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## Research Paper

Mothers' lived experiences during COVID-19 pandemic (A qualitative study using a phenomenological approach)



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Fazlollah Hasanvand<sup>1</sup>, Zahra Ghalami<sup>2</sup>, Taranom Salehi<sup>3\*</sup>, Zahra Tayefi<sup>4</sup> & Zahra Nafar<sup>5</sup>

1. Educational Psychology Department, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran.
2. Educational Psychology Department, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran.
3. Clinical and General Psychology Department, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran.
4. Educational Psychology Department, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran.
5. Clinical and General Psychology Department, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran.

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### ABSTRACT

**Objective:** This research aimed to study mothers' lived experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Methods:** The research methodology was qualitative, and the research type was phenomenological. The statistical population of the study consisted of mothers with student children who had high levels of depression, anxiety, and stress based on the DASS-24 questionnaire due to the experience of the coronavirus pandemic in 2021. The sampling method was purposeful and continued until theoretical saturation was reached (30 people). Colaizzi's seven-step analysis method was applied to analyze the interviews. The gathering and analysis of the data were handled simultaneously.

**Results:** 1177 codes were extracted and eventually categorized into 6 components. The findings indicate that we can study mothers' lived experiences during the spread of COVID-19 from six perspectives: constructive lived experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, emergence, and development of psychological issues, social issues, educational and cultural issues, family issues, and physical and systemic issues.

**Conclusion:** The findings of the current research showed that the widespread of the COVID-19 disease had created problems in the different fields of life from the mothers' point of view, But the spread of this disease has provided them with positive experiences such as self-improvement and personal growth.

## 1. Introduction

The world has encountered COVID-19 disease since December 2019, and an intense infectious disease aroused from the new COVID-19 (Grolli et al., 2021). The World Health Organization (WHO) declared on March 11, 2020, that COVID-19 could be defined as an epidemic (WHO, 2020). The findings have indicated that this disease had a significant impact on individuals' everyday life worldwide; some of these

impacts are the decrease in mental health, life quality, and physical and athletic activities and an increased stress, fear, anger, mental derangements, learning difficulties, harming friendly and family bonds, isolation, cancellation of public events, addition to workloads, sleeping disorders, and excessive usage of virtual media and internet (Kabasawa et al., 2021; Li et al., 2021; Chawla, Tom, Sen, & Sagar, 2021).

\*Corresponding Author:

Taranom Salehi

Address: Clinical and General Psychology Department, Allameh Tabataba'i University, Tehran, Iran.

E-mail: [tarannomsalehi93@gmail.com](mailto:tarannomsalehi93@gmail.com)

The increasing number of patients, spreading in various states, the unpredictable future of this pandemic are the main concerns. Other lateral social, economic, occupational, and personal damages such as losing jobs or your loved ones have also aggravated these noisome conditions (Danese, Smith, Chitsabesan, & Dubicka, 2020).

On the other hand, the COVID-19 epidemic has caused prompt and unsurpassed changes in the lives of billions of children and teenagers (Ravens-Sieberer et al., 2021). Approximately 144 countries shut down their school to prevent the virus from spreading, and above 1.2 billion students left their educational environment and classroom due to social distancing worldwide (Qianwei et al., 2020; Zhu, Zhuang, & Ip, 2021). Overcoming the present conditions and complying with the limitations can be challenging for children and teenagers because these conditions are incompatible with their developmental tasks. Accordingly, the challenges and consequences of COVID-19 might drastically impact the quality of children and teenagers' mental health (Ravens-Seibier et al., 2021; Salari et al., 2020).

The COVID-19 outbreak has significantly influenced social relationships between individuals COVID-19 outbreak; because social distancing is still the safest way to prevent the COVID-19 outbreak (Grolli et al., 2021). COVID-19 has also had tremendous effects on education and learning. Shutting down institutions was a discreet action to prevent COVID-19, influencing educational systems worldwide. The process of teaching and learning has transitioned from a face-to-face form into virtual methods, which has caused many issues; because many agents' effects on virtual learning, teachers' output, and students' skills have been influenced (Duraku and Hoxha, 2020). Meanwhile, some factors such as school staff and students' digital competence (Mielgo-Conde, Seijas-Santos, & Grande-de-Pardo, 2021), school' quality aid for learning, promoted online system trust, the effectiveness of formative assessment on this relatively new educational method can have contrastive effects on online and virtual class (Tartavulea, Albu, Albu, Dieaconescu, & Petre, 2020). However, these alternations happened quite suddenly, and educational instruments and resources are not yet prepared in many areas. For example, weak internet bandwidth, lower virtual quality in rural areas in comparison to urban areas due to the lack of substructures, and as a result, absence in virtual classes are a few issues in some countries (Radha, Mahalakshmi, Kumar, & Saravankumar, 2021). The low quality of the education, teachers'

