

Survey

## The Lingering Effect of the Pandemic: Impact on Social, Emotional and Educational Aspects of Students' Lives

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### ABSTRACT

Covid-19 pandemic has been proven as a debilitating time for every section of the society; employment sector, industrial divisions, and economic markets all saw disastrous and drastic changes in their working. But one other sector that suffered heavily due to the advent of Covid-19 pandemic was the education sector. Education sector: whether at school level or degree level faced tremendous challenges to navigate through the obstacles presented by pandemic on the journey of imparting and gaining knowledge. In the present survey research Bal Bharati Public School, Pitampura in collaboration with Jitin Chawla Centre for Career Development is seeking clarity on the impact and barriers pandemic imparted on the journey of students' education. For the purpose of the survey, students from grade 9th to Grade 12th were asked to fill out a survey questionnaire that helped in understanding their challenges and influence of pandemic on their educational, social as well as emotional competency. Students were also enquired about their perception of career planning conducted by school authorities during the period of on-going pandemic for comprehending the impact of career planning on students' psyche and competencies.

**Keywords:** *Lingering Effect, Pandemic, Social, Emotional and Educational Aspects*

World Health Organization (WHO) declared spread of Covid-19 as a global emergency and a pandemic resulting in world coming to a still. Every nation for preserving the health and securing safety of its citizens declared numerous guidelines and restrictions followed by complete lockdown that closed all the working machinery in the nation. With such impositions across the nations; education system had no other choice but to modify its paradigm and move ahead with its working through online medium and thus, remote learning was introduced for the very first time at a large scale throughout the nation. Remote learning as the name suggests is a type of blended learning that was introduced to overcome the barriers of physical distance; it is a type of learning situation where neither students nor teachers must be physically present in close proximities but can be present at different places at a time for enjoying the benefits of synchronous, i.e., live learning facility (Greener, 2021).

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Received: August 20, 2023; Revision Received: September 01, 2023; Accepted: September 03, 2023

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Remote learning may sound simple and straightforward entity but is one of the most misunderstood concepts that resulted in a lot of challenges for students as well as teachers while ensuring the on-going process of education during Covid-19. Different layers of remote learning that took place via online platforms resulted in diverse impact on students' and teachers' lives. Students and teachers who were trying to adjust to the drastic changes brought in by Covid-19; also witnessed huge effects on their competencies. In case of students' much larger effects were witnessed on students' educational, social as well as emotional competencies.

And for that very reason; the school authorities felt the need of counselling and career planning for each student adequate development. Career planning and counselling conducted by school authorities in time of pandemic was an initiative to enhance students' proficiency in dealing with their educational, social and emotional hurdles and to improve their overall personalities which not only helped them in making appropriate changes in their lives at the current moment but would also help students in directing their lives to choose appropriate career paths in future.

Speaking of competencies talked in the present research; one must be clear on what exactly is meant by it. Educational competency is a term denotes an approach of education that focuses on increasing or improving the skills of learning in students. Competency as a word has been derived from psychological qualitative behaviours or competence defined by McClelland in 1973 that focuses on personality factors that have general usefulness in life (McClelland, 1973). In similar sense, social competence or social competency is defined as "(a) the ability to build positive and healthy interpersonal relationships and to resolve interpersonal conflicts, (b) the development of a clear self-identity in general, and a group or collective identity (e.g., national identity) in particular, and (c) the orientation to be a responsible citizen in one's society and a caring citizen in the world" (Ma, 2012).

While emotional competencies are set of skills demonstrated by people in form of "self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and social skills at appropriate times; and in ways that is in sufficient frequency to be effective in any situation" (Boyatzis, Goleman, & Rhee, 2000) however it is quite different from emotional intelligence which refers to ability of the person with innate capacity, while emotional competence is acquired skill.

Lastly, career planning is a subset of career development that focuses on recognizing one's personal competencies, knowledge and skills to accomplish certain tasks especially related to career goals and advancement in career paths. Career planning is a crucial step in every student's life especially the students at the level of higher education as they are the ones who has to take important life decision of choosing a career for themselves. And with such important decisions to be taken amidst the on-going pandemic; students were seen to bear a lot difficulties especially owing to changes in their environment that was directly or indirectly impacting their competencies. Therefore, to better understand the problems faced by students and to evaluate the influence of career planning on students' competencies namely, educational, social and emotional, the present study was performed.

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**LITERATURE REVIEW**

*Table 1 Literature Review of Existing Studies*

Authors	Country	Purpose	Source	Summary of findings
Yuvaraj (2011)	India	Definition of Competency	Research Article	Competency is an attribute of individuals in sense of their strengths and weaknesses that requires efforts for developing and attaining personal goals.
Shen (2021)	China	Importance of career planning for students in higher education.	Research Paper	Career planning is a necessity in students' lives during high school as it helps them to be more critical thinker in lieu of their future goals, career paths and choices. Career planning also has positive impact on overall educational development of students.
Chiesa, Massei, & Guglielmi (2016); Berger, Hanham, Stevens, & Holmes (2019)	Italy. Australia	Career planning and educational development	Research papers	Targeted career planning conducted in form of workshops, counselling sessions have significant impact on increasing career preparedness among students that enhance their confidence and decision making.
Saarni, Campos, Camras, & Witherington (2007).	USA	Relationship between social competence and emotional competence.	Research Paper	Social competence is a vital component in students' lives to ensure their emotional competence as the two competencies seem to have a strong association among students' especially female students. It is when students portray higher social awareness and skills they are more

