

IMPACT OF COVID-19 AMONG SCHOOL CHILDREN: A COMPARISON WITH HOLIDAYS IN THE PAST

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ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to understand how the children were spending their holidays until last year and what they do during the COVID-19 lockdown period. Are the children emotionally affected? And how do they compensate their education breakdown staying at home. The researcher has set three simple objectives of the study. They are: To know how the summer vacation was during last year and compare the activities with current lockdown period and finally to understand the knowledge of COVID-19 amongst the children. The study results show that most of the children were spending their holiday time with their grandparents during last year, some of them attending summer classes, family trips, etc. During the lockdown period children spend a lot of time on family bonding, online classes, etc. The education breakdown is compensated by attending regular online classes. The positive side of the results shows that children do not spend a lot more time on social media and TV alone. They do not show any special emotional effect during this lockdown period.

KEYWORDS: *COVID-19, Holidays, Activities*

INTRODUCTION

Holidays being a part of academic calendar, is said to be a time that energizes, rejuvenates a child. It gives a break from the routine academic learning and provides a space for self and community learning process. Every year, both children and parents prepare a possible plan to make effective use of the summer vacation irrespective of financial status of the family. Parents try to spend their maximum time with children to teach them life lessons. Many parents plan to send their children for coaching classes and some others with a trip. Every family tries to support their children to make their holidays memorable. Some children are themselves serious planners on how to spend their vacation while some other depend on their family and friends. Until last year, school vacation days were as per the schedule. Studying very hard to complete the final exams and relaxing during the holidays has become history today. But the year 2020, beginning itself has shown us a difficult time. Most of the children in the world could not complete their classes and exams for the year. This has happened due to the high speed spread of COVID-19. Schools and educational institutions are closed to avoid the spread of the novel corona virus. But such closure should not stop the academic progress of the children. Hence, teachers are finding ways through technology to continue with the teaching and learning activities. Thinking about what was the status of school going children until last year and now, number of questions are coming up for which a solution is needed which is the outbreak of this research study.

Statement of the Problem

The research has been initiated to study the impact of COVID-19 among school children, focusing on how the holidays were spent in the past and comparing it with current situation. How is the mental state of the children? Whether they are missing their classes, trips, etc. whether they are happy or frustrated with the current condition. What changes this lockdown has brought in them? How are they making use of the time? What positive change will it bring among every individual, family, country and the globe.

Understanding the difficult situations faced by children both in their academic and personal life during the pandemic. The research would try to bring out the past experiences and memories in mind of the children and compare it with what they are facing today. The Level of Understanding about the COVID-19 among school children.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

To Achieve the Aim of the Research, Following Objectives are proposed:

- To know how was the summer vacation during last year and now.
- To compare the activities undertaken in the past and present.
- To know the level of understanding on COVID-19 among school children

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Research Method

A self-administered structured questionnaire will be used as a survey instrument for primary data collection, whereas sources of secondary data will include: journals, reports, websites, magazines, etc.

Survey Location

This study was conducted among school children in Erode district, Tamil Nadu. The reason for choosing this area for the study purpose is that, it is the home town of the researcher and wanted to identify what children of the area do so like the researcher herself. This study concentrates on comparison of activities done by children during their vacation in the past and present and to find what is their thought process during the COVID-19 crisis.

The study area has 40 schools of which 21 are government, panchayat and aided schools and 19 are private schools. (Schools in Erode) (<https://schools.org.in/tamil-nadu/erode/erode>)

Target Respondents

The questionnaire was circulated using Google forms to children from various schools in the district. To get response from the children without interference of parents, class 5 to 12 children only were targeted in survey. In 3 days' time could collect responses from 218 students.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSIONS

The questionnaire consists of three demographic questions such as Name, School and Class. Out of the three demographic questions only class of the students was a compulsory question and other two were optional to answer. Questions 4 to 7 were study based questions in which the respondents have to rank the options given and question 8 was about understanding of COVID-19 by the respondents. The results of the 4 study based questions are presented below.

In order to study what were the activities of the children during the school holidays during the last year, the following factors were given and the respondents were asked to rank the activities according to what they have done and the table below shows the ranks given by 218 respondents.

