Impact of COVID-19 on education in India: stakeholders' voice

Prateek Kalia
Department of Corporate Economy, Faculty of Economics and Administration,
Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic
Bhavana Behal
Faculty of Education (K), Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India
Kulvinder Kaur
Lovely Professional University, Phagwara, India, and
Deepa Mehta
Faculty of Education (K), Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India

Abstract

Purpose – This exploratory study aims to discover the different forms of challenges encountered by school stakeholders, including students, teachers, parents and management due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Design/methodology/approach – Qualitative methodology was deployed for the study. A purposive sampling technique was used to select the respondents for a semi-structured interview. Data were examined using interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA).

Findings – It was found that each stakeholder faced four different challenges: mental distress, physical immobility, financial crunches and technological concerns. Findings suggest that teachers are experiencing higher financial, technological and physical challenges as compared to other stakeholders followed by parents.

Originality/value – This paper discusses the major challenges faced by each stakeholder along with the opportunities. These findings will be useful for educationists, regulatory authorities, policymakers and management of educational institutions in developing countries to revisit their policy frameworks to develop new strategies and processes for the smooth implementation of remote learning during a period of uncertainty.

Keywords COVID-19, Pandemic, Remote learning, School, Stakeholder

Paper type Research paper

1. Introduction

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) across the world in early 2020 forced the World Health Organization to categorize it as a pandemic across the globe (Park, 2020). Almost every country imposed travel restrictions to minimize the spread of this virus (Chinazzi *et al.*, 2020). Lockdown, social distancing and quarantine were some measures taken

by the governments to break the chain of coronavirus. The closure of schools and other educational institutions became paramount to ensure the safety of the young generation (Murphy, 2020; Tarei and Kumar, 2022). This situation has urged educators to develop a feasible mode of remote learning to curb the consequence of loss in the learning process (Codding *et al.*, 2020; Dutta, 2020). Also, there was a need to adopt an optimistic approach and provide an environment free from panic and phobias. Without any further delay, the offline mode of education was transformed into a digital teaching mode (Behal and Kalia, 2022; Cheng, 2020; Kashiramka *et al.*, 2021; Owusu-Fordjour *et al.*, 2020). Schools and educational institutions were suddenly forced to adapt to the situation (Aguliera and Nightengale-Lee, 2020). The educational institutes became the backbone of the digital education system as they provide the framework to work on future building (Azorín, 2020; Kashiramka *et al.*, 2021). Nevertheless, providing a distance mode of learning on a long-term basis needs advanced infrastructure, funds and dynamic policy interventions for sustainability (Justis *et al.*, 2020; Sahlberg, 2020).

E-learning is not a new concept in developing countries. However, there is a lack of vital e-learning elements like 24 h electricity, Internet connectivity, information and communications technology (ICT) and an inadequate supply of trained instructors (Aung and Khaing, 2016; Lwoga, 2012; Omidinia, 2011). In this scenario, social media platforms played a crucial role in sharing teaching-learning resources. Online platforms such as Zoom, Google meet, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, GoTo Meeting and many others became popular (Dash *et al.*, 2022; Joshi *et al.*, 2021). All these platforms have certain advantages and limitations (Dash *et al.*, 2022). For instance, *Zoom* is quick to install and allows recording and sharing the meeting, but sometimes lag in audio connectivity. Similarly, *Google Meet* allows direct meetings from the Google Calendar and offers professional plans but can only be accessed through Google Chrome. *Webex* provides premium services to all its customers, but its recent changes in the time limit to free account holders is a setback. *Microsoft Teams* is suitable for both small and large meetings but is amongst the most expensive platforms. *GoToMeeting* has a simple user interface, but its free plan allows just 3 participants at a time. All these platforms were accessed using digital devices. Many digital gadgets such as smartphones and tablets, which were restricted or prohibited inside the school premises pre-COVID, became the mainstay of the education system and supported learning in a period of uncertainty (Sahlberg, 2020).

In a physical classroom, a teacher can create a strong bond with the students through face-to-face interaction, which is missing in the online class (Anderson and Hira, 2020). Moreover, e-learning requires creative content and digital skills to keep the students engaged (Shehzadi *et al.*, 2020), due to which teachers are expected to upgrade their skills immediately. Old-aged teachers who are not tech-savvy are expected to become affluent in online teaching (Iivari *et al.*, 2020), thus, creating a burden on teachers. Ultimately, the pandemic has resulted in a shift of the baton of learning activities from teachers to parents. The involvement of parents in education helps the children to perform better with confidence. They attain more in less time. Learners aided by parents show better behavior and good scores on tests (Owusu-Fordjour *et al.*, 2020); however, all parents can't do that (Iivari *et al.*, 2020). Some families are incapable of providing a comfortable learning environment, and students are bound to study in their living room or bedroom shared with other siblings. It distracts their attention, and the learning output is minimal (Zainuddin *et al.*, 2020). Additionally, it is difficult for working parents to keep a check on their child's academic activities. The parents who lost their jobs during the pandemic faced a shortage of funds while managing their livelihood. They are struggling hard to cope-up with the uncertain future of their families (Dutta, 2020).

The authors in the past discovered that students going for e-learning are more proactive and rational in their approach to education (Ali *et al.*, 2018). In a few cases, it was reported that the learners feel isolated because of less or insignificant human interaction (Bolliger *et al.*, 2010; Zhu *et al.*, 2019). Studies conducted during the pandemic found that children are under

stress because of extending lockdowns, quarantine conditions and fear of getting infected. This has led to boredom and frustration (Cluver *et al.*, 2020; Zhou *et al.*, 2020) and it endangers the scope of child development (Iivari *et al.*, 2020). Prioritizing health and safety over academic responsibilities is the need of the hour (Netolicky, 2020). Both the teachers and the parents are focusing on developing positive thoughts among children and mitigating anxiety regarding the risk of diseases (Trombly, 2020).

There is plenty of research focusing on primary education (Fehr and Andrade, 2016; Overton *et al.*, 2016; Sarkar, 2016) and technical higher education (Das *et al.*, 2015; Kashiramka *et al.*, 2021; Menon and Suresh, 2021; Tarei and Kumar, 2022). Since 2020, several studies focusing on the issues related to online teaching and learning during the pandemic were also published, but they are focusing on just one or two stakeholders. For example, the majority of these studies are centered around students' psychological issues (Dutta, 2020; Owusu-Fordjour *et al.*, 2020; Tran *et al.*, 2020; Zia, 2020) while ignoring the challenges faced by parents and school management. Only a few scholars have discussed the problems encountered by teachers (Joshi *et al.*, 2021; Mailizar *et al.*, 2020a, 2020b). Similarly, the majority of studies relied on surveys and quantitative techniques while researching the effect of COVID-19 on education or stakeholders (Maini *et al.*, 2021; Sharma and Kiran, 2021). To the best of our knowledge, this is the first comprehensive qualitative study to report the challenges and opportunities faced by the stakeholders of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Guided by applied crisis theory (ACT) and stakeholder theory, we traced different types of crises or challenges in the lives of education stakeholders during the pandemic. Further, we also investigated opportunities that emerged in the context of acceptance of crisis response. We pose the following research question:

RQ. What are the challenges and opportunities faced by stakeholders of school education (i.e. students, teachers, parents and management) during the COVID-19 pandemic?

To answer our research question, we first created a theoretical underpinning using applied crisis theory and reviewed literature related to the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and school stakeholders and elaborated the qualitative methodology. Subsequently, various themes arising out of the analysis have been detailed followed by discussion, implications, limitations and future scope.

2. Theoretical underpinning and literature review
2.1 Applied crisis theory
Crises are a common part of life and it is defined as "a perception or experiencing an event or circumstance as an unacceptable hardship that transcends the person's present resources and coping processes" (Everly *et al.*, 2001). Crises are thought to be temporal and episodic phenomena, as opposed to the idea that a mental condition is continuous and primarily driven by biology (particularly outside the psychiatric context). These phenomena are believed to represent a chance for change or a turning point in a person's life (Hobbs, 1984). Consequently, a crisis can provide space for both personal growth and post-traumatic development (Slaikeu, 1990).

According to Brammer (1985), applied crisis theory encompasses three domains: (1) normal developmental crises, (2) situational crises and (3) existential crises. Developmental crises are instances in the regular course of human growth and evolution in which a significant change or shift takes place that results in atypical reactions. Although developmental crises are thought to be typical, each person and each developmental crisis is unique and needs to be evaluated and addressed accordingly. Uncommon and extraordinary situations that a person has no control over cause a situational crisis to arise. Situational crises are unpredictable, shocking, intense and frequently devastating, which is the key to

distinguishing them from other types of crises. The inner conflicts and fears that go along with significant human concerns like purpose, responsibility, independence, freedom and commitment constitute an existential crisis.