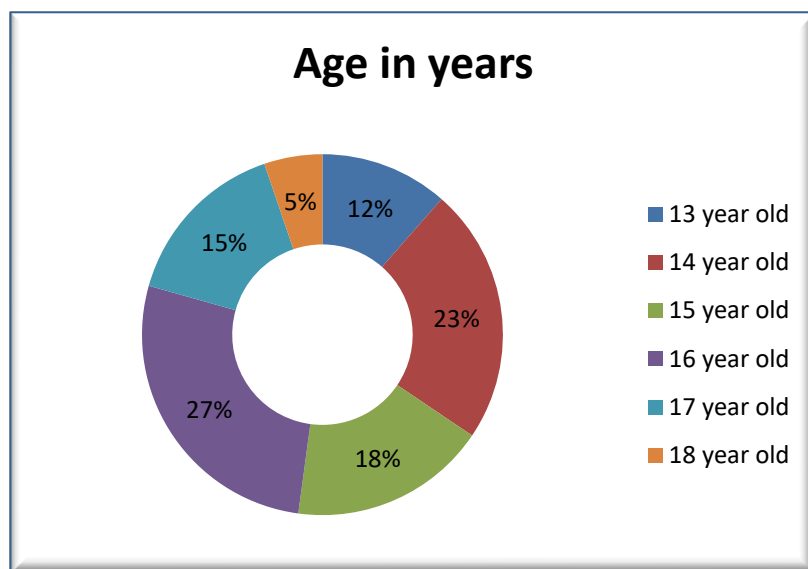
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				inclined to show higher emotional understanding about their surroundings.
Ma (2012)	China (Hong Kong)	Ways of promoting social competence among students	Research Paper	Social competence requires practical involvement of parents, school authorities and practical learning environment for development among students. Schools must focus on overall development of students by facilitating them with additional development prospects such as positive development or career developments apart from curriculum teaching to enhance their overall competence level.
Ran, Zeb, et al., (2022)	China	Emotional competence, general self-efficacy and career development	Research Paper	Emotional skills are highly important for students in their academic and vocational lives, where general self-efficacy has significant and positive correlation with emotional competence that is impacted with decisions made in career life. Thus, highlights the importance of career development for enhancing emotional skills among students.
Romero-Rodríguez, Moreno-Morilla, Muñoz-Villaraviz, & Resurrección-Pérez (2021);	Spain	Career Exploration Planning and its impact on social, educational and emotional	Research Paper	Career exploration is a critical part of career planning that constructs or reconstructs the social, emotional and educational skills among students. The present

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Flum, & Kaplan (2006)	learning among Spanish students	study found that “career exploration has been shown to be crucial to foster children’s commitment and involvement in school and to facilitate their comprehensive development in life”.
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### *Students' Demographics: Participation Record*



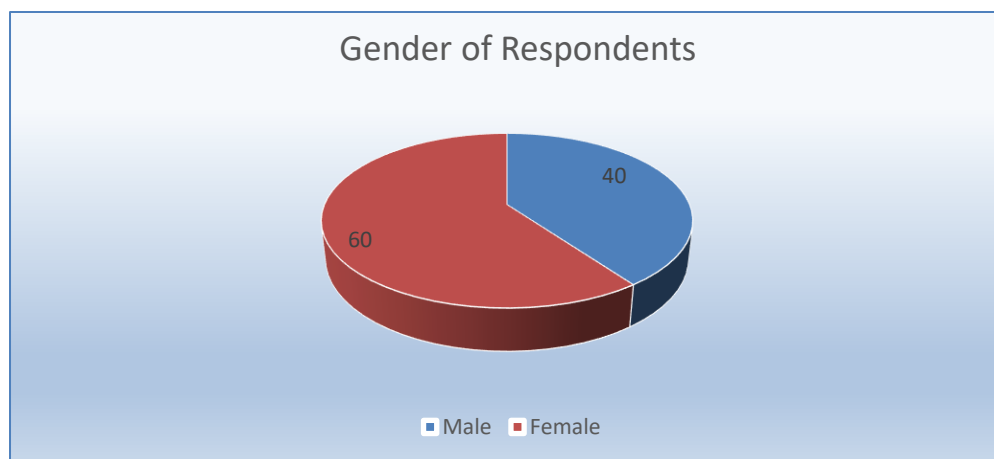
**Figure 1** Representing Respondents Age in years.

The present survey was conducted on a set of students from Grade 9th to Grade 12th. A total of 306 students were enrolled in the study with the help of convenience sampling method which is a non-probability technique of sampling performed based on certain inclusive parameters as per the judgement of the researcher.

The inclusion criteria for the current study were students currently enrolled in higher education from grade 9th to 12th, between the age group of 13 to 18 years.

In the present study, a mix of students from each age group were enrolled as depicted in Fig.1 but highest percentage of students belonged to age group 16 years old (27% of total sample) followed by 14 years old students (23% of the total sample) with a mean of the sample at 15.27 years and standard deviation at 1.42. The present depiction of age in Fig.1 represents adequate contribution of each age group as part of a sample representing young students in higher education who are in their growing phase requiring utmost support and guidance from teachers, counsellors, parents and their own peers.