restricted access, conceding a big portion of education to parents have made virtual education very difficult in the COVID-19 era (Thorell et al., 2021), and the low quality of the teaching process, evaluation, and appraisements, and additional burden on teachers and students have concerned students, teachers, and parents (Duraku and Hoxha, 2020).

The damages that originated from the COVID-19 can be bigger threats to some societies, and among these, primary mothers responsible for the mental and physical health of their children confront unique conditions, and thus, require special attention; because children and teenagers are in a sensitive growth stage and mothers are the ones that are mostly entangled with it. On the other hand, individuals' lived experiences of these crises can present a practical guide to mothers and teachers who have faced similar problems. The research results have depicted that mothers believe that the COVID-19 restrictions have influenced their students' children' sleeping quality, planning, and psychological issues. The changes created by COVID-19 have influenced mothers' quality of sleeping, planning, and psychological issues as well (Cellini, Giorgio, Mioni, & Di Riso, 2021). On the other hand, the number of activities accomplished by mothers and fathers at home has increased significantly. Mothers are always entangled with responsibilities that increase their work and stress them out (Clark et al., 2020). Many of these mothers are also working women, and by shutting down the school, they have taken over the responsibility of educating their children (doing the homework and encouraging their children to be active in online classes) (Imbergates et al., 2021). Many working mothers have reported that they had to reduce their working time to try various solutions for facing these new conditions (Manzo & Minello, 2020). The research results show that mothers are also exposed to psychological damages such as stress, depression (Spinola, Liotti, Speranza, & Tambelli, 2020), anxiety, and domestic violence (Malkawi, Almhdawi, Jaber, & Alqatarneh, 2020). In past research, the level of anxiety and mental pressure of different sections of society has been examined through quantitative studies (especially the medical staff), but in this research, to conduct qualitative research in-depth, only the group of mothers as a society under the pressure in raising children during the outbreak of covid-19 was studied in depth and through interviews and not quantitative measurements. Hence, the present research aims to study the various lived experiences of mothers during the COVID-19 outbreak.

## 2. Materials and Methods

The present research was conducted in a qualitative method, and the approach was phenomenological so that lived experiences of mothers in Tehran during the COVID-19 can be comprehended. The statistical population of the study consisted of mothers with student children who had high levels of depression, anxiety, and stress based on the DASS-42 questionnaire due to the experience of the coronavirus pandemic. The sampling method was purposeful and continued until theoretical saturation was reached (30 people), and then interviewed. Colaizzi's (1978) seven-step analysis method was applied to analyze the data that used to extract, organize and analyze qualitative data. Researchers who use the phenomenological approach consider the use of this method to be a clear and logical process through which the main structure of an experience can be examined. The summary of the data analysis steps is presented in table 1.

The inclusion criteria for the present study are informed consent to answer the DASS-42 questionnaire and participate in the interview, living in the city of Tehran and getting a higher than average score in the DASS-42 questionnaire. Also, lack of consent to complete the questionnaire or participate in the interview at any point of the research and the place of residence is outside the scope of the research are among the exclusion criteria for the present research. In the analysis process of this research, which was accomplished during the open coding step, alongside thoroughly studying the conducted interviews, every word or phrase that the subjects mentioned about the contrastive or destructive consequences of the spread of COVID-19 were considered a code. Then, the codes associated with their concept were put next to each other in the axial coding phase. Finally, more extended and elevated categories and components were formed to determine the fundamental constructive and destructive consequences the sampling population has experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. The general process of data analysis was conducted using the MAXQDA software. Cohen kappa's indicator was used to assess the reliability of coding and the homogeneity of the findings. Moreover, internal validity or experts' views were used to verify the validity.