2.2 Stakeholder theory
The literature in business science is where the stakeholder concept first appeared. The Stanford Research Institute, which coined the phrase in 1963 to generalize and broaden the idea that the shareholders were the sole group that management needed to be sensitive to, is credited with its present use in management literature. However, Freeman (1984) proposed the stakeholder theory as a suggestion for the strategic management of businesses in the late twentieth century. He emphasized that while making strategic decisions, organizations should consider the interests of all stakeholders (Freeman, 1994). To a lesser or greater level most of the researchers agreed that the firm should examine the needs, interests and impacts of individuals and groups that have an impact on or may have an impact on its policies and operations (Ackermann and Eden, 2011; Mainardes *et al.*, 2011). Therefore, the organization, other players and the type of interactions between the corporation and the actors are the three main components of the stakeholder concept (Clarkson, 1995; Freeman, 2018).

2.3 COVID-19 pandemic crisis and school stakeholders
The COVID-19 pandemic crisis, had a significant impact on students, teachers, parents and educational institutions around the world, much like many other facets of daily life (Mailizar *et al.*, 2020a).

Remote learning lessons were not able to hold students' attention for a longer duration, as virtual classes are not able to develop empathy between students and teachers (Kulal and Nayak, 2020) and loss of physical contact with teachers has resulted in low motivation among students for learning (Sintema, 2020). Due to social isolation and uncertainties of the pandemic children developed disorders (psychosocial, conduct, emotional, eating and hyperkinetic) (Cluver *et al.*, 2020; Lee, 2020; Zainuddin *et al.*, 2020; Zhou *et al.*, 2020). These mental and physical health issues also led students towards an aversion to academics.

Teachers shifted their focus from traditional lesson teaching to the development of survival skills among students (Trombly, 2020) amid the pandemic. Remote learning came as an abrupt and unintended deviation of classroom transactions to online distance teaching (Hodges *et al.*, 2020). As teachers were not ready for this emergency transformation, they faced challenges, in the transmission of technology-based lessons at four levels, i.e. accessibility of the internet, relevant textbooks, hardware and software usage in school, technical assistance for teachers and students provided by the school, competency of teachers towards, experience and orientation e-learning, the configuration of content, assessment and evaluation to be in sync with curriculum and students potential to absorb remote learning lesson (Mailizar *et al.*, 2020a). Teachers strive hard, blurring their distinctions between work and life, and they learn how to use technology to design meaningful learning experiences. Further, straining their physical and mental health they showed empathy for students while giving them the best instruction, they can under the given conditions (Anderson and Hira, 2020).

Parents along with teachers were forced to be persistently creative in adopting this transforming education scenario (Zainuddin *et al.*, 2020).

Countries throughout the world have made changes in education policy to resonate with their government policy of social distancing (Fotheringham *et al.*, 2020). The isolation and quarantine have led to a new education paradigm "engage the world, change the world" (Azorín, 2020; Fullan *et al.*, 2018). This has swiftly pushed the education sector into a resurgence phase. Educational institutions have acknowledged this change with the term

"School's Out, But Class's On" (Cheng, 2020). To ensure incessant services of education during the time of lockdown and quarantine, countries around the world have adopted the concept of remote learning.

2.4 E-learning and the digital divide in developing countries
The digital divide is a complex phenomenon that prevails in our society. It encompasses digital inequality in terms of accessibility, usage and outcomes (Song *et al.*, 2020). There is a huge difference in the number of people who have access to technology and those who do not (Hall *et al.*, 2020). Despite advancements in internet access in India, the digital divide between men and women is huge, i.e. only 33% of women in India use the internet, which is far less as compared to men (57%). This gap is even more in rural men and women (49 vs 25%) (McDougal *et al.*, 2022). Researchers observed an increase in the incidence of the digital divide with an increase in digitalization. The pandemic brought in an unexpected change, further highlighting the digital divide issue. To maintain social distancing, people shifted from traditional modes to digital ones (Tarei and Kumar, 2022). This shift also happened in the Indian education system, which demanded enormous adaptations from students, teachers, parents and school administration (Iivari *et al.*, 2020). There were difficulties in ensuring fair access to digital education for everyone while ensuring student engagement in remote learning (Behal and Kalia, 2023). Many schools have access to the internet and devices, but due to a lack of support and training, smooth digital transformation was a challenge (Hall *et al.*, 2020). A considerable disparity between developed and developing countries may result in the digital divide. A comparative study across six countries regarding the education system during a pandemic shows continuity in schooling and higher education. It is mediated by technology and the internet, indicating the presence of the *digital use divide* (Hall *et al.*, 2020). Also, there are differences in terms of availability of digital equipment, technical abilities, accessibility to resources, level of parent education in private and public schools, and schools in urban and rural areas, resulting in a digital divide (Iivari *et al.*, 2020).

3. Method
3.1 Participants
The present study employed a qualitative methodology using a semi-structured interview. The population of the study constituted the students at private schools studying in Grade 7–11, their parents, teachers and school management in the district of Varanasi, North India. We used purposive random sampling to recruit 24 participants (six students, six parents, six teachers and six school owners) who represented six private schools. Students ($n = 6$; 4 males; 2 females) were enrolled in Grade 7–11 in the private schools of North India (Varanasi district). Three students were in high school, one was in Grade 7 from an upper middle school, and two were preparing for Grade 11. Mainly female parents participated in the interview, aged between 30 and 45 years ($M = 37$). Most parents were married and working ($n = 3$), one housewife, one divorced working mother and one businessman father from an upper-middle-class family. Teachers ($n = 6$) were aged between 34 and 51 years ($M = 43.33$) and had working experience of 5–14 years ($M = 9.83$, $SD = 9.40$) in their respective schools. Two female teachers were trained and experienced in middle school pedagogy; one male teacher was biology head in a senior secondary wing; one male teacher from the commerce department, one female from the history department and one female teacher was a mathematics expert for grade 11. Management (School owners) ($n = 6$; 5 females; 1 male) represented private schools. They were in this profession for 9–15 years ($M = 11.17$, $SD = 1.95$). Four (66.67%) schools were situated in urban areas, while two (33.33%) were in rural areas. All six schools were affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education, New Delhi, India.

3.2 Procedure

After the phase of social distancing and strict lockdown norms, the study was conducted when the local government authorities allowed relaxation in the public movement. A total of 30 stakeholders were approached for the interview via telephone and mail. Purposive sampling was used to select the participants. Respondents were provided with an information sheet explaining the purpose and requirements of participation and written consent for voluntary participation in the interview was obtained. Further, they were given the scope to leave the interview or skip a question if they feel uneasy to answer. The second author conducted face-to-face interviews with them in a vacant classroom on school premises, at the owner's office, or in their homes, as per their comfort level. An interview guide was prepared to conduct the interview (Walliman, 2006; Whiting and Williams, 2013). The participant responded to open-ended questions regarding their feelings and experiences about the situation, how the pandemic has affected them in various aspects of their lives and how they resolve their problems. Data saturation was achieved after 5 to 6 interviews with each stakeholder. As each group was homogeneous, even this small sample was sufficient to provide a better understanding (Rostill-Brookes *et al.*, 2011). Smith and Eatough (2007) recommended a sample size of 6 when using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Eatough and Smith, 2006; Reid *et al.*, 2005). Thus, this sample size was considered adequate to derive meaningful outcomes in a qualitative study (Genç and Öksüz, 2015; Hallock *et al.*, 2019; Kaur and Kumar, 2020, 2022). All interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed verbatim by standardized methods for transcription as reported by (Smith *et al.*, 2009; Smith and Eatough, 2007; Smith and Osborn, 2003). On average, each interview lasted for 60 min.

3.3 Data analysis

Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), a qualitative research methodology was employed. It seeks to delve deeper into the lived experience of a phenomenon (Alase, 2017; Pringle *et al.*, 2011; Smith and Eatough, 2007; Smith and Osborn, 2003). In this study, researchers examined the emerging patterns of experiential affirmations articulated within the data, before moving to a more interpretative stance that aims to contextualize and understand the participants' real-life experiences (Smith, 2004). The description of the analysis is outlined in Table 1.

4. Results

The researcher drew the consensus and identified four main themes: mental distress, physical immobility, financial crunches and technological concerns, which reflect the lived experienced challenges of school stakeholders: students, parents, teachers and management. The themes based on stakeholders' perceptions of the challenges and hidden opportunities posed by the pandemic are deciphered by the researchers (Table 2). The following section illustrates thought-provoking aspects of the four principal themes with supporting extracts from the interview transcripts.