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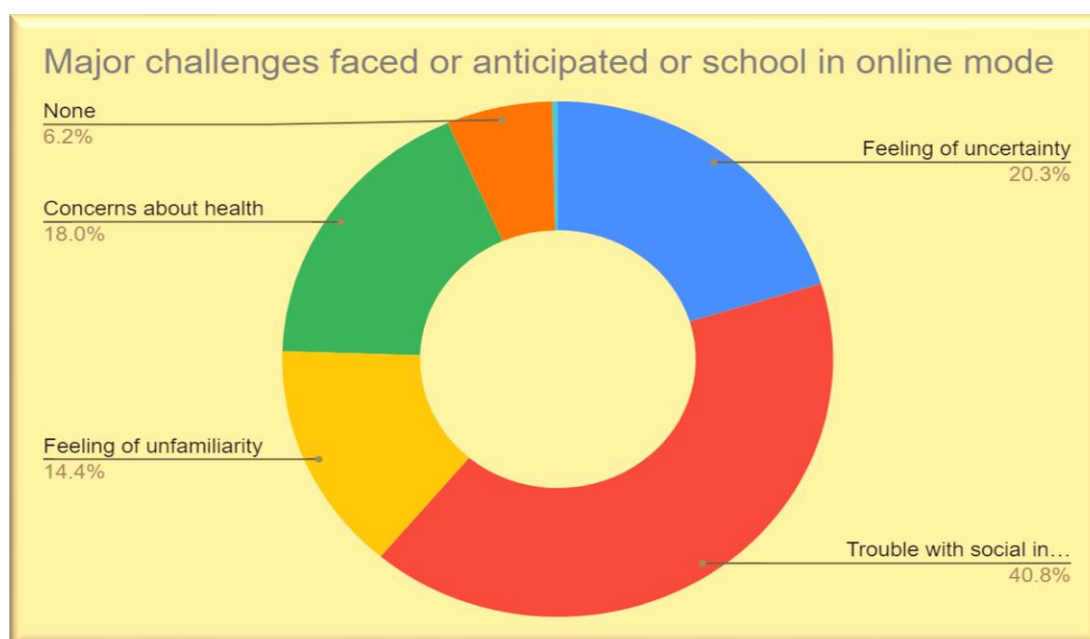


**Figure 2 Representing Respondents' Gender**

As the study followed convenience sampling; no control was devised on the gender of respondents, thus, resulting in 60% of participation from female students, and 40% of participation from male students.

### **Challenges in Remote Learning: Educational Point of View**

- As part of evaluating educational competency of students during a transitioning period of Offline School to remote learning; students were enquired about the major challenges they faced or anticipated during the phase of Covid-19 pandemic.
- School authorities with the help of school counsellor wanted to evaluate the perception of problems encountered by students in remote learning to enhance their education model for imparting knowledge to each student even in the middle of crises that is of pandemic situation caused with the spread of coronavirus.



**Figure 3 Major Challenges for Students in Remote Learning**

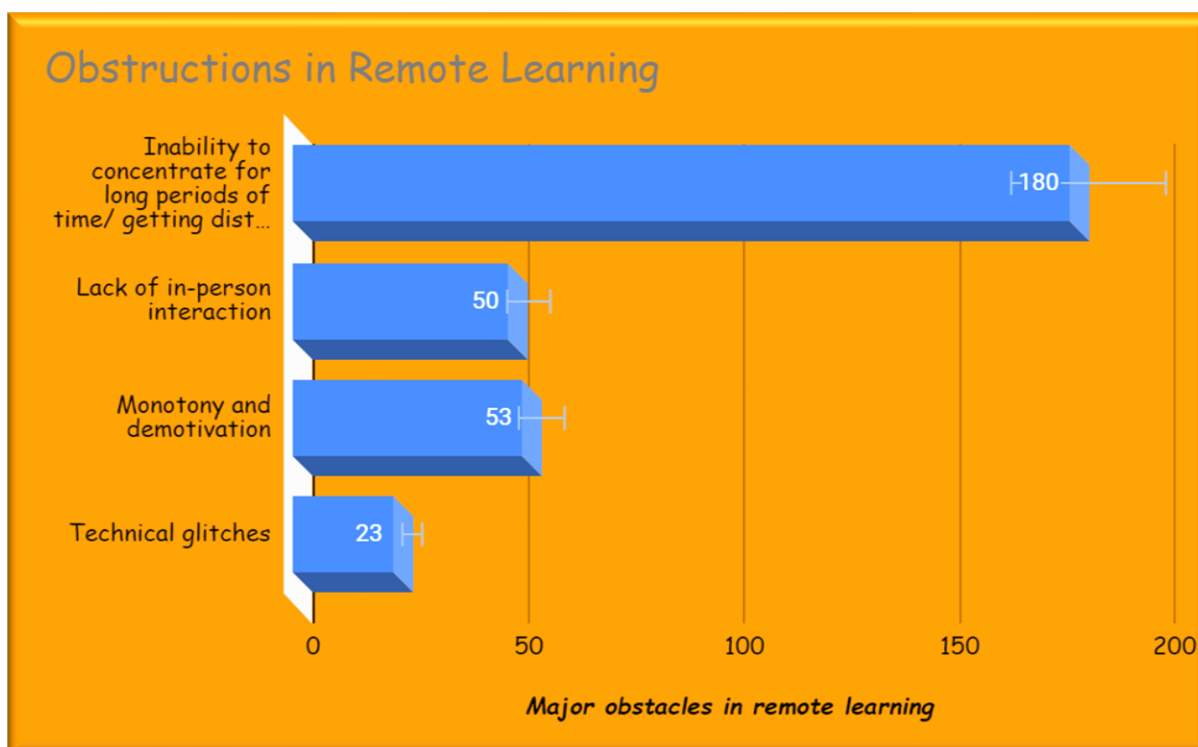
## **The Lingering Effect of the Pandemic: Impact on Social, Emotional and Educational Aspects of Students' Lives**

Remote learning or online schools was relatively a new concept for students to get accustomed to during Covid-19. This new concept of imparting knowledge at a distance to growing students was not only difficult and challenging situation for students but also teachers and parents who were also struggling to be as supportive and guiding as they are in offline school settings.

Teachers were motivated to help students in this transitioning phase and thus, wanted to assess their perception on the challenges they were facing or anticipated to face in near future.

