



Role of Home-School Communication During the COVID Crisis in England, Germany, India and Iran

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Received: 16 July 2024 Revised: 14 April 2025 Accepted: 22 May 2025 Online: 08 December 2025</p>	<p>The main goal of this research was to investigate the experiences of home-school communication in England, Germany, India and Iran during the COVID crisis. The research method was qualitatively comparative using Bereday's approach. Data collection method was documentary based on analysis of primary and secondary sources. The validity and reliability of the data were examined and confirmed based on four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. The research findings indicated that economic pressures resulting from the COVID crisis and educational expectations from parents led to a weakening of home-school communication in all studied countries. However, German families benefited from more structural support and resources. Also, although economic and social inequalities existed among families in all countries, the nature of these inequalities differed. In England and Germany, inequalities were mainly related to the ethnic, cultural, and migratory backgrounds of families, while in Iran and India, these inequalities were more related to poverty, marginalization, and living in rural areas. Furthermore, the lowest level of engagement with online education was observed among Indian families. The findings suggest that achieving educational equity and providing equal opportunities in crisis situations plays a significant role in strengthening home-school communication.</p>
<p>KEYWORDS</p> <p>Crisis Situations COVID-19 Educational Inequalities Family Involvement Home-school Communication</p>	

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1. Introduction

In performing educational duties, home and school are complementary to each other (O'Brien, 2025). Home is the child's first school, and school is their second home. If these two institutions are not coordinated in their educational activities and goals, the students' growth process will be disrupted. Through the cooperation and participation of home and school, students' learning levels increase, and various aspects of their development are accelerated (Celik & Tomris, 2024). Conversely, the greater the gap in home-school relations, the more abnormal the conditions for student upbringing will be. Effective communication between these two institutions reduces educational duality (Cui, et al, 2024). Family involvement in children's academic affairs has been proven to contribute to a child's self-esteem, educational equity, the creation of a rich and fair learning environment, and the facilitation of cognitive and socio-emotional development (Camelo et al, 2023). Family participation and cooperation with the school have different levels. The most basic and passive level of participation is based on the common attitude of "the teacher knows best." At the second level, parents only visit the school on special occasions, such as ceremonies or student achievement displays (e.g., sports and artistic activities). The third level involves the participation of parents and teachers in fundraising to provide school equipment and facilities. At the fourth level, parents play a more active role in educational activities, such as attending seminars and workshops focused on analyzing academic values and skills. At the next level, parental involvement includes direct collaboration with teachers in curriculum planning; this level of participation is particularly important in countries where the curriculum planning system is centrally managed (Mansouri & Taleb-Beigi, 2024). The highest and most active level of participation is involvement in school decision-making, which is usually achieved through parents' membership in school associations and committees (Marsh & Willis, 2018).

One of the factors that highlighted the importance of home-school relations and the role of parental educational involvement in recent decades was the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus. A longitudinal study by Mocho et al. (2024) shows that with the disruption of the educational process and school closures during the COVID era, parents took on a more active role in their children's academic affairs. The findings of this research indicate that parental involvement acted as a protective factor, helping families support their children against the consequences of this crisis. In late 2019, the outbreak of the coronavirus, as a pathological, widespread agent with a high rate of complications, mortality, and disability in humans, quickly became one of the serious concerns for global public health and economy (Singhal, 2020). The spread of this disease in a short period

affected all educational systems worldwide and fundamentally transformed the view of education and learning. This transformation brought about significant changes in the way school curricula were implemented. One of the first and most immediate decisions made by governments was to close educational centers and switch to virtual or distance learning (Carrion-Martinez et al., 2021).

The transition from the traditional education system to distance learning required rapid adaptation from schools, students, and families. Most parents had little time to prepare educational facilities at home and get ready to support their children's education (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). Suddenly, students were expected to take charge of guiding and regulating their own curricula and accepting responsibility for it. This issue, in particular, brought problems for elementary school children and children with special needs. Therefore, the success of home-based education depended on the family's capacity to facilitate learning and provide the necessary support (Tiitinen et al, 2023).

Traditionally, one of the challenges schools face is low family participation in the educational process. However, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the role of family participation with schools and, on the other hand, the quality of communication between parents and children within the home became more important (Otero-Mayer et al, 2021). In the new landscape, schools were required to adopt a dual approach in interacting with families and students to continue and develop teaching-learning processes. Similarly, families also strived to strengthen their relationships with their children to optimize educational processes (Carrion-Martinez et al, 2021).

