



STUDI E RICERCHE

Pakistani families in Italy during Covid-19: a survey on problems, needs and resources

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Famiglie pakistane in Italia durante il Covid-19: un'indagine su problemi, bisogni e risorse

Abstract

This paper reports on a survey which involved 152 parents (90% fathers) of Pakistani origin living in Italy. The aim of this research was to understand the impact of Covid-19 on these families and, especially, on their wellbeing, on managing domestic and school life, on resources and protective factors. Another goal was to involve a target of parents who are quite absent in current similar studies in Italy. In spite of its limitations, this quantitative study offers the specific point of view of Pakistani immigrant fathers who, despite experiencing a strong crisis, show themselves to be able to draw from personal, religious and relational resources, mainly connected to their culture of origin.

Keywords

Covid-19, pakistani immigrant fathers, familiar wellbeing, coping skills

Il presente lavoro espone i risultati di una indagine, svolta tramite un questionario, che ha coinvolto 152 genitori di origine pakistana residenti in Italia (90% padri). L'obiettivo della ricerca era di comprendere l'impatto del Covid-19 sui suddetti nuclei familiari e, soprattutto, sul livello di benessere dei componenti, sulla gestione della vita domestica e scolastica, e su risorse e fattori protettivi. Altro obiettivo è stato quello di coinvolgere un target di genitori pressoché assente da ricerche e studi analoghi, attualmente disponibili in Italia. Questa indagine quantitativa, seppur con i limiti che verranno descritti, offre il punto di vista specifico di padri immigrati pakistani che, pur riportando una situazione di crisi piuttosto accentuata, dimostrano di attingere a risorse personali, religiose e relazionali prevalentemente legate alla cultura di origine.

Parole chiave

Covid-19, padri immigrati pakistani, benessere familiare, capacità di coping

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1. Literature review on families and children during Covid-19 in Italy

The academic literature here considered includes research and studies on the topic available to date (July 2021), which have been concluded and published in Italy. They offer a useful insight on the impact of the pandemic on family life, on children well-being, as well as on the changes in care work and parenting styles.

The following publications specifically analyze the point of view of parents and children in Italy: Spinelli *et alii* (2020), Tiberio *et alii* (2021), Bosoni *et alii* (2020), Del Boca *et alii* (2020), Uccella, De Carli, Nobili (2020), Save the Children (2020), Cerniglia, Cinimo, Ammanniti (2020), Cusinato *et alii* (2020), Gigli (2021), Gigli, Trentini (2021), Mantovani *et alii* (2021), Pastori *et alii* (2021), Biffi, Gambacorti-Passeri, Bianchi (2021), Lorenzini (2021), Lajus (2021), Di Genova (2021), Demozzi (2021).

Most of these studies questioned parents through online surveys. Despite the surveys being conducted in heterogeneous contexts and disciplinary fields, these investigations share a common limit, due to the method of recruiting the non-probabilistic sample: the respondents are mainly mothers (90% on average), with a medium to high level of education, married or cohabiting with the partner, and working from home during lockdown, in comfortable houses, without logistic or organizational issues, without problems related to the availability of technological devices or internet connection. The limitation of these studies consists in their homogeneous population, which does not represent disadvantaged social situations such as those characterized by migration paths, unemployment, single-parent families or other types of non-nuclear families, cases of conflictual separation or couple crisis, situations of educational poverty and digital divide.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, the research produced is still very useful for drawing an overall picture, especially on some aspects that emerge homogeneously. First, there is an increase in parental stress and in problems of family-work balance: in all the research analyzed, an evident effect of the health restrictions imposed by the pandemic is the increase in the parental workload and the difficulty of reconciling it with work commitments (both for those who have worked from home and for those who have gone to the workplace).

The main difficulties expressed by the participants in the various surveys are mainly: concern for the future and the loss of economic stability; difficulties in managing daily life and having to deal with children's learning; not finding space and time for oneself; not having a social life and not being able to spend time in contact with nature (Gigli, Trentini, 2021, p. 36).

Regarding the sharing of care work between genders, there is an increased overload for women (Dello Preite, 2021), but also more paternal presence in some traditionally maternal aspects of family care (IPSOS, 2020). We can notice two trends in care functions related to gender during Covid-19 (Hennekam, Shymko, 2020; Lagomarsino *et alii*, 2020; Mangiavecchi *et alii*, 2020; Del Boca *et alii*, 2020): on one side, the increased self-consciousness generated by the crisis and the changes in everyday habits created the chance for some parents to deconstruct and rethink their roles; on the other side, in some cases an intensification of gender performativity has confirmed and strengthened stereotypical behaviors.

On the transformations of the parent-child relationship during Covid-19 crisis, most research shows that families with younger children report higher levels of stress, probably due to the increased and continuous demand for attention and surveillance (Tiberio *et alii*, 2021, pp. 30-31). However, there is also a positive effect of Covid-19 on family relationships:

Some works highlight a greater emotional closeness between parents and children and an attempt by adults to protect children from experiences of anxiety and fear, greater attention to renegotiation of family and educational rules, an attempt to empower the children (Gigli, Trentini, 2021, p. 37).

