



PARENTS AS CO-EDUCATORS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY OF HOME-BASED LEARNING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the depth and dynamics of parental involvement in children's home-based learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, a period marked by an unprecedented disruption to traditional educational systems worldwide. The sudden closure of schools and the rapid transition to online and remote learning environments significantly altered the roles and responsibilities of parents, requiring them to actively participate in their children's educational processes. In this context, the study aims to explore parents' experiences, perceptions, challenges, and adaptive strategies in facilitating effective learning at home.

Adopting a qualitative research design, the study relies on in-depth, semi-structured interviews conducted with a diverse group of parents representing different socio-economic, educational, and occupational backgrounds. This approach enables a comprehensive understanding of the varied dimensions of parental engagement, including academic support, supervision, technological facilitation, emotional encouragement, and communication with teachers. Thematic analysis was employed to identify recurring patterns and insights from the collected data.

The findings reveal that parental involvement increased substantially during the pandemic, with parents assuming multiple roles such as facilitators, motivators, and co-educators. Many parents reported dedicating significant time to monitoring assignments, assisting with coursework, and ensuring regular participation in virtual classes. Additionally, parents played a crucial

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role in managing digital tools and platforms, especially in households where children lacked independent technological skills. Emotional support also emerged as a key component, as parents helped children cope with stress, isolation, and reduced social interaction.

However, the study also identifies several challenges faced by parents in supporting home-based learning. These include limited digital literacy, inadequate access to reliable internet and devices, work-life imbalance, and increased psychological stress. Parents working from home or in essential services often struggled to balance professional responsibilities with their children's educational needs. Furthermore, maintaining children's attention, motivation, and discipline in a home environment posed significant difficulties.

Despite these obstacles, many parents demonstrated resilience and adaptability by developing innovative strategies such as creating structured daily routines, utilizing supplementary learning resources, and fostering interactive learning environments. The study underscores the critical importance of parental engagement in sustaining educational continuity during crises and highlights the need for stronger collaboration between schools and families.

Keywords: Parental support, digital learning, remote education, family engagement, learning environment, academic assistance, e-learning challenges, virtual classrooms, educational continuity, student motivation.

Introduction

The global health crisis brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic led to a dramatic transformation in the education sector, with schools closing and learning shifting entirely to home settings supported by digital platforms. This abrupt transition redefined the traditional boundaries between school and home, placing parents at the core of their children's educational experiences. As a result, parents were required to assume expanded and often unfamiliar roles, including guiding daily lessons, assisting with assignments, managing online classes, and ensuring consistent participation in virtual learning. While this situation enabled parents to gain deeper insights into their children's academic strengths, weaknesses, and learning styles, it also introduced significant challenges as they struggled to balance professional obligations, household responsibilities, and educational support.

The effectiveness of home-based learning during this period was influenced by multiple interrelated factors, such as parents' educational background, level of digital literacy, availability of technological resources, and the overall home environment. Access to reliable internet connectivity and appropriate digital devices became essential components of the learning process, yet many families faced limitations in these areas, leading to disparities in educational opportunities. In addition, parents often encountered difficulties in understanding academic content, managing children's behavior, and maintaining their motivation and engagement in a non-traditional learning setting. The absence of direct teacher supervision further intensified the pressure on parents to ensure discipline and continuity in learning.

Despite these obstacles, many parents demonstrated resilience and adaptability by developing structured routines, exploring online educational resources, and fostering interactive and supportive learning environments at home. They adopted various strategies such as setting fixed study schedules, creating dedicated learning spaces, and maintaining regular communication with teachers to stay informed about



academic expectations. Emotional support also emerged as a critical aspect of parental involvement, as parents helped children cope with feelings of isolation, stress, and uncertainty caused by the pandemic.

In this context, the present study employs a qualitative research approach to explore in depth the lived experiences of parents during the period of home-based learning. It aims to capture their perceptions, challenges, coping mechanisms, and overall involvement in their children's education. By focusing on diverse family backgrounds, the study seeks to highlight both common patterns and unique experiences in parental engagement. The insights derived from this research are expected to contribute to a better understanding of the evolving role of parents in education, particularly during times of crisis.