The sudden transfer of educational responsibility to families was accompanied by numerous challenges. The unpreparedness of this institution to accept curriculum content and the lack of necessary skills in some families led to disruptions in students' learning processes. This highlights the increasing necessity of paying attention to the supportive role of educational institutions and designing empowerment programs for families in crisis situations (Tiitinen et al, 2023).

In non-face-to-face education, especially at the elementary level, the role of parents becomes significantly prominent. Children in this age group require serious companionship and assistance from parents to effectively benefit from virtual education. Also, given the absence of a physical teacher, the supervisory and supportive role of parents becomes doubly important. In this regard, parents, as teacher assistants, must create conditions for students to compensate for the shortcomings resulting from not being in school and the lack of direct contact with the teacher (Santana et al, 2023).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the education system faced fundamental changes; students were required to continue their education under the management and supervision of parents and

with the support of teachers. In other words, while previously it was expected that the management and supervision of students' education would be the responsibility of school officials and families would support the school in this path, during this period, the shift in roles led to fundamental changes in the relationship between home and school. Previously, providing learning facilities and conditions and establishing order and discipline was the responsibility of the school, but afterward, parents had to take on some of the school's duties (Abbaspour, 2020).

The World Bank, with a precise description, explained the unique nature of the COVID-19 pandemic and introduced parents as the frontline in responding to children's survival, care, and learning needs (Devercelli, 2020). Children's learning in the home environment forced parents to acquire a "coaching" role. Parents who had internet access had to balance facilitating their children's learning with their daily tasks. This was while for parents with lower education levels and limited resources, playing the role of an educational facilitator and supporting children in the learning process was a major challenge at various levels. During school closures, children were forced to study at home; a situation that required serious parental support. Although parental involvement has traditionally had a positive impact on children's home education, the conditions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic challenged traditional learning methods. Parents faced numerous problems during school closures. For example, many needed financial assistance and support to provide tools such as laptops and create a suitable study space (Khan, 2020). Also, they had to show flexibility in sharing electronic devices with their children and adjust their work schedule according to the circumstances (Hakkila et al, 2020). Additionally, parents with lower educational attainment and single-parent families dedicated less time to their children's education (Bayrakdar and Guveli 2020). In the home environment, children were compelled to shift from group learning with peers to individual learning, and the primary responsibility for supporting their education transferred from teachers to parents. Thus, the educational environment became dependent on the home environment. An increasing number of studies seek to explain the issues and challenges of distance education that emerged during school closures amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

The findings of these studies indicate that the primary factors influencing the home educational environment can be divided into three categories: electronic tools and internet access, parents' social capital and available time to supervise their children's learning, and parents' confidence in using technology (Moradian and Amani, 2022; Mahallati and Esmaeili, 2021; Jafarzadeh et al., 2022; Diaz, M.J., 2021). OECD (2020) reports indicate that children from disadvantaged families often lacked internet access in the home environment. This led to wide

learning gaps between children from high-income and low-income families. Differences in parents' familiarity and ease of use with information and communication technology also created learning inequalities during the pandemic, as parents with better technological skills were able to enhance the quality of their children's education. Poor internet network connection, the detrimental effects of home environmental noises on online classes, and minimal interaction between teachers and students were among the common problems parents faced during the COVID-19 era (Goswami, 2020).

Online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic led to an increase in parental responsibilities. An online survey conducted by Grover (2021) with 1000 parents showed that 50.31% of parents struggled with keeping their children focused on learning, 49.26% with establishing a daily routine and balancing family life, 41.83% with performing responsibilities and teaching, 33.40% with regulating wake-up and sleep times, 33.31% with balancing work from home and teaching, and 33.20% with helping children understand educational content. Additionally, the survey indicated that 83.7% of students participated in live online classes and 74.4% used smartphones for classes. These findings contrast with the results of a survey conducted in the United States, which reported that 62% of students primarily used laptops, 40% used tablets, and 25% used desktop computers for online classes.