4.1 Theme 1: mental distress

Students. Life has become monotonous for most students. They miss their school days and fun with friends and schoolmates. Socializing was their motivation which inculcates a challenge-seeking temperament in them. Meetings with peers relieve their mental stress. But now, they are confined to their homes which makes it quite difficult for them to stay focused on their goal. Some students are worried about exams while others need motivation for their studies. Many students are desperate to meet their friends to recreate the happy moments again. In the words of respondents:

Phase of analysis	Description
1. Individual analysis	The second author transcribed the data to an appropriate level of detail and the first and third authors cross-checked for accuracy. The first, second and fourth authors read and discussed the statements of the interview data across 24 transcripts and coded a textual analysis. Analysis was done to figure out conceptual ideas into themes and then all the themes were noted and interpreted after the second round of discussion among all the authors
2. Within-group analysis	For each participant group (students, parents, teachers and management), commonalities and differences were identified within individual interviews and across interviews. Emerging patterns or themes were structured and assigned meaning to the context. Recurring themes were concluded as a common theme
3. Across group analysis	Commonalities and differences across the groups were organized diagrammatically into overarching themes. This structure was reviewed by the research team, and the overall meanings from these patterns were used to derive labels for themes (Smith *et al.*, 2009)
	Transcripts were given to the participants and requested feedback about the accuracy of the content to check consistency between emergent and superordinate themes and to identify quotations to support each theme (Smith *et al.*, 2009). The comments attained through this process helped to appropriately reflect the individual voices in the final report (Smith, 2017). The findings of the study were presented to highlight the personal experiences of participants to reflect both convergence and divergence from the superordinate themes identified in the data (Smith, 2017)
5. Reliability	An independent researcher reviewed the emergent themes identified for a random selection of 30% of the participants. Inter-rater reliability was "substantial" ($\kappa = 0.62$; Landis and Koch, 1977)

Table 1.
Description of the
IPA analysis

RS1: "We are stuck inside our houses, and life has become a stereotype. I have no siblings to play with, which makes me frustrated many times. I miss my school days and friends a lot. The closure of schools has made me inactive, lazy, and dull."

RS2: "I have become lenient and have started taking things casually. Now, it is difficult for me to get myself motivated for my studies. My exams are approaching but don't feel pressured. I think I have lost the instinct for challenges. I am losing self-confidence."

RS3: "I am worried about my board exams which will commence in a few months. Online sessions are good to some extent, but I am dissatisfied with the testing system. The poor online examination process is the main reason for worry, and as a result, I get irritated very easily."

Teachers. In the digital transformation phase, the six-hour duty of teachers has turned into a 24×7 job. Their private contact details are shared with the students as well as their parents. They receive calls and messages during non-working hours too. The workload has increased and sometimes they have to work on holidays too.

The role of a teacher is now more of a facilitator and counselor. They are working hard to bring normalcy to the life of their students. Amidst the changing scenario, teachers narrated their worries and anxiety as:

RT1: "We have to work 24x7 as students can call up anytime to clarify their doubts. We are expected to look after online classes, our kids, and our family, which make our life very hectic. I often look tensed because it is hard for me to maintain a balance between work and life."

RT2: "Our school assigns random classes to us with no prior scheduling. Initially, I was not confident to handle online sessions. I did not enjoy teaching online. I felt pressure and anxiety. But now, the headmistress has framed a proper schedule for classes. Things are getting better with time, and I am also learning how to deal with the situation."

Superordinate themes	Emergent themes	S	P	T	M	n	%
Challenges							
Mental Distress	Isolation leading to insecurities	2	3	5	1	11	45.8
	Lack of confidence and motivation	5	2	4	3	14	58.3
	Fear and anxiety	1	4	5	3	13	54.2
	Poor concentration	5	0	1	1	7	29.2
Physical Immobility	Body strains (eyesight issue, weight gain, stiffness, cervical spondylitis, blood pressure issues)	5	5	5	3	18	75
	Exhaustive daily routine with limited locomotion	2	5	4	1	12	50
Financial Crunches	Expenditure on technical devices	1	4	4	2	11	45.8
	Reduced salaries and job insecurity	0	2	5	3	10	41.7
	Digitalize renovation of infrastructure for schools	1	2	4	5	12	50
	Setback and shut down of firms and institutions	1	3	4	1	9	37.5
	Increasing liabilities disturbing budgets	0	5	5	3	13	54.2
	Decrease in gross enrollment ratio	0	2	3	4	9	37.5
Technological Concerns	Over-dependency on social media	3	4	4	3	14	58.3
	Poor internet connectivity	3	3	3	1	10	41.7
	Unstandardized evaluation and assessment	1	4	5	3	13	54.2
	Unstructured digital pedagogy	2	5	4	3	14	58.3
	Unstandardized e-content	2	3	3	3	11	45.8
Challenges unveiling Opportunities							
Mental Distress	Spend quality time with family	4	4	3	4	15	62.5
	Crisis management	1	3	3	2	9	37.5
	Survival skill enhancement	1	4	3	4	12	50
Physical Immobility	Develop healthy eating habits	3	4	4	4	15	62.5
	Learn to follow a disciplined routine	2	3	4	4	13	54.2
	Daily exercise and yoga	4	3	5	4	16	66.7
Financial Crunches	Understand the value of money	2	2	2	1	7	29.2
	Budgeting with limited funds	0	4	4	5	13	54.2
	Explore alternative income sources	0	3	3	1	7	29.2
Technological Concerns	Erode digital divide at all levels of society	2	3	4	4	13	54.2
	Ample scope for tapping OER (open education resources) globally	0	1	4	1	6	25
	Collaborative resource planning	0	2	4	3	9	37.5
	Hybrid classes to be planned for coming sessions	2	1	3	3	9	37.5
	Preparedness for the uncertainty (lockdown)	0	1	3	2	6	25
Note(s): S= Students, T = Teachers, P=Parents, M = Management; $n = 24$							

Table 2.
Challenges and opportunities shared by stakeholders

Parents. They are striving hard to keep their wards safe during the pandemic. They are not ready to risk the life of their children at any cost. For this reason, they have accepted e-learning. However, they are not satisfied with the online teaching-learning process. Parents complained that network issues affect the studies of their wards. Some parents have observed changes in their wards' conduct, such as non-seriousness during session delivery, cheating during exams, etc. The following replies of parents show their concern and worriedness about their child.

RP2: "Since I am not going to my office these days, I try to spend more time talking to my parents and children. My kids hardly listen to any session. They launch the session and keep their phone aside, and the teacher is unable to notice it as the audio is on mute and the video is off. My son told me that his friends did cheating during exams to get good marks."

RP3: "At times, anxiety and stress about the future prospectus of my family disturb me. My husband helps me a lot to cope with the situation. He assists me with household tasks and monitors our children's academic progress. With the help of meditation, we overpower our stress. Together we are learning to deal with the situation."

Management. The responsibility and stress of management have increased during the pandemic. They have to take care of the needs of the students and boost the morale of their staff. School management is concerned regarding the retention of admissions. The schools planning for expansion got a severe hit during the pandemic, which is quite evident from the following statements:

RM1: "In February 2020, we started the kindergarten section in our school. Because of the lockdown, we got fewer admissions and suffered losses. Many parents have withdrawals admissions of their wards."

RM3: "We are worried about the survival of our institution and sustenance in the market. Our liabilities are more than our assets. It is very difficult for us to manage our expenses."

4.2 Theme 2: physical immobility

Students. All the co-curricular school activities halted during the lockdown, restraining the inculcation of psychomotor skills in children. Fatigue and less movement have made them dull and inactive. Eyesight issues, weight gain and laziness are a few other problems faced during the lockdown. But it is also noticed that students are inculcating the practice of exercise and yoga to maintain their fitness. When students were asked about their physical well-being, they replied:

RS1: "I have become clumsy and lazy and have developed the habit of sleeping more. I have gained weight, and therefore I am planning to join online yoga classes with my mother."

RS6: "I have become lethargic. Due to a lack of physical activities, I feel stiffness in my body. Increased screen time has affected my eyesight. Virtual modes of classes are not helping me much. I wish I could study in a physical classroom environment."

Teachers. The COVID-19 pandemic consequently led to the extended lockdown. To have a safe escape from its adverse impact on education, teachers played a crucial role. They are working hard 24×7 with a compromise on their salaries. The eyesight issue is also rising at an alarming rate among them. They have also experienced physical stiffness in their bodies. Those who follow the yoga and exercise regime consider themselves in a better position. When they were asked about their physical health, they responded:

RT1: "In the beginning phase of imparting online lessons, I developed backache and eyesight issues. Now I practice yoga which gives me the strength to perform my daily chores. I have changed my eating habits too."

RT5: "I feel exhausted because screen time has increased a lot. Moreover, preparation for online lessons takes more time as there is a shift from regular classes to virtual teaching. I have to sit for long hours to prepare and deliver lessons. I have developed severe backache and body aches. I have a history of cervical spondylitis, which is triggering again. To stabilize my health, I have started a morning walk on the terrace."