Figure 1 shows the ranking of activities done by the children during their last year holidays. There are 10 study factors and the respondents were asked to rank them according to their perception and the results are as below:

A maximum of 88 respondents have ranked spending time with grandparents as their 1st choice whereas 30 respondents have ranked it in the 2nd position and 20 respondents have ranked it in the 10th place. The 2nd study factor of attending summer coaching classes, 56 respondents have ranked it with 2nd position whereas for 40 of them it is in 10th place only. The 3rd factor family holiday trip, 54 respondents have ranked it in 3rd place followed by 29 respondents giving 2nd place and 24 respondents giving 1st rank. The 4th study factor being visiting relatives has been ranked as 4th option by 55 respondents and 2nd rank by 26 respondents and 7th rank by 24 respondents. The 5th study factor being chilling out with friends has been given 5th rank by 67 respondents and 6th rank by 33 respondents. The 6th study factor of watching TV has been ranked at 6th place by 63 respondents and 5th position by 36 respondents followed by 35 respondents giving 3rd rank. The 7th factor being doing crafts and painting has been ranked at 7th place by 52 respondents and 4th place by 34 respondents. The 8th study factor was movies and dinner has been 8th choice of 66 respondents, 7th choice of 28 respondents and 3rd choice of 27 respondents. The 9th study factor being physical activities was given 9th rank by 57 respondents, 8th rank by 28 respondents and 4th and 1st rank by 18 respondents each. The 10th study factor was spending time on social media has been ranked at 10th place by 79 respondents, 9th rank by 41 respondents and 22 respondents ranked it at 1st place.

Figure 2 shows the ranking of activities done by the children during the lockdown period of COVID-19. There are 6 study factors and the respondents were asked to rank them according to their perception and the results are as below:

Family bonding as the 1st factor has been ranked at 1st place by 116 respondents and 2nd place by 27 respondents. Attending online classes and revising text books was the 2nd study factor which has been ranked at 2nd place by 85 respondents and 1st place by 56 respondents. The 3rd study factor was learning something new for which 82 respondents have given 3rd place while 42 respondents have ranked it at 4th place. The 4th factor being indoor games has been ranked at 4th place by 73 of them and 3rd place by 54 of the respondents. The 5th factor of study was watching TV and movies for which 82 respondents have given 5th position and 50 of them with 4th position. The 6th study factor was time spent on social media for which 124 respondents have ranked 6th place and 37 in 5th place.

Figure 3 shows the emotional factor of the respondents on the COVID-19 lockdown. The emotional factors were divided into happy, frustrated, scared and no effect. The responses are detailed below:

Out of 218 respondents 33.5 % of the respondents do not have any effect in their lockdown experience, while 27.1 % of the respondents were scared of the novel virus and the effect of lockdown whereas 21.1 % of respondents felt happy and 18.3 % of the respondents were frustrated due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

Figure 4 shows the ranking of activities done by the children to compensate the educational breakdown during the lockdown period of COVID-19. There are 5 study factors and the respondents were asked to rank them according to their perception and the results are as below:

The 1st Factor being attending regular online classes for which 162 respondents ranked at 1st place while 19 of them ranked 5th position. The 2nd Factor being revising books for Which 115 respondents ranked at 2nd while 3rd and 4th rank was given by 33 respondents each. The 3rd factor being connecting with friends to discuss the subject has been given 3rd rank by 104 respondents and 4th rank by 48 respondents. The 4th study factor was connecting with educators to continue learning was ranked by 98 respondents at 4th place and 52 respondents at 3rd place. The 5th study factor being no new study measure initiated was ranked at 5th place by 146 respondents and 4th position by 30 respondents.

Table 1: Activities During Your Summer Vacation 2019

S. No	Activities During Holidays	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Spending time with grand parents	88	30	14	11	15	8	8	5	19	20
2	Summer coaching classes	13	56	17	14	12	3	12	19	32	40
3	Family holiday trip	24	29	54	14	6	15	21	16	19	20
4	Visiting your relatives	16	26	23	55	17	16	24	21	10	10
5	Chilling out with friends	5	10	11	27	67	33	21	22	6	16
6	Watching TV	12	16	35	19	36	63	14	10	10	3
7	Doing crafts, painting, etc.	14	18	15	34	18	29	52	16	12	10
8	Movies and dinner	6	11	27	14	20	25	28	66	12	9
9	Physical activities	18	16	17	18	16	16	21	28	57	11
10	Time on social media and others	22	6	5	12	11	10	17	15	41	79

Source: Primary data collected using Questionnaire.

