication tools, but also pointed out new problems, especially those concerning students and parents. These included difficulties in motivating students to study and engaging parents to cooperate, irregular work habits of students, parents' struggles with coordinating the learning process at home, inability to cope with long-term care of children under stress, job loss or reduced means of subsistence, anxiety and depression in children, and a lack of technical possibilities to connect to the Internet network at home. The authors of the report also emphasised that most headteachers proactively solved their problems through self-organisation, knowledge-sharing, searching for information on the Internet, or asking the governing body or other schools for assistance.

Many international publications have also focused on remote learning and the role of parents in it. Bhamani et al. (2020) discussed problematic aspects of home learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The first group of issues focused on the impact of the pandemic on children's education and daily routines. Parents felt that a formally structured routine, which teaches the importance of time, scheduling, and assignment completion, was disrupted by distance learning. The authors also underscored difficulties in transitioning to online learning and the negative impact on social development. Secondly, many children considered distance learning a vacation from school, so parents had difficulties keeping children active and engaged in tasks. Consequently, designing a home timetable for students to maintain a regular sleep-wake cycle became essential.

Güvercin et al. (2022) took an interesting perspective, focusing on the experiences of teacher-parents and exploring their opinions about the remote education process during the COVID-19 pandemic. This encompassed not only school-related activities but also extracurricular, institutional support, challenging areas, and many others. Opinions on challenging areas were categorised into three sections: difficulties related to lesson follow-up, technical problems, and psychological and social challenges. Garbe et al. (2020)

analysed the remote learning experiences of parents with children during the pandemic. Parents stressed difficulties in balancing responsibilities (i.e. multiple levels of learners at home), motivating their children, and accessibility issues (lack of access to technology hardware, content knowledge, or pedagogy).

Schuck et al. (2021) studied collaboration with parents during COVID-19 online teaching from the special educator perspective. The most critical concern during this difficult time was the well-being of students and families. The study revealed an increase in mutual understanding among teachers and parents, although, at the same time, teachers reported varying degrees of engagement from parents and families in the education process. The context of well-being was further explored by Connor et al. (2022). It is also worth noticing that distance learning introduced some innovative solutions. The publication of Haller and Novita (2021) showed high satisfaction of parents when schools implemented more online-based teaching formats during the lockdown. The provision of learning materials on online platforms was also appreciated due to its time-saving aspect and security considerations.