$$0.79 = \frac{30+0}{38} = \text{Observed agreement}$$
$$\frac{A+B}{N} * \frac{A+C}{N} * \frac{C+D}{N} * \frac{B+D}{N} = \frac{30+4}{38} * \frac{30+6}{38} * \frac{6+0}{38} * \frac{4+0}{38} = 0.015$$

=chance agreement

$$\frac{\text{observed agreement} - \text{chance agreement}}{1 - \text{chance agreement}} * \frac{0.79 - 0.015}{0.985} = 0.78 = \text{kappa}$$

A semi-structured interview method was used to obtain data in the present research; thus, a few questions related to the research subject were asked from mothers about the alternations in their own lives and their families during the COVID-19 outbreak. Then, subsidiary questions were asked in the interview process to understand the responses better. The questions were asked to state their various experiences in different life domains extensively. The time of the interviews differed from 20 to 40 minutes.

The first questions were about demographic information. Participants' voice was recorded in the interviews after receiving their permission and written on a paper word-by-word. At the beginning of the interview, it was explained to the participants that moral principles such as confidentiality and trusteeship, anonymity, and secrecy of the information were heeded, and their informed consent was received. The interview began with this question "Do you state your experiences about the alternations that took place in your own life, and your children and husband's life during the COVID-19 outbreak?" Further relevant questions were asked on this subject to better comprehension and clarify their responses. In the interview, it was declared to all participants that they could withdraw from the interviews whenever they wished.

Lovibond & Lovibond DASS-42 (1993): This scale consists of 42 items including 14 items for each symptom of anxiety, depression and stress. The questions on this scale are rated from 0 (not applicable to me) to 3 (applicable to me). The results of different studies were similar in terms of internal consistency, convergent validity, and divergent validity among different clinical and non-clinical populations. Indeed, many studies showed that the DASS is a valid and reliable instrument in the clinical and general population (Pooravari, Dehghani, Salehi, & Habibi, 2017). The studies showed that DASS42 had good internal consistency, which had values ranging from .91 for depression, .81 for anxiety, and .88 for stress (Vignola & Tucci, 2014). The reliability of this scale in the present study was calculated based on Cronbach's alpha coefficient equal to 0.81.

## 3. Results

Nowadays, data analyses are considered one of the most vital stages of research in most research based on research data gathered from scientific subjects. Constructive and destructive consequences experienced during the COVID-19 were studied for analyzing this research's findings. Figure 1 categorizes the participants' lived experiences based

on the research findings.

The results of figure one display that mothers' lived experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic can be categorized into two categories constructive and destructive. Constructive experiences were fewer than destructive experiences, and this category includes 11 components which are self-actualization, personal growth, enhancing personal skills, eliminating destructive social relationships and strengthening constructive family relationships, increasing appreciation and having a positive cognition of spiritual possessions, taking better care of your physical and mental health, spreading the reading culture, increasing resilience and adaptability towards this disturbed world we live in, decreasing luxuriance and consumerism, enhancing the conditions of nature and environment, increasing knowledge of modern technologies, forming pleasant dietary habits, deployment, and development of occupations. One of the mothers talked about the positive impacts of the COVID-19 disease:

"One of the good things about COVID-19 was that we were together; this time had many benefits for us; I had time to catch up with my works, I read a lot more, I dedicated more time to my child."

The number of destructive experiences was higher; therefore, they were categorized into 5 general categories: the emergence and development of psychological problems, social problems, training educative problems, family problems, and physical problems. Emergence and development of psychological problems consist of components that cause and increase psychological anxiety and public distress; the ones that form or develop psychological disorders, issues and mental pressure on women due to increased burden they have to handle, lack of gratification of aesthetic requirements and artistic and entertaining activities, addictions and excessive usage of social media, restricting children and tense behavior outbreak (i.e., aggression, salvo, fear, and unpleasant behaviors).

One of the mothers talked about the increases physiological problems during the spread of COVID-19: "I believed that mental diseases have expanded in this era. Depression has increased. The fear of the COVID-19 has caused distress and anxiety for some individuals, and they are mental disease factors."