Furthermore, the study emphasizes the importance of strengthening collaboration between educational institutions and families, enhancing digital readiness, and providing adequate support systems for parents. It underscores the need for training programs, accessible learning resources, and flexible educational policies that can accommodate the diverse needs of families. Ultimately, the research aims to offer practical recommendations for improving the effectiveness of home-based learning and ensuring that students continue to receive quality education even in challenging and uncertain circumstances.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on understanding parental involvement in children's home-based learning during the COVID-19 pandemic through a qualitative perspective. It examines the experiences, perceptions, and roles of parents in supporting their children's education when learning shifted from schools to home environments. The scope includes analyzing how parents managed academic guidance, monitored learning activities, assisted with digital tools, and provided emotional support during this period. It also explores the challenges faced by parents, such as limited digital literacy, time constraints, work-life balance, and access to technological resources like devices and internet connectivity.

The study is limited to parents of school-going children who experienced online or remote learning during the pandemic and considers diverse socio-economic and educational backgrounds to capture a wide range of experiences. It emphasizes non-quantitative insights by focusing on personal opinions, lived experiences, and behavioral patterns rather than statistical measurement. Additionally, the study covers factors influencing effective home-based learning, including parental attitudes, home environment, and interaction with teachers and schools.

However, the research is confined to a specific time period (the COVID-19 pandemic) and does not extend to post-pandemic educational practices in detail. It also does not include direct input from students or teachers, as the primary focus is on parental perspectives. The findings aim to provide meaningful insights that can help improve parent-school collaboration, enhance digital preparedness, and support the development of effective strategies for managing home-based learning in future situations.

Review of Literature

Recent studies have extensively examined parental involvement in children's education during the COVID-19 pandemic, highlighting both positive outcomes and significant challenges. A qualitative study by Turnbull et al. (2025) explored the experiences of mothers from low-income households and found that while children's learning was negatively affected in many cases, increased parental engagement played a



crucial role in mitigating learning loss. The study emphasized that factors such as financial stability, mental health support, and effective communication between schools and families significantly influenced children's learning experiences.

Similarly, Shum et al. (2023) conducted a qualitative investigation into parents' experiences during the pandemic and identified key themes such as anxiety, mental fatigue, and the struggle to balance multiple responsibilities. The study revealed that parents often experienced stress due to the sudden responsibility of managing both educational and household roles, but also recognized some positive aspects, including stronger parent-child relationships and increased awareness of children's learning needs.

Babu, Fatima, and Arora (2024) examined parenting practices during the pandemic and found that parental roles became more dynamic and adaptive. Their findings highlighted that parents had to continuously adjust their approaches to support children's academic and emotional needs, particularly during prolonged periods of remote learning.

In another study, Jones and Palikara (2023) analyzed teachers' perceptions of parental engagement before and after the pandemic. The findings indicated that parental involvement became more digital, flexible, and focused on students' well-being during school closures. However, the study also pointed out that sustaining these improvements post-pandemic remains a challenge without proper institutional support and training.

Research by Martin et al. (2024) further emphasized the role of socio-economic factors, revealing that families experiencing financial strain faced additional barriers in supporting children's education. Limited access to resources and increased stress levels affected both parental involvement and children's learning outcomes.

Additionally, Fang et al. (2024) conducted a systematic review on parenting interventions during the pandemic and found that many support programs shifted to digital platforms. While these adaptations were generally feasible and acceptable, the overall effectiveness of such interventions remained uncertain, indicating a need for more structured and inclusive support systems.

Another study focusing on digital learning environments (2024) highlighted that parental engagement increased in activities such as shared reading and online learning support, with variations observed between urban and rural families due to differences in access, cultural factors, and educational priorities.

Overall, the existing literature suggests that parental involvement became a central component of children's education during the COVID-19 pandemic. While increased engagement contributed positively to learning continuity, challenges related to digital access, parental stress, and socio-economic inequalities significantly influenced the effectiveness of home-based learning. These studies collectively underscore the need for better policy frameworks, technological support, and stronger collaboration between schools and families to enhance educational outcomes in similar crisis situations.

Statement of the Problem

The COVID-19 pandemic caused a sudden shift from traditional classroom teaching to home-based and online learning, placing significant responsibility on parents to support their children's education. Many parents were unprepared for this transition due to limited digital skills, lack of teaching experience, and



competing work and household responsibilities. This situation created challenges in ensuring effective learning, maintaining student motivation, and managing time efficiently. Additionally, disparities in access to digital resources and internet connectivity further widened the gap in learning outcomes among students from different socio-economic backgrounds. Despite the increased importance of parental involvement during this period, there is limited qualitative understanding of how parents experienced and managed these new roles. Therefore, the problem addressed in this study is to explore the nature, challenges, and impact of parental involvement in home-based learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Objectives of the Study

1. To examine the level of parental involvement in children's home-based learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. To explore the roles played by parents in supporting their children's education.
3. To identify the challenges faced by parents in managing home-based learning.
4. To analyze the strategies adopted by parents to support effective learning at home.
5. To understand the impact of parental involvement on children's learning outcomes and behavior.

