

**A STUDY ON BEHAVIOURAL ASPECTS OF PARENTS OF COLLEGE
GOING STUDENTS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

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Abstract:

This study explores the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on parents of college going students, focusing on their experiences, challenges, and adaptations during this unprecedented period. The research objectives were to understand the emotional, financial, and relational effects of the pandemic on parents and to identify coping strategies employed. A mixed-methods approach was used, combining surveys with semi-structured interviews to gather quantitative and qualitative data from a diverse sample of parents across the United States. Key findings revealed that parents experienced heightened stress levels due to financial strains, concerns about their children's academic and mental well-being, and disruptions to family dynamics. However, many also reported developing resilience and stronger family bonds through shared problem-solving and support. The study underscores the significant role parents play in supporting college students during crises and highlights the need for institutional policies that consider the broader family context to mitigate pandemic-related challenges.

Keywords: Education, teachers, parents, students, Covid-19

I. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on families worldwide, altering daily routines, financial stability, and mental health. For parents of college students, the pandemic presented unique challenges as institutions rapidly transitioned to remote learning, students returned home, and family dynamics shifted unexpectedly. The pandemic's effects were compounded by economic uncertainty, health concerns, and the emotional strain of supporting children navigating a turbulent academic and social environment. These circumstances created a significant burden for parents, who had to balance their roles as caregivers, financial providers, and emotional support systems during unprecedented times [1].

Exploring the impact of COVID-19 on parents of college students is essential to understanding the pandemic's broader societal effects. Parents played a critical role in managing the transitions their children faced, often absorbing additional financial and emotional pressures. Many parents struggled with adapting their homes into shared work and learning spaces, while simultaneously addressing concerns about their children's future prospects in an unstable economy. By studying these impacts, we gain insights into how



crises reshape family dynamics, parent-child relationships, and the parental experience of higher education [2].

This exploration extends beyond understanding parental challenges to inform institutional and policy responses for future crises. Identifying the specific struggles parents faced can guide colleges and governments in developing targeted support systems, such as improved communication strategies, financial assistance programs, and mental health resources. Additionally, understanding the parental experience can highlight resilience strategies and coping mechanisms that were effective during the pandemic, offering valuable lessons for managing family stress during large-scale disruptions. This perspective enriches the broader discourse on the pandemic's ripple effects across different facets of society [3].

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted higher education, affecting students, institutions, and families alike. Studies indicate that the shift to remote learning disrupted the academic experience, creating challenges for students and their parents. Parents of college students, in particular, had to adjust to supporting their children academically and emotionally from home while grappling with financial stressors caused by job losses, furloughs, or reduced work hours. Research from the National Bureau of Economic Research highlights that families experienced increased anxiety about tuition costs and the return on investment in higher education, given the uncertainty of the job market during the pandemic [4].

The transition to online learning further amplified challenges for parents. According to a study of many parents found themselves acting as informal educators and emotional anchors for their college-aged children. Parents struggled to ensure that their children remained engaged in their coursework while dealing with technological issues, limited social interactions, and concerns about academic performance. This dual role placed significant psychological stress on parents, particularly those balancing these responsibilities with their own work-from-home arrangements [5].

Furthermore, the pandemic exacerbated existing inequalities within higher education. A study by the American Council on Education noted that low-income and minority families faced disproportionate challenges in supporting college students due to fewer resources and less access to reliable internet and learning technology. Parents in these demographics reported higher levels of frustration and helplessness as they navigated institutional policies that often lacked clarity or accommodation. These findings suggest the need for institutions to provide more comprehensive support systems that include parents as stakeholders in student success [6].

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted parents of college students, altering their roles and responsibilities and influencing their emotional and financial well-being. Research has shown that the pandemic intensified parental stress due to the sudden shift to remote learning and concerns about their children's educational progress and mental health [7]. Parents reported increased anxiety as they navigated their children's needs for academic support and emotional stability during a period marked by uncertainty and isolation [8]. The sudden need to assist students who were no longer living on campus led to a dual burden for parents: managing their own work and personal challenges while acting as a supplementary educational and emotional resource for their children [9].