Parents. Parents are overstrained with the responsibilities of homeschooling their kids. In addition, they have to take care of other family members. It has brought their relationships under the scrutiny of patience and caused mental pressure and physical strain. Parents are bound to uphold the family needs in terms of managing expenditure, assisting the academics of their wards and housekeeping while working at home. Parents are inculcating healthy

eating habits and fostering awareness about mental and physical health in their kids. They have expressed their present physical health condition as:

RP1: "I need to assist my child in his studies, due to which I suffered frequent headaches, and both of us are facing eyesight issues. We are under deep stress. I have started attending lessons on physical and mental wellbeing on YouTube. It helped me a lot. We have also developed the habit of eating healthy food and a balanced diet to improve our health."

RP2: "Since I am working from home, stagnation has made me sluggish. Due to the present condition, I cannot allow anyone in my family to move out. Our physical activities have stopped, and we are gaining weight.

RP4: "I have to sit with my 12 years old kid for lectures delivered by the schoolteachers followed by the coaching tutors. My health is getting affected continuously. Fatigue and poor vision keep haunting me."

Management. The sudden closure of school affected them badly. The fear that traditional schools may lose the enrollment of students for physical classes kept haunting them. Thus, the Schools' Management started to re-assess their potential infrastructure to meet remote teaching requirements. They are one of the pillars of imparting digital education to students. They were expected to adapt to the shift in the education sector as soon as possible. Complaint calls from parents and teachers resulted in frustration and depression. The workload increased, and their life became hectic amidst the pandemic. In their own words:

RM4: "I run a small school. I maintain a record of the assigned tasks, online evaluation of lessons, and assessments conducted via. virtual mode. It becomes quite difficult for me to keep a check on every activity. I sometimes feel frustrated and severe headache is common these days."

RM5: "There is an urgent need to reinvest in technology-based classrooms. The sooner we bring the changes, the better it is. But the problem is that daily some new apps are developed, and it becomes hard to decide the best application for online education. I got too busy with school tasks that I stopped giving time to myself. My health is getting deteriorated."

4.3 Theme 3: financial crunches
Students. Not all the students are from well-off families, and pandemics made their family conditions worse than ever. During the interview, two students mentioned that their parents could not afford to pay the school fee as they are sitting ideal at home. Teachers in the virtual classes keep reminding them to clear the outstanding dues. Learners feel insulted and uncomfortable hearing such notifications. A respondent narrated his bitter experiences when he was given free reminders in the virtual class.

RS1: "I got a reminder about the pending fees in front of my classmates. I felt insulted and stopped attending that class. Now I avoid such a situation by leaving the class whenever any teacher starts discussing school fees."

One student was under deep stress due to deteriorated financial condition of his family. He feared that he might have to quit his studies due to financial constraints. Due to this insecure condition, he was unable to concentrate in online classes. In his own words:

RS2: "My father is the only earning member of our family, and for the last three months, our food outlet is shut down. We are facing financial crunches, and if this situation lasts for a few more months, I may have to quit my studies. Due to this insecure condition, I am not able to concentrate on my digital classes.

Teachers. The salaries of teachers were reduced during lockdown due to a decrease in fee collection. The teachers were bound to work with less pay as they do not have an alternate option. They even invested money out of their own pockets to buy resources such as a stylus, blackboard, headphones, etc., which was an additional burden on them.

RT1: "As parents are not paying the fees, a huge backlog of defaulters is accumulated in the school accounts department. We, the teachers, are the ones who are most affected. Even though we work for extra hours, we are still subject to salary reductions due to inadequate fee collection."

RT3: "I have purchased some resources to support online classes. Our school management is neither providing us the required stuff nor paying us timely. I received 70% of my actual salary for my teaching services during the lockdown."

Teachers used to earn additional income through coaching institutions which are closed now. Some teachers have their monthly dues to pay off, which becomes a liability during current circumstances. The following statement suggests that teachers are afraid and feel insecure amidst the pandemic:

RT6: "I am worried about my coaching classes which got impacted due to lockdown. It has hampered my source of income and financial growth. Anxiety and fear keep haunting me."

Parents. Parents and guardians are experiencing a hard time during the lockdown. Many families are experiencing financial hardships and trying to balance their expenses and available funds. The school is putting pressure on students to pay off their unpaid debts. Unfortunately, it is contributing to the parents' financial as well as mental tension. Parents have mixed feelings about paying school fees and dealing with financial difficulties.

RP1: "Due to lockdown, we are left with little funds. Therefore, I have not paid the fee for the last two months. My daughter bear humiliation in the virtual class."

RP3: "I understand that the school has costs to cover, so I am paying the fees on time. What irritates me the most is that they charge complete fees from parents, but they are not paying the full salary to the teachers. They should either pay them fully or reduce the fees of students."

RP6: "Lockdown has not added any financial burden on me. My son already owns a laptop, and we have smartphones too. We have not purchased any electronic gadgets to support e-learning. But yes, a few of my friends have purchased smartphones and tablets for their kids."

Parents are facing financial stress during the lockdown scenario. They are not paying school fees, and few of them cannot afford to buy technical gadgets, which are a prerequisite for attending virtual lessons.

Management. Management of various schools confesses that it was very tough for them to cover the operational cost. Low cash inflow due to less remittance of fees is the permeating challenge that has blocked their money. They reduced the salaries of their staff. Some schools also reduced their staff to minimize their financial liability. Continuous efforts are required to boost the morale of their teaching and non-teaching staff. So, initially, they paid them salaries out of their pockets and even spent hefty amounts to purchase new technological equipment and software to smooth the implementation of the online teaching-learning process. The following statements reflect their financial stress amidst the pandemic and steps to control it.

RM1: "We have to pay salaries, even if there was an inadequate collection of fees. Our liabilities have increased more than our assets. At present, we can pay 70% of the salaries to our staff; and we have promised them to pay the leftover in installments when the situation normalizes."

RM2: "We have dismissed a few of our staff like additional teachers for arts and crafts, and taekwondo teachers to reduce our financial liabilities."

4.4 Theme 4: technological concerns
Students. The COVID-19 pandemic has opened new avenues for academic learning. Many learning apps have been developed over time to assist digital education. Students have

adopted these technologies and apps to access their e-classes. Some students are happy to learn in the comfort of their homes, while others feel lonely. Caution is needed to drag the attention of learners into productive channels. Otherwise, they become easy prey to malicious sites.

RS2: "I take the help of YouTube and other academic channels online to clear my doubts. It is comfortable for me to handle the internet, and I am enjoying learning from home."

RS3: "At times, I am diverted to other sites while browsing for my assignment, which wastes my time. I feel an aversion to manually writing things. Science practical is not feasible in these online classes, and I am unable to understand such topics properly."

Due to the lack of technological resources, few students are not able to make their presence during the online class. A respondent shared his experience with attendance regularity as:

RS4: "Our class teacher announced that class attendance is mandatory, but I cannot attend all the classes. We are three siblings, but we have only two smartphones. Thus, one of us had to compromise and did not get the chance to attend the online session."

Teachers. The role of teachers has become more challenging than ever before. They have to upgrade themselves with the changing time. Those who are tech-savvy found it easy to adopt the digital mode of education. On the other hand, some teachers initially considered the e-learning journey a struggling period. They expressed their views as:

RT3: "Changing the mode of imparting education during the pandemic was a kind of struggling period for me. I was instructed by the school management to make PPTs for every session. I learned to make PPTs from YouTube. Initially, it was a little difficult, but now I am comfortable making online session plans, handling apps, and taking the assessment of the students."

RT6: "I am a tech-savvy person and keep myself updated with the latest technology. I very well know how to handle various electronic devices. Additionally, our school provides online orientation and training to the teachers."

Parents. When it comes to the tech-savvy aspect, all parents are not competent with the upcoming technology and fail to render the essential help in covering their course. Parents are not able to verify whether their children are using the internet for constructive or destructive purposes. They stated:

RP1: "My daughter spent half of the day on the laptop. I cannot keep an eye on her all the time. I am worried if she is browsing the relevant content or not."

RP2: "Internet is a necessity for online education. Since all academic work is through the digital mode, they spend more time on smartphones. He is getting addicted to surfing the internet."

Teachers assign tasks not only to the students but to parents also because home learning requires parents' assistance. Often, they feel frustrated and find it hard to set an equilibrium between their wards' education and household work. It is difficult for parents to keep track of their children's online activities.

RP3: "I am not satisfied with the teaching over virtual platforms. My child is not able to grasp the content. The online evaluation process is also not up to the mark. Teachers give objective-type questions that are of low difficulty level. I have to assist my child and provide him the content for better understanding."

Management. The management of schools is interested in reforming and developing the content for the long term to prepare the students to deal with present and future situations by adopting an inclusive approach and extracting the experience from the world. Schools are

trying hard to provide all services for better academic achievement, which is reflected in their statements:

RM1: "We have purchased software through which our teachers can impart education online. We have hired an agency to train our teachers to handle the applications and tools."

RM4: "We are working on the improvisation of online tools and techniques for evaluation and assessment. We have collaborated with a group of local school IT experts to develop standardized e-evaluation methods. We are trying to contact parents for feedback about the current status of the teaching and learning process."