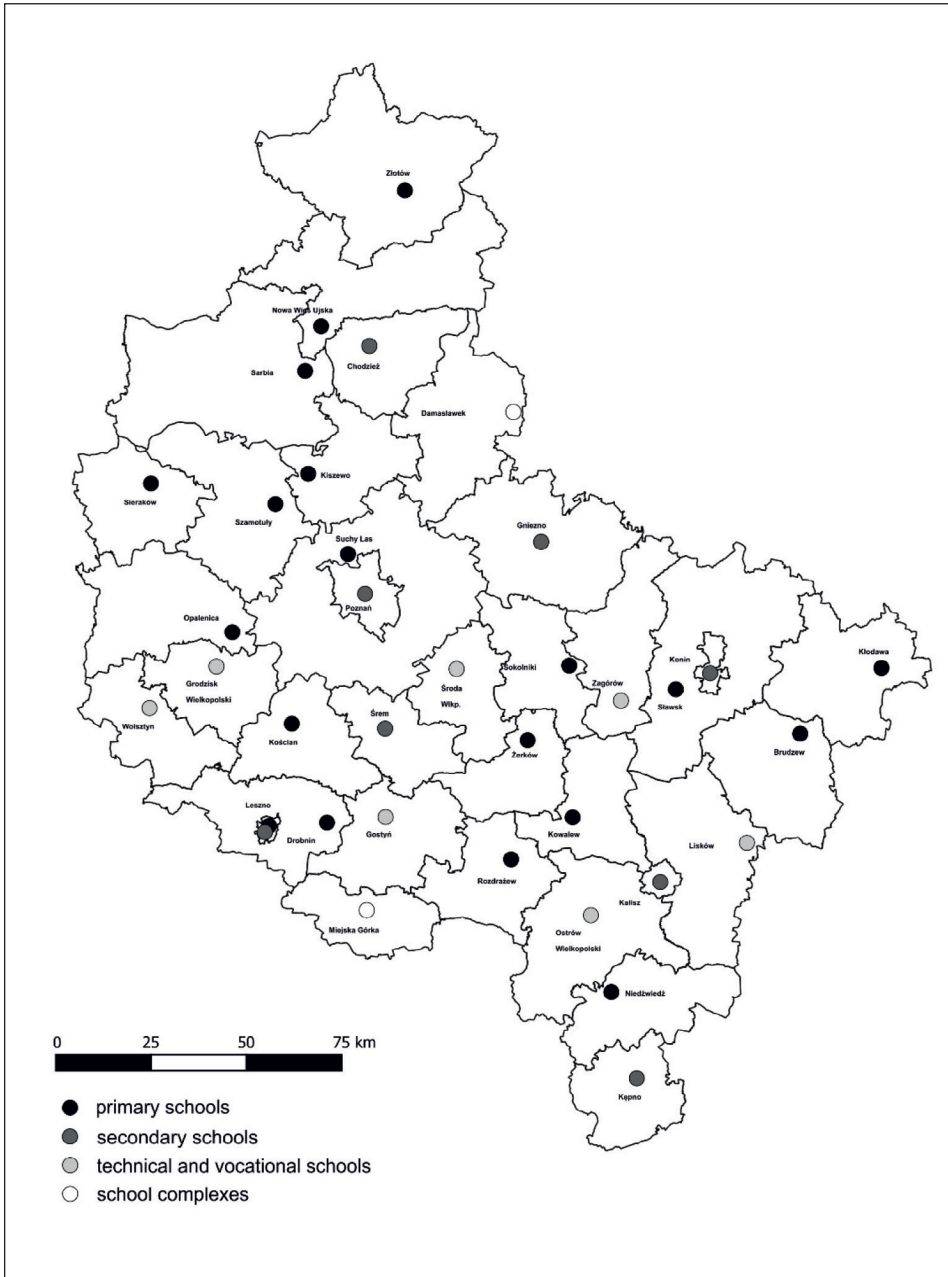
The present study also aligns with this broad trend of publications. Its distinguishing feature is its regional approach as it analyses parents' attitudes from the viewpoint of school principals from various poviats of the Wielkopolska region. This spatial distinction situates the study within the research field of education geography, particularly within its behavioural approach.

## Sources and research methods

To gather detailed information on principals' perspectives regarding the attitudes of students' parents towards remote learning during the pandemic, questionnaires were distributed to principals or vice-principals of 36 randomly selected schools from the Wielkopolska region. The sampling of schools was spatially stratified, i.e. schools were drawn to take into account the separateness of spatial units at the poviat level, which served as separate layers in the sampling scheme. Consequently, the random sample was assembled in such a way as to include schools from every poviat in the Wielkopolska region. This stratified method of random sampling resulted from the assumption made in the research process that the attitudes of students' parents during the pandemic are spatially differentiated and largely depend on the school's location and the place of residence. However, the type and level of the school were also crucial in the selection process, reflected in the adopted analysis scheme. Namely, the differences between primary, secondary, and vocational schools were taken into account.