In Iran, Baharlouei and Afrasiabi's (2022) research titled "Mothers' Interpretation of E-learning in the Context of the Coronavirus Pandemic" explores the experiences and interpretations of mothers with elementary school children regarding e-learning. In this article, mothers' experiences and interpretations are categorized into seven main themes: increased psychological pressure, disruption of daily routines, playing the role of mother/teacher, obsession with homework, distancing from the student role, breaking the taboo of virtual space, and doubts about learning and assessment. Heidari Lakeh, Naeimi and Shivandi (2022), in a study titled "Students' Perception of the Family's Role in Their Academic Adjustment to Quarantine Conditions During the COVID-19 Outbreak," showed that students' perception of the family's role in academic adjustment included the following supports: educational, emotional-psychological, behavioral, and financial-instrumental. Although the COVID-19 pandemic affected the educational systems of various countries, their strategies in responding to home and school challenges differed. The main objective of this research is to examine the experiences of the home-school relationship in four countries: Iran, England, Germany, and India. To achieve this goal, the following questions are posed:

- What similarities exist in the experiences of the home-school relationship among the selected countries?
- What differences exist in the experiences of the home-school relationship among the selected countries?

2. Research Method

This is a qualitatively comparative research and data collection method was documentary. For data collection, reputable international information databases such as Google, World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, OECD, and Persian information databases including SID, Magiran, Irandoc, were studied and reviewed. Eligible sources were purposefully selected and reviewed based on two criteria: relevance to the topic and completeness of the text. For country selection, the strategy of "different social systems, different educational outcomes" was used. George, F. Bereday's four-stage approach was used for data analysis and presentation of results. To determine the validity of the present research, four criteria from Guba and Lincoln's (1985) model were used, including credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

3. Findings

A) Description

Iran

The coronavirus was officially identified for the first time in Iran on February 19, 2020. On this date, two cases were reported in Qom, both of whom unfortunately passed away. Following this event, schools and educational centers in Iran were closed from early February 2020. These closures were implemented to prevent the spread of the virus and protect the health of students and educational staff (Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia). In Iran, the Ministry of Education launched the SHAD (Student Educational Network) system in 1399, initiating virtual education. This platform facilitated communication between teachers, students, and parents, and approximately 70% of students had access to it. Additionally, for students without internet or smart device access, educational programs were broadcast through television networks such as Education Channel.

Also, the 4030 telephone system was launched in cooperation with the Ministry of Health to answer questions related to COVID-19 and provide psychological and educational counseling to families.

In this regard, the home-school relationship during the COVID-19 pandemic was affected by parental anxieties and concerns. In a study conducted by Mosayebi Ardakani et al. (2021), the problems and challenges of virtual education during the COVID-19 pandemic in Iran were investigated. This study identified problems of virtual education in the areas of education, teachers and schools, parents, students, and virtual education infrastructure. The problems and challenges in the parents' domain included the number of school-aged children, high parental involvement, parents' unfamiliarity with technology infrastructure and facilities, financial burden, and parental concerns regarding educational issues. Educational challenges in Iran were influenced by teaching methods and lack of parental communication with schools, reduced learning, lack of teacher supervision in virtual education, parents' lack of sufficient skills and knowledge, students' physical and psychological problems, and the absence of a nationwide technological infrastructure for virtual education. Some parents experienced media panic and concerns about addiction to virtual spaces and students' social and psychological harms. This meant that students were educated in a new environment called virtual space, which was not limited to education, and no prior planning or justifications had been made. Students' entry into the vast, unknown, and exciting virtual space led to their addiction to media and mobile phones, which affected students' moods and mental, psychological, and physical issues. Parents' low media literacy and privacy deficiencies added to their fear and panic of media, leading to their anxiety (Kalateh Sadati and Sabouhi Golkar, 2022; Soleimani, 2021). School closures reduced students' communication and interactions with others, and consequently, many social skills that individuals acquire by being in peer groups and in the school environment decreased.

In addition, many students developed a tendency towards loneliness and social isolation, experienced social phobia, and became involved in social deviations (Abolmaali Al-Hosseini, 2020; Kalateh Sadati and Sabouhi Golkar, 2022). During the COVID-19 pandemic in Iran, the widespread use of virtual space and online education had significant impacts on students' family and social relationships, especially in secondary school. Various studies have shown that students in this period increasingly turned to virtual interactions, which led to a decrease in family communications and the formation of a kind of social independence that had negative social consequences (Salehi and Parsaei, 2022). According to Nabipour and Baratali (2021), in addition to parental cooperation in monitoring students' homework and encouraging them to study, challenges such as the informality of classrooms in the family, disruption of family life order, families' unwillingness for virtual education, lack of continuous parental supervision, parents' unfamiliarity with the type of virtual education activities, parents' lack of resilience for students' continuous presence at home,

economic problems, and the high cost of internet packages were also observed. Despite extensive parental cooperation with students, their children's learning rate still decreased compared to in-person education, and not all parents consider this method suitable for the first grade (Kiani and Hosseinejad, 2021). On the other hand, research by Parvaei et al. (2023) shows that Iranian women, due to multiple family responsibilities and role pressures, have been more affected than men by the consequences of COVID-19 and their children's e-learning.