RM4: "We provide training to our teachers to upgrade them with technology to blend virtual and physical modes to bring new dynamics to education."

5. Discussion, implications and limitations
5.1 Discussion
COVID-19 pandemic has brought an immediate change in the education system worldwide (Bao, 2020; Shehzadi *et al.*, 2020). It has positively affected e-learning and accelerated its growth but significantly altered the lives of students, teachers, parents and management. The outbreak of COVID-19 has transformed the mode of imparting knowledge. The conventional four-wall classroom teaching transformed into remote learning under the roof of homes (Murphy, 2020). Those who were reluctant to adopt e-learning were also forced to accept it. "School's Out, But Class's On" can be considered the waking call for the future of education (Cheng, 2020; Xia, 2020).

The present study reveals the modified role of teachers from the traditional instruction giver to mentor and counselor of the student, which is aligned with the literature (Sahlberg, 2020). Still, their exhaustive efforts are not yielding desirous results because the students are not regular and attentive in the virtual classes. The bitter truth remains that all children do not acquire much of what is taught in school. Lack of personal touch is the major issue faced by teachers and students in the online teaching-learning process. Most students miss their school friends and learning environment. They are confined to their homes which makes them lazy and dull. Lack of physical activities resulted in various health issues, and increased screen time causes eyestrain. Teachers also complain about eyesight issues. Physical stiffness of the body, migraine, etc., are other side effects of digital teaching-learning on health. In such a situation, yoga and meditation help them overcome health issues and bring back stability in their lives.

Job insecurity is the major concern of the teaching fraternity. For this reason, they are working with reduced salaries. It is a tough time for the school management, due to the huge backlog of defaulters. Students are experiencing pressure from the school to clear outstanding dues. Unfortunately, it is adding to financial stress as well as mental stress. Parents are finding it difficult to pay fees as they are sitting idle at home with no work. Families from the low-income group got severely hit by the pandemic and suffered from psychological distress (Dutta, 2020). The fragile economic situation of families under quarantine conditions affects the mental well-being of children (Cluver *et al.*, 2020; Zhou *et al.*, 2020). Further, not all the teachers and students have the necessary resources, such as laptops, internet access and microphones. Moreover, various issues, viz., system failure, technical glitches, network problems and bandwidth issues, are encountered while taking online sessions. They are unable to address these issues due to a lack of technical assistance. It reduces their interest in e-learning, and the results are consistent with the literature (Arora and Srinivasan, 2020). Thus, an immediate investment and technical orientation are required to upgrade technological infrastructure.

5.2 Theory-driven evaluation of the findings

As per the stakeholder theory, an organization must provide equal consideration to the interests of all its stakeholders. To achieve this goal, an organization must develop strategies to maintain balance. The critics of stakeholder theory argue that the requirements and interests of all stakeholders cannot be resolved equitably. Amidst the crisis, when the stakes for health and life are so much higher, "*balancing the stakes*" is more crucial. Our findings contribute to such theoretical debates and offer insights into this regard. Firstly, our research highlights the key issues faced by school stakeholders amidst the pandemic and suggests ways to tackle these issues with the help of stakeholder and crisis theory. Secondly, the results of this study indicate that stakeholder interactions during a crisis may differ during normal situations (Figure 1). For example, organizations can focus more on various corporate social responsibility (CSR) actions as they can successfully influence public opinion and safeguard the business reputation and image in long run (Wen *et al.*, 2021). Thirdly, during a crisis, stakeholders must understand their current stakes, maintain an optimal balance of diverse interests and cooperate (Ng *et al.*, 2022), for instance, the shift of the baton of learning activities from teachers to parents.

We adopted three dimensions of crisis, i.e. developmental, situational and existential from the applied crisis theory (Brammer, 1985) to comprehend the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on education stakeholders (Figure 2). Based on these dimensions, it was found, that *mental distress* ascended among students, teachers and parents as the COVID-19 wave got intensified (situational crisis). Situational crises are times of psychological and behavioral turmoil that are caused by risks to one's life and typically result in the person suffering major losses (Poal, 1990). Furthermore, *physical immobility* led by isolation and social distancing
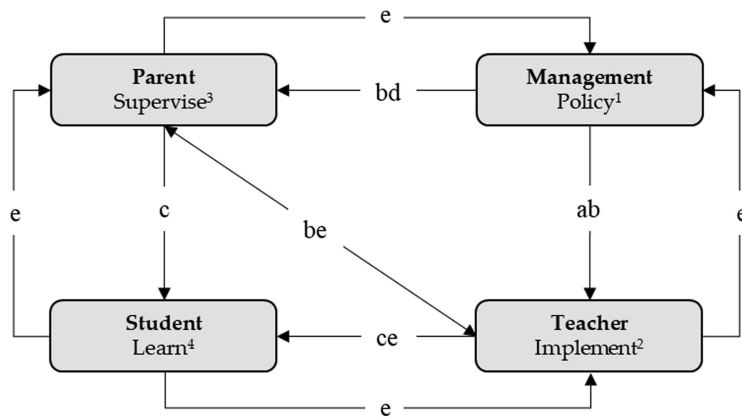
Note(s): [a] Acknowledge, reinforce, and motivate teachers, monetary compensation to teachers; [b] Information sharing; [c] Teaching, mentoring and support; [d] Fee collection through easy instalments and financing schemes; [e] Feedback and cooperation
[1] Introduce robust and cost effective remote, collaborative, and hybrid learning systems, incorporate crisis management and survival skills in curriculum, offer wellness programs to the stakeholders; [2] Teaching and mentoring; [3] Supervision; [4] Learning in digital environment, maximize family interactions, reduce the generation gap, inherit values and morals from elders

Figure 1.
The school stakeholders and the type of interactions during crisis (COVID-19) based on the findings of the study

Challenges (Themes/Theoretical aspects)

| Opportunities | Implications for policymakers |

Mental distress (Situational crisis)
- Isolation leading to insecurities
- Lack of confidence and motivation
- Fear and anxiety
- Poor concentration

Opportunities:
- Spend quality time with family
- Crisis management
- Survival skill enhancement

Implications for policymakers:
Development of Crisis management at the time of uncertainty should be one of the aims of education

Physical immobility (Developmental crisis)
- Body strains (eyesight issue, weight gain, stiffness, cervical spondylitis, blood pressure issues)
- Exhaustive daily routine with limited locomotion

Opportunities:
- Develop healthy eating habits
- Learn to follow disciplined routine

Implications for policymakers:
Awareness and Sensitization of wellness and health should be an integral part of teachers' training programs and students' school curricula

Financial crunches (Existential crisis)
- Expenditure on technical devices
- Reduced salaries and job insecurity
- Digitalize renovation of infrastructure for schools
- Setback and shut down of firms and institutions
- Increasing liabilities disturbing budgets
- Decrease in gross enrolment ratio

Opportunities:
- Understand the value of money
- Budgeting with limited funds
- Explore alternative income sources

Implications for policymakers:
Survival skills and development of adversity intelligence should be inculcated in students

Technological concerns (Existential crisis)
- Over dependency on social media
- Poor internet connectivity
- Unstandardized evaluation and assessment
- Unstructured digital pedagogy
- Unstandardized e-content

Opportunities:
- Eroding digital divide
- Ample scope for tapping OER (open education resources) globally
- Collaborative resource planning
- Hybrid classes
- Preparedness for the uncertainty (lockdown)

Implications for policymakers:
Installation of hi-tech infrastructure in schools should be promoted to meet the need of Industry 4.0. Social Media should be considered a vital part of teaching-learning activities
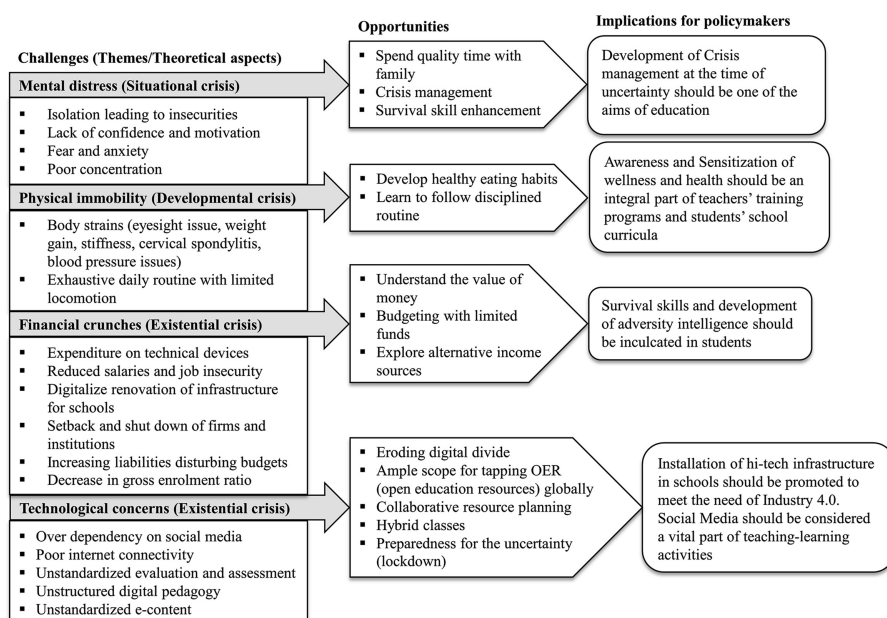
Figure 2.
Framework based on the findings of the study