The randomly selected sample of schools also encompassed two school complexes, i.e. institutions bringing together various types of schools – primary, general, and vocational – “under one roof” with a joint principal. In these cases, the principal answered the interview questions from the perspective of the problems of the entire managed institution. The result of the questionnaire interviews is a collection of 36 unique statements from principals or vice-principals from primary schools (19), general secondary schools (8), technical and vocational schools, i.e. former vocational schools (7); and from the two school aforementioned school complexes. A detailed list of the schools where the interviews were conducted is presented in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Spatial distribution of schools where questionnaire interviews were conducted with school principals



Source: own compilation based on questionnaire interviews

Questionnaire interviews with school principals formed part of the research carried out by the authors of the article from November 2020 to October 2021, under the project titled “Diversification of social attitudes in the sphere of educational services during a pandemic.” The project was implemented courtesy of the funding obtained in the competition announced by the Rector of the Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, entitled “Research on COVID-19.” The synthetic results of the project are presented in the monograph entitled “Diversity of social attitudes of students and teachers from the Wielkopolska region during the COVID-19 pandemic” (2021). The interview questionnaire for school principals was more comprehensive and, beyond opinions on the attitudes of students’ parents, contained eight other problematic issues analysed within the project.

The results of the interviews in the form of answers obtained were initially presented in a way that synthesised the statements of all directors, taking into account the most frequently indicated issues characterising the problematic situation under discussion. Following this, select original perspectives from headteachers are quoted, which either corroborate the general characteristics and most common problems in their opinions or raise separate issues specific to individual institutions or groups of students. The selected quotes from the principals have been anonymised and constitute the author’s interpretation of the records, developed based on transcripts from the interviews that were most often conducted online via the MS Teams platform. In some instances, they also draw from written reports prepared by principals in response to interview requests, frequently derived directly from submitted interview question forms. In addition, it should be noted that some quoted statements are somewhat expansive and go beyond the question asked, primarily due to an inevitable overlapping of the problem situations described, but also reflecting the emotional approach of many respondents towards the issues presented.

### The most important challenges for school principals in March 2020 after switching to the remote teaching mode

The most significant problems that emerged in March 2020, i.e. after the suspension of school classes and the transition to remote learning, included the development of communication channels with students, which was raised by most principals. As the conditions resulting from the pandemic were of great surprise, almost no school was prepared to conduct remotely as the only formalised electronic contact tool with students, and their parents in most schools (although not in all, as some teachers in one of the high schools used MS Teams for conducting lessons with an extended curriculum in high school subjects) was an e-journal. This was the platform that was most often used by teachers in the first weeks of the pandemic for transferring teaching materials and tasks and for collecting homework from students. Many teachers also adopted other contact methods with students, including e-mail correspondence, Messenger, Facebook, or telephone contact, and also handed over and received tasks in writing, e.g. through school secretariats. These were ad hoc solutions to an unexpected, problematic situation as a long-term lockdown extending for the next months was not anticipated.

However, at a later stage of the pandemic, when it became clear that a return to traditional classes would not be possible until the end of the school year, principals began searching intensively for new tools and platforms to support communication and educational processes. Since there was a relatively large variety of available tools, it was necessary to choose

and deploy these resources to students as soon as possible. MS Teams applications were the most frequently selected, followed by Google Classroom and Moodle. Nevertheless, the adoption of these tools did not take place immediately in some schools in May (e.g. in those where the school already had the appropriate IT infrastructure and the principal or one of the deputies had an IT and mathematics education or could count on the help of IT teachers or “volunteers” from the group of parents), only after the holidays, when they managed to deal with the purchase of licenses and the installation of student and teacher accounts. Concurrently, there was a problem with the internet access (specifically, fast connections) both for schools/teachers and the largest group of participants in the didactic process, i.e. the students.

Another major challenge was the availability of IT equipment in schools (though not all) and among students. In numerous schools, internet connections were inadequate to support the didactic processes of all classes. This situation demanded an expansion of the IT infrastructure and additional computer equipment for teachers and students. From the student perspective, access to a computer was a common issue due to there typically being only one in their homes, which had to be shared with siblings and often with parents working remotely. Frequently, students resorted to using applications on their mobile phones to connect with teachers and participate in lessons. Teachers, on the other hand, used their personal computer equipment without waiting for the delivery of work laptops. Some aid in this regard came in the form of a PLN 500 financial grant by the ministry to teachers, which they used to purchase small computer accessories like headphones.