Emergence and development of social problems consist of components of increasing social distancing, emotional bonds, absence of a growth opportunity for children and teenagers from participating in group activities, economic problems and alternation in job status, children and teenagers' communication

problems, social idleness, not attending social events, elderly related problems, and lack of an opportunity to learn various skills. For example, one of the mothers said this regarding her communication problems:

"We have gotten more secluded during these times. Everyone has departed. Somehow it is like they cannot do anything anymore. People used to talk on the phone, but even that kind of interaction has also reduced. Everyone is just so isolated."

The emergence and development of training and educational problems include the following components: decreased quality of education and evaluation in virtual learning, formation of educative and moral deviation in virtual space, lack of emotional bonds in the classes, decreased motivation and enthusiasm, teachers' difficulties in supervising teaching and learning processes, parents' difficulties and unawareness in supervision, and economic problems. One of the mothers talked about the changes our educational system has undergone through after the COVID-19 outbreak:

"Children have lost communication with their teachers. COVID-19 has significantly influenced studying. Now I see younger children who study through online classes, which is not good for them. They do not study. They just do nothing all day and do a little homework at night, take pictures, and send them. I think it has brought great damage to our education."

The emergence and development of family problems consist of communication problems among family members, tensions and conflict between parents and children, and conflicts between spouses. One of the mothers talked about her experience regarding the effects of the COVID-19 disease on family relationships:

"To be honest, the COVID-19 has been tough for me. I have children, and I have to deal with them all day; well, that is tedious and affects my relationship with my husband. I inconsistently asked him to go out, and I felt like I was drifting away from my social dimension. Now I tell him you did what you wished, and I was the one with all the responsibilities. It is an awful feeling."

The emergence and development of physical problems include decreased physical and athletic activities, development, and spread of diseases, decreased physical fitness, and inappropriate physical conditions. Regarding the physical changes after the spread of COVID-19, one of the mothers mentioned:

"I think everyone was entangled with it in the beginning. Everyone said that they go to bed in the morning."

Based on table 2, positive lived experiences included 11 components and 212 free codes. Among the negative experiences were the emergence and development of psychological problems with 299 free codes, social problems with 251 free codes, educative and training problems with 245 free codes, physical problems with 102 free codes, and family problems with 67 free codes had the highest free code frequency. Opportunities for self-actualization, personal growth, and enhancing personal skills were the most required constructive lived experiences. Among the experience psychological problems, development and increased psychological anxiety, distress, and public concern

and development of psychological disorders were the most important ones. The increased social distancing component and decrease in closeness, emotional bonds were the most critical problems of experienced social problems. Among educative and training problems, the component of decrease in the quality of education and evaluation in virtual classes' formation of moral-educative deviations throughout the internet were highly emphasized. Communication problems between family members among family problems and reduction of physical and athletic activities among physical problems held great importance.

**Table 1. A summary of Colaizzi's phenomenological descriptive method steps**

Steps	Description
1	Accurately studying all descriptions and important findings of the participants.
2	Extracting significant phrases and sentences related to the phenomenon
3	Giving meaning to significant extracted sentences
4	Organizing participants' descriptions and common concepts in specific categories
5	Turning all the derived beliefs into precise integral descriptions
6	Turning the integral description of the phenomenon into a short and precise description
7	Approaching the participants to clarify the obtained viewpoints and validating the findings

**Table 2. Frequency of extracted codes in different coding steps**

Extracted Components	Axial Codes	open codes	Code Frequency (n)
<b>Constructive lived experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic</b>	Self-actualization, personal growth, enhancing personal skills	Participating in online foreign language classes Reflecting on personal weaknesses and reinforcing them Discovering and reinforcing potentials	48
	Eliminating unpleasant social relationships and reinforcing constructive family bonds	More time to spend with the family Cutting off futile and wasteful relationships Improving your relationship with your children	37
	Boosting gratitude and having a positive attitude towards spiritual possessions	Boosting gratitude Considering the value of health Getting a better understanding of family joys	28
	Spreading the reading culture	More chances to read Using electronic books Increased group readings through virtual space	18
	Forming pleasant dietary habits	Consuming fresh and healthy nutrients Taking vitamins and supplements Ordering fewer takeaways	17
	Taking better care of your physical and mental health	Increased open space activities Increased visits to mental health specialists Further hygiene maintenance	16
	Increasing resilience and adaptability towards this disturbed world we live in	Having a more rational attitude toward problems Increasing acceptance and resilience Feeling competent in crisis	13
	Deployment and development of online businesses	Virtualizing businesses Creating domestic jobs Development of online businesses	12
	Decreasing luxuriance and consumerism	Eliminating costly and useless traditions Decrease of luxuries parties with excessive, unnecessary costs Facilitating marriages	9
	Increasing knowledge of modern technologies	Increased technology application knowledge Getting to know the positive effects of using technology Learning how to use virtual space and computers	8
	Enhancing the conditions of nature and the environment	Causing less damage to nature Decrease of commotion, traffic, and sound pollution A chance for nature and the environment to respire	7

