

Article

Parental Involvement in Homework During Covid-19 Confinement

Natalia Suárez¹, Estrella Fernández¹, Bibiana Regueiro², Pedro Rosário³, Jianzhong Xu⁴ and José Carlos Núñez^{1,5}

1 Universidad de Oviedo.

2 Universidad de Santiago de Compostela.

3 Universidad de Minho.

4 Mississippi State University.

5 Universidad Autónoma de Chile.

ARTICLE INFO

Received: November 22, 2021

Accepted: February 28, 2022

Keywords:

Covid-19

Homework

Parental involvement

Family stress

Elementary and secondary school

ABSTRACT

Parental involvement in homework during Covid-19 confinement.

Background: The purpose of this study was to compare parents' involvement in students' homework during COVID-19 confinement and their involvement in normal circumstances. **Method:** 628 parents of elementary and high school students completed a questionnaire about their family and family involvement in their children's homework. To address the objective, data were examined using mean differences and analysis of variance. **Results:** As predicted, the COVID-19 situation led to more time spent doing homework for students, as well as higher levels of conflict and stress within the family. In addition, parents reported having increased their homework management during confinement in terms of emotional and motivational support for their children compared to normal circumstances. Finally, the data showed more conflicts and family involvement in the families of children with special needs compared to families of children without special needs. **Conclusions:** The time spent in confinement posed many challenges to families' routines and the data indicated a lack of resources available for families to manage their children's tasks, as well as an increase in family stress and conflicts.

Implicación Parental en los Deberes Escolares Durante el Confinamiento por Covid-19

RESUMEN

Implicación parental en los deberes escolares durante el confinamiento por Covid-19.

Antecedentes: El propósito de este estudio fue comparar la implicación de los padres en los deberes de los hijos durante el período de confinamiento por Covid-19 con la implicación en circunstancias normales. **Método:** 628 padres de alumnos de Primaria y Secundaria respondieron a cuestiones sobre características de la familia y su implicación en los deberes escolares de los hijos. Para abordar el objetivo, los datos se estudiaron mediante diferencias de medias y análisis de varianza. **Resultados:** La situación de confinamiento llevó a que los estudiantes dedicaran más tiempo a hacer los deberes, así como a niveles más altos de conflictos y estrés dentro de la familia. Además, los padres informaron haber aumentado su implicación en los deberes en cuanto a apoyo emocional y motivacional dedicado a sus hijos en comparación con las circunstancias normales. Finalmente, se obtuvieron datos que muestran mayor cantidad de conflictos y estrés en familias con niños con necesidades especiales. **Conclusiones:** El confinamiento planteó muchos desafíos para las rutinas de las familias, observándose una falta de recursos disponibles de las familias para implicarse adecuadamente en las tareas escolares de sus hijos, así como un aumento del estrés y los conflictos familiares.

Palabras clave:

Covid-19

Deberes escolares

Implicación parental

Estrés familiar

Educación primaria y secundaria

The COVID-19 pandemic has produced an unprecedented social, health, and education situation globally, with a pronounced impact in Europe since March 2020 (Méndez-Giménez et al., 2021). Due to the need to prevent and control the spread of the novel virus, most people were confined to their homes. Moreover, due to school closures, students were expected to learn from home via online classes (Zhou et al., 2020). This situation has been tremendously difficult for students and families (Orgilés et al., 2021) and has highlighted the importance of family involvement in education to help children cope with daily learning assignments (Katz & Earl, 2010). During this period, teachers, administrators, and parents worked hard to deliver learning activities as usual. However, these efforts were not likely to provide quality education similar to that previously delivered in the classroom.

Over the course of the confinement in Spain, education administrators advised teachers to avoid introducing new content in their online classes. Acknowledging that many students would not be able to follow online classes to the same degree, teachers focused their learning efforts on reviewing or expanding content that had already been taught. These recommendations aimed to minimize the differences between students with and without digital resources or help from the family to learn new content. These general recommendations further allowed teachers the liberty to organize the type and amount of tasks assigned to students. Due to the school closures, all school tasks, both classwork and homework, became homework, expected to be completed outside the classroom (in this case, at home) without the teacher's in-person support (Cooper et al., 2006). In this situation, there was a greater than usual need for parental supervision. While families were confined, parents and guardians became students' most important study companions and played an important role in their effective learning during "home-schooling" (Xia, 2020).