In a limited number of schools – at the discretion of the principal – teachers conducted remote lessons in shared (vacant) school rooms using the school IT infrastructure. Another challenge at that time, as pointed out by the headmasters, was a lack of IT competencies regarding the operation of remote platforms – in the majority of cases, training was needed for teachers (in terms of preparing lessons, attaching files, planning and sending homework, and checking them), as well as for students and parents. An essential step was identifying leaders among teachers who could support the teaching staff in improving digital skills. Thus, the transition to remote teacher methods had to be preceded by solid preparation for the provision of suitable communication tools and the acquisition of skills to use them.

In the context of internet access and limited connectivity on remote platforms, the issue of “disappearing students” arose in some schools. These students stopped attending lessons due to problems with access to computer equipment or network access. However, these were isolated instances (from 1 to 5, according to the statements of the individual school directors) and were promptly addressed by educators and the management, primarily by renting the necessary equipment or sharing a computer station at school, while adhering to the applicable sanitary regulations, e.g. one to two workstations in the computer room or even in the common room, under a duty teacher’s supervision. Another important problem was the establishment of suitable school procedures concerning remote teaching; everything was novel and unexpected. Documentation was undoubtedly challenging, and new “necessary” guidelines began appearing for maintaining documentation remotely.

Another issue was the difficulty in determining how to effectively assess students’ knowledge. In some interviews, the problem of organising school celebrations in a remote system was also highlighted. It was also revealed that online synchronous classes were only sporadically conducted in schools by a handful of teachers. The practice of sending tasks and materials for students’ work prevailed, leading to an increased need for time devoted

to learning, and in the case of the classes of younger students, the need to also involve parents to assist with children. A dozen principals also pointed out the problem of students who required psychological and pedagogical assistance at school losing this possibility when switching to remote learning. It, therefore, became a significant challenge to devise the form and tools for providing such assistance in the new conditions. Furthermore, some new students required such specialist pedagogical support during this period.

However, there were also positive indications in the headmasters' statements, such as teachers starting to converse with students in a more "partner-like" manner, as students often guided them in the nuances of new technologies. A valuable added benefit was the considerable increase in the integration of the school environment and all its main stakeholders – principals, teachers, parents, and students. Everyone collaborated for a singular cause, which greatly united the school community. It should be emphasised that the shift from in-person to remote teaching brought about huge challenges for everyone. It was a very turbulent time when all involved (i.e., principals, teachers, parents, and students) faced great uncertainty. At that time, no one was aware of the timeframe in which remote learning would have to function.

### Participation of parents in the didactic process during distance learning conditions in the home environment

The sudden suspension of in-person classes in March 2020 caused a radical shift in students' circumstances – everyday routines were abruptly and unexpectedly altered, with academic responsibilities transferred to the home environment. This transition impacted the lives of all families with school-age children, presenting new challenges related to caring for younger students at home and developing new schedules of work and school activities for all household members. In many instances, substantial technical and organisational problems also emerged. A lack of access to a computer, which became essential for everyday work not only for students but also for a large proportion of parents. Moreover, there was also often a lack of separate zones for individual household members, meaning student and professional tasks had to be performed simultaneously.

Undoubtedly, the responsibility of creating a suitable learning environment at home and monitoring children's participation in lessons was shifted onto their parents. In the opinion of many school principals interviewed, parents' attitudes towards the new situation were quite diverse. They generally divided the parents' community into those actively involved in school life and those with moderate to low engagement with the didactic process of their children. Generalising the opinions of principals, the group of engaged parents prevailed in primary schools – most of these parents monitored their children's remote learning and often personally participated in classes and helped with homework. There were even instances of parents taking over student duties, such as doing homework for their children. In extreme cases (but observed and discussed among teachers and school principals), parents provided hints during tests.