<b>Emergence and development of psychological problems</b>	causing and increasing psychological anxiety and public distress	Concerns and fears of the disease Worrying about the increased post-COVID-19 mental health problems A sense of lack of calmness	110
	Development of psychological problems	Anxiety Depression Scrupulosity	71
	Women's problems and mental pressures posed by increased burden	Adding to parents' burden The presence of mothers in education and doing online homework Concerning more about their children's health	40
	Lack of gratification of aesthetic, artistic requirements, and entertaining activities	Lack of gratification of aesthetic, artistic requirements, and entertaining activities Restriction of entertaining facilities Reduction of the senses of joy and happiness Traveling less	33
	Addictions and excessive usage of social media	Wasting time on the internet The probability of children's moral deviation Children limit their world to their phone	25
	Restricting children and tense behavior outbreak (aggression, salvo, fear, and unpleasant behavior).	Increased aggression Children having difficulties understanding COVID-19 restrictions Having anger control problems	20
	<b>Social problems</b>	Increased social distancing and close, emotional bonds	Not communicating with friends or family Fewer fulfillments of emotional requirements It is more difficult to communicate socially
Lack of an opportunity for children and teenagers to grow in their sensitive age		Decrease of playing and activity time for children Lack of an opportunity for introverted children or the ones with learning problems to do better Children losing opportunities by being at home	44
Children and teenagers' communication problems		Missing a chance to have interpersonal relationships The probability of an increase in communication problems after the COVID-19 era Isolation	37
Economic problems and alternations in job statuses		Economic damages caused by COVID-19 Restrictions of jobs Development of online businesses	33
Social idleness and not attending social events		Being socially limited Staying home all the time Separation from people	28
Elderly related problems		Elderlies feeling lonely Difficulties in their lives due to the absence of communication Failure to meet the expectations old parents have	15
Absence of opportunity to learn various kinds of skills		Lack of an opportunity to learn social skills Limitations of educational opportunities Interference of educational classes	13
<b>Cultural and educational problems</b>	Decrease of the quality of education and evaluation in virtual learning	Academic failure Virtual teaching not being suitable for all teaching subjects The unreal grade improvement of weak students due to teaching	71
	Formation of moral-educative deviations in the virtual space	The chances that students would not use the internet in appropriate ways Children facing a new unlimited world Losing focus on education due to the extent of the internet	45
	Failure to create emotional bonds in classes and schools	Absence of an emotional bond between teacher and students Reduction of interaction between students Reduction of interaction between the teacher and the student	35
	Decrease of motivation and enthusiasm to study	Lack of motivation to study Absence of some students in online classes Reduction in children's energy level, enthusiasm, and motivation to study due to the absence in a physical environment and reduction of peer interaction	34
	Teachers' difficulties in supervising the teaching and learning process	Failure to realize how much the students have learned Absence of encouragement and punishment in the class Lack of teachers' supervision and control on students' distractions	32

	parents' difficulties and unawareness in supervision	The difficulties of virtual education for parents Parents' failure to control the usage of social media Difficulties for the students to provide the required tools and facilities in online classes	28
<b>Family problems</b>	communication problems among family members	Increased argument among family members Increased tensions between couples Losing control	29
	Tensions and conflict between parents and children	Increased tension between children and parents Increased parents' commands Arguing with children	21
	Conflicts between spouses	Causing spouse's issues to stand out more Spouse getting angry The appearance of tension between parents	17
	Decrease of physical athletic activities	Physical growth limitations for infants Gaining weight Decrease in athletic activities	45
<b>Physical problems</b>	Development and spread of diseases	Damages as the result of the decrease of athletic activities Insomnia Eye damage	31
	Decrement of physical fitness and physical conditions	Eating more Increased edacity and obesity due to stress Gaining weights because gyms are closed	26