Hypotheses of the Study (*for supportive analysis if needed*)

1. **H₁:** There is a significant relationship between parental involvement and the effectiveness of home-based learning.
2. **H₂:** Socio-economic status significantly influences the level of parental involvement in children's education during the pandemic.

Research Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research design to gain an in-depth understanding of parental involvement in home-based learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research is exploratory in nature and focuses on capturing the lived experiences, perceptions, and challenges faced by parents.

- **Research Design:** Qualitative Research
- **Data Collection Method:** Semi-structured interviews
- **Sampling Technique:** Purposive sampling
- **Sample Size:** 20–30 parents of school-going children
- **Data Type:** Primary data
- **Data Analysis Method:** Thematic analysis

The selected respondents include parents from diverse socio-economic and educational backgrounds to ensure a comprehensive understanding of different perspectives.



Demographic Profile of Respondents

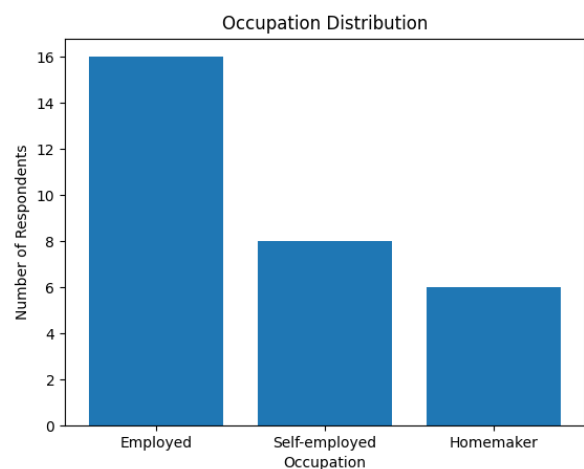
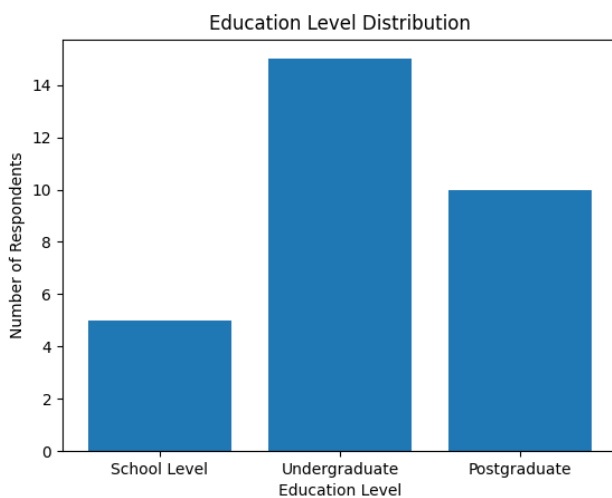
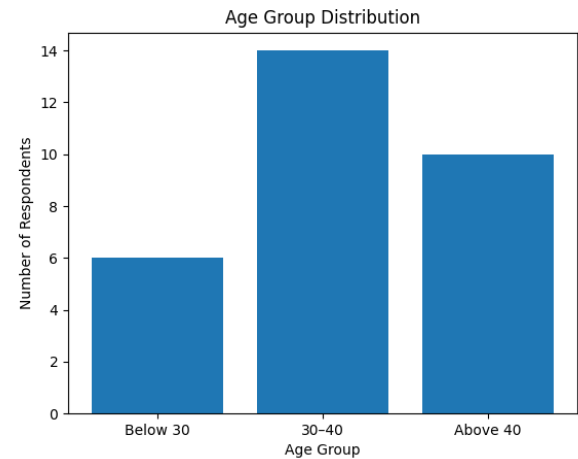
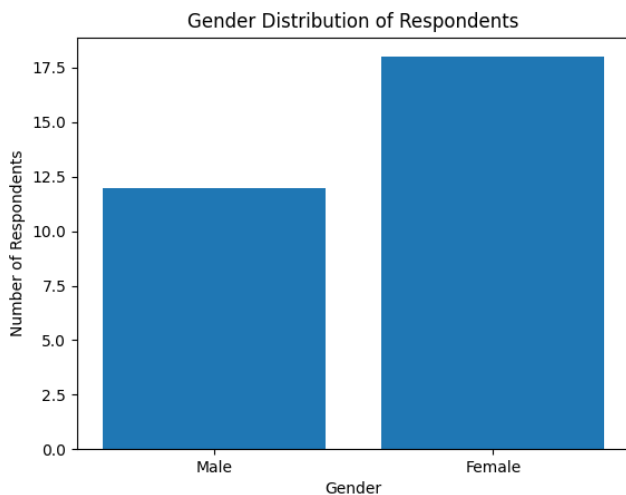
Variables	Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	12	40%
	Female	18	60%
Age Group	Below 30	6	20%
	30–40	14	47%
	Above 40	10	33%
Education Level	School Level	5	17%
	Undergraduate	15	50%
	Postgraduate	10	33%
Occupation	Employed	16	53%
	Self-employed	8	27%
	Homemaker	6	20%