It is well known that parents play an important role in helping their children manage homework (Cunha et al., 2015; Deslandes & Rousseau, 2008; Fernández-Alonso et al., 2022; Xu et al., 2020; Regueiro et al., 2015), especially in elementary school when the strategies used by students are likely to be closely modelled after their parents (Álvarez Bermúdez & Barreto-Trujillo, 2020; Xu & Corno, 1998). Over the last few decades, the nature and contents of homework have been extensively studied, and a solid corpus of knowledge has been built (Núñez et al., 2015a; Rosário et al., 2018). For example, the number of homework tasks or the time spent, rather than the quality and relevance of the tasks assigned (Suárez, 2015), as well as homework time management, (Núñez et al., 2015b; Valle et al., 2019; Xu & Wu, 2013) have been found to be key when addressing homework. Moreover, while focusing on parental involvement in homework, parents' motivation to become involved is crucial (Katz et al., 2011) and is closely related to parents' beliefs about parental responsibility (Forsberg, 2007). Parental homework support describes parents' availability for their children's questions and concerns about their homework, as well as their efforts to set up homework-friendly environments and further provide help on homework (e.g., praise children's work and efforts, and check completed homework) when they need it (Núñez et al., 2015a; Xu et al., 2017). Recently, Dettmers et al. (2019) have shown that parental homework involvement predicted wellbeing at school, mathematics achievement, and language achievement. However, not all types of parental involvement seem to be equally related to children's academic achievement (Fernández-Alonso, 2017). For example,

the work of Núñez et al. (2015a) with elementary, middle, and high school students showed that perceptions of strong parental control over homework were negatively related to academic achievement, while perceived parental homework support was positively related. Finally, extant research has found a positive relationship between parental homework support and students' motivation when doing homework (Valle et al., 2015). Still, homework may be a source of stressful interactions between parents and children (Green et al., 2007; Katz et al., 2012; Pressman et al., 2015). For example, when parents perceive a greater need to be involved in a child's homework and their time and resources are limited, family stress is likely to increase (Pressman et al., 2015).

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, many parents worried about their level of preparedness and skills for guiding their children through homework and school tasks. With no face-to-face lessons, the support students received from teachers to complete tasks was limited. Students were expected to complete tasks online or send them back to teachers by email or whatsapp. Parents' communication with teachers was also limited, mostly because many teachers themselves were struggling with telework whilst taking care of their children. Many parents found it very difficult to manage their children's school tasks properly due to the demands of work and childcare (UNESCO, 2020). In fact, these exceptional months were troubling and anxious times for students, parents and teachers (Daniel, 2020). Parents all over the world experienced a collision of roles (i.e., parent, employee, employer, teacher). Although the confinement situation may include positive factors for parents (e.g., the ability to spend more time with their family and children), some parents experienced stress, anxiety, and fatigue (Suárez et al., 2022).

The confinement period and the uncertainties of the duration of the pandemic and the return to "normal" may have increased conflicts and arguments between parents and children. In addition, each family's characteristics, such as the number of children at home, whether any have special needs, or the parents' availability to help children, may have influenced parental involvement in homework. For example, prior research has shown that engagement in schools is lower among parents of children with special education needs (Lamb Inquiry, 2009). In sum, we believe that the COVID-19 confinement may have posed additional challenges to these families.

Acknowledging prior research findings and the current pandemic situation, we believe that comparing parents' involvement in homework during normal circumstances versus that in this exceptional one was a unique opportunity to help further understand families' involvement while in confinement and engaged in telework. The purpose of the present study was to compare parents' involvement in homework against levels of family stress and conflicts during the confinement period and in normal circumstances. An additional goal was to analyse parents' involvement in children's homework during the pandemic confinement in relation to family and homework variables (e.g., the number of children, parents' work conditions, and the quantity and type of tasks assigned to children).

Method

Participants

There were 628 Spanish parents who completed the questionnaire in relation to their children. Most were from the North of Spain (96.0%). Although the vast majority of the families participating

in this study are from the Principality of Asturias (96.2%), families from other communities have also answered the questionnaire: Madrid (0.5%), the Balearic Islands (0.5%), Castilla and León (0.9%), Valencian Community (0.2%), Castilla La Mancha (0.2%), Galicia (0.4%), Catalonia (0.6%), Basque Country (0.2%) and Aragon (0.2%). 38.0% of the respondents were engaged in telework during the confinement, 37.1% were unemployed, (note, just 11.7% were unemployed prior to the confinement), and 24.9% were attending their jobs as usual. The ages of the children ranged from 6 to 19 years old, with a mean of 10.8 ($SD = 3.23$). Of these students, 61.4% were enrolled in elementary school, 30.4% in middle school, and 5.4% in high school. A small number (3.0%) of the parents did not provide information about their children's school year. Most parents reported that their children had access to an internet connection during confinement (96.7%).

Instruments

The questionnaire was delivered online and included a section with informed consent. The questionnaire included socio-demographic variables (number of children in the family, type of job of parents during the confinement, and information regarding children with special needs) and other variables of interest in normal circumstances and during the confinement: time spent on homework, amount and type of homework assigned and worked on during the confinement, stress in the family, and family conflict. Measures are as follows:

Family stress. In normal circumstances / during confinement, homework is a source of stress in our family (5-point Likert scale from 1. Never to 5. Always).