In younger primary school grades, instances of parents' involvement in remote lessons, such as turning on their microphones to voice their opinions about the subject's content, were also described. Parents from the engaged and active group were also people who regularly contacted teachers via e-mail, phone calls, or the Microsoft Teams application, either individually or at scheduled class meetings. They continually discussed their children's



progress and learning difficulties. However, in secondary schools, parents displayed less active attitudes, and they were often not directly involved in lessons. Some vocational schools even reported that parents did not appear interested in the didactic process of their children. Among high school principals, it was observed that aid from parents was marginal. The divergent attitudes between the majority of parents of secondary school students and those of younger primary school students largely resulted from the natural processes of children entering adulthood and the increasing responsibility of the students themselves for their academic careers. Nevertheless, secondary school principals highlighted other essential aspects of the attitudes of older children's parents, such as support provided in various dimensions (e.g., psychological, social, economic, and technical) and motivation.

The level of parental involvement and interest in their children's academic journey at the secondary school level may also be demonstrated by the establishment of institutions like hotlines in several schools. School counsellor's duty hours were extended, particularly in cases of unusual student behaviour or those initiated by the parents themselves, who were concerned about the behaviour of their children. The doors of some schools were also "opened" for parents (description from an interview in a vocational school), in compliance with sanitary regulations, primarily to facilitate contact with tutors and joint monitoring of students' school activity.

#### **Examples of original statements made by directors during interviews:**

##### **5. Primary school principals:**

*"Most parents monitor their children's distance learning and often participate in the above-mentioned classes (especially parents of children in younger classes). Parents contact teachers via Microsoft Teams. Thanks to meetings with parents, teachers discuss the progress and difficulties of students on an ongoing basis."*

*"Parents are very involved in the technical provision of connections with the school and didactic matters. They even said they were helping the teachers because the kids had no school discipline and had to sit with them in front of the computer. The downside is that everyone wants their children to get the best grades and hints; they help children with school tasks, so, unfortunately, these are the first scams. They also show that learning is for evaluation. Another problem at the beginning was that they reported that they did not have the equipment and borrowed it from the school. But luckily, they gave it back as soon as they bought their own. You can also praise your parents that they wisely invested 500+ just in remote learning equipment or that a gift for the first Holy Communion. Laptops were just what was needed."*

*"Parents who were involved and cooperated with the school in ordinary times are still involved and take care of their children's school affairs during remote learning, and those who blamed the school for the poor results of their children, it is still the case. It is especially typical for wealthy families to refuse to accept that their child is not the best and blame the teachers and the school. Well, who is to blame that Jacus has '1'? – well, the teacher is guilty because he exposed it to him. There is also the problem of parents' participation in remote lessons. Some teachers demanded that some rules be drawn up so that only the student could participate in them, but in the conditions of home lessons, this is unrealistic and absurd. On the other hand, parents protested not to ask their children on the remote lesson forum,*

so other parents hidden behind the cameras would not hear their child answering. It was, of course, a matter of embarrassment for the not-so-volatile responses of the kids. And here, the teacher has to sweat always to find some excuse and a good side to such a statement.

Parents also sometimes join the lessons, e.g. when the teacher points out that eating during lessons is not allowed, the mother in the camera excuses her son that he was hungry because he did not have time to eat breakfast and she just prepared it for him. In another case, a mother regularly cleaned the room with a vacuum cleaner on Fridays at 9 o'clock, when the English lesson was due. Sometimes there are fights in the background of the camera. In general, parents are not particularly embarrassed, because now the school does not have such respect as it used to, you can say that they come in 'out of the blue' and explain their reasons to the teachers. But the worst thing is that parents cooperate with children in cheating, which is already demoralising. We know, for example, that substituted people solve tasks on remote tests because it is known that a child will not hire a tutor who will log into the class with a code at a particular time, but it is difficult to prove it formally. And then, if she is asked to do this task herself during a remote lesson, she suddenly 'flies out of Teams' and disconnects from the remote lesson. Or, for example, when they call their parents to say that their daughter is not in class, the mother directly claims that she is at home with her in this lesson now and probably something with the connection. Several such complex cases out of the 600 at school spoil the blood. So we do not have formal tools to enforce knowledge and presence. Teachers do not want to use this topic and worsen the situation, so as not to involve the family court in these decisions, to accuse such parents of being educationally inefficient."