England

England imposed its first lockdown in March 2020. Education Secretary Gavin Williamson announced that schools in England would close from March 20 for an indefinite period. During this time, education continued online through platforms such as Microsoft Teams, Moodle, and BBC Bitesize. However, problems such as some families' lack of access to the internet and suitable devices, as well as an increase in absenteeism of over 1.5 million students consistently from school in 2022–2023, indicated communication challenges between home and school. In England, services such as cognitive-behavioral therapy were provided to help students with special needs.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said that schools would continue to care for the children of key workers and vulnerable children. After this closure, officials announced that schools would begin a widespread reopening on June 1. At the beginning of the spring term 2021, England returned to a national lockdown, and learning was again predominantly remote (UK Department for Education, 2020). In England, the most challenging aspect of homeschooling, expressed by a high percentage of parents, was maintaining a work-education balance. Whether managing the household or working from home, the added pressure of home education disrupted the balance for parents. Parents struggled to maintain balance during these unstable times. These challenges caused parents to feel stressed, affecting their well-being, and the inevitable consequences of staying home to care for their children led to a loss of economic independence, career advancement, and potential lifelong income for parents, especially mothers, a sacrifice that negatively impacted mothers' health (Khan, 2020). On the other hand, the provision of online and offline education and the review of school assignments increased, and educational policy efforts aimed at addressing inequality, but inequalities during the COVID-19 pandemic increased for children who received free school meals, single-parent families, families with lower educational attainment, and those with specific ethnic backgrounds such as Bangladeshi or Pakistani (Bayrakdar & Guveli, 2020). In the research by Andrew et al. (2020) in England, most parents were largely satisfied with the support provided through schools. However, resources were unevenly distributed, and the learning experience was

non-interactive for many children, which led to high parental anxiety about their children's future and education.

Germany

Following the outbreak of the coronavirus, Germany's federal states announced the closure of primary and secondary schools on March 16, 2020. Within 3 days, schools in all federal states, except Saxony and Hesse, were closed. In Germany, the closure of schools and universities first occurred in March 2020, but unlike some countries, it gradually reopened schools. Reopenings were carried out in compliance with strict health guidelines such as social distancing and mask-wearing. Schools were open for students who could not be cared for at home, but no regular teaching was provided.

The German Schools Digital Pact was a national program launched in 2019 with the aim of strengthening digital infrastructure in the country's schools. The German federal government initially allocated 5 billion euros to equip schools with new technologies such as high-speed internet, smartboards, and laptops (BMBF, 2021). With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the urgent need for distance learning led the German government to expand this program with three emergency support packages totaling 1.5 billion euros:

- Emergency equipment programme: Included €500 million to purchase tablets and laptops to lend to pupils who did not have access to digital devices at home (Bildungsforschung.digital, (2020).
- IT management programme: Included €500 million to hire or train IT administrators in schools to provide technical support for digital infrastructure ((BMBF, 2021).
- Equipment programme for teachers: Included €500 million to provide laptops and tablets to teacher to facilitate online teaching (DigitalPaktSchule, 2021).

During this period, platforms such as Moodle and Zoom were used for education. The limited reopening of secondary schools was approved on April 20, 2020. Primary schools, from May 4, 2020, offered reduced teaching hours exclusively for final-year students and remained closed for other classes until the end of the summer holidays. After the partial reopening of schools, non-pharmaceutical interventions to reduce virus transmission were decided and implemented by each federal state individually (Freundl et al, 2021).

From June 22, 2020, the summer holiday period began. Due to the different summer holiday dates in various states, there was no specific period after reopening when all schools in all states closed simultaneously (Ott im Kampe et al, 2020). Overall, UNESCO recorded 24 weeks of partial

closure and 14 weeks of full closure for Germany, totaling 38 weeks of school closures (Fuchs-Schündeln et al, 2022).