Family conflict. In normal circumstances / during confinement we often argued with our children about homework (5-point Likert scale from 1. Never to 5. Always).

Family data. Number of school-aged children (1, 2 or 3 or more); Do any of your children have any special needs? (yes or no); During confinement, did your job involve... (working from home, suspension of work, travelling to my place of work, unemployed since before confinement); During confinement, how many of the assigned homework tasks did your child do? (5-point Likert scale from 1. None to 5. All of them); During the confinement, how did your child hand in their homework? (Online via a digital platform, completed in a traditional way, then sent to the teacher, both ways).

Time spent on homework. From Monday to Friday, how much time did your child spend doing homework each day during the confinement / in normal circumstances? (they didn't do homework, less than 30 minutes, 30 minutes to an hour, one to two hours, more than two hours).

Parental involvement. This measure was assessed with The Parental Homework Management Scale (PHMS) (Cunha et al., 2018). This scale consists of eight items involving five response options (1-never, 2-rarely, 3-sometimes, 4-often and 5-very often). The validation of the PHMS showed good psychometric validity and reliability. Cunha et al. (2018, p. 340) found that a two factor model was a much better fit than a single factor model ("two factor solution: $MLR\chi^2 = 137.026$; $df = 19$; $CFI = .959$; $RMSEA = .060$; 90% CI [.048 - .073]); one factor solution $MLR\chi^2 = 516.360$; $df = 20$; $CFI = .827$; $RMSEA = .121$; 90% CI [.110 - .133]). Consequently, the current scale includes an Environment-Time management factor (E-T) and a Motivation-Emotion management

factor (M-E). The former describes the parents' physical structure provision, $\alpha = .75$ (e.g., "I help my child locate the materials he/she needs to complete math homework"). The latter describes the psychological structure provision, $\alpha = .81$ (e.g., "I tell my child that he/she is able to do math homework even when he/she feels that it is too hard"). In the present study, we used the PHMS to ask participants about parental management in normal circumstances and during confinement.

In the sample of the present study, the two-factor model showed a good fit for both versions: under normal conditions ($MLR\chi^2 = 61.58$; $df = 18$; $CFI = .98$; $RMSEA = .06$; 90% CI [.04 - .08]) and during confinement ($MLR\chi^2 = 48.57$; $df = 18$; $CFI = .99$; $RMSEA = .05$; 90% CI [.03 - .07]).

According to the criteria established in Dimitrov (2010) ($\Delta CFI \leq -.01$ signals lack of invariance), the data from the analysis of factorial invariance across moments (prior to - during quarantine) show support for both configural ($\chi^2 = 92.87$; $df = 34$; $CFI = .99$) and measurement invariance (metric, scalar, and strict: $\Delta CFI = -.001$, $-.001$, $-.002$, respectively). This means that (a) the basic organization of the model is compatible for both time points, (b) each item contributes to the construct in a similar way at both times, (c) multigroup comparisons are possible (e.g., T-tests or ANOVA), and (d) the specific variance and the error variance are similar at both times. Reliability for the two factors was satisfactory under normal conditions ($\omega = .871$, $\alpha = .870$ [CI : .852 - .885] for E-T; $\omega = .882$, $\alpha = .880$ [CI : .858 - .890] for M-E) and during confinement ($\omega = .890$, $\alpha = .889$ [CI : .873 - .901] for E-T; $\omega = .887$, $\alpha = .874$ [CI : .853 - .886] for M-E).

Procedure

A snowball sampling was used in this study. The Google questionnaire was sent to all the management teams of the schools in the Principality of Asturias, and the directors of the educational centers sent the families the invitation to participate. Moreover, the research team also invited groups of fathers and mothers through WhatsApp. This strategy has allowed fathers and mothers from other communities to engage in the research. Of the total sample of families participating in the study, 81.5% send their children to public schools, 16.1% to private schools, and 2.4% to private schools. Finally, 64.2% of the children were enrolled in elementary school, 30.4% middle school, and 5.4% high school. The questionnaire was available to be completed through the months of April and May of 2020 and took about 10 minutes. All of the questions required responses to avoid missing them.

Parents were warned that if there was more than one child in the family, the questionnaire should be answered in general terms. However, parents were allowed to fill in a questionnaire for each child when the cases were considered dissimilar. Finally, approval of the study by the University's ethics committee was not requested due to the circumstances of home confinement. The expected delay of the response from the committee would prevent data collection at that unique time. An item was included in the questionnaire to ask families' consent.