proved to be the prime cause of the developmental crisis. A developmental crisis is a stage of change in personality marked by distress at the cognitive and affective levels (Poal, 1990). It is a period of transition in life when a person finds it difficult to deal with new expectations and starts to doubt their social environment (Robinson *et al.*, 2021). Additionally, lockdown across the globe halted economic activities and money flow in the economy. People lost their source of income. Stagnation of finances posed a threat to survival among stakeholders. *Financial crunches* generated an existential crisis. Humanistic perspectives on job loss and rising unemployment can help us better comprehend the existential crisis caused by the pandemic (Blustein and Guarino, 2020). Existential crises emerge when one is not satisfied with him/herself. Moreover, in the present study, it was found that traditional teaching was replaced by digital tools and software. These drastic changes in the teaching-learning environment compelled frontline stakeholders of education, i.e. teachers and students for its adoption. This sudden shift deteriorated the learning environment as stakeholders were neither trained nor ready for such transformation causing several *technological concerns*. Stakeholders faced these challenges in chaos with creativity and willingness to achieve their educational objectives, which corresponds to existential thinking (Bland, 2020).

5.3 Practical implications
Findings suggest that teachers are more prone to financial, technological and physical challenges among all stakeholders followed by parents. As teachers are the key contact point between management, students and parents; school management should acknowledge the efforts of teachers to reinforce confidence and motivation in them. While struggling to meet both ends for their families' teachers are incurring heavy expenditure on electronic devices and peripherals for the digital classroom with the reduction in salaries. Management should chalk out, how and to what amount they will be compensated. Secondly, teachers are under pressure to adopt new e-learning technologies to impart knowledge. In this scenario, an

unstandardized assessment and evaluation procedure with unstructured digital pedagogy deteriorates the quality of teaching-learning. Education policymakers and educationists should create robust remote, collaborative and hybrid learning systems which are easy to use and cost-effective. Thirdly, the management is facing a huge backlog in fee collection, thus they can offer various easy installment and financing schemes for parents in collaboration with formal financial institutions. This will reduce the financial constraints of parents and sustain the gross enrollment ratio of schools.

Based on stakeholder theory we recommend greater involvement of the school management and their stakeholders during challenging times. School management must work much more closely and aggressively with students, parents and teachers (Ng *et al.*, 2022). To achieve this, we recommend stakeholder representation at the corporate board to create a "win-win collaboration". Also, we recommend school management to focus more on various corporate social responsibility (CSR) actions as they can successfully influence public opinion and safeguard the school's reputation and image in long run (Wen *et al.*, 2021).

On the brighter side, the stakeholders can harness some benefits during adversity. For example, the lockdown period can maximize family interactions and reduce the generation gap as children can inherit values and morals from their elders. Results emphasize the relevance of a healthy diet, exercise and disciplined routine voluntarily adopted by students, parents and teachers. School management can carry forward this cult under their wellness programs. There is a need to incorporate crisis management and survival skills in the textbook lessons in a form of a hidden curriculum to prepare a breed of mentally strong individuals. A sudden increase in the use of digital media and devices for educational purposes has reduced the digital divide in society. Overall, the education sector must prepare itself for the new norm of remote and digital learning.

5.4 Contribution of the study
COVID-19 pandemic has remodeled the traditional teaching-learning methods and proved to be a supernova that has the power to bring a long-lasting change. All the stakeholders of educational institutions got affected by this pandemic. This is the first study in which the experiences of all the stakeholders of schools are taken into consideration. The emerging themes highlight the main challenges that the stakeholders encountered during the pandemic. The challenges faced by each stakeholder are reported in-depth along with the opportunities. In this way, it presents the bright and dark side of the pandemic in the education sector and its impact on all school stakeholders. The understanding of these findings will be helpful to deal with the situation of uncertainty caused by a catastrophe in near future.

5.5 Limitations and future scope
The research is exploratory and confined to school stakeholders, including students, teachers, parents and management. Future studies can interview policymakers from government or regulatory bodies. Secondly, this study is confined to the stakeholders of private schools only. A sample from government school stakeholders and families from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds may lead to some differences. Third, the findings may differ among students enrolled in primary school. Fourth, the sample is collected from India, hence results can be generalized to the school stakeholders in developing countries. However, future studies can check if the results are valid across developed countries. The current study discovers the different forms of challenges encountered by school stakeholders. However, we did not determine which stakeholder group is more important than another. Future studies can segment the school stakeholders into meaningful categories

to understand their impact. For instance, stakeholders can be classified as an advocate, dormant, adversarial or apathetic based on issue involvement and their predisposition (Wen *et al.*, 2021). Thence, future studies can develop strategies to strengthen the relationship with the prioritized stakeholders.

References

Ackermann, F. and Eden, C. (2011), "Strategic management of stakeholders: theory and practice", *Long Range Planning*, Elsevier Ltd, Vol. 44 No. 3, pp. 179-196.

Aguliera, E. and Nightengale-Lee, B. (2020), "Emergency remote teaching across urban and rural contexts: perspectives on educational equity", *Information and Learning Sciences*, Vol. 121 Nos 5/6, pp. 471-478.

Alase, A. (2017), "The interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA): a guide to a good qualitative research approach", *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, Vol. 5 No. 2, pp. 9-19.

Ali, M., Raza, S.A., Qazi, W. and Puah, C.-H. (2018), "Assessing e-learning system in higher education institutes", *Interactive Technology and Smart Education*, Vol. 15 No. 1, pp. 59-78.

Anderson, E. and Hira, A. (2020), "Loss of brick-and-mortar schooling: how elementary educators respond", *Information and Learning Sciences*, Vol. 121 Nos 5/6, pp. 411-418.

Arora, A.K. and Srinivasan, R. (2020), "Impact of pandemic COVID-19 on the teaching – learning process : a study of higher education teachers", *Prabandhan: Indian Journal of Management*, Vol. 13 No. 4, pp. 43-56.

Aung, T.N. and Khaing, S.S. (2016), "Challenges of implementing e-learning in developing countries: a review", *Advances in Intelligent Systems and Computing*, Vol. 388, pp. 405-411.

Azorín, C. (2020), "Beyond COVID-19 supernova. Is another education coming?", *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*, Vol. 5 Nos 3/4, pp. 381-390.

Bao, W. (2020), "COVID-19 and online teaching in higher education: a case study of Peking University", *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, Vol. 2 No. 2, pp. 113-115.

Behal, B. and Kalia, P. (2022), "Core competencies and values for education 4.0", in Manna, M.S., Balusamy, B., Sood, K., Chilamkurti, N. and Rajathi, I. (Eds), *Pedagogy in the 21st Century: Challenges & Opportunities (Edutech Enabled Teaching)*, CRC Press, Florida, United States, pp. 59-72.

Behal, B. and Kalia, P. (2023), "Student engagement in digital learning Milieu", in Sood, K., Kalia, P., Grima, S. and Chaudhary, A. (Eds), *Digital Analytics Applications for Sustainable Training and Education*, Apple Academic Press, Florida, United States.

Bland, A.M. (2020), "Existential givens in the COVID-19 crisis", *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, Vol. 60 No. 5, pp. 710-724.

Blustein, D.L. and Guarino, P.A. (2020), "Work and unemployment in the time of COVID-19: the existential experience of loss and fear", *Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, Vol. 60 No. 5, pp. 702-709.

Bolliger, D.U., Supanakorn, S. and Boggs, C. (2010), "Impact of podcasting on student motivation in the online learning environment", *Computers and Education*, Vol. 55 No. 2, pp. 714-722.

Brammer, L.M. (1985), *The Helping Relationship: Process and Skills*, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs, New Jesry, USA.

Cheng, X. (2020), "Challenges of 'school's out, but Class's on' to school education: practical exploration of Chinese schools during the COVID-19 pandemic", *Science Insights Education Frontiers*, Vol. 5 No. 2, pp. 501-516.

Chinazzi, M., Davis, J.T., Ajelli, M., Gioannini, C., Litvinova, M., Merler, S., Piontti, A.P.Y., Mu, K., Rossi, L., Sun, K., Viboud, C., Xiong, X., Yu, H., Halloran, M.E. Jr, Ira, M.L. and Vespignani, A. (2020), "The effect of travel restrictions on the spread of the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak", *Science*, Vol. 368 No. 6489, pp. 395-400.