Another recurring outcome is related to the family relational climate perceived by the parents: despite the long periods of forced coexistence, the cohesion and emotional closeness seem to have increased. In some cases, the increase in time spent together had a positive effect on the ability to communicate more and devote more attention to each other (Gigli, Trentini, 2021).

Regarding the psychological health of children in the pandemic, research shows an increase in mental health problems in childhood and adolescence (Uccella, De Carli, Nobili, 2020, p. 4). Some evidence indicates an increase in the screen time of children and adolescents².

Regarding educational poverty, which was already quite high in our country (Benvenuto, Vaccarelli, Di Genova, 2020; Save the Children, 2020; ISTAT, 2020), specific surveys confirm that the pandemic has worsened some already critical aspects, such as the economic crisis, the digital divide and the lack of support measures (ISTAT, 2020; Di Genova, 2021). The risks of social exclusion increased and, therefore, there is a confirmation of “the high correlation between children’s school results and parents’ level of education and socio-economic condition” (Longo, 2021).

Lastly, there is a recurrence of responses from the parents’ point of view that identify the following as protective and resilience factors for overcoming the emergency phase: their emotional and relational competence, the possibility of sharing their experiences and concrete aspects of daily life with others, access to information through ICT, the possibility of maintaining a collaborative relationship with schools, the chance to benefit from an open space and a natural environment (Gigli, 2021, pp. 38-39). However, research also suggests that for parents “Coping with emotions in situations of high stress is often very energy-consuming and in some cases dysfunctional because the physiological reactions as symptoms of stress can be exacerbated” (Tiberio *et alii*, 2021, p. 35).

2. Data on immigrant families in Covid-19

As previously mentioned, most Italian surveys involving parents suffer the lack of representation of family contexts with difficult socio-economic situations. Furthermore, families with different origins are almost completely absent, probably because of the types of survey and the recruitment of the sample, that did not favor the participation of immigrant parents; they are generally unwilling to participate in this type of research, also because of language barriers.

Thus far, there are several international research and reports about migrants and refugees during the period of the pandemic (Guadagno, 2020; Fernandez-Reino, McNeil, 2020; WHO, 2020; OECD, 2020). The most recurrent result is that the global crisis caused by the pandemic has especially worsen those situations which were already fragile and problematic, such as those experienced by migrants. The mentioned research mainly concerns people in the phase of migration or recent immigration, while the situation of people with a previous history of migration and permanently allocated in the country of arrival has not been deeply considered yet.

Very few studies have investigated the specific issue of immigrant families during Covid-19 and they are mostly qualitative. The only Italian study that could be found was carried out by Lajus (2021), who conducted a biographical micro-research with a mother of Cameroonian origin residing in Italy, showing an alarming situation regarding the housing, economic and relational issues that threatens single immigrant mothers, with important consequences on children.

Even at the international level, the few studies found on this specific topic (Guruge *et alii*, 2021; Rodriguez *et alii*, 2020; De Souza *et alii*, 2020) reveal that the main problems for immigrant parents regard changes in relational dynamics, facing new pressures, living with a constant level of anxiety and fear, re-thinking lifestyles and habits; in some contexts, even extremely stressful situations were found, such as fear of deportation, fear of access to services, economic and financial stress.

This study aims to contribute to fill this gap in literature: the issue of the wellbeing of immigrant families during Covid-19 has still been little investigated, despite its importance. 1 in 5 children in OECD countries has at least one immigrant parent, and almost half of them lives below the poverty line (OECD, 2020). Thus, there are extremely high percentages of children and families in serious socio-economic conditions, in critical housing situations, with less job stability, not always with access to primary care, and with linguistic difficulties that prevent them from having the necessary information to understand the pandemic situation and to support their children in distance learning (*ibidem*).

2 <https://www.commissariatodips.it/notizie/articolo/piu-connessi-ma-piu-isolati/index.html>

3. Some cultural references in Pakistani families

Given the characteristics of the sample of this survey (mainly fathers, all of Pakistani origin), it is necessary to briefly investigate some issues that generally influence Pakistani families' dynamics, in order to better contextualize the data that will be presented.

As highlighted by the literature but avoiding any generalization, dynamics within Pakistani families are often affected by rigidity of parental role, anchoring to gender roles and importance of Islamic religion, which has a strong regulatory power on social behavior. First, both men and women seem to be subordinated to socially established roles (Tanzeer *et alii*, 2011): women are expected to take care of the house, of children and of the elderly; they are encouraged to hide their emotions and invited not to express their opinions. On the other hand, men are expected to have a stable and well-paid job, a decision-making role in family life and they are representative of the family in the public sphere (Kausar *et alii*, 2014). Furthermore, parenting styles often influence the conveyance of gender stereotypes (Alarbeed *et alii*, 2014): parents tend to educate sons and daughters in a different way, especially from the point of view of management and communication of emotions. Mothers seem to speak more with their daughters than with their sons, and they educate daughters to be more supportive, to speak with a delicate tone and not to express controversial opinions (Hussain *et alii*, 2015), while they tend to educate their sons to be more independent.

