



## **The impact of the pandemic (Covid-19) on the school environment and family integration in students' lives in the Brazilian municipal public school system**

*The impact of the pandemic (Covid-19) on the school environment and family insertion in the lives of students in the Brazilian municipal public network*

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### **SUMMARY**

This article aims to highlight the issues that were part of the difficult and unusual process experienced by students in the Brazilian public school system during the social isolation imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. This generated abrupt and sudden changes in the adaptation and innovation phase of school administrators, teachers, students, and parents. Faced with the challenge of overcoming themselves, they threw themselves into the fight and acted bravely as seasoned professionals in pursuit of victory. With the help of qualitative research and a literature review, with the important contributions of André, Gomes, Gusmão, Marcolan, and others, we found significant and strengthened active and remarkable partnerships between families and schools, which resulted in the smooth running of teaching activities. The use of technology, represented by tablets, smartphones, computers, the internet, WhatsApp groups, as well as school dropout rates generated by social inequality, were addressed to guide the topic at hand, considering the major transformations undergone by Brazilian education.

**Keywords:** COVID-19 Pandemic. Educational Technology. Education Modality. Family. School Dropout.

### **ABSTRACT**

This article aims to highlight the issues that were part of the difficult and unusual process experienced by public school students in the Brazilian educational system during the social isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This period led to abrupt and sudden changes in the adaptation and innovation phase for school administrators, teachers, students, and parents. These individuals bravely rose to the challenge and fought courageously as fierce professionals in pursuit of success. Through qualitative research and a literature review, with important contributions from André, Gomes, Gusmão, Marcolan, and others, the study found a remarkable and strengthened partnership between family and school, which resulted in the smooth progression of teaching activities. The use of technology, represented by tablets, smart-phones, computers, the internet, and WhatsApp groups, as well as school dropout rates caused by social inequality, are addressed to guide the discussion, considering the major transformations the Brazilian education system discussed.

**Keywords:** COVID-19 Pandemic. Educational Technology. Education Modality. Family. School Dropout.

### **SUMMARY**

This article aims to highlight the problems that formed part of the difficult and unusual process experienced by public school students in the Brazilian educational system during the social isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This period provoked abrupt and sudden changes in the adaptation and innovation phase for school leaders, teachers, students and priests. These individuals stood up valiantly to face the challenge and fought with courage as fierce professionals in search of success. Through a qualitative investigation and a bibliographic review, with important contributions from André, Gomes, Gusmão, Marcolan and others, the study found a notable and strengthened collaboration between the family and the school, which resulted in the good progress of teaching activities. The use of technology, represented by tablets, smart phones, computers, the internet and WhatsApp groups, as well as school dropout rates caused by social inequality, are addressed to guide discussion, considering the great transformations that the Brazilian educational system has experienced.

**Keywords:** COVID-19 Pandemic. Educational Technology. Education Modality. Family. School Dropout.

This article aims to understand what occurred during the period of social isolation in the educational environment, regarding students' study routines and teaching practices. Qualitative in nature, this article is based on research conducted by education theorists and websites, highlighting highly relevant aspects of the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, caused by the Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), a time when, due to the high level of contagion of the virus, social isolation and physical distancing were necessary.

The MEC, through its ordinance No. 343 of March 17, 2020, replaced the previously in-person classes with remote ones, using digital resources, allowing students and teachers to maintain their usual contact using classes in a virtual environment, completely changing the daily routine of both, including families and the management team.

It was a challenging transition process. In fact, "adaptation" and "remodeling" are words that define this research, as there was no other way to resolve the chaos resulting from such a problem other than through a temporary rupture in part of the pedagogical approach that had previously been in place.

Even amidst adverse circumstances and scenarios, everyone came together to minimize potential negative outcomes so that students' learning wouldn't suffer. Families played a crucial role with their children, guiding them through assignments and encouraging them to overcome difficulties, serving as the primary link between them and the school. Theirs was an arduous and challenging task, but a truly promising one, because what else can we expect from a family if not this kind of attitude, as Rodrigues (2016, p. 31) explains about encouraging reading:

Reading can be encouraged by socializing agents such as school, library and family, and may or may not be worked on simultaneously. However, it is important that reading is motivated a priori by the family, as this is the individual's first space of sociability, where he or she comes to know reading as a habit already practiced at home.

This article also addresses the issue of school dropout, portrayed as an unfavorable factor stemming from this macabre period in our history, clearly demonstrating the extent of social inequality within many families. However, there is no doubt that both overcame challenges: school, student, and family. This overcoming was notable, despite coming at a high price—a price that, in the end, despite setbacks, ups and downs, mistakes and successes, yielded a favorable outcome.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

This study was developed following the parameters of bibliographic research, using a qualitative, exploratory, and descriptive approach. Critical analysis, aimed at understanding and explaining this challenging and sudden episode in the history of Brazilian education, is conducted by collecting materials from various authors. The scope of this study is the school environment related to the events that occurred during the COVID-19 pandemic, which generated—among other factors—social isolation and remote classes; family interaction with the school, as well as support for their children's school life; social inequality, which caused students countless difficulties in following remote classes due to lack of internet access, tablets, or smartphones; and the absence of public policies aimed at addressing the problem.