Clarkson, M.B.E. (1995), "A stakeholder framework for analyzing and evaluating corporate social performance", *The Academy of Management Review*, Vol. 20 No. 1, pp. 92-117.

Cluver, L., Lachman, J.M., Sherr, L., Wessels, I., Krug, E., Rakotomalala, S., Blight, S., Hillis, S., Bachman, G., Green, O., Butchart, A., Tomlinson, M., Ward, C.L., Doubt, J. and McDonald, K. (2020), "Parenting in a time of COVID-19", *The Lancet*, Vol. 395 No. 10231, p. e64.

Codding, R.S., Collier-Meek, M., Jimerson, S., Klingbeil, D.A., Mayer, M.J. and Miller, F. (2020), "School psychology reflections on COVID-19, antiracism, and gender and racial disparities in publishing", *School Psychology*, Vol. 35 No. 4, pp. 227-232.

Das, M.C., Sarkar, B. and Ray, S. (2015), "A performance evaluation framework for technical institutions in one of the states of India", *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, Vol. 22 No. 5, pp. 773-790.

Dash, S., Samadder, S., Srivastava, A., Meena, R. and Ranjan, P. (2022), "Review of online teaching platforms in the current period of COVID-19 pandemic", *Indian Journal of Surgery*, Vol. 84 S1, pp. 12-17.

Dutta, M. (2020), "COVID-19 and impact of school closures on the children of the United States; a point of view with an empirical analysis", *SSRN Electronic Journal*, pp. 1-45, doi: 10.2139/ssrn.3596096.

Eatough, V. and Smith, J.A. (2006), "I feel like a scrambled egg in my head: an idiographic case study of meaning making and anger using interpretative phenomenological analysis", *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice*, Vol. 79 No. 1, pp. 115-135.

Everly, G.S., Jr, F, R.B., J, Eyier, V. and Mitchell, J.T. (2001), "Sufficiency analysis of an integrated multicomponent approach to crisis intervention", *Advances in Mind-Body Medicine*, Vol. 17 No. 3, pp. 174-183.

Fehr, M. and Andrade, V.S.C.S. (2016), "Search for objective environmental performance indicators of primary schools", *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, Vol. 23 No. 7, pp. 1922-1936.

Fotheringham, P., Harriott, T., Healy, G., Arenge, G., Mcgill, R. and Wilson, E. (2020), "Pressures and influences on school leaders as policy makers during COVID-19", available at: https://philpapers.org/archive/FOTPAI.pdf (accessed 8 July 2020).

Freeman, R.E. (1984), *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder's Approach*, Pitman, Boston, MA.

Freeman, R.E. (1994), "The politics of stakeholder theory: some future directions", *Business Ethics Quarterly*, Vol. 4 No. 4, pp. 409-421.

Freeman, R.E. (2018), "Divergent stakeholder theory", in Singer, A.E. (Ed.), *Business Ethics and Strategy*, Vol. I and II, 1st ed., Routledge, London, pp. 377-380.

Fullan, M., Quinn, J. and McEachen, J. (2018), *Deep Learning: Engage the World Change the World*, Corwin Press, California, USA.

Genç, M. and Öksüz, B. (2015), "A fact or an illusion: effective social media usage of female entrepreneurs", *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 195, pp. 293-300.

Hall, T., Connolly, C., Grádaigh, S.Ó, Burden, K., Kearney, M., Schuck, S., Bottema, J., Cazemier, G., Hustinx, W., Evens, M., Koenraad, T., Makridou, E. and Kosmas, P. (2020), "Education in precarious times: a comparative study across six countries to identify design priorities for mobile learning in a pandemic", *Information and Learning Sciences*, Vol. 121 Nos 5/6, pp. 433-442.

Hallock, W., Roggeveen, A.L. and Crittenden, V. (2019), "Firm-level perspectives on social media engagement: an exploratory study", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 22 No. 2, pp. 217-226.

Hobbs, M. (1984), "Crisis intervention in theory and practice: a selective review", *British Journal of Medical Psychology*, Vol. 57 No. 1, pp. 23-34.

Hodges, C., Moore, S., Lockee, B., Trust, T. and Bond, A. (2020), *The Difference between Emergency Remote Teaching and Online Learning*, EDUCAUSE, available at: https://er.educause.edu/

articles/2020/3/the-difference-between-emergency-remote-teaching-and-online-learning (accessed 4 August 2020).

Iivari, N., Sharma, S. and Ventä-Olkkonen, L. (2020), "Digital transformation of everyday life – how COVID-19 pandemic transformed the basic education of the young generation and why information management research should care?", *International Journal of Information Management*, Vol. 55, 102183.

Joshi, A., Vinay, M. and Bhaskar, P. (2021), "Impact of coronavirus pandemic on the Indian education sector: perspectives of teachers on online teaching and assessments", *Interactive Technology and Smart Education*, Vol. 18 No. 2, pp. 205-226.

Justis, N., Litts, B.K., Reina, L. and Rhodes, S. (2020), "Cultivating staff culture online: how edith Bowen laboratory school responded to COVID-19", *Information and Learning Sciences*, Vol. 121 Nos 5/6, pp. 453-460.

Kashiramka, S., Sagar, M., Dubey, A.K., Mehndiratta, A. and Sushil, S. (2021), "Critical success factors for next generation technical education institutions", *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, Vol. 28 No. 5, pp. 1605-1621.

Kaur, K. and Kumar, P. (2020), "Social media usage in Indian beauty and wellness industry: a qualitative study", *The TQM Journal*, Vol. 33 No. 1, pp. 17-32.

Kaur, K. and Kumar, P. (2022), "Social media: a blessing or a curse? Voice of owners in the beauty and wellness industry", *The TQM Journal*, Vol. 34 No. 5, pp. 1039-1056.

Kulal, A. and Nayak, A. (2020), "A study on perception of teachers and students toward online classes in Dakshina Kannada and Udupi District", *Asian Association of Open Universities Journal*, Vol. 15 No. 3, pp. 285-296.

Landis, J.R. and Koch, G.G. (1977), "Landis amd Koch1977_agreement of categorical data", *Biometrics*, Vol. 33 No. 1, pp. 159-174.

Lee, J. (2020), "Mental health effects of school closures during COVID-19", *The Lancet Child and Adolescent Health*, Elsevier Ltd, Vol. 4 No. 6, p. 421.

Lwoga, E. (2012), "Making learning and Web 2.0 technologies work for higher learning institutions in Africa", *Campus-Wide Information Systems*, Vol. 29 No. 2, pp. 90-107.

Mailizar, M., Almanthari, A., Maulina, S. and Bruce, S. (2020a), "Secondary school mathematics teachers' views on E-learning implementation barriers during the COVID-19 pandemic: the case of Indonesia", *Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education*, Vol. 16 No. 7, em1860.

Mailizar, Samingan, Rusman, Huda, I. and Yulisman, H. (2020b), "Mathematics, Science and Social Science teachers' acceptance of online teacher professional development: does internet accessibility matter?", *Journal of Physics: Conference Series*, Vol. 1460, 012103.

Mainardes, E.W., Alves, H. and Raposo, M. (2011), "Stakeholder theory: issues to resolve", *Management Decision*, Vol. 49 No. 2, pp. 226-252.

Maini, R., Sehgal, S. and Agrawal, G. (2021), "Todays' digital natives: an exploratory study on students' engagement and satisfaction towards virtual classes amid COVID-19 pandemic", *The International Journal of Information and Learning Technology*, Vol. 38 No. 5, pp. 454-472.

McDougal, L., Raj, A. and Singh, A. (2022), "The digital divide and is it holding back women in India?", *Hindustan Times*, available at: https://www.hindustantimes.com/ht-insight/gender-equality/the-digital-divide-and-is-it-holding-back-women-in-india-101641971745195.html (accessed 19 August 2022).

Menon, S. and Suresh, M. (2021), "Factors influencing organizational agility in higher education", *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, Vol. 28 No. 1, pp. 307-332.

Murphy, M.P.A. (2020), "COVID-19 and emergency eLearning: consequences of the securitization of higher education for post-pandemic pedagogy", *Contemporary Security Policy*, Taylor & Francis Group, Vol. 41 No. 3, pp. 492-505.

Netolicky, D.M. (2020), "School leadership during a pandemic: navigating tensions", *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*, Vol. 5 Nos 3/4, pp. 391-395.

Ng, D.W.L., Duarte Alonso, A., Bressan, A., Vu, O.T.K., Tran, T.D. and Atay, E. (2022), "Businesses and their community in times of COVID-19: a stakeholder theory approach", *European Business Review*, Vol. 34 No. 6, pp. 798-818.

Omidinia (2011), "Review of E-learning and ICT infrastructure in developing countries (case study of Iran)", *American Journal of Economics and Business Administration*, Vol. 3 No. 1, pp. 120-125.

Overton, K., Joo, S.-J. and Stoeberl, P.A. (2016), "Benchmarking public school performance by unionized status", *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, Vol. 23 No. 7, pp. 1626-1642.