In a country like Germany, where homeschooling was illegal, home teaching suddenly became commonplace. It became clear that many parents were capable of doing more than they thought, and schools suddenly played a supportive role for parents. However, parents could only properly help their children if they had sufficient communication with the school (Muynck, 2022). The data from the COVID-19 survey of the German National Educational Panel Study indicates parents' perception of school support during the national lockdown in Germany in spring 2020. Overall, parents' evaluation of school performance during the pandemic-induced closures showed moderate results, and their satisfaction level appeared to be slightly lower than in the pre-pandemic era (Teresa & Shally, 2021). Families faced additional pressures during the pandemic, as they were required to perform their own assignments and administrative duties while simultaneously educating their children at home. Teachers and students were also forced to transition to online lessons and adapt to remote teaching methods. Many parents reported feeling overwhelmed and under additional pressure from playing the role of a teacher's assistant alongside their parental duties, which acted as a stressor (Gehrer et al, 2022).

India

In India, with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, schools were closed from March 2020, leading to the closure of 1.5 million schools and 247 million primary and secondary students being deprived of in-person education (UNICEF, 2021). Given the inadequate educational conditions and the abandonment of students, it was decided in October 2020 to delegate school reopening to local areas. As a result, alternating curricula, two-day-a-week reopening alongside online education, double-shifting schools, and outdoor education were put on the agenda (Sharma & Joshi, 2021). This pandemic brought challenges to India's education system. Teachers and students were not adequately prepared for online education, and many rural areas lost learning opportunities due to lack of access to digital educational tools (Rawal & Jangra, 2023).

In this regard, the Ministry of Education in India launched online platforms and distributed television programs to facilitate access to education. School closures and the transfer of educational responsibility to families led to a greater academic decline among children from families with relatively fewer resources and support. Given the long-term consequences, research findings in India highlight the vital role of technology and families in supporting children's learning during

COVID-19. Therefore, governments should increase their efforts to reduce the digital divide (Guariso & Nyqvist, 2023).

B) Interpretation

In response to the question of what factors influenced the experiences of home-school relationships during the COVID-19 era in selected countries, the results of the study are as follows:

Iran

Iran was among the countries where students experienced prolonged school closures. In the first year of the pandemic, the readiness of schools, especially in rural and remote areas, was low, and they practically lost the opportunity for coherent education. To compensate for this deficiency, education was provided through television in cooperation with the Education Network. However, online education continued on the student social network platform (Ghafourifard, 2020). During the COVID-19 pandemic, the weakness of communication infrastructures such as unstable internet and the lack of widespread access to smartphones seriously challenged the effectiveness of the "Shad" virtual education system in many parts of the country. This infrastructural inadequacy led to severe disruption in communication between home and school, and in some cases, families were forced to forgo their children's education (Wikipedia, Shad Software, 2023). Many low-income households lacked basic digital tools such as smartphones or tablets, which effectively halted the education process for children in these families. As a result, the level of interaction between parents and schools decreased, and the family's role in supporting the learning process, especially at the primary level, was not properly defined or supported (Ghasemzadeh & Afrasiabi, 2023).

During the COVID-19 era, due to weak communication infrastructures like the internet and lack of access to smartphones, the Shad virtual education system was unusable for many regions. This problem severely disrupted communication between home and school, and some families gave up on their children's education (Wikipedia, Shad (Software, 2023). Many families lacked digital tools such as smartphones or tablets, which led to the cessation of education for children from low-income families. Interaction between home and school decreased, and the role of parents in education, especially for primary students, was not properly defined or supported (Ghasemzadeh & Afrasiabi, 2023).

The findings of Jafarzadeh et al. (2022) show that three factors—improving students' learning experiences, emotional support, and parental interaction with schools—encouraged families to participate more. However, families faced issues during this interaction such as lack of internet access, absence of online education technology infrastructure, unpreparedness of home

and school, and the cultural context for accepting this type of education (Mosayebi Ardakani et al., 2021). During the COVID-19 period, the government provided various financial and insurance supports to reduce economic pressure on families, some of which were general and some specific to low-income families.

England

In England, school closures had long-term negative effects on students' mental and social well-being. Reports indicate that GCSE students in 2025 suffered the most from the consequences of the pandemic era (The Times, 2025a). In response to this crisis, homeschooling significantly increased, and hybrid school models also emerged, where students' physical presence was only one or two days a week. These measures were considered part of the socio-cultural responses to address the educational disruptions caused by COVID-19 (The Times, 2025b). Meanwhile, many parents actively participated in the learning process, trying to compensate for the gap caused by reduced direct interaction with schools (Financial Times, 2024).