- As per the results depicted in Fig. 3, it is seen that for 40.8% of students', main concern was the trouble they are facing in social interaction. Covid-19 brought in a vast number of challenges in context of education and one of them was restricted social interaction. Children in their growing age require adequate social interaction with their peers, teachers and other supporting members of education system which was found to be quite difficult to be balanced due to the restrictions inflicted by Covid-19.
- Mostly the feeling of being distant from regular social interaction at physical space created troubles for students to concentrate on other educational aspects of their schooling.
- Apart from troubles faced in social interaction; about 20.3% students also faced the challenge of feeling uncertain in these unfortunate times. According to Friedman (2020), feelings of uncertainty was a common challenge students faced during online learning that stemmed from situations leading to "lack of options for students to determine whether they want to take online courses or not, the lack of access to free technology hardware, software and internet services on campus due to social distancing, a lack of motivation to learn; the new course workload, adapting to unfamiliar technology for first time online student users and uncertainty about the future among others".
- There were also reportedly a of feeling of unfamiliarity (14.4%) of the new paradigm of education and also a growing concern for health (18%) among students as this staggering situation had an adverse impact on their overall wellbeing and mental health. There was also an increase in risk on physical health due to limited physical exploration for students and higher use of gadgets used for taking online classes strained their eyes, and minds.
- These challenges either had a severe or moderate response negatively impacted lives of students which was also reflected in their educational competence and for that very reason it is important that school and parents take a joint initiative to help students recover from such problematic conditions in current scenario when restrictions imposed by Covid-19 are now gradually being lifted.

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**Figure 4** *Obstructions in Remote Learning*

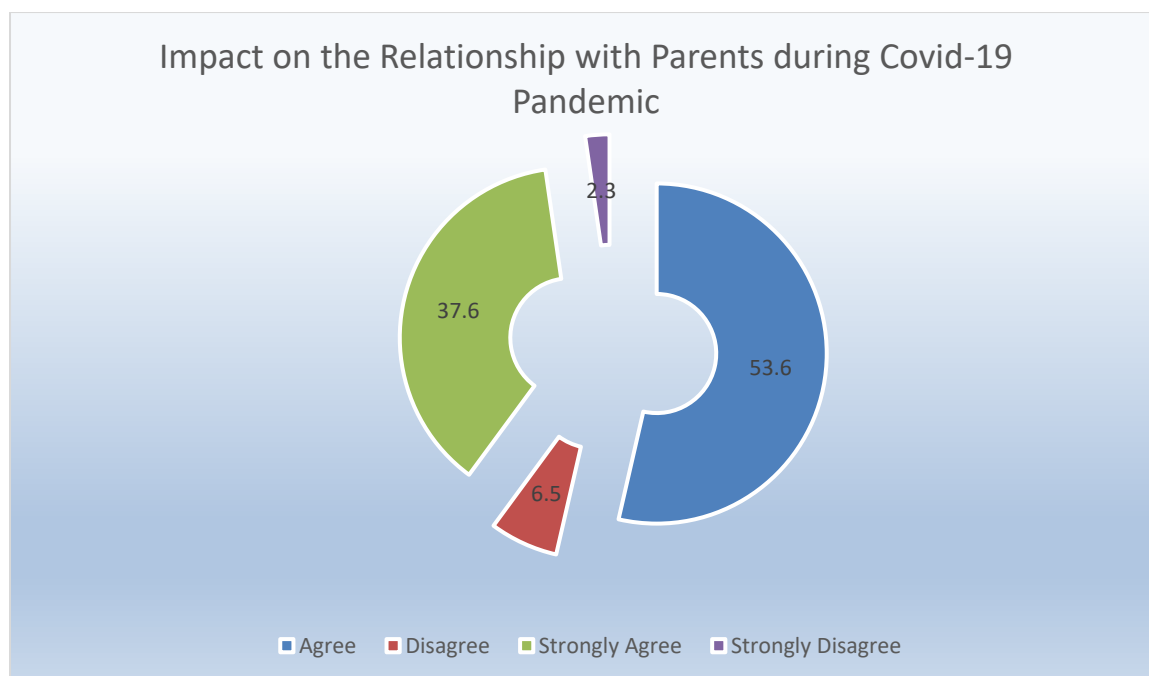
- In addition to holistic challenges in remote learning; students also faced obstructions in online education owing to its very nature of being a synchronous education conducted over online platforms.
- Majority of students, about 180 from total sample of 306 believed that there was a lack of concentration that impacted their education; as they were unable to feel determined to study for longer period of time.
- Lack of in person interaction, i.e., need of physical proximity of offline schools was also an obstruction in their educational competence, while 53 students also stated monotonous nature of online learning lead to demotivation for overall education which is among the major problems school authorities have to work upon in current scenario.
- Motivation is the key for enhancing students' education competency that not only requires efforts made at school but also at home through guidance of parents. Need for motivation as part of education can be understood with help of Self-Determination Theory by Ryan (2002) that suggests motivational processes are influencing factor in the quality learning process that primarily depends on autonomy, competence and social relatedness among students (Müller, & Palekčić, 2005).
- Lastly, Technical glitches were other obstructions in online learning that led to demotivation of students to engage in proactive learning process.