The bibliographic review is justified by the analysis of works that discuss this topic, with the help of scientific articles, dissertations and books, in order to support with solid foundations the theoretical framework, which properly explores the pedagogical and social results, taking into account the positive and negative effects of the pandemic on Brazilian public education.

## 3 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 3.1 A brief overview of the impact of COVID-19 on Brazilian education

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It is well known that the COVID-19 pandemic required social distancing as a public health strategy to reduce contagion. This resulted in the interruption of classroom activities, forcing schools to close and adapt to remote learning through the creation of WhatsApp groups and other suitable means for transmitting content for their respective subjects. Tablets, smartphones, and computers were used during this difficult phase of education.

The fact is that, due to social distancing adopted as a safety measure, schools, in a herculean

challenge, were forced to undergo an urgent process of adaptation and innovation in their pedagogical approach, incorporating classes into their online platforms to continue student activities. Brasil (2020) describes this critical moment at the height of the pandemic, whose social isolation resulted in the need to transition from in-person to remote classes, announcing that

ORDINANCE No. 343, OF MARCH 17, 2020, provides for emergency measures in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic:

Art. 1º To authorize, on an exceptional basis, the replacement of ongoing in-person courses by classes that use information and communication means and technologies, within the limits established by current legislation, by a higher education institution that is part of the federal education system, as referred to in art. 2º of Decree nº 9.235, of December 15, 2017.

§ 1 The authorization period referred to in the caput will be up to thirty days, extendable, depending on guidance from the Ministry of Health and state, municipal and district health agencies.

§ 2º It will be the responsibility of the institutions to define the subjects that may be replaced, to provide tools to students that allow them to monitor the content offered, as well as to carry out assessments during the period of authorization referred to in the caput.

§ 3 The application of the substitution referred to in the caput to Medicine courses as well as to professional internship and laboratory practices in other courses is prohibited.

§ 4 Institutions that opt to replace classes must notify the Ministry of Education of this measure within a period of up to fifteen days.

Art. 2 As an alternative to the authorization referred to in art. 1, higher education institutions may suspend in-person academic activities for the same period.

§ 1º Suspended academic activities must be fully resumed for the purpose of fulfilling the teaching days and class hours established in current legislation.

§ 2 Institutions may also change the vacation calendar, as long as they comply with the teaching days and class hours established in current legislation.

Art. 3 This Ordinance shall come into force on the date of its publication. (Brazil, 2020)

And so, everyone had to adapt to the new reality: the management team (board, pedagogical coordination, and secretariat), teachers, students, and parents. Parents had to guide their children with homework; students had to adapt to the new style of distance learning to understand the content; and teachers had to develop skills with digital platforms, recording video lessons and incorporating online activities into them.

For excellent engagement, many opted for Google Meet, a videoconferencing platform that provides real-time classes with screen sharing and a variety of features. WhatsApp, Telegram, and even email served as communication and follow-up apps, as well as a space for clarifying questions.

As for the management core, it was responsible for managing and coordinating all of this machinery.

Of course, there was an impact on school education. However, emergency measures—albeit modest, given the current challenges—adopted by mayors, governors, school administrators, and faculty minimized the effects of the chaos. This was achieved with the regulation of remote learning, which, while not comparable to in-person learning, was the most conducive way to glimpse possibilities. The same occurred in higher education institutions.

In line with this understanding, Gusmão (2024) states that: “In times of crisis, opportunities arise, but, unfortunately, most people are worried about the crisis. Few are able to perceive the opportunities.” Following this line of reasoning, there was nothing to be done in the face of such a health crisis, regarding finding adequate and technical procedures so that the educational process would not be harmed in its functionality, other than through remote teaching, which would temporarily replace face-to-face classes.

### 3.2 The importance of the family in the student's learning process

And what about family involvement in their children's learning during the pandemic, when, due to social isolation, schools closed their in-person activities and began them remotely? Everyone knows that families play a crucial role in their children's knowledge acquisition during the school year, participating in school meetings, actively monitoring their homework and notebooks, and observing their daily development.



There's no doubt about that. However, during the pandemic, they had to increase these responsibilities, starting to supervise their children extensively and help them explain the content for the development of activities. Online learning became a real challenge for students, particularly due to the technological resources they had to adopt.