In this country, students experienced both online and offline learning. The online period for primary school children was shorter, and slightly longer for secondary school. The offline period was provided to families in the form of exercises, homework, and educational videos (UK Department of Education Report). The level of parental involvement with schools depended on the children's age; families collaborated more with schools at primary ages (Pensiero et al, 2020). On the other hand, available educational resources for families, socio-economic status, and educational attainment all influenced the level of home-school collaboration (Lucas, et al, 2020; Sharp et al, 2020). Research results indicate that during this period, parents played a strategic role in enhancing student learning, and the level of home-school participation increased (Jones & Forster, 2021).

There is evidence that students from certain ethnic backgrounds were more likely to have unfavorable learning experiences during the pandemic (Bayrakdar & Guveli, 2020; Khalid & Singa, 2022). However, the UK government has tried to provide financial and non-financial support to schools and families; for example, free meal packages were prepared in schools for disadvantaged and vulnerable students. Additionally, financial support was considered for students with special needs (Education Policy Institute, 2020). In addition to the government, non-profit human and welfare service associations also actively and flexibly supported families (Bennett et al, 2023).

Germany

In Germany, distance learning required active parental involvement. In families where parents had higher education levels or sufficient financial resources, the quality of their children's education was also assessed as more favorable; in contrast, in low-income families or those with an immigrant background, the educational gap significantly increased (Gunzenhauser et al., 2021). Other social and psychological consequences of the lockdown included increased parental stress and feelings of loneliness among children (May & Hörl, 2024). In this context, social inequalities had a significant impact on the extent and type of parental support for homeschooling, leading to a deepening of existing educational gaps (Eickelmann et al., 2022).

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, concerns arose regarding a decline in academic performance and an increase in the learning gap due to school closures. However, research shows similar levels of progress for students with low performance before the pandemic (Depping et al, 2021). The problem in Germany for over 20 years has been that individual differences in student performance are much greater than in many European countries, and students' academic skills are strongly linked to their socio-economic and immigration backgrounds. Research conducted in Germany shows the connection between lockdown preventive measures and government policies. Although public acceptance among families was initially good, the economic burden of lockdown measures continuously reduced support for all policies (Naumann et al, 2020).

In the exceptional circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, EU member states concluded supplementary agreements to provide additional support in the form of an "Immediate Equipment Program" for terminal equipment in schools, an agreement to promote IT management in schools, and a program for lending equipment to designated teachers (Katsanidou et al, 2022; European Union Report, 2021). The government also provided policies such as allocating financial resources, leave policies, increasing universal child benefits, additional support for single parents, and short-term work for employees with children to support families given school and daycare closures. The results of the survey conducted by Ebbinghaus et al, (2022)) shows that in the field of social policies, healthcare-related support, followed by pension rights, received the most positive reception from families. On the other hand, programs such as home visits, counseling, and supervision for child support were implemented by the youth welfare agency, which contributed to the effectiveness of intra-family relationships (Jentsch & Gerber, 2022).

India

India, with its vast student population and geographical dispersion across forested, mountainous, and remote areas, faced serious challenges in virtual education during the COVID-19 pandemic. The lack of basic infrastructure such as stable electricity, internet access, and even radio in some states like Bihar and Jharkhand led to a significant number of children being excluded from the education process (Times of India, 2023). School closures disproportionately affected students from deprived and rural classes, with only about 27.5% of students having access to digital tools, which was one of the main factors contributing to school dropouts in many parts of the country (Sinha, 2023). To maintain communication between home and school and reduce educational damage, the Indian government utilized various tools such as WhatsApp messaging, state television programs, and voice calls. Additionally, the "Happiness Program" was designed and implemented in Delhi state with the aim of providing psychological support to students and strengthening emotional ties between home and school (Wikipedia, 2023).

The most significant issue that the Indian education system faced during the COVID-19 period was prolonged school closures and families' concerns in this regard. This impact was widespread on students who had to contend with online learning without adequate financial and family support, as well as a lack of infrastructure, especially in underdeveloped areas (Tilak & Kumar, 2022). Prolonged closures in India led to school dropouts and reduced learning among marginalized children, an increase in child labor, and early marriage for girls (Gilberson et al, 2022). Furthermore, due to the unpreparedness of the education system in this country, they were forced to develop unplanned methods of education dissemination, which led to the use of non-standard class delivery methods and diminished participation (Dayal & Pratibha, 2023). During the lockdown, approximately 15% of parents reported that their child had dropped out of school. In other words, the relationship between home and school was lost. Also, 51% of parents whose children attended private schools reported regular contact with teachers, while this figure was reported as 34% in public schools (Narang & Bedi, 2024). The results of the research by Pattnaik et al. on the challenges of parental educational participation in 2022 show that the access gap, usage gap, and skill gap affect parents' ability to support their children's education at home.