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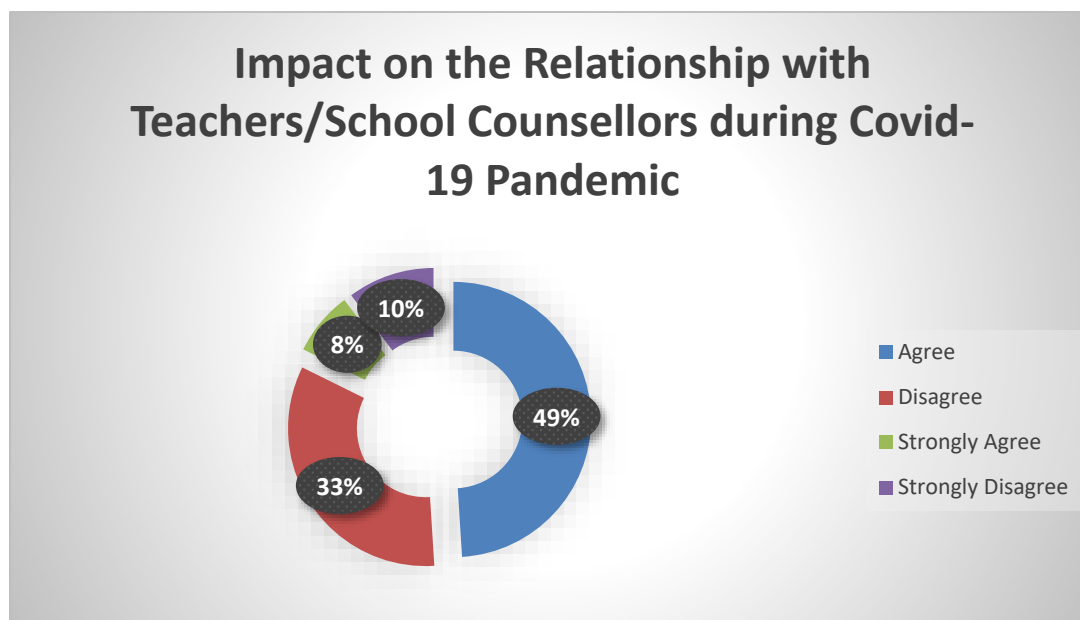
### *Social Competence Challenges for Students*

- Creating a supportive environment on online learning was not only challenging from education point of view but also from a social interaction point of view.
- Social interaction, knowledge and awareness are key components of students' social competence which took a major hit during covid-19 especially in terms of negative impact on the relationships students had with their peers, parents and also teachers.



**Figure 5** *Impact of Covid-19 on relationship between students and their parents*

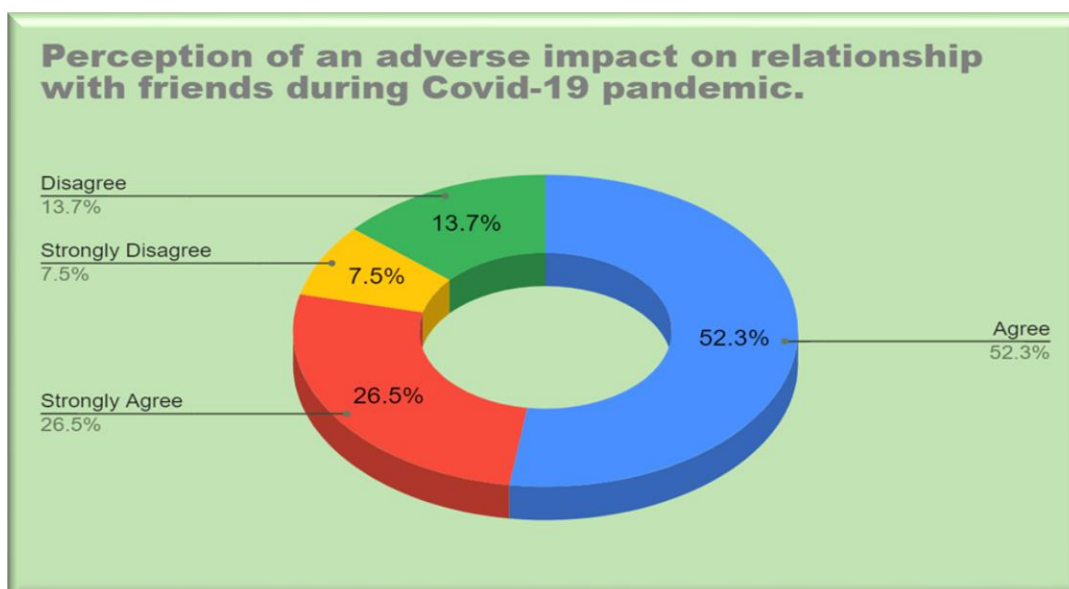
- Covid-19 brought about substantial challenges in the relationships students held with their parents. From the above fig.5, majority of students (53.6%) agreed that Covid-19 had impacted their relationship with their parents in a negative way.
- While 37.6% had a stronger perception of negative impact of Covid-19 on their personal relationship with their respective parents.
- Only a small percentage of 6.5% and 2.3% strongly disagreed and disagreed respectively with having a negative impact of pandemic on their individualistic relationships with their parents.
- Moreover, the depiction of results clearly states that majority of student population had troubles in their relationship with their parents owing to negative impacts of pandemic which needs utmost care by counsellors and parents for reducing the ill-effects of pandemic on social competence of students for near future.



*Figure 6 Impact of Covid-19 on relationship between students and teachers/school counsellors*

- One of the societal concerns that Covid-19 pandemic caused was the closure of schools. Change in teaching modality from offline classes to an online remote education changed the environmental and social context of learning. This change was also observed and felt by students resulting in 49.0% of students agreeing to the interference and hurdles caused by Covid-19 pandemic on the relationship between students and their teachers/school counsellors. On the other hand, only about 10% students strongly agreed with the impact of Covid-19 on relations between students and their teachers/school counsellors.
- The interfering impact of Covid-19 pandemic on students-teacher/school counsellor relationship was a result of significant difference between classroom teaching and online education. Moreover, the change in the environment and social context brought by Covid-19 also highlighted the downside of pandemic that limited the interaction opportunities students had with their teachers and counsellors. Though teachers and counsellors addressed their concerns regularly to limit the adverse consequence of Covid-19. Still behaviour that is much a contradiction of what is observed in a classroom teaching to what is experienced in remote education did lead to some obstruction. However, positive and healthy associations between teachers/school counsellors with students did enabled students to develop extremely valuable and practical skills such as self-regulatory skills, enhancement in emotional competence through constant address on students' motivation and wellbeing.