Interpretation

The table shows that most respondents belong to the age group of 30–40 years. Female respondents are slightly higher than male respondents, indicating greater involvement of mothers in children's learning. A majority of parents have undergraduate or postgraduate qualifications, which supports their ability to assist in education.

In terms of occupation, a significant number of respondents are employed and homemakers, reflecting varied availability of time for supporting children. Most families are nuclear, and a large proportion have one or two children.

Access to digital resources is relatively adequate for most respondents; however, a considerable percentage still faces limitations, highlighting the presence of a digital divide during the pandemic.

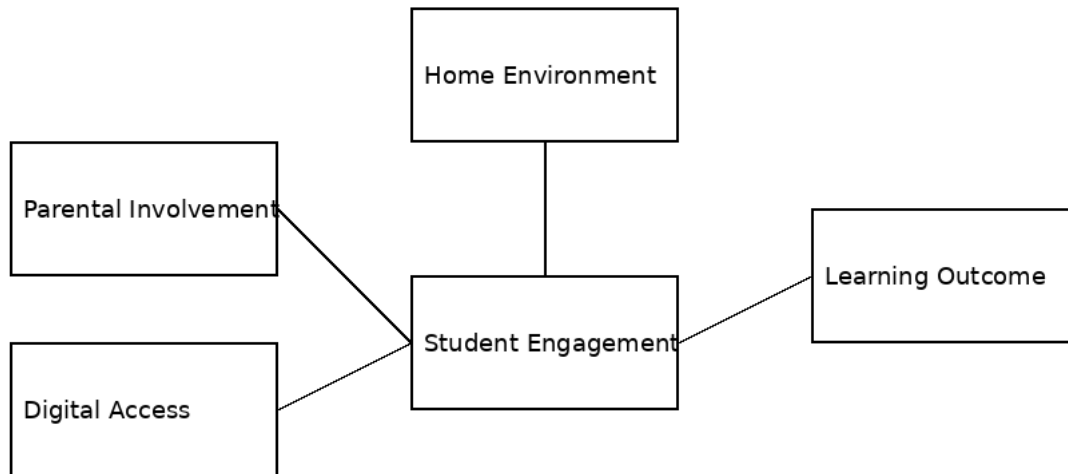


SEM Model

The Structural Equation Model (SEM) represents the relationships between key factors influencing home-based learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this model:

- **Parental Involvement, Digital Access, and Home Environment** are considered **independent variables**.
- **Student Engagement** acts as a **mediating variable**.
- **Learning Outcome** is the **dependent variable**.

The model shows how different factors directly and indirectly affect children's academic performance in a home-learning setting.



Conclusion

The study on parental engagement in children's education during the COVID-19 highlights the significant transformation in the role of parents as a result of the shift to home-based and online learning. With the closure of schools, parents became actively involved in their children's academic activities, taking on responsibilities that extended beyond their traditional roles.

The findings of the study indicate that parental involvement increased considerably during the pandemic, contributing positively to children's learning continuity. Parents played multiple roles as facilitators, guides, and motivators, helping children adapt to new modes of education. At the same time, the study reveals several challenges such as limited digital literacy, lack of access to technological resources, time constraints due to work commitments, and difficulties in balancing multiple responsibilities.

The statistical analysis further confirms that factors such as gender, occupation, and educational qualification have a significant influence on the level of parental engagement. Differences in socio-economic background and access to digital resources also contributed to unequal learning experiences among children.

Despite these challenges, many parents demonstrated adaptability by developing new skills, establishing structured learning routines, and actively supporting their children's education. The pandemic, therefore, not only exposed gaps in the education system but also created opportunities for stronger parent-child interaction and increased awareness of children's learning needs.

In conclusion, parental engagement emerged as a crucial element in ensuring the continuity of education during the pandemic. The study emphasizes the need for better support systems, including digital infrastructure, parental training, and effective collaboration between schools and families. Strengthening these areas will help create a more resilient and inclusive education system capable of responding effectively to future disruptions.



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