"The role of parents at the beginning of remote learning was huge to ensure a connection with the school. They even set up their groups on FB and communicated quickly with the teacher or each other, so the flow of information was faster because the e-journal was too rigid a link. The role of parents in remote learning of the youngest students is invaluable. Now, children are more independent after so many months, especially in technical terms; they switch on and switch smoothly. But some parents faithfully accompany their children in remote lessons, stay in the background and help implement lesson tasks. You can often hear 'mommy, don't help me' in the microphone. From the conversations with the Parents' Council, it appears that they already felt a certain relief because last spring was crazy; they came back from work, and here is school, school, school, check, send back, because the little ones did not know how to do the tasks and everything was on the shoulders of the parent. Now the child has a better-planned agenda. But parents still 'spot' lessons, which annoys teachers because they often enter into substantive competencies and join the lessons, comment, and advise other methods, obviously the best for their children and not the whole class. Meetings with parents and tutors also worked well – they logged in from the student's panel, and then it turned out that, for example, all cameras work, but the children do not – then the parents found out with surprise that the child reported problems with the equipment. It is also good that after the end of the lesson, the parent can talk with the teacher via the link about some important current issues, e.g., excuses."

"The parent should be present during the lessons of the youngest students to help them understand the instructions. To this day, some parents or grandparents participate with the child in every lesson, especially in grades 1–4. In general, parents' interest is quite high; the

tutors also say that parents are interested and follow the e-journal, report problems, and even contact the teacher in the evening. What's worse is that teachers still hear parents' hints from behind the screen. They also noted that the results of the control work are inconsistent with the achievements of children before the pandemic and indicate the help of the parent and the Internet in this regard. The school also conducted a survey among parents asking about the most common difficulties during remote learning – the answers obtained were as follows: difficulties with the range, difficulties in translating tasks to the child, problems with the laptop, the child could not receive all links on the phone, connection problems, lack of explanations of the subject of the lesson, too many tasks to be performed in individual subjects, e.g. 5–6 exercises each, constantly checking e-mail or Messenger, whole days spent with a mobile phone and laptop, lack of free time for sports, lack of peers and school contacts, discouragement with learning. But there were also several responses that no difficulties faced parents due to the transition to remote learning.”

“Of course, there were incidental cases of a child not connecting for a long time, not participating in classes, and breaking telephone contact (e.g. unexpected change of number or intentional avoidance of parents' contact with the school). At that time, I asked the local police chief to intervene in urgent contact with the school, which always had an immediate effect.”

“Most parents were involved. Sometimes too much. It happened that parents carried out instructions and tasks for students, prompted while checking messages.”

“It happens that parents use their access to remote lessons and follow the course of classes very carefully, but only to ask the child what they think should be learned after class. Some parents stress their child with their presence.”

“Parents of students in grades 1–3 show great involvement in the educational process of their children; you can notice the presence of a parent during classes, where he supports the teacher's work. In grades 4–8, there are also cases where not only the parent participates in the lesson but also other family members. Their participation is not always necessary, as older students can remote education independently. In our opinion, the vast majority of parents understand the situation and try to support their children in the education process to the best of their abilities. However, there are situations, especially in the younger grades, when parents do homework for their children. They participate in the lesson and comment when the teacher explains the lesson's topic.”

#### 6. High school principals:

“We do not notice the participation of parents in remote lessons – in the case of high school, the help of parents is marginal.”

“In the vast majority, parents support and motivate children.”

“Parents cooperate with the school but have become more demanding and tolerant towards their children in the remote teaching situation. They often use a forced situation to justify them, e.g. from not doing their homework, most often by pointing to mental problems and thus put the teacher in an uncomfortable situation.”