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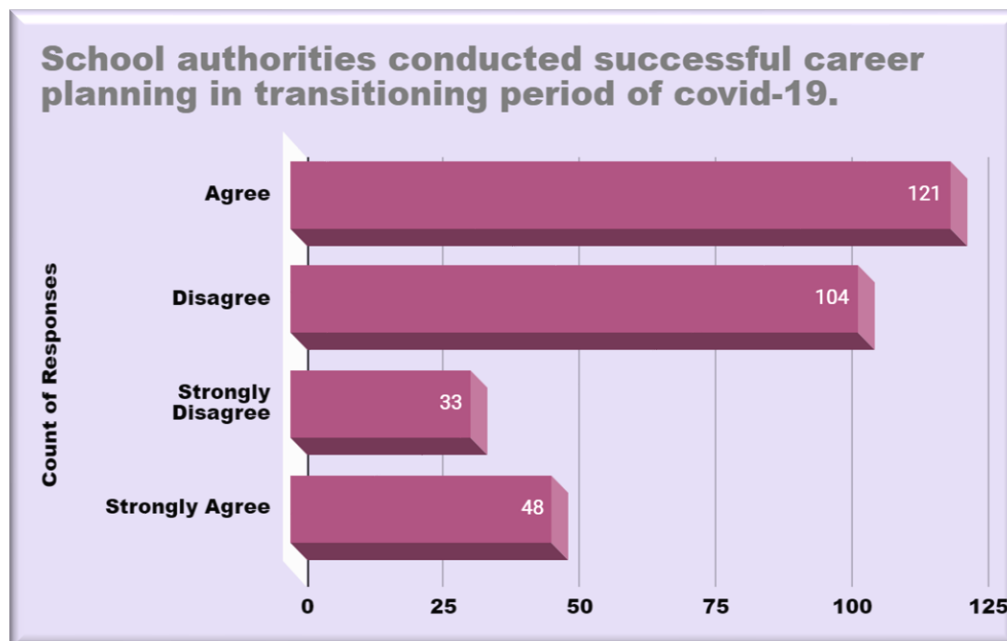


*Figure 7 An Adverse impact of Covid-19 on relationship between students and their friends/peers*

- Third component of social interaction that was seen to be negatively affected due to Covid-19 spread was relationship between students and their friends/peers.
- 52.3% and 26.5% of students agreed as well as strongly agree on the negative influence Covid-19 had on their relationship with their friends and peers. Students who maintain their social identity among peer circle in offline schools were now restricted to limited social interaction through online mediums that stagnated their growth of social identity, and social needs that are highly important to gain social awareness and knowledge about societal norms.
- Apart from majority of students agreeing upon the negative impact of covid-19 on social interaction; a group of students also disagreed (13.7%) and strongly disagreed (7.5%) for any negative implications suffered in their social ties with their friends/peers.

Understanding about educational, social and emotional competence of students would be incomplete without school authorities, teachers and school counsellor making effortful steps in order to enhance them which has become of utmost important looking at the negative implications suffered by students owing to the pandemic situation caused by Covid-19. Hence, providing additional development support to students; teachers along with counsellors promoted career planning as part of career development initiative which yielded positive response from students as stated below.

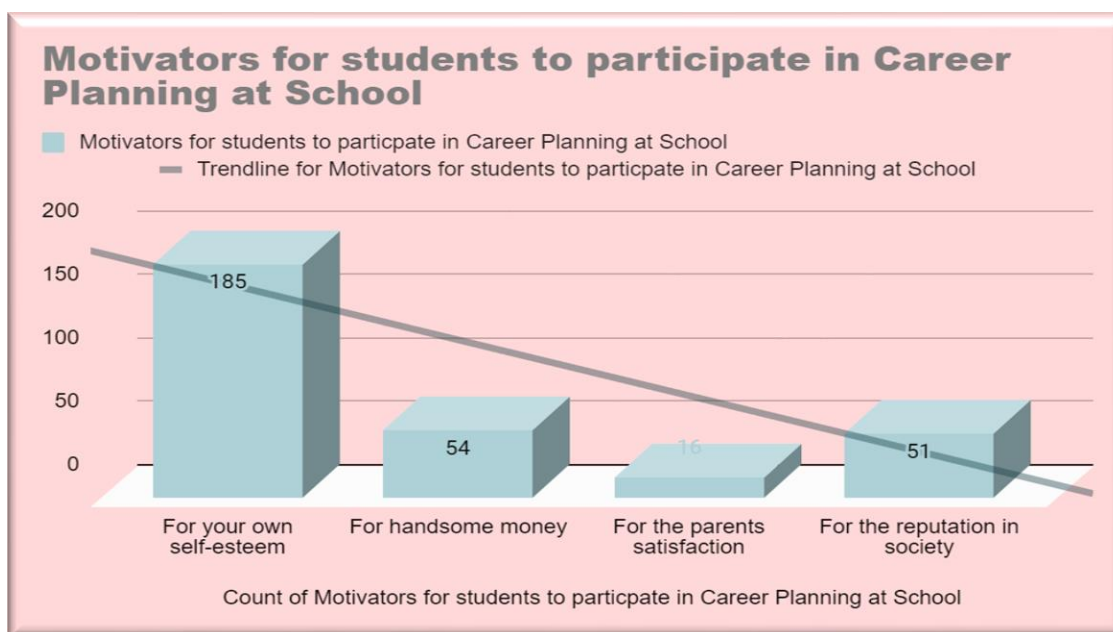
*Career Planning During Covid-19 Pandemic: An Initiative to Improve Students' Competence*



*Figure 8 Representing students' opinion on career planning done by school authorities and counsellors*