Data analysis

Descriptive analyses, mean differences, and analysis of variance were performed with the statistical package SPSS 24,

and the confirmatory factor analysis and invariance analysis were performed with Mplus 7. The data analysis was carried out in several phases. First, descriptive analyses for each of the relevant study variables (mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis) were conducted. Following [Finney and Di Stefano \(2006\)](#), all the variables met the criteria for normality. A Student t-test for related samples was run to compare the parents' answers before and during the confinement regarding the time spent on homework, family stress, family conflicts, and the two dimensions of the Parental Homework Management Scale (environment-time management and motivation-emotion management factors). In addition, student t-tests for independent samples and an ANOVA were conducted to compare possible differences between variables describing different family circumstances from the PHMS questionnaire. We performed the ANOVA when factors met the criteria for normality/homoscedasticity. Following the procedure used by [Torregrosa-Díez et al. \(2022\)](#), prior to the analysis of the differences between groups, the invariance of the PHMS (prior to and during quarantine) has been examined. The size of the effects was assessed with Cohen's d (when the means were compared) and with eta-squared (when the variance was analyzed). According to the criteria of the classic work of Cohen (1988), $d = 0.20$ ($\eta^2 = .010$) is equivalent to a small effect; $d = 0.50$ ($\eta^2 = .059$) is equivalent to a medium effect; $d = 0.80$ ($\eta^2 = .138$) equates to a large effect.

Results

Descriptive data are shown in [Table 1](#). All the variables show higher mean scores during the confinement period. In other words, comparing the time spent in confinement against normal times, parents reported spending more time on tasks, higher levels of stress in the family, more family conflicts (e.g., arguments), and higher scores on Environment-Time management and Motivation-Emotion management. All differences were statistically significant, with a large effect size for the time spent on tasks, a moderate effect size for the levels of stress, a small size effect for the family conflicts and environment-time management, and a very small effect size for motivation-emotion management.

[Table 2](#) shows the descriptive statistics of family circumstances and homework characteristics considered relevant (number of children, children with special needs, characteristics of work, quantity of homework done, and type of homework assigned) during the confinement via the two factors of PHMS.

There were statistically significant differences between parents with and without children with special needs in both factors of PHMS, with higher means for families with children with special needs [E-T management: $t(620) = 3.00$; $p < .01$; $d = 0.39$; M-E management: $t(93,45) = 2.08$; $p < .05$; $d = 0.23$]. There were no statistically significant differences in any of the factors related to the number of children in the family [E-T management: $\chi^2(2) = 0.536$; $p > .05$; M-E management: $F(2, 613) = 0.380$; $p > .05$] or related to the nature of parents' work [E-T management: $F(3, 612) = 1.13$; $p > .05$; M-E management: $\chi^2(3) = 4.98$; $p > .05$].

There were statistically significant differences in the amount of homework done (E-T management) ($\chi^2(4) = 42.69$; $p < .001$; $d = 0.546$), with parents whose children did not do homework having a higher mean, but not in M-E management factor. There were

statistically significant differences in both factors depending on the type of homework [E-T management: $\chi^2(2) = 10.12$; $p < .01$; $d = 0.256$; M-E management: $F(2, 613) = 4.23$; $p > .05$; $d = 0.165$], with students doing traditional homework and then sending images to teachers requiring more parental management.

Table 1.

Differences in means in study variables between normal circumstances (before confinement) and during the confinement.

	Before Confinement		During Confinement		<i>t</i> (df)	<i>p</i> > <i>t</i>	Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
Time spent on HW	3.26	0.99	4.15	0.91	-21.97 (627)	.000	0.94
Levels of stress	2.22	1.15	2.94	1.41	-12.02 (626)	.000	0.59
Arguments	2.18	1.10	2.68	1.37	-9.34 (627)	.000	0.40
E-T management	2.58	1.23	3.15	1.35	-13.88 (620)	.000	0.44
M-E management	4.05	1.06	4.15	1.03	-4.79 (613)	.000	0.12

Note. HM = Homework; E-T = Environment-Time; M-E= Motivation-Emotion.

Table 2.

Means and standard deviations of variables by the two dimensions of Parental Homework Management Scale (environment-time; motivation-emotion).

	<i>n</i>	E-T management		M-E management	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Special need					
Yes	67	3.61	1.30	4.36	0.83
No	555	3.09	1.35	4.13	1.04
Number of children					
1	241	3.15	1.30	4.11	1.04
2	331	3.17	1.36	4.20	1.00
3 or more	44	2.98	1.58	4.06	1.18
Type of job					
Remote (home) working	235	3.13	1.35	4.01	1.14
Work-not at home	160	3.00	1.39	4.20	0.99
Suspension	157	3.26	1.32	4.25	0.92
Unemployed	70	3.26	1.32	4.29	0.84
How much HW done					
None	6	4.21	1.60	4.04	1.65
Some	25	3.79	1.10	4.27	0.99
Half	35	3.84	1.15	4.34	0.71
Most	135	3.48	1.14	4.19	0.91
Everyone	385	2.88	1.39	4.11	1.09
How HW done					
Digital platform	68	2.96	1.43	4.09	0.92
Traditional	191	3.41	1.25	4.33	0.94
Both	357	3.05	1.37	4.07	1.08

Note. Homework (HW); Environment-Time (E-T); Motivation-Emotion (M-E).