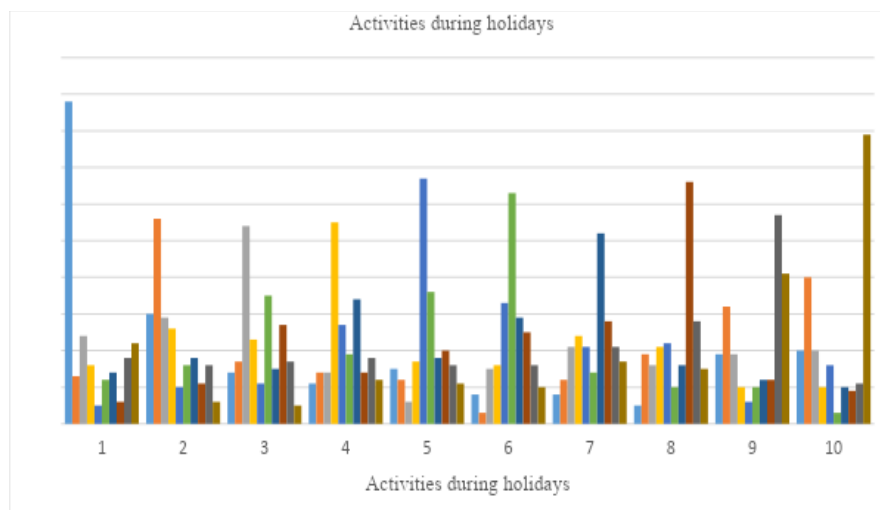


Figure 1: Activities During Your Summer Vacation 2019.

Table 2: Activities During Your COVID-19 Lockdown

S. No	Activities During COVID-19	1	2	3	4	5	6
1	Family bonding	116	27	20	11	24	20
2	Online classes / revising the text book	56	85	25	21	18	13
3	Learning new things	6	39	82	42	22	27
4	Indoor games	13	31	54	73	35	12
5	Watching TV, movies	16	26	22	50	82	27
6	Time on social media and others	11	10	15	21	37	124

Source: Primary data collected using Questionnaire

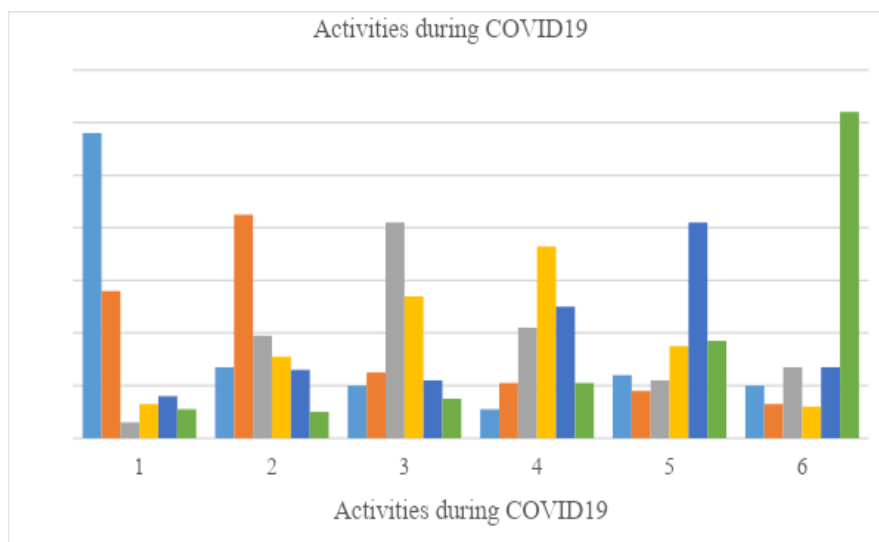


Figure 2: Activities During Your COVID-19 Lockdown.

Table 3: What is Your Feel on COVID-19 Lockdown?