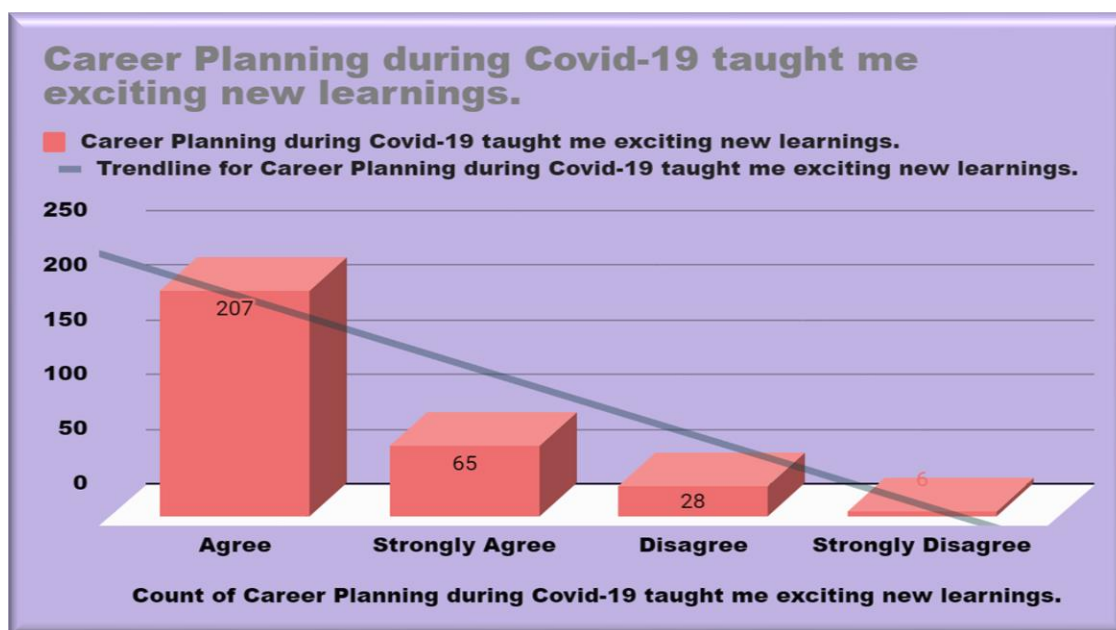
- As mentioned earlier; understanding the competencies of students is not enough presently, but there is an utmost need of enhancing those competencies which can be done by performing successful career planning and career development initiatives. Therefore, as school shifted to an online learning paradigm; school authorities and counsellors aimed to impart them directions by instigating career planning where students were made aware of importance of choosing appropriate career paths and goals for oneself and how to evaluate their own career directions and objectives for near future.
- As seen in fig.8 career planning conducted by school authorities with help of counsellors yielded somewhat mixed results of opinions on the degree of its success. Where 121 students agreed that school initiated a successful career planning transitioning during Covid-19 but a close number of 108 students disagreed with it.
- Moreover, 33 students out of total sample were found to be in strongly disagreement with success of career planning conducted by school authorities while 48 students, a bit higher number were found to be in strong agreement on the success of career planning program by the school.

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**Figure 9** Motivators identified among students to participate in career planning at school

- As part of the career planning initiative from school; counsellors attempted to understand the key motivators that reinforce students behaviour in the direction of participation or involvement in career planning drive conducted at school.
- On assessing the situation, it was observed that 185 students (60.45%) of students were motivated to participate in career planning for enhancing their own self-esteem which is also a key component of an individual's personality much needed for enhancing one's own capabilities, abilities and last but not the least competence in their daily lives.
- As per fig.9, it is clearly visible that trendline is highest at self-esteem to be a key motivator and reducing with other motivators at play. Here, monetary gains in career (17.64%), parental satisfaction (5.22%) and for social status or reputation in the society (18.95%) was accounted to be the respective motivators behind students' engagement in career planning.
- Apart from these findings, students were enquired whether career planning during Covid-19 led to any new learnings for them and the following results were observed.



*Figure 10 Students' opinion for career planning teaching them new exciting learning's during covid-19 pandemic*

- Covid-19 pandemic has been a challenging time for everyone and in such times students across the nation faced tremendous hurdles that not only restricted their physical and social interaction but also had an adverse impact on their wellbeing and mental health. As explained in research conducted by Wang, et al., (2020) limitations owing to Covid-19 has resulted in negative implications of psychological health of students who are not at risk of suffering from increased anxiety, fear and ill-effects on their wellbeing.
- Therefore, Career planning and guidance conducted by school authorities was a way to motivate students to channel their competence and mind into something productive that will not only have positive impact on them but would also lead to new learnings.
- When enquired from students; it was seen that 207 students (67.6%) agreed that career planning was an effective initiative for them and had taught them new as well as exciting things. Apart from them, 21.2 % students (65 in number) had a strong agreement to similar opinion.
- While only 28 students (9.1% ) disagreed on the fact that career planning during covid-19 taught them anything new; who were supported by very few students, only 6 in number with strong disagreement of career planning being effective in new learning during covid-19.

In overall sense, career planning initiative conducted by school authorities with help of counsellors was a successful drive that helped students identifies their motivators or reinforcement in life for choosing appropriate career paths and for enhancing their capabilities. These capabilities for which career planning would be helpful in longer run is educational competence, social competence and lastly, emotional competence.

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For further proving the significant role of career planning in educational and emotional component which can be enhanced with the guidance of right educators and counsellors with a little help from parents; a correlation test was conducted.

### *Correlation between Career Planning during Covid-19, Educational Competency, and Emotional Competency*

**Table 2 Correlation Coefficients**

	Educational competency	Emotional Competency	Career Planning during Covid-19
Educational Competency	1	0.06	0.123**
Emotional Competency		1	0.234**
Career Planning during Covid-19			1

*Note: \*\* significant at 0.05 (p<0.05)*

Emotional competency was calculated with only quantitative statement items that were scored and an overall score of emotional competencies was calculated for each student. While for educational competency and career planning during covid-19 variables both quantitative and qualitative statement items were used for assessment. Qualitative data yielded graphical data while quantitative data was used for conducting correlation analysis which was performed via Pearson Moment Correlation Test.