Discussion

Social support is essential for adolescents' school adjustment ([Fernández Lasarte et al, 2020](#)). During the period of confinement due to COVID-19, even more than in normal conditions, family support has been crucial. The purpose of this study was to analyze

how parents managed their children's homework during the confinement resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and to learn whether or not that management was different in this situation compared to normal circumstances (i.e., prior to the pandemic). These factors were also looked at under the lens of distinct family situations to identify associations.

The closure of schools changed the ways in which learning materials and homework were delivered, and the support traditionally provided by teachers was limited. As predicted, this unexpected situation led to more time spent doing homework for students, as well as higher levels of conflict and stress within the family (Bueno-Novitol et al., 2021; Orgilés et al., 2021). These new conditions for completing homework tasks, as well as the lack of teachers' in-person supervision and explanations, may help to explain the reported increase in time spent working on homework compared to the usual time. The difficulties families were struggling with (e.g., teleworking simultaneously with children homeschooling, plus the house chores and the preparation of the daily meals), the worrying news from all over the world, the home confinement, and the greater need for parental involvement, led to increased levels of stress and conflicts within the family (Daniel, 2020; Pressman et al., 2015).

Our results showed that parents in the confinement period reported having increased their homework management regarding the emotional and motivational support for their children when compared to normal circumstances. Previous studies have shown that students are likely to find this type of parental involvement useful and motivating to help them complete their homework and further their learning and comprehension of the materials (Núñez et al., 2015a; Valle et al., 2015; Martínez-Vicente et al., 2020). However, it is reasonable to believe that the family circumstances may have played a role in the parents' management of homework during the confinement. Importantly, current data show that parents' management of homework was not affected by the number of children nor the type of work that they were doing during confinement. However, parents reported being more involved in homework when any of their children had special needs. From parents, the latter demanded more environment-time organization, along with more motivational encouragement and emotional support while helping their children in the absence of an in-person special needs teacher.

These results are consistent with pre-pandemic data, showing more conflicts and family involvement in families with children with special needs when compared to families without children with special needs (Robledo & García, 2014). These findings suggest that school administrators and teachers could consider providing parents of these children with domain-knowledge and strategies likely to help them support their children with homework and school needs. While in home confinement, this intentional support would have helped foster family involvement and the children's well-being.

The homework tasks in home confinement led parents to increase their levels of involvement in their children's homework. Students were expected to complete homework and deliver it to teachers. Parents needed to check whether homework was being done, and further check the quality of work, while working to clarify children's questions and concerns. Finally, students needed to send their homework to the teacher. Sometimes, parents had to

do this last step themselves, either due to children not knowing how, or because the only way was via the parents' smartphone.

One of the major problems reported by teachers and parents during the confinement was the management of the homework tasks, particularly the final step, in which students were asked to return homework assignments to their teachers through an online system. This process posed potential conflicts and added an additional responsibility to families already overloaded with work and struggling to cope with the many tasks at hand. In a future confinement situation, teachers and school administrators could consider using alternative ways of assigning and collecting homework in a family-friendly way. For example, building an app or a platform for homework would help to overcome this obstacle, although the students with no devices or internet access should still not be left behind. To help these students, the schools could use regular mail or deliver homework to their homes using *taxi-homework* solutions.

The amount of homework completed was related to parents' homework management, but only for the environment-time domain. Interestingly, during confinement, these parents reported being more involved in homework when their children were not assigned any, and for that reason, they did not do homework. Parents in this situation may have spent extra time setting an environment for children to work and study in an attempt to make up for their lack of homework. These results suggest that families were ready to help children maintain their study routines and minimize their learning loss due to confinement. Teachers and school administrators should consider providing intentional help and instructions to families about how to manage children's homework. To simply stop assigning homework because of families' pre-existing responsibility load may not be the best educational course of action; rather, educators could consider assigning homework more closely tailored to students' needs and able to be fairly approached from the varying starting points of family available resources.

This study provides a limited picture of the Spanish parents' situations with regard to homework during the confinement period. Still, the data could merit educators' attention and further inform potential approaches to future school closures and home confinement periods. Most parents reported that their students were assigned more homework than in normal circumstances, but they did not consider this increase in itself a difficulty for the family management. In fact, parents of children who were not assigned homework reported having made efforts to provide an environment for their children to work and study. On the contrary, the homework tasks that required parental intervention, due to their complexity or the materials needed, posed difficult challenges for family management. Moreover, parents also reported additional efforts to help children with special needs work and complete their homework. Not surprisingly, this was one of the variables related to parents' increased involvement in homework management during confinement. In fact, the extra attention these children require while learning must be provided by parents when helping with and checking their work.