In other words, families, their children, and the school had to reinvent themselves. Hence the importance of a constant relationship between family and school, especially since the beneficiary is always the student, who perceives a healthy atmosphere whose goal is their human and cognitive development. Tiba (1996, p. 178) believes that "It is within the home, in family socialization, that a child acquires, learns, and absorbs the discipline needed to, in the near future, have social health." And this is an undeniable truth, because it is within the family, in the privacy of the home, that the child takes his first steps and develops his character and sense of direction.

André and Barboza (2018, p.15), reiterate this thesis, emphasizing:

Assuming that the family and the school have the same objective, which would be the development of the individual as a whole, thus working on the affective, moral, and intellectual side, promoting the child's autonomy and forming conscious citizens, one can observe the importance of the connection between the two sides, family environment and school environment.

In fact, the family has this peculiarity and importance in the educational life of its children, which considerably favors the work of the school. In line with this premise, that the involvement of the family in the educational process of the child is truly fundamental, Maluf (2022, p. 78), states:

The partnership between the family and educational establishments is essential, whether built on principles of respect, mutual responsibility, trust and acceptance of each individual's peculiarities, with the aim of improving and facilitating the development of an appropriate pedagogical proposal (Maluf, 2022, p.78).

### 3.3 After all, during the pandemic, did Brazilian public education meet the educational needs of each student?

There is no doubt that the school environment needs to consider the diversity and difficulties of students, whatever they may be, thus serving as a guide for pedagogical strategies that unconditionally meet the needs of each student, with their own methodologies and teaching methods, in order to achieve success, making, in fact, the learning process accessible to all, even remotely.

During the pandemic, the difficulties faced were countless for obvious reasons: no one was prepared for this regrettable and fateful episode in our history. Education departments were forced to adapt at a dantesque and previously unimaginable rate. Based on the ideas of Sinepe/RS (Ensino..., 2020, np), this adaptation occurred because:

In an emergency and with little time for planning and discussion (which would take months in a normal situation), teachers and school administrators, public and private, from basic to higher education, had to adapt in real time the curriculum, activities, content and classes as a whole, which were designed for a personal and face-to-face experience (even if blended), and transform them them in a fully experimental Emergency Remote Education. Taking a snapshot of this process, we can affirm that education has never been so innovative. It was the fastest digital transformation ever recorded across an entire sector, simultaneously. (Teaching..., 2020, np).

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And that's exactly what we sought to do during the pandemic in the municipal public school system of Caucaia, Ceará, where every effort was made—despite the Herculean and unexpected difficulties—prioritizing student learning. The Municipal Department of Education even provided tablets to students. The results were evident. satisfactory, both for teachers, managers, coordinators, as well as for students and parents.

The municipality of Caucaia has shown that quality education is achieved with responsibility, commitment to its students, and that promoting education is not just about worrying about numbers and exceeding goals, but a mission, an ideal, a purpose in life that grows each day with the learning of new lessons that result in rectification.



of errors, with the aim of achieving excellence.

Unfortunately, not everything is rosy when it comes to the quality of Brazilian education. Numerous municipalities, especially in the Northeast, failed to provide the necessary resources for their students to attend and take advantage of classes productively. Even in Caucaia, the difficulties became evident in different ways, as this unexpected and atypical event exposed the lack of emergency protocols and structural weaknesses—many of which were preexisting.

### 3.4 School dropout during the pandemic

The consequences that Covid-19 caused in Brazilian education were beyond imagination, as it bordered on the sphere of students' mental health, causing immense difficulties in reasoning and assimilation of content, due to the lack of follow-up of explanations formulated by teachers, the time available of parents and their lack of knowledge to help their children with their studies in this difficult mission.

Anxiety, lack of motivation, problems arising from lack of concentration, and geographical separation from classmates are some of the indelible marks left by Covid-19. From there, it was only a matter of time before school dropouts became a reality. And what is the worst thing about school dropouts in a person's life? It is undoubtedly social inequality, which leads to low wages and less important positions in both the private and public sectors. Children, young people, and adults have dropped out of school for a variety of reasons. Some, for the reasons described above; others, because they couldn't adapt to remote classes and lost their desire to learn.

The Alicerce Institute Blog says that:

According to the C6 Bank/DataFolha survey, four million Brazilian students, aged 6 to 34, dropped out of school in 2020. School dropout rate in 2020: Higher education: 16.3% - High school: 10.8% - Elementary school: 4.6%. Among the main causes of school dropout is socioeconomic factors, with students from lower social classes leading the dropout rates. Classes A and B: 6.9% - Classes D and E: 10.6%. Lack of internet access. Due to the pandemic, almost all schools opted for online classes, which contributed to many children and young people missing out on classes last year, as 47 million people lack internet access, according to a study by the Internet Steering Committee in Brazil. According to UNICEF, among Brazilian states that adopted remote learning, only 15% distributed devices to students, and less than 10% subsidized internet access. As a result, 3.7 million enrolled students were unable to access school activities and study at home.