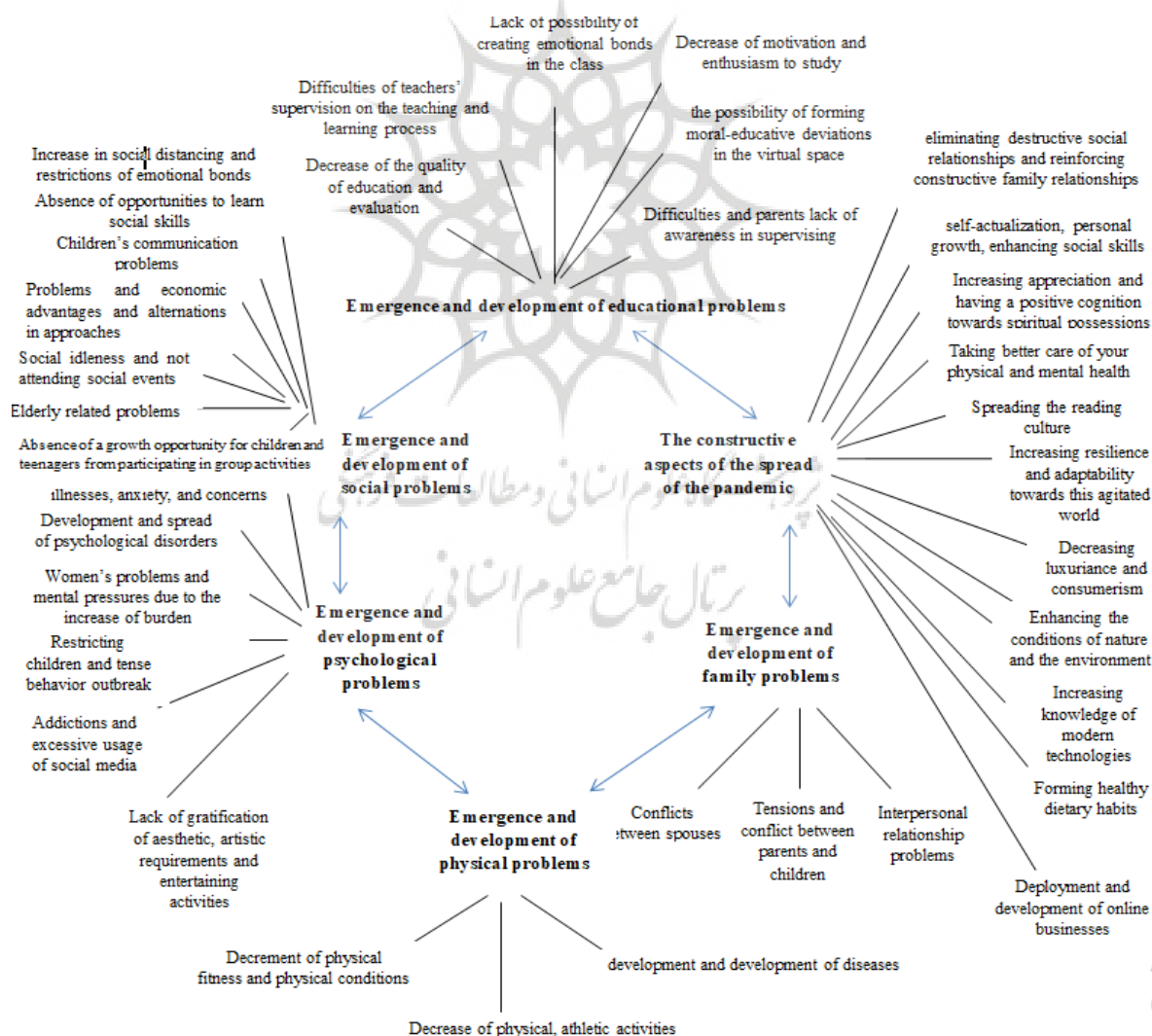


Figure 1. Multi-dimensional model of mothers' constructive and destructive lived experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