Emotional Factors	% of Respondents
Happy	21.1
Frustrated	18.3
Scared	27.1
No special effect	33.5

Source: Primary data collected using Questionnaire

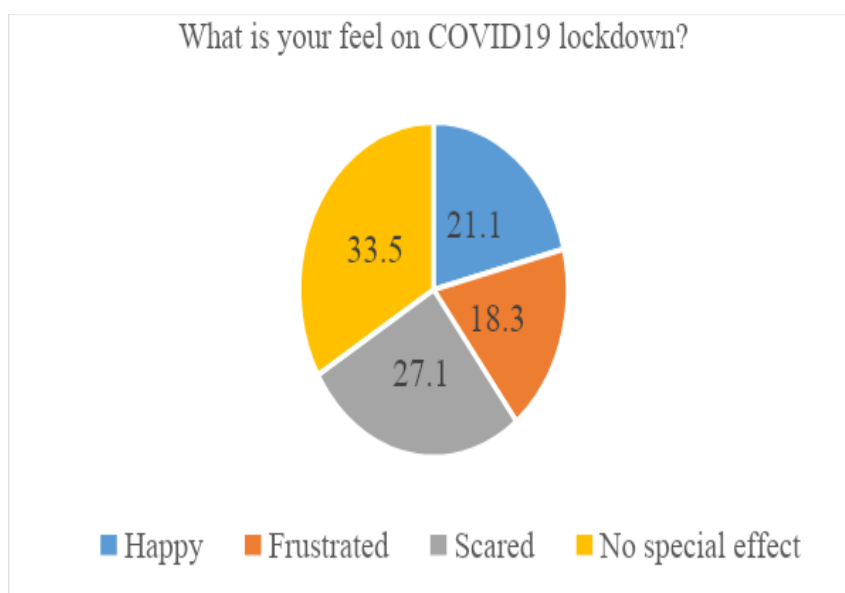


Figure 3: What is Your Feel On COVID-19 Lockdown?

Table 4: How Do U Compensate This Education Breakdown Days?

S. No	Compensating Education Breakdown	1	2	3	4	5
1	Regular online classes	162	16	12	9	19
2	Revising from the books	22	115	33	33	15
3	Connecting with friends to discuss on the subject	10	38	104	48	18
4	Connecting with educators to continue learning activities	10	38	52	98	20
5	No new study measure followed	14	11	17	30	146

Source: Primary data collected using Questionnaire

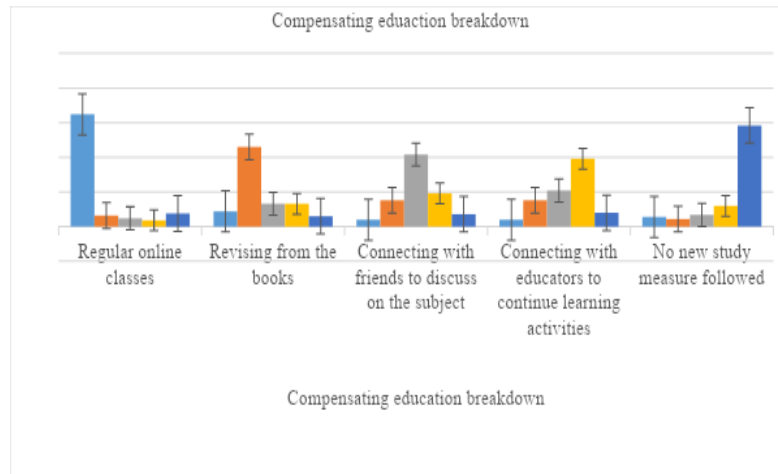


Chart 4: How Do U Compensate This Education Breakdown Days?

FINDINGS

The Following are the Outcome of the Study Results

- Most of the children were spending time with their grandparents during their holidays until last year. Children prefer stay with grandparents during their summer vacation which was a normal way of spending holidays until last year. Spending time on social media has not gained much importance amongst children.
- Among the activities that are undertaken during the COVID-19 lockdown, family bonding has gained 1st place, online classes and revising books with 2nd place. The happiest part is that here again spending time on social media stands in the last position.
- It is evident from the results that the lockdown has no effect on emotion factor of the children but around 27.1 % are scared about the virus spread.
- It seems to be good turn among the children that they are spending time by attending regular online class and the number of children who do not take up any new study measure is at a minimum of 14 out of 2018 respondents.

CONCLUSIONS

The study is linking the activities done by children in the past and now during the lockdown period. Even though lockdown is a bit troublesome period, children are taking it positively. They have not put their books down and sat in front of TV or social media and spending their time. In fact they are spending their time productively either by continual studying, family bonding, etc. This aspect of children is to be appreciated. Parents also play an important role in helping the children to spend their time usefully. Some parents are taking care of children which they could not do if they are working on normal vacation times for which children prefer visiting grandparents. This study can be concluded that young India is moving ahead whether it is normal holidays or lockdown period. The focus of children is on the positive side.

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