C) Juxtaposition

The educational experiences of different countries and their coping strategies for this biological crisis depend on each country's conditions and capacities. The most important issues, challenges,

and capacity-building aspects regarding the home-school relationship in selected countries are presented in the table below.

Table 1: Educational Status during COVID-19 and Factors Influencing Home-School Relationship Experiences in Selected Countries

Country	Home-School Relationship Issues during COVID-19
Iran	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational status during COVID-19: Education accompanied by anxiety and concern about children's learning status, lack of student cooperation and engagement with online education, insufficient teacher supervision in online education, reduced social interactions among students, shift towards non-educational uses and addiction to cyberspace, lack of continuous parental supervision, increased burden of responsibility on parents, especially mothers, loss of coherent education in rural areas, economic pressure on families • Factors influencing home-school relationship experiences: Providing education through various methods on the SHAD platform, television, and the possibility of recording and reusing educational files, government economic support for families.
England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Educational status during COVID-19: Imbalance between work and student education during COVID-19, loss of economic independence, especially for mothers, creation of educational inequality in single-parent and ethnic families, continuation of in-person education. ▪ Factors influencing home-school relationship experiences: Providing educational support for the working class and the underprivileged, providing financial and non-financial support to schools and families, support from non-governmental organizations in providing services to families
Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Educational status during COVID-19: Efforts to balance work and children's education, educational inequality and reduced performance among lower social classes and immigrants, correlation between quarantine measures and government policy and political participation. ❖ Factors influencing home-school relationship experiences: Benefiting from various types of EU support, especially educational support, providing various types of financial, educational, and health support, protecting children to prevent harm by the Youth Welfare Agency
India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Educational status during COVID-19: Longest time children spent at home without technological infrastructure reinforcement, teachers' unpreparedness for education during COVID-19, students' and families' unpreparedness for online education conditions, low participation and dropout, especially in families with low support resources, access gap, usage gap, and parents' skills and abilities in online education during COVID-19. ✓ Factors influencing home-school relationship experiences: Experience of entrusting school reopening authority to local areas, and two days a week alongside online education, double-shifting schools and outdoor education, weakened home-school relationship, better performance of private schools in establishing regular school communication with students' parents.

Based on the above table, home-school relationship experiences in selected countries depended on available support resources at home, the extent of societal readiness and acceptance of online education, the level of parental and school supervision over students, and the extent and manner of financial, educational, and health support provided by the government and non-governmental organizations to families. Thus, the more these factors contribute to strengthening the home-school relationship, the more they lead to greater parental involvement in school and enhanced student learning.

D) Comparison

Analysis of the obtained documents shows similarities in the impact of online education challenges on home-school relationship experiences, but there are differences in countries' capacities and the level of progress in their technical and skill infrastructures affecting this relationship.

Table 2. Experimental Comparison of Selected Countries' Experiences During the COVID-19 Pandemic Regarding Education Status and Home-School Connection

Topic/Country	Iran	England	Germany	India
Adoption of distance learning approach	✓	✓	✓	✓
Lack of preparedness or low preparedness of families	✓	✓	✓	✓
Economic pressure on families due to market closure	✓	✓	✓	✓
Home-school relationship affected by lack of access and absence or weakness of infrastructure	✓	✓	✓	✓
Family responsibility in connection with school, especially mothers' responsibility	✓	✓	✓	✓
Families' s Support from non-governmental organizations for online and blended learning upervision of children's homework	✓	✓	✓	✓
Government financial, educational, and health support for families		✓		
Online or non-face-to-face education on the agenda	✓	✓	✓	✓
Low public acceptance of online education	✓	✓	✓	✓
Use of domestic messaging apps for home-school communication (e.g., SHAD)	✓			
Use of phone calls for school-family communication	✓	✓		✓
Use of official educational platforms such as: Microsoft Teams, Moodle		✓	✓	
Use of WhatsApp, TV, and radio	✓			✓

Similarities

The educational systems of all selected countries adopted a distance learning approach in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, issues such as families' lack of preparedness, parents' knowledge and skill levels, and their access to digital facilities existed in all countries. On the other hand, the closure of the job market and economic pressure on families, coupled with the supervision of children's homework and their learning progress, contributed to weakening the home-school relationship in all countries. Furthermore, the issue of lack of access, absence of technical infrastructure, and the influence of family cultural capital overshadowed the home-school relationship in all selected countries. In all these countries, the primary responsibility for the home-school relationship was assigned to parents, especially mothers.