While struggling with a severe international health and social crisis, parents highlighted that their problem was not with the amount of homework assigned to their children, but rather the type, and the further lack of resources available at home to manage the

homework process. This may have been a unique experience, but still, educators could consider examining the lessons learned to apply in future situations similar to these. In Spain, many parents were occupied adjusting to their own teleworking endeavors while simultaneously trying to support their children in online school, many with minimal support and limited experience. Future research may consider it useful to compare parental homework management across different countries, with different confinement restrictions.

Another aspect that requires attention relates to how the important changes that have occurred in families (e.g., increased stress and role conflict) (Fegert, et al., 2020; Fontanesi et al., 2020; Suárez et al., 2022), largely due to confinement and the entire pandemic, may negatively influence the involvement of parents in their children's schoolwork. In this sense, Davis et al. (2020) found that fathers and mothers with school-age children experienced high mental distress during confinement due to the difficulties of parental involvement, both as parents and teachers. Given that the coronavirus is still with us, and we do not know to what extent the level of parental stress may continue, we agree with Davis et al. (2020) in supporting parents during this time of family health problems and improving schooling of the children. However, for this, it could be very helpful to have data on how the psychological characteristics of families (eg, stress, anxiety, parental burnout) can influence their level of involvement (considering the amount of time, but also the quality of their time) in their children's homework. Complementarily, it could also be interesting to investigate how these parents could benefit from training in emotional competencies to help them improve their well-being (Lin, et al., 2021).

It is also important to take into account some limitations of the study. Most importantly, the method of sample selection. Snowballing does not control which parents respond to the questionnaire, nor how representative they are of the general population. Yet, a rapidly changing, time-sensitive situation such as this, prompted us to act immediately in order to get parents' perceptions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, this approach (with the embedded tradeoff) allowed us to better capture the transition from before to during confinement. However, we must stress that this is not a longitudinal study in which measures would have been taken prior to and during confinement. What is more, in this case, the parents responded to both situations at the same time. Due to this situation, the parents' responses could have been affected by the fact that when responding they compared the two moments. Future research could consider addressing the following questions: to what extent does the current personal situation of the family, caused by the pandemic, affect fathers' and mothers' perceptions of homework handling? Is it possible that the harsh conditions of confinement have influenced parents' responses? Finally, due to the uncertainty associated with pandemic times, the results of the study should be taken cautiously.

Funding

This work was partially funded by the European Regional Development Funds (European Union and Principality of Asturias) through the Science, Technology and Innovation Plan (FC-GRUPIN-IDI/2018/000199).

References

- Álvarez-Bermúdez, J., & Barreto-Trujillo, F. J. (2020). Family climate and its relation to academic performance in high school students. *Revista de Psicología y Educación, 15*(2), 166-183. <https://doi.org/10.23923/rpye2020.02.194>
- Bueno-Novitol, J., García-García, P., Olaya, B., Lasheras, I., López-Antón, R., & Santabárbara, J. (2021). Prevalence of depression during the COVID-19 outbreak: A meta-analysis of community-based studies. *International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology, 21*(1), Article 100196. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijchp.2020.07.007>
- Cohen, J. (1988). *Statistical power analysis for the behavioral sciences* (2nd ed.). Erlbaum.
- Cooper, H., Robinson, J. C., & Patall, E. A. (2006). Does homework improve academic achievement? A synthesis of research, 1987-2003. *Review of Educational Research, 76*(1), 1- 62. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543076001001>
- Cunha, J., Rosário, P., Macedo, L., Nunes, A. R., Fuentes, S., Pinto, R., & Suárez, N. (2015). Parents' conceptions of their homework involvement in elementary school. *Psicothema, 27*(2), 159-165. <https://doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2014.210>
- Cunha, J., Xu, J., Rosário, P., & Núñez, J.C. (2018). Validity and reliability of the Parental Homework Management Scale. *Psicothema, 30*(3), 337-343. <https://doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2017.426>
- Daniel, S. J. (2020). Education and the Covid-19 pandemic. *Prospects, 49*, 91-96. <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s11125-020-09464-3>
- Davis, C. R., Grooms, J., Ortega, A., Rubalcaba, J. A-A., & Vargas, E. (2020). Distance learning and parental mental health during COVID-19. *Educational Researcher, 50*, 61-64. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0013189X20978806>
- Deslandes, R., & Rousseau, M. (2008). Long-term students' management strategies and parental involvement in homework at the elementary level. *International Journal of Parents in Education, 2*(1), 13-24.
- Dettmers, S., Yotyodying, S., & Jonkmann, K. (2019). Antecedents and outcomes of parental homework involvement: How do family-school partnerships affect parental homework involvement and student outcomes? *Frontiers in Psychology, 10*, 1048. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.01048>
- Dimitrov, D. M. (2010). Testing for factorial invariance in the context of construct validation. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development, 43*(2), 121-149. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0748175610373459>
- Fegert, J.M., Vitiello, B., Plenner, P.L. & Clemens, V. (2020). Challenges and burden of the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic for child and adolescent mental health: a narrative review to highlight clinical and research needs in the acute phase and the long return to normality. *Child Adolesc Psychiatry Ment Health, 14*, 20. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13034-020-00329-3>
- Fernández-Alonso, R., Álvarez-Díaz, M., Woitschach, P., Suárez-Álvarez, J., & Cuesta, M. (2017). Parental involvement and academic performance: Less control and more communication. *Psicothema, 29*(4), 453-461. <https://doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2017.181>
- Fernández-Alonso, R., Díaz-Álvarez, M., García-Crespo, J., Woitschach, P., & Muñoz, J. (2022). ¿Debemos ayudar a nuestros hijos con los deberes? Un meta-análisis con datos PISA [Should we help our children with homework? A meta-analysis using PISA data]. *Psicothema, 34*(1), 56-65. <https://doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2021.65>