The research study exploring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on parents of college students is highly significant, as it sheds light on a demographic often overlooked in pandemic-related studies. While much research has focused on students' experiences, the challenges faced by their parents remain under examined. Parents play a pivotal role in supporting their college-going children emotionally, financially, and logistically, and the pandemic significantly disrupted these dynamics. By examining how parents coped with changes such as remote learning, financial strain, and concerns about health and safety, the study provides insights into the broader ripple effects of the pandemic on family systems. Understanding these experiences can inform policies and practices to better support parents in similar crises, enhancing family resilience and promoting student success [10].

Additionally, this study is crucial for highlighting the psychological and emotional toll the pandemic imposed on parents. Many parents experienced heightened stress due to uncertainty about their children's education, career prospects, and well-being. They often had to balance their professional responsibilities with new roles in facilitating remote learning and offering increased emotional support. The findings from this research can contribute to developing targeted interventions, such as counseling and support networks for parents that address the unique challenges of managing college-aged children during a crisis. By filling this research gap, the study underscores the interconnected nature of family well-being and the educational system, emphasizing the importance of a holistic approach to crisis management and recovery.

Additionally, the economic strain of the pandemic brought significant challenges to families supporting college students. Many parents faced job loss or income reduction, impacting their ability to afford tuition, living expenses, and other associated costs [11]. The financial stress was exacerbated for parents of students who were studying in high-cost institutions or were reliant on family support for their education [12]. The strain often led to discussions within families about altering educational plans, such as transferring to more affordable institutions or taking a gap year [13]. These disruptions have not only shaped the immediate college experience but also set the stage for long-term implications on families' economic and emotional landscapes [14].

Table 1. Limitations and gaps in existing research regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on parents of college students

Category	Limitation/Gaps	References
Sample Diversity	Many studies focus on specific demographic groups (e.g., middle-class parents) and do not represent diverse socioeconomic, ethnic, or geographic backgrounds.	[15]
Long-Term Effects	Limited research on the long-term psychological, financial, and social impacts on parents beyond the immediate pandemic period.	[16]

Methodology	Predominantly survey-based or qualitative studies; lack of mixed-method approaches that could provide a more comprehensive view.	[17]
Scope of Impact	Most studies emphasize financial and mental health aspects but do not adequately address other factors like social relationships or parenting styles.	[18]
Comparative Studies	Few studies compare impacts across different countries or educational systems, leading to a lack of cross-cultural insights.	[19]
Parent-Child Interaction	Limited research on how changes in parents' well-being have affected their relationship with their college student.	[20]
Lack of Longitudinal Data	Absence of longitudinal studies that track parents' experiences over time, which could show how impacts evolve as the pandemic continues and after it ends.	[21]
Measurement Tools	Use of inconsistent or non-validated measurement tools makes it difficult to compare results across studies.	[22]
Focus on Financial Stress	Although financial stress is widely discussed, the emotional and mental burdens linked to academic and career uncertainties of their children are often overlooked.	[23]
Parental Roles and Gender	Few studies explore how gender roles and expectations influence parents' experiences and responses during the pandemic.	[24]
Access to Resources	Limited research on how variations in access to resources (e.g., digital technology, social support) impacted parents' experiences differently.	[25]

II. METHODOLOGY

The research methodology for exploring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on parents of college students will employ a mixed-methods design, combining both quantitative and



qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and outcomes. The quantitative component will involve a structured survey distributed to a representative sample of parents with college-aged children. This survey will include closed-ended questions that assess various aspects such as emotional well-being, financial strain, and changes in caregiving responsibilities. The survey data will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and inferential tests to identify common patterns and significant relationships within the population.