This research indicates that the outbreak of the COVID-19 disease had some helpful results, despite all the problems it caused for individuals worldwide. Some of these helpful results are self-actualization, personal growth, enhancing personal skills; eliminating destructive social relationships and strengthening positive family bonds; accession of appreciation and having a positive understanding towards spiritual possessions; Spreading the reading culture; forming positive dietary habits; taking better care of physical and mental health; increasing resilience and adaptability towards this disturbed world we live in; deployment and development of online businesses; decreasing luxuriance and consumerism; increasing knowledge of modern technologies; enhancing the conditions of nature and the environment. These findings are consistent with the research results of Zambrano-Monserrate, Alejandra Ruanob, & Sanchez-Alcaldec (2020), Rume & Islam (2020), Williams et al. (2021). Decrease in serious damages being done to nature and natural resources (Chakraborty et al., 2021), an opportunity for self-evaluation, alleviating the speed of life and being less hasty, acquiring knowledge and new skills, developing positive habits, spending more quality time with relatives (Krajewski, Frackowiak, Kubacka, & Rogowski, 2021), acquiring positive confrontation approaches during the pandemic such as exercising, doing outside activities, and interacting with family members and friends (Sarah, Oceane, Emily, & Carole, 2021) are the positive aspects of the spread of COVID-19. It is worth mentioning that the COVID-19 outbreak caused widespread restrictions and temporary recess of many occupations. This working at home decreased commutes and vehicle usage and made companies consume less fuel, thereby decreasing air pollution in many crowded cities of the world. Decreased commuting, working at home, and widespread restrictions naturally made many individuals stay at home and played an important role in decreasing damage to the environment and natural resources. The COVID-19 outbreak provided an opportunity for many individuals worldwide to pay more attention to issues such as self-actualization, learning skills, reading, and taking care of their backlog. The spread of this disease also developed healthy habits and behaviors among individuals (e.g., eating healthy food, fruits, and vegetables).

Analyzing this research's results show that the emergence and development of psychological problems were greatly influenced by the spread of COVID-19. According to the findings, the main

problems detected in the present study were as follows: development and spread of psychological anxiety and public distress; development and spread of psychological disorders; women's problems and mental pressures due to the increased burden of their disturbed world; lack of gratification of aesthetic, artistic requirements, and entertaining activities; addictions and excessive usage of social media; restricting children and tense behavior outbreak. These findings are consistent with those reported by Koçak, Koçak, and Younis (2021); Shah, Mohammad, Qureshi, Abbas, and Aleem (2021); Feinberg et al. (2021); Bozdağ (2021); de Figueiredo et al. (2021). Some of the psychological consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak are depression, anxiety, and stress (Westrupp et al., 2021), post-traumatic stress (Liu, Erdei, & Mittal, 2021), sleeping disorders (Partinen, 2021); feeling lonely (Pann et al., 2021). The possibility of being infected with the COVID-19 virus has caused a lot of anxiety and fear for all individuals. Many individuals have been infected with this virus and lost their family members and friends, and bereavement of health and their loved ones had done serious damage to them. Moreover, staying at home and implementing restrictions and quarantine have made life be monotonous, and this has provided the grounds for depression development. The limitations on social communications and family commutes have brought isolation and loneliness for many individuals during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Analyzing the present research's results show that the emergence and development of social problems is one of the most important alternations caused by the COVID-19. Some of the problems are increased social distancing and decreased close emotional bonds; lack of an opportunity for children and teenagers to grow while they are in such sensitive age; economic problems and alternations in job statuses; children and teenagers' communication problems; social idleness and not attending social events; elderly related problems; lack of an opportunity to acquire various skills. The present research's findings are consistent with the research results of Ali, Yilmaz, Fareed, Shahzad, & Ahmad, 2021; Krendl & Perry, 2021; Philpot et al., 2021. The social consequence of the COVID-19 outbreak is a decrease in acquiring social skills (Charney, Camarata, & Chern, 2021). Actions such as using masks, social distancing, and holding online classes and meetings to prevent infection can have negative impacts on social communications (especially on children and teenagers) since they are always at home, and the likelihood of creating face-to-face social communications is low.



This would have have destructive consequences for this sensitive group.