- Fernández Lasarte, O., Ramos Díaz, E., Goñi Palacios, E., & Rodríguez Fernández, A. (2020). The role of social support in school adjustment during Secondary Education. *Psicothema*, 32(1), 100-107. <https://doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2019.125>
- Finney, S. J., & DiStefano, C. (2006). Non-normal and categorical data in structural equation modelling. In G. R. Hancock, & R. O. Mueller (Eds.), *Structural Equation Modelling: A second Course* (pp. 269–314). Information Age Publishing.
- Fontanesi, L., Marchetti, D., Mazza, C., Di Giandomenico, S., Roma, P., & Verrocchio, M. C. (2020). The effect of the COVID-19 lockdown on parents: A call to adopt urgent measures. *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice, and Policy*, 12(1), 79-81. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1037/tra0000672>
- Forsberg, L. (2007). Homework as serious family business: Power and subjectivity in negotiations about school assignments in Swedish families. *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 28(2), 209–222. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01425690701192695>
- Green, C. L., Walker, J. M. T., Hoover-Dempsey, K. V., & Sandler, H. M. (2007). Parents' motivations for involvement in children's education: An empirical test of a theoretical model of parental involvement. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 99(3), 532–544. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.99.3.532>
- Katz, S. y Earl, L. (2010). Learning about networked learning communities. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 21(1), 27-51. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09243450903569718>
- Katz, I., Kaplan, A., & Buzukashvili, T. (2011). The role of parents' motivation in students' autonomous motivation for doing homework. *Learning and Individual Differences*, 21(4), 376–386. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lindif.2011.04.001>
- Katz, I., Buzukashvili, T., & Feingold, L. (2012). Homework stress: Construct validation of a measure. *Journal of Experimental Education*, 80(4), 405–421. <https://doi.org/10.1080/002220973.2011.610389>
- Lamb, B. (2009). *Lamb Inquiry: Special Educational Needs and Parent Confidence*. DCSF.
- Lin, G-X., Szczygiel, D., Hansotte, L., Roskam, I., & Mikolajczak, M. (2021). Aiming to be perfect parents increases the risk of parental burnout, but emotional competence mitigates it. *Current Psychology*. Advance online publication. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-01509-w>
- Martínez-Vicente, M., Suárez-Riveiro, J.M., & Valiente-Barroso, C. (2020). Parental involvement and student engagement with homework: differences according to schoolyear, gender and academic achievement. *Revista de Psicología y Educación*, 15(2), 151-165. <https://doi.org/10.23923/rpye2020.02.193>
- Méndez-Giménez, A., Cecchini, J. A., Fernández-Rio, J., & Carriedo, A. (2021). Physical activity and prevention of depressive symptoms in the spanish population during confinement due to COVID-19. *Psicothema*, 33(1), 111-117. <https://doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2020.294>
- Núñez, J. C., Suárez, N., Rosário, P., Vallejo, G., Valle, A., & Epstein, J. L. (2015a). Relationships between perceived parental involvement in homework, student homework behaviors, and academic achievement: differences among elementary, junior high, and high school students. *Metacognition and Learning*, 10, 375-406. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11409-015-9135-5>
- Núñez, J. C., Suárez, N., Cerezo, R., González-Pienda, J.A., Rosário, P., Mourão, R., & Valle, A. (2015b). Homework and academic achievement across Spanish Compulsory Education. *Educational Psychology*, 35(6), 726-746. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01443410.2013.817537>
- Orgilés, M., Espada, J. P., Delvecchio, E., Francisco, R., Mazzeschi, C., Pedro, M., Morales, A. (2021). Anxiety and depressive symptoms in children and adolescents during COVID-19 pandemic: A transcultural approach. *Psicothema*, 33(1), 125-130. <https://doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2020.2987>