According to Table 2, representing the correlation results between the tested variables; it was found that there is a significant and positive correlation between educational competency and career planning during covid-19 at  $r=0.123$ ,  $p<0.05$ . Similarly, a positive and significant correlation was found between emotional competency and career planning during covid-19 at  $r=0.234$ ,  $p<0.05$ .

Though both correlations were positive in nature, i.e., if one parameter increases other would also increase in same direction, for instance, if school has support from parents and counsellors to enhance career planning apart from their curriculum development then there would be an increase witnessed in educational and emotional competencies. And as stated earlier in previous research studies that emotional competency has significant association with social competency the enhancing emotional skills of students would have positive influence on their social skills. But as stated, the correlation here though being significant was found to be a weak one which does hold substantial evidence for conducting future researches keeping in mind that future studies have to take into considerations other variables or limit the restrictions stated for the current study.

## **CONCLUSION**

The present study was set out to understand the lingering effect of Covid-19 pandemic on the lives of students. Three aspects of students' lives; educational, emotional and social competence were focused on to develop an understanding on how Covid-19 pandemic impacted the overall wellbeing of students. Moreover, the study also took a deep dive into the efforts made by teachers and school counsellors to eradicate or at least limit the adverse impact of Covid-19 pandemic on students. The efforts made by school authorities was

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primarily seen through the success of Career Planning development programme sanctioned and executed with help of teachers and school counsellors. However, persistent interaction with students, guidance in coping with new environmental and social context and the comfort of association a student has with his/her teachers and school counsellors also showed promising effects on controlling the negative consequences of the pandemic.

Adequate levels of career development has become a necessity for every student in their growing years which school must be acknowledged as part of their own curriculum and extracurricular activities. Previous research has adequately stated that school initiatives to promote career development and planning has effectively helped students to enhance their educational development (Baek, & Park, 2015) similar results have been found for social development and emotional skills among students. Therefore, in lieu of earlier literature, survey research was conducted that aimed to evaluate the impact of career planning during Covid-19 conducted by school authorities and counsellors for enhancing students' educational, social and emotional competencies.

As present study followed a survey research methodology; a self-reporting questionnaire was devised that consisted of both qualitative and quantitative statements. The qualitative items were analyzed with help of graphical analysis while quantitative data; mainly variables of emotional and educational competencies along with career planning during Covid-19 was analyzed with help of correlation testing performed via Pearson Moment Correlation.

As per the results, it was seen that students' social, emotional and educational competencies were deeply affected with spread of covid-19 and the initiative taken by school in form of career planning was a way of enhancing students' competencies and keep them motivated in such challenging times.

The present study was able to find that students' faced problems in social interaction, social perception and social skills during Covid-19 period. Main aspects that suffered for students were their social ties with parents and friends/peers. The impact of covid-19 had negative implications of students' social life which has also been suggested in other studies; stating that poor social relationships of students may lead to students facing troubles in achieving educational goals, having behavioral and emotional difficulties (Kupersmidt, and DeRosier, 2004). Though present study did not find any association between social competency with other variables studied in research but looking at the importance of social development in the lives of students, further exploration is required in forthcoming research studies.

Apart from these results, educational and emotional competencies of students were found to have positive and significant correlation with career planning during covid-19. This was found to be in line of existing research that suggested significant impact of career development and career planning as a successful approach for enhancing students' educational skills especially in the fast-growing world that has been dominated with technical advancements (Serbes, & Albay, 2017).

Similar findings were found in case of career planning and emotional competency or development of students in previous studies. As according to Romero-Rodríguez, et al., (2021) and Arbona (2000) career planning and explorations conducted as part of school curriculum helps students to freely express their emotions, thoughts and perceptions that are extremely vital for emotional development of students and to adapt to new circumstances.



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The present study has proven to be beneficial in understanding the perspective of students pertaining to their own understanding of their emotional, social and educational competencies. It has also depicted the success of career planning in school in the opinion of students and has proven to provide future scope of exploration that would not only help students to grow and develop but would also help in improvement of school curriculum and model of working.

### *Key themes from this survey research*

#### **Scope and Benefits**

- Students and parents would be able to identify the signs of social, emotional and educational competencies or their lack of; helping them to identify the parameters that needs guidance and support.
- School authorities would be able to enhance their working models and also incorporate career development as a drive for enhancing overall personality of students.
- Research also helps professionals to identify the impact of covid-19 and restrictions of pandemic on social and emotional skills of children which when impacted to a great extent in negative manners may cause behavioural and psychological problems. Therefore, the study may act as a bases for understanding students' needs and limiting future mental health issues.
- As per the role of parents, counsellors and guardians; study explains them the points that require their attention for students in addition to the motivators that they may focus for enhancing their personalities.
- The study may also act as guiding study for planning effective school counselling programs, career development initiatives and regular mental health workshops for betterment of students.

#### *Future Directions or Implications*

- The study did not primarily focus on social skills and has a scope of exploring social competency of students in depth in future explorations.
- Forthcoming studies may also enhance the research model of present study and introduce controls for higher relevancy in research findings.
- School may also take findings of the present research to upgrade their counselling programs or life skill classes to improve students' wellbeing, mental health and skills needed for sustenance in their future life especially in terms of career orientations.

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## **The Lingering Effect of the Pandemic: Impact on Social, Emotional and Educational Aspects of Students' Lives**

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### ***Acknowledgement***

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

### ***Conflict of Interest***

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

***How to cite this article:*** Gandhi, S., Soni, V. & Chawla, J. (2023). The Lingering Effect of the Pandemic: Impact on Social, Emotional and Educational Aspects of Students' Lives. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(3), 2880-2898. DIP:18.01.274.20231103, DOI:10.25215/1103.274