Differences

Although families in all selected countries were affected by the economic pressure caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, in Germany, support resources including educational, financial, and health aid were provided by the government, non-governmental organizations, and the European Union to both schools and families. The availability of these support resources helped alleviate families' problems during this period and encouraged their greater participation with schools.

The sudden spread of the COVID-19 pandemic led the central governments of these countries to prioritize online education or a blended approach of online and in-person learning. Although public acceptance of online education was low in all countries, the level of general preparedness and acceptance was lower in Iran and India due to their cultural contexts. According to research findings in Iran, this was mainly due to the lack of formality of virtual classrooms and families' unfamiliarity. However, in India, in addition to these issues, the lack of access to online educational tools was more widespread than in Iran. Overall, among these countries, families in India had low participation in the educational system due to the prolonged presence of students at home and the lack of access to online educational facilities for many rural and marginalized students.

Despite reports of inequality in access to online education and a skill gap among families in all selected countries, the nature of inequality was more ethnic and cultural in England, economic and migratory in Germany, and cultural and geographical in Iran and India.

4. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to compare home-school relationship experiences in Iran, the UK, Germany, and India. The findings of this research indicated that there was a sudden shift in the role

of parents to teachers and primary educators of their children at home, and a lack of initial preparedness in accessing equipment and educational skills in all selected countries. This finding is also present in the results of research by Mosayebi et al., 1400; Khan, 2020; Rawal & Jangra, 2023; Muynck, 2022. Furthermore, economic and educational pressure and dual conflict in parents, especially mothers, also affected home-school relationships in these countries. However, among these countries, German families benefited from more governmental, non-governmental, and international support resources. This helped reduce the pressure on families.

Another finding of the research is that in all selected countries, due to the decline in students' academic performance in virtual education, public acceptance was low, and it led to various challenges in education, which is consistent with Abedini Beltark's research (2020) from this perspective. However, in Iran and India, this affected family participation in school, which perhaps one of the reasons for greater impact in Iran was due to the provision of education through the educational network, which Hajitabar Firoozjayi, Abedini Beltark, and Khatiri (1403) stated in their research that the TV school program had an impact on parental participation, which ultimately led to academic motivation.

It should be noted that this impact was high in India due to the prolonged home schooling and the fact that a large population of rural and marginalized families lacked sufficient technology and skills. In this regard, the results of Gilberson et al (2022) research show that this issue led to school dropout and reduced learning among children, as well as early marriage for girls. On the other hand, although the technical and skill gap in the educational system of all selected countries became more apparent during the COVID-19 period, its nature differed in these countries. The nature of this inequality was cultural and ethnic in the UK, economic and migratory in Germany, and cultural and geographical in Iran and India, and as stated in the OECD (2020) report, the existence of these inequalities caused problems in parents' educational follow-up and reduced the academic performance of these groups. Examining the experiences of these countries in the field of home-school relationships highlights the importance of family educational participation in virtual education in special and crisis situations. Therefore, given these experiences, it is necessary for the educational systems of different countries to prepare themselves for a possible future and strive to provide opportunities for family participation in the educational process. In this path, using the experiences of other countries will help leverage the capabilities and capacities of each country during sensitive periods.

Given the experiences from the COVID-19 pandemic, it is necessary for educational planners in developing countries such as Iran and India to adopt more precise measures to face similar crises

in the future, especially if another pandemic occurs. In this regard, the following recommendations are noteworthy:

- ❖ Strengthening and systematic development of virtual education infrastructure and ensuring equitable access for students and teachers to the internet, digital equipment, and online learning resources;
- ❖ Holding extensive training courses for teachers to enhance virtual teaching skills, use of educational platforms, and digital content design;
- ❖ Designing flexible curricula with the capability of blended implementation (in-person and virtual) and the possibility of adjustment during crises, to maintain educational quality and reduce academic decline;
- ❖ Providing psychological and social support for students, families, and teachers in crisis situations, to maintain educational stability through online counseling and welfare programs;
- ❖ Designing and implementing reliable systems for evaluating students' academic performance in non-in-person conditions, with an emphasis on educational equity and fraud prevention.

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