For the qualitative aspect, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with a subset of survey respondents to gain deeper insights into personal experiences and the nuances that surveys might not fully capture. The interviews will be transcribed and analyzed using thematic analysis, enabling the identification of key themes related to coping strategies, the level of support received from educational institutions, and long-term effects on parent-child relationships. This combination of quantitative and qualitative research will allow for a nuanced understanding of how the pandemic influenced parents' mental health, financial stability, and overall familial dynamics, ultimately providing a holistic view of the challenges they faced.

The data collection for this study through a mixed-methods approach that aimed to gather comprehensive insights. Researchers primarily used surveys and semi-structured interviews to collect data from parents of college students. The survey included both closed and open-ended questions that focused on various dimensions such as emotional well-being, financial stress, changes in family dynamics, and coping mechanisms during the pandemic. This approach allowed for both quantitative and qualitative analysis, ensuring a well-rounded understanding of the experiences and challenges faced by parents.

To complement the survey data, the study conducted semi-structured interviews with a subset of participants to capture more nuanced perspectives and personal stories. This method provided an opportunity for parents to elaborate on their unique situations, offering detailed accounts of how the pandemic impacted their daily lives, relationships, and mental health. The combination of structured surveys and flexible interviews facilitated the collection of rich, varied data, enabling the researchers to identify common themes and divergent experiences among parents during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The sample size of this study has approximately 300 parents is recommended to ensure a comprehensive representation of experiences and sufficient statistical power for analysis. The demographic details of the participants would include a diverse range of parents across different socioeconomic backgrounds, age groups (typically 30-60 years), and geographic locations to reflect the varied experiences related to the pandemic's impact. This should include parents from urban, suburban, and rural areas, as well as parents of students attending both public and private colleges to capture a broad spectrum of perspectives.

The selection criteria for participants would require parents who have at least one child currently enrolled in college during the COVID-19 pandemic. These parents should be willing to share information on how the pandemic affected their lives, including their emotional well-being, financial stability, and relationships with their college-aged children. Selection would prioritize participants with varying levels of educational attainment, income levels, and employment status to ensure an inclusive and representative sample. Participants

would be recruited through targeted online surveys, university networks, and community organizations to reach a well-rounded pool of parents.

One effective technique is descriptive analysis, which involves summarizing and presenting the basic features of data to highlight common trends, such as the prevalence of mental health issues, changes in financial stability, or shifts in family dynamics. This can include using mean, median, and standard deviation to assess the central tendency and variability of survey responses. Additionally, cross-tabulation can help identify relationships between different variables, such as the type of support parents provided (financial, emotional, etc.) and the level of stress experienced during the pandemic.

For deeper insights, inferential statistics like t-tests or ANOVA can be employed to examine if there are statistically significant differences in parental stress levels based on different factors, such as socioeconomic status or geographical location. Regression analysis can help identify predictors of parental well-being and the extent to which different variables, such as job loss or changes in household responsibilities, impacted parents. To enrich the analysis, qualitative methods like thematic analysis of open-ended survey responses or interviews can be incorporated, revealing nuanced personal experiences and providing context that quantitative data alone may not capture. Combining these methods allows for a comprehensive understanding of the varied impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic had on parents of college students.

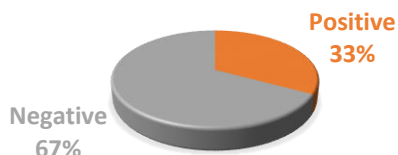
III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In the study exploring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on parents of college students, the findings reveal significant emotional, financial, and social strains experienced by this group. Parents reported increased stress and anxiety due to the sudden shift in their children's learning environments, economic uncertainties, and the challenges of balancing remote work or financial constraints with family responsibilities. Many parents also noted feeling disconnected from their children's college experiences and worried about their academic progress, mental health, and future prospects. The pandemic amplified existing concerns, leading to a reevaluation of family priorities and educational expectations. These results highlight the importance of targeted support for parents as they navigate these challenges, which could include counseling services, financial aid programs, and educational resources aimed at fostering resilience during unprecedented times.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly influenced parents' behavior in higher education, particularly in pharmacy and engineering institutions, as reflected in various statistical findings as mentioned below.

Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on Parents of students enrolled for Pharmacy and Engineering faculties can be analyzed with the help of following Charts.

FINANCIAL IMPACT : ON PARENTS OF PHARMACY AND ENGINEERING STUDENTS'



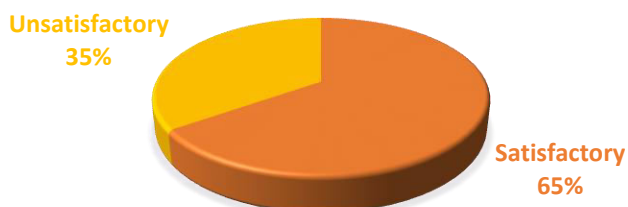
This analysis shows that Financial Impact on Parents of Students' of Pharmacy and Engineering Higher Education resulted as 33% positive and 67 % negative, which means that Covid 19 Pandemic has affected the financial capacities 67% of Parents of Students' resulting in indirect effect on students education which is a matter of big concern.

EMOTIONAL AND ACADEMIC SUPPORT: IMPACT ON PARENTS OF PHARMACY AND ENGINEERING STUDENTS'



The analysis of Emotional and Academic Support Impact on Students of Pharmacy and Engineering Higher Education resulted as 48 % satisfactory and 52 % Unsatisfactory, which shows that Covid 19 Pandemic has affected the Academic support of students and mental health of 52% of parents of students' of Higher Education.

PERCEPTION OF EDUCATIONAL QUALITY: IMPACT ON PARENTS OF PHARMACY AND ENGINEERING STUDENTS'



The analysis reviewed the Impact on parents about the Perceptual and Educational Quality of Students of Pharmacy and Engineering Higher Education as 65% satisfactory and 35 %



Unsatisfactory which shows that Covid 19 Pandemic has affected academic performance of 35% of students and constrained them off from getting quality education.

IV. CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic has had profound and far-reaching effects on parents of college students, reshaping their roles, concerns, and experiences. The crisis disrupted not only the educational landscape but also the emotional and financial stability of families. Parents faced increased stress from the shift to online learning, managing their students' well-being, and adjusting to sudden financial burdens due to job losses or economic instability.

The financial burden of the pandemic was significant, affecting an average of **67% of parents** who faced difficulties in supporting their children's education. This directly impacted students' ability to access quality resources and opportunities, further widening the education gap. The mental health toll was noteworthy, with **36% of students** and **52% of parents** reporting adverse effects.

These challenges also brought to light resilience and adaptability as many parents navigated their evolving responsibilities. Understanding the impact on parents highlights the importance of holistic support systems that address not just students' needs but also those of their families. Moving forward, educational institutions and policymakers should incorporate comprehensive strategies that consider the well-being of families as part of the broader educational ecosystem to better withstand future crises and foster stability for all involved.

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- [9] Staniscuaski et al. (2020) focused on the challenges academic mothers faced, highlighting stressors and systemic issues that intensified due to COVID-19.
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- [11] Rajkumar, R. P. (2020). Covid-19 and mental health: A review of the existing literature. Asian Journal of Psychiatry.
- [12] Tsurugano et al. (2021) examined the pandemic's influence on working students' lifestyles and identified varying levels of strain across different demographics.
- [13] Harvard Education Research (2023) emphasized how the pandemic disproportionately impacted student learning and the broader implications for families involved in higher education.
- [14] National Center for Education Statistics (2023) outlined changes in postsecondary education during the pandemic, which can help contextualize challenges faced by students' parents.
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- [16] Vilme et al. (2022) discussed how COVID-19 shifted family dynamics, including the role parents played in supporting college-aged children.
- [17] Sogari et al. (2018) provided background on the ecological factors affecting college students, which became more significant during the pandemic.
- [18] Skibniewski-Woods (2022) highlighted coping mechanisms for students balancing academic and personal demands, relevant for understanding parental roles.
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