Owusu-Fordjour, C., Koomson, C.K. and Hanson, D. (2020), "The Impact of COVID-19 on learning-the perspective of the Ghanaian student", *European Journal of Education Studies*, Vol. 7 No. 3, pp. 88-101.

Park, S.E. (2020), "Epidemiology, virology, and clinical features of severe acute respiratory syndrome -coronavirus-2 (SARS-CoV-2; Coronavirus Disease-19)", *Clinical and Experimental Pediatrics*, Vol. 63 No. 4, pp. 119-124.

Poal, P. (1990), "Introduction to the theory and practice of crisis intervention", *Quaderns de Psicologia*, Vol. 10, pp. 121-140.

Pringle, J., Drummond, J., McLafferty, E. and Hendry, C. (2011), "Interpretative phenomenological analysis: a discussion and critique", *Nurse Researcher*, Vol. 18 No. 3, pp. 20-24.

Reid, K., Flowers, P. and Larkin, M. (2005), "Exploring lived experience", *Psychologist*, Vol. 18 No. 1, pp. 20-23.

Robinson, O.C., Cimporescu, M. and Thompson, T. (2021), "Wellbeing, developmental crisis and residential status in the year after graduating from higher education: a 12-month longitudinal study", *Journal of Adult Development*, Springer US, Vol. 28 No. 2, pp. 138-148.

Rostill-Brookes, H., Larkin, M., Toms, A. and Churchman, C. (2011), "A shared experience of fragmentation: making sense of foster placement breakdown", *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry*, Vol. 16 No. 1, pp. 103-127.

Sahlberg, P. (2020), "Will the pandemic change schools?", *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*, Vol. 5 Nos 3/4, pp. 359-365.

Sarkar, S. (2016), "Application of PCA and DEA to recognize the true expertise of a firm: a case with primary schools", *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, Vol. 23 No. 3, pp. 740-751.

Sharma, I. and Kiran, D. (2021), "Study of parent's satisfaction for online classes under lockdown due to COVID-19 in India", *Journal of Statistics and Management Systems*, Vol. 24 No. 1, pp. 17-36.

Shehzadi, S., Nisar, Q.A., Hussain, M.S., Basheer, M.F., Hameed, W.U. and Chaudhry, N.I. (2020), "The role of digital learning toward students' satisfaction and university brand image at educational institutes of Pakistan: a post-effect of COVID-19", *Asian Education and Development Studies*, Vol. 10 No. 2, pp. 276-294.

Sintema, E.J. (2020), "Effect of COVID-19 on the performance of grade 12 students: implications for STEM education", *Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education*, Vol. 16 No. 7, em1851.

Slaikeu, K.A. (1990), *Crisis Intervention: A Handbook for Practice and Research*, 2nd ed., Allyn and Bacon, Boston, MA.

Smith, J.A. (2004), "Reflecting on the development of interpretative phenomenological analysis and its contribution to qualitative research in psychology", *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, Vol. 1 No. 1, pp. 39-54.

Smith, J.A. (2017), "Interpretative phenomenological analysis: getting at lived experience", *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, Routledge, Vol. 12 No. 3, pp. 303-304.

Smith, J.A. and Eatough, V. (2007), "Interpretative phenomenological analysis", in Lyons, E. and Coyle, A. (Eds), *Analysing Qualitative Data in Psychology*, SAGE Publications, Ltd, London, pp. 35-50.

Smith, J.A. and Osborn, M. (2003), "Interpretative phenomenological analysis", in Smith, J.A. (Ed.), *Qualitative Psychology: A Practical Guide to Research Methods*, SAGE Publications Ltd., London, UK, pp. 53-80.

Smith, J.A., Flowers, P. and Larkin, M. (2009), *Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis*, Sage Publications Inc, Los Angeles, CA.

Song, Z., Wang, C. and Bergmann, L. (2020), "China's prefectural digital divide: spatial analysis and multivariate determinants of ICT diffusion", *International Journal of Information Management*, Elsevier Ltd, Vol. 52, 102072.

Tarei, P.K. and Kumar, S. (2022), "Benchmarking the assessment of barriers to the admission of management education in India during the COVID-19 pandemic", *Benchmarking: An International Journal*, Vol. 29 No. 7, pp. 2231-2257.

Tran, T., Hoang, A.-D., Nguyen, Y.-C., Nguyen, L.-C., Ta, N.-T., Pham, Q.-H., Pham, C.-X., Le, Q.-A., Dinh, V.-H. and Nguyen, T.-T. (2020), "Toward sustainable learning during school suspension: socioeconomic, occupational aspirations, and learning behavior of Vietnamese students during COVID-19", *Sustainability*, Vol. 12 No. 10, p. 4195.

Trombly, C.E. (2020), "Learning in the time of COVID-19: capitalizing on the opportunity presented by the pandemic", *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*, Vol. 5 Nos 3/4, pp. 351-358.

Walliman, N. (2006), *Social Research Methods*, SAGE Publications Ltd, London.

Wen, T.J., Li, J.Y. and Song, B. (2021), "Does public segmentation matter in crisis communication? The interplay between public segmentation and crisis response strategies", *Corporate Communications*, Vol. 26 No. 3, pp. 622-635.

Whiting, A. and Williams, D. (2013), "Why people use social media: a uses and gratifications approach", *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, Vol. 16 No. 4, pp. 362-369.

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 Evidence of Chinese Education*, Vol. 4 No. 2, pp. 521-528.

Zainuddin, Z., Perera, C.J., Haruna, H. and Habiburrahim, H. (2020), "Literacy in the new norm: stay-home game plan for parents", *Information and Learning Sciences*, Vol. 121 Nos 7/8, pp. 645-653.

Zhou, S.-J., Zhang, L.-G., Wang, L.-L., Guo, Z.-C., Wang, J.-Q., Chen, J.-C., Liu, M., Chen, X. and Chen, J.-X. (2020), "Prevalence and socio-demographic correlates of psychological health problems in Chinese adolescents during the outbreak of COVID-19", *European Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*, Springer Berlin Heidelberg, Vol. 29 No. 6, pp. 749-758.

Zhu, X., Huebner, E.S. and Tian, L. (2019), "A person-centered longitudinal analysis of adolescents' loneliness and social anxiety: clusters, predictors, and outcomes", *School Psychology*, Vol. 34 No. 5, pp. 576-589.

Zia, A. (2020), "Exploring factors influencing online classes due to social distancing in COVID-19 pandemic: a business students perspective", *The International Journal of Information and Learning Technology*, Vol. 37 No. 4, pp. 197-211.

About the authors

Dr. Prateek Kalia is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Corporate Economy, Faculty of Economics and Administration, Masaryk University, Brno, Czech Republic. He has vast experience of twenty years, including a three-year post-doctoral position at Masaryk University. He has also worked as a Director and Professor at a leading university in North India. He is a specialist in the field of management with a keen interest in digital analytics, electronic commerce, e-service quality, and consumer behavior. His articles are published in leading international journals like the International Journal of Operations & Production Management, Computers in Human Behavior, Journal of Innovation & Knowledge, The TQM Journal, etc. He is a reviewer for various A-category journals. He has presented his work at several national and international conferences and received awards and accolades. Currently, he is editing a book related to digital analytics for Apple Academic Press (CRC Press). He is very well known for his novel smartphone user classification metrics called Cellular Graphics and holds

a copyright for it. He is a recipient of the prestigious Dean's award for excellent publication at Masaryk University. Prateek Kalia is the corresponding author and can be contacted at: Prateek.Kalia@econ. muni.cz

Dr. Bhavana Behal is a "Teach for BHU" Fellow under the scheme of the Institution of Eminence (IoE) at Mahila Maha Vidhyalaya, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India. She is a Doctorate in Education from the Faculty of Education (K), Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India. Her research interests are conflict management, educational philosophy, educational psychology, educational management and administration, teacher education, and guidance and counseling. She has participated in and presented her research at various national and international seminars/conferences. Her work is published in reputed journals.

Dr. Kulvinder Kaur has worked as a post-doctoral research associate at the Brij Disa Center for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (IIMA). She has completed her Ph.D. from Mittal School of Business, Lovely Professional University, India. Her research interests include exploring digital and social media use in varied contexts. She has a strong interest in the field of qualitative research, and her works are published in reputed international journals.

Dr. Deepa Mehta has completed her education at Vikram University, Ujjain, India, and Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, India. She is currently an Associate Professor in the Faculty of Education (K), at Banaras Hindu University, India. Her research interests span teaching of English language, educational psychology, peace education, education management and administration, and teacher education. She has completed two major research projects with the University Grants Commission (UGC), India, and the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR). She has presented her research findings at several national and international conferences/seminars. She has authored and edited several books and published more than 50 research papers and book chapters. Her most recent single-authored book is "*Education Administration*". Eight scholars have been awarded a doctorate under her guidance and presently she is guiding eight research scholars.