*“The participation of parents in the didactic process in the conditions of remote lessons varies; in March 2021, a survey monitoring distance learning was sent to parents, and about 10% of parents responded.”*

7. Vocational school principals:

*“Some parents participate in lessons and sometimes help with homework. Most, however, are not interested in the didactic process of their children.”*

*“Active parents (in the past) remain active. There is no major change here... We have organised meetings between the school’s pedagogue, teachers, tutors, principals, and parents. Face-to-face meetings are more effective, especially with parents of students who report emotional problems (depressed mood, low self-esteem). In addition, we practice the contact of the educators with parents via e-journal and helpline. We also send parents various educational materials and videos.”*

*“There is contact with parents via student accounts, but in general, there is no madness statistically. The attendance is at most about  $\frac{3}{4}$ , and there are always those parents who do not have to come. Parents are interested in their children’s progress, but only active ones. Many parents are interested in what the teacher says and enter lessons in teams; we even have those who report that the teacher is slacking. Still, with 1000 lessons a day, it is difficult for us to monitor everyone effectively. There are also tense parent-teacher relations, e.g. a student does not participate in classes, does not log in, and when the teacher asks why the mother replies that he should not be interested in it and that he will write a complaint to the school board because it is enough that she justifies him. But, in consequence, it is about the attitude about other students who diligently go and learn.”*

*“Some parents take it reasonably and with great understanding. Kids are supervised and participate in classes; parents do not do the work for them. Unfortunately, many parents misunderstand helping their child and doing the work for the child. This can be seen in the grades (they are much higher than in full-time teaching). There aren’t many ways to eliminate this behaviour. It also happens that parents participate in lessons (somewhere off-camera) and try to give hints. This irritates and sometimes leads to tensions between the parent and the teacher.”*

*“Unfortunately, parents are unlikely to engage in the didactic process in the conditions of remote lessons; only a few are in constant contact with the headmaster, tutors, or subject teachers, informing about the problems and needs of their child. This may be due to the fact that our students are people on the verge of adulthood and parents do not always have an impact on their learning and participation in remote teaching.”*

8. School complex principals:

*“High praise for the parents, they are very involved, ask questions, check how the children function in lessons, sometimes we host them in lessons. Parents of children from grades 1–3 were especially challenged because they had to participate physically in their children’s lessons. The school also provides parents with the opportunity to take advantage of psychological and pedagogical help, or at the request of parents of children with a certificate, disability, or those who do not have the conditions to participate in remote lessons at home, then at the*

*request of the parents, the child is admitted to school, where it organises care and a position for remote work, or lessons are organised at school. These are isolated cases, but it is possible. From the new activities, the parents asked the teacher to remind the students that after the lesson, they should get up from the computer and air the room for work hygiene.”*

## Summary

In analysing the substantive content of the interviews regarding the attitudes of students' parents during remote learning, it is apparent that there are no fundamental differences between the opinions of school principals across different districts of the Wielkopolska region. In fact, the opposite tendency can be observed, with many statements indicating similar problematic issues and shared strategies to solve them.

A greater diversity of opinions can be seen when considering the school level. For instance, a distinctive issue raised mainly by primary school principals was the participation of parents in lessons and their tendency to complete tasks or even write tests for children, as well as the frequent baseless excuses for absences and unfinished tasks. Conversely, secondary school principals, both in general and vocational schools, quite unanimously evaluated aid from parents in lessons as marginal.

The data gathered during the interviews is quite diverse because despite centring the statements around the designated issues, the interviewees often expanded on the topic and raised other threads related to the individual cases they described. This is largely understandable and justified given their emotional involvement in the matters and events being discussed, as the principals were and are the central figures responsible for the organisation and functioning of schools during this unusual period. The interviews portray an image of highly engaged school principals and teaching staff, who were striving to lead their schools through this challenging period in a responsible manner, with excellent knowledge of the specifics of the environment, preparing them for new challenges.

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