Analyzing the results shows that one of the main domains of experienced alternations due to COVID-19 is the emergence and development of educational problems. Some of the problems in this field are decrease in the quality of education and evaluation in virtual education; development of educational deviations via social media; lack of the opportunity to create emotional bonds in classes and schools; reduction of motivations and enthusiasm to study; teachers' difficulties to supervise the teaching and learning process; parents' difficulties and unawareness in supervision and economic problems. These results are consistent with the research findings of some other researchers (Bansak & Starr, 2021; Mortazavi, Salehabadi, Sharifzade, & Ghardashi, 2021; Yildirim, 2021). The problem of internet accessibility, substructure deficiency, class management, human resources (Sari & Nayir, 2020), and unilateral interaction and focus reduction (Shim and Lee, 2020) are the challenges of online classes in these times. The spread of COVID-19 worldwide happened so fast and there was no much time for countries to adjust their education system and create the required grounds for virtual education. This issue aroused many problems for students, parents, and teachers, especially in the initial months of the spread. Shutting schools down due to the disease's widespread contagion and depriving the students of education significantly reduced their motivation and interest in studying. On the other hand, students' consistent access to social media has caused some of them to abuse this space and use it excessively. These are why virtual education is considered an inappropriate alternative despite all the efforts teachers and parents have made.

Based on the analysis of the results of this research, the emergence and development of family problems is another important change caused by COVID-19. Communication problems among family members; formation of tension and arguments between parents and children; development of tension between spouses are some of the problems related to this domain. These findings are in line with previous studies (Fosco, Sloan, & Fang, 2021; Hsu & Henke, 2021). Domestic violence (Piquero, Jennings, Jemison, Kaukinen, & Knaul, 2021); decrease in couples' relationship qualities, and dysfunction of families (Schmid, Wörn, Hank, Sawatzki, & Walper, 2021) are some of the changes posed by the COVID-19 outbreak. Changes such as lockdown, remote workings, and shutting

down schools have caused family members to be with each other more than ever. It seems that the prolonged period of this disease and the families being constantly together and the mental consequences and effects of COVID-19 played a critical role in decreasing the resilience of the family members and developing tensions and conflicts between them.

The result analysis demonstrates that one of the main experienced change domains that originated from the COVID-19 outbreak is the emergence and development of physical problems. Some of them is decrement of physical athletic activities, fitness and conditions. The findings of this research are in line with the research results of Galanis, Vraka, Fragkou, Bilali, & Kaitelidou (2021) and Okuyama et al. (2021). Di Stefano et al. (2021) have reported that a decrease in physical activities during the COVID-19 pandemic was perceptible to most individuals. Obesity and metabolic disorders (Stefan, Birkenfeld, & Schulze, 2021), and damages and dermatosis (Darlenski et al., 2021) are other physical consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. These findings show that COVID-19 restrictions have significantly reduced physical activities. On the other hand, closing gyms and exercise classes have reduced the chances of exercising for many individuals, leading to overweight and obesity of individuals in the world. Hewing hygiene protocols play an important role in reducing the chances of being infected by this virus; however, frequent use of disinfectants, washing hands over and over again, and prolonged usage of masks can lead to skin damage.

This research indicates that the outbreak of the COVID-19 disease had some helpful results, despite all the problems it caused for individuals worldwide. Physical, psychological, social, educational, and family problems are among the most important problems that have affected the lives of mothers who have student children during the outbreak of Covid-19. According to the findings, physical and mental health experts working in supportive public authorities such as the Ministry of Health are recommended to cooperate with the broadcasting organization and other organizations to assist mothers by online social skills training to learn how to confront these difficult times. It is also suggested that schools form focus groups to reinforce constructive virtual communications. School principals are also suggested to teach the main subjects to parents through specific groups to familiarize them with the general training methods.

## Limitations

Participants in the research were middle-class, well-educated women living in Tehran. Mothers from poorer or less educated backgrounds were not included in this study. Furthermore, a number of mothers did not agree to take part in the interviews. They may not wish to attend interviews due to higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. These mothers can have different histories of the loss of a family member or the economic consequences of this pandemic. Another limitation of our study was that we had to conduct the interviews by telephone due to the risk of infection with Covid-19. Therefore, we could not observe the non-verbal responses of mothers. Consequently, these limits should be taken into account in the generalization of the findings.

## 5. Ethical Considerations

### Authors' contributions

All authors of this article participated in all stages of writing and conducting research.

### Conflicts of interest

There is no conflict of interests among the authors.

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### Data availability statement

The associated data could be available by a reasonable request from scientists by sending email to the corresponding author.

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