What was seen as a preponderant factor hindering access to remote classes for thousands of students, especially in early childhood education, primary and secondary school, and high school, in various parts of the country, was the social vulnerability in which families already found themselves well before the pandemic, which led to inaccessibility to the internet and, in countless cases, difficulties due to a lack of resources for technological access via a smartphone or tablet. As Cpers (2022) reports, "The main reasons were the difficulty of accessing remote classes and financial problems, with the students who led the dropout rate belonging to classes D and E."

Cpers (2022) continues to emphatically address this topic:

Nívia Marques Monteiro, a history teacher in the municipal school system of Maracanaú, a municipality in the state of Ceará, located 24 km from the capital, Fortaleza, experienced this tragedy firsthand. "Many students were unable to attend classes remotely; we had a significant dropout rate for a variety of reasons (...). Social inequality is significant here, and some students lacked equipment and materials to study, and as a result, many of them dropped out of school."

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This situation significantly harmed low-income families, who had only one cell phone to meet everyone's needs, making it impossible for their children to attend remote classes, which contributed significantly to school dropout rates.

This result was reflected after the end of social isolation, when that many did not return to the classroom environment.

In this regard, Senhoras (2020, p.6) makes the following observation:

On the one hand, the situations of total paralysis of face-to-face and virtual processes naturally generated the most problematic context, as the strong disruption of teaching-learning processes in



The pandemic context poses significant limitations to the full absorption of content in the post-pandemic period, with the return of compressed academic cycles. It is in these problematic situations of complete shutdown that the increase in school dropouts becomes more pronounced in the medium term, as the post-pandemic period is synchronously permeated by a concentrated agenda of educational content delivery, precisely at a time of labor market difficulties, demanding efforts from the various members of a vulnerable family.

Another factor contributing to school dropouts was the fact that many schools, upon being authorized to resume in-person classes, experienced structural issues in their infrastructure, thus failing to comply with health protocols. This forced their students to continue remote learning for a period of time.

### 3.5 The legacy that remote classes left as acquired knowledge

Was the legacy that remote classes brought in terms of knowledge for students truly satisfactory in terms of consistent and proficient study continuity? Obviously not, and this has a clear and perceptible explanation. How can a three- to four-hour classroom lesson, with proper guidance from the teacher, be prominently replaced by a video lecture lasting just a few minutes and lacking the presence of the teacher, classmates, and the customary exchange of information through mutual dialogue about the reason for the topic at hand?

Certainly, a student who completed preschool four and five (2020 and 2021), especially in public schools, and began the first year of elementary school, a period during which literacy is developed, encountered greater difficulty in keeping up. Similarly, students who completed eighth and ninth grades and began high school in 2022, as well as those who completed the last two years of high school during the pandemic.

How did they continue their studies? Certainly with some difficulty due to the lack of access to certain content that was so important for their future studies. After all, you can't compare an in-person class with a remote one, as the former's quality and duration are significantly superior to the latter's.

According to Cpers (2022), "The closure of schools during the pandemic in 2020 reduced expected learning by 72.5%. This, in addition to being serious, left profound consequences and indelible and undesirable traces not only on public health, but also on the functionality - temporary, of course - of Brazilian education, since the school environment is truly important for the socialization and, consequently, cultural enrichment of the student, an excellent stimulator of knowledge, as Gomes (1999, p. 31) says: "school is a sociocultural space in which different presences meet."

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Taking into account what has been mentioned throughout this article, the purpose of this information was objectively understood to better explain what occurred during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021, when social isolation was enacted and, consequently, the temporary end of in-person classes and the beginning of remote ones. The suspension of in-person school activities resulted in a Herculean challenge for principals, coordinators, and secretaries, as well as for teachers, students, and parents, especially in public schools in Brazil.

It was a truly turbulent period for everyone, as the art of adaptation and innovation is never easy, especially in adverse situations like the pandemic. This study provided, in its brief outlines, an accurate portrayal of events in the field of education within the context of the procedures of those involved in ensuring quality education. It discussed adaptability to technological means in an effort to promote dynamic classes.

and promising, considering the context of difficulties arising from the physical distance between teachers and students.

He raised the issue of school dropout, arising from the lack of stimulus and financial conditions, caused by social inequality that made it impossible for countless families to access smartphones, tablets, computers and the internet.



It showed the vulnerability and lack of structure of schools when they were unable to receive their students after the end of isolation. social ment.

The research developed here brought to light the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, but it also incisively revealed the heroic stance of its protagonists. It's obvious that every process, especially challenging ones, is prone to difficulties and even failures. Brazilian education, especially public education, was no different. However, since every difficulty is—or at least should be seen as—a victory in disguise, the pandemic left, beyond its destructive trail, important lessons: it's important to prepare for setbacks that may arise without warning.

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