- Pressman, R. M., Sugarman, D. B., Nemon, M. L., Desjarlais, J., Owens, J. A., & Schettini-Evans, A. (2015). Homework and Family stress: With consideration of parents' self confidence, educational level, and cultural background. *The American Journal of Family Therapy*, 43(4), 297-313. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01926187.2015.1061407>
- Regueiro, R., Suárez, N., Valle, A., Núñez, J.C., & Rosário, P. (2015). Homework motivation and engagement throughout compulsory education. *Revista de Psicodidáctica*, 20(1), 47-73. <https://doi.org/10.1387/RevPsicodidact.12641>
- Robledo, P., & García, J. N. (2014). Family context of learning disabled or ADHD students, perceptions of parents and children. *Estudios sobre Educación*, 26, 149-173.
- Rosário, P., Núñez, J. C., Vallejo, G., Nunes, T., Cunha, J., Fuentes, S., & Valle, A. (2018). Homework purposes, homework behaviors, and academic achievement. Examining the mediating role of students' perceived homework quality. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 53, 168-180. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cedpsych.2018.04.001>
- Suárez, N. (2015). *Homework and academic performance in compulsory education students*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Oviedo]. DigiBUO. https://digibuo.uniovi.es/dspace/bitstream/10651/33360/1/TD_NataliaSuarezFernandez.pdf
- Suárez, N., Núñez, J. C., Cerezo, R., Rodríguez, C., & Rosário, P. (2022). Psychometric properties of Parental Burnout Assessment and prevalence of parental burnout: A person-centered approach. *International Journal of Clinical and Health Psychology*, 22(1), Article 100280 <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijchp.2021.100280>
- Torregrosa Díez, M. S., Gómez Núñez, M. I., Sanmartín López, R., García Fernández, J. M., La Greca, A., Zhou, X., Redondo Pacheco, J., & Inglés Saura, C. J. (2022). Measurement invariance and latent mean differences between American, Spanish and Chinese adolescents using the Social Anxiety Scale for Adolescents (SAS-A). *Psicothema*, 34(1), 126-133. <https://doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2021.42>
- UNESCO (2020, April). *UNESCO COVID-19 Education Response. Education Sector issue notes n° 2.3*. <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/issuenotes>
- Valle, A., Pan, I., Núñez, J. C., Rosário, P., Rodríguez, S. & Regueiro, B. (2015). Deberes escolares y rendimiento académico en Educación Primaria [Homework and academic performance in Primary Education]. *Anales de Psicología*, 31, 2, 562-569. <https://dx.doi.org/10.6018/analesps.31.2.171131>
- Valle, A., Pan, I., Regueiro, B., Suárez, N., Tuero, E., & Nunes, A. R. (2015). Predicting approach to homework in Primary school students. *Psicothema*, 27(4), 334-340. <https://doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2015.118>
- Valle, A., Piñeiro, I., Rodríguez, S., Regueiro, B., Freire, C., & Rosário, P. (2019). Time spent and time management in homework in elementary school students: A person centered approach. *Psicothema*, 31(4), 422-428. <https://doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2019.191>
- Xia, J. (2020). Practical exploration of school-family cooperative education during the COVID-19 epidemic: A case study of Zhenjiang experimental school in Jiangsu Province, China. *Best Evidente Chinese Education*, 4(2), 521-528.

- Xu, J., & Corno, L. (1998). Case studies of families doing third-grade homework. *Teachers College Record*, 100(2), 402-438.
- Xu, J., Fan, X., Du, J., & He, M. (2017). A study of the validity and reliability of the parental homework support scale. *Measurement*, 95, 93-98. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.measurement.2016.09.045>
- Xu, J. Núñez, J. C., Cunha, J., & Rosário, P. (2020). Online Homework Distraction Scale: A validation study. *Psicothema*, 32, 469-475. <https://doi.org/10.7334/psicothema2020.60>
- Xu, J., & Wu, H. (2013). Self-regulation of homework behavior: Homework management at the secondary school level. *Journal of Educational Research*, 106(1), 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220671.2012.658457>
- Zhou, L., Li, F., Wu, S., & Zhou, M. (2020). "School's Out, But Class's On", The largest online education in the world today: Taking China's practical exploration during the COVID-19 epidemic prevention and control as an example. *Best Evidence Chinese Education*, 4(2), 501-519.