Furthermore, there seems to be a clear division in gender roles: women are anchored to housework, to the education of children and the care of the elderly, while men are required to manage the family from an economic point of view and in relations with institutions and society (Farid-ul-Hasnain *et alii*, 2012).

The Islamic religion usually plays a fundamental role, on one side because it is considered fundamental for psychological, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing, and on the other side as it represents a set of moral values to be handed down to the new generations. However, although religious practice is mandatory and often requires a considerable daily time commitment, it seems that parents nowadays are less rigid, compared to the past, if children do not observe such practices (Mehfooz, 2021).

Research carried out on Pakistani families in immigration contexts tends to confirm some dynamics, with slight differences as regards second generation immigrants. First, the division between gender roles seems to remain quite rigid (Zakar *et alii*, 2012). Religion keeps playing a fundamental role for Pakistani families in the education of sons and daughters (Shakari, 2013). First generation immigrants tend to value their own culture of origin to a greater extent, compared to their sons and daughters, who tend to get closer to the host culture (Khan, 2020; Khaleque *et alii*, 2015).

Other studies on immigrant families in Italy coming from South-Asian countries (such as Labov, 2017, 2019; Tognetti Bordogna, 2011) also need to be considered in order to understand the multiple dimensions of transnational parenthood and transcontinental experiences.

4. Research

The research on immigrant families of Pakistani origin at the time of Covid-19 in Italy has two focuses: on one side, the family dynamics and the experiences of parents and children in the pandemic period; on the other hand, the relationship of these families with schools, considering the changes that have occurred due to Covid-19.

Due to space limitations, only the first focus is presented here: this article, therefore, should be considered together with its complementary³. While here we focus more on the experiences of parents during the pandemic, the data on the family-school relationship will be explored in the other article.

3 "Famiglie pakistane in Italia nel Covid-19: una rilevazione su problemi, bisogni e risorse nel rapporto con le istituzioni educative e scolastiche" (in submission).

4.1 *Motivations and objectives*

The purpose of this investigation is to explore impact of the pandemic on Pakistani families residing in Italy, since far too little attention has been paid to this specific issue (as described in par 1.2). Furthermore, immigrant families often were particularly affected by recent developments in society due to the pandemic crisis, as it worsened especially those situations that were already fragile from a working and financial point of view.

Specifically, the aim of this investigation is to understand how Covid-19 has impacted:

- on the economic and working situation of these families;
- on their domestic habits and family dynamics;
- on the level of wellbeing of parents and on the representations that parents have of their children's difficulties;
- on the management of children in domestic and school life;
- on parents' needs, resources, and protective factors.

4.2 *Methodology*

The study used a questionnaire which was constructed by adapting a questionnaire used in two previous surveys (Gigli, 2021; Gigli, Trentini, 2021) to the specific focus of this research. Slight changes and adaptations were made due to the specific sample and due to the need to translate it into Urdu language. The responses were collected in the period between March 16 and April 10, 2021.

Data were collected respecting GDPR 2016/679; participants were not asked sensitive data. The questionnaire was distributed online (Google Modules): 152 parents of Pakistani origin residing in Italy, who were contacted through Facebook groups and Whatsapp groups, responded. All participants were informed about the objectives of the survey, but some of them requested a telephone contact with the Urdu-speaking researcher: they needed clarifications on the purposes of the research, and on privacy issues (especially for their daughters). In these direct contacts with the participants, the surveyor noted that, although the invitation was addressed to both parents, some men preferred to be in charge of it without allowing their partners to participate, stating that they are "representatives of the family".

The questionnaire, translated into Urdu by one of the researchers, consists of 39 closed-ended questions, grouped into three sections:

- personal data, and economic and working situation during the pandemic;
- domestic condition and family situation during the pandemic;
- school situation of one of the children during the pandemic.

In this paper, the data related to the first two sections are reported and analyzed, while the topic of the children's school situation is examined in another article.

The data was analyzed using Jamovi software. In the bivariate analysis, the Chi-Square test was used with the aim of testing the relationships between categorical variables, setting a significance level (Alpha level) of .05.

4.3 *Characteristics of the sample*

The sample mainly consists of fathers (81.6%, N = 124), generally quite young: 61.2% (N = 93) are under 40 years old. The presence of women is rather small: even though both fathers and mothers were asked to respond, only 28 women participated, out of a sample of 152 parents. This could be due to different reasons, such as the different male and female family roles which, in most Pakistani families as well as in many others, entrust the father with greater responsibility and recognition. This disproportion did not allow us to consider the gender variable in the bivariate analysis.

The educational qualification of most participants is the upper secondary school diploma (65.1%, N = 99); almost a quarter of the sample completed lower secondary school (23.7%, N = 36). Most participants are married (96.1%, N = 146).

The sample is mainly composed of people who have been living in Italy for quite a long time: none for less than 3 years, 28.3% (N = 43) have lived in Italy for 3-10 years, 43.4% (N = 66) for 10-30 years,

28.3% (N = 43) for over 30 years or from birth. More than half of the sample (52.6%, N = 80) has both Pakistani and Italian citizenship; the majority live in Northern Italy (85.5%, N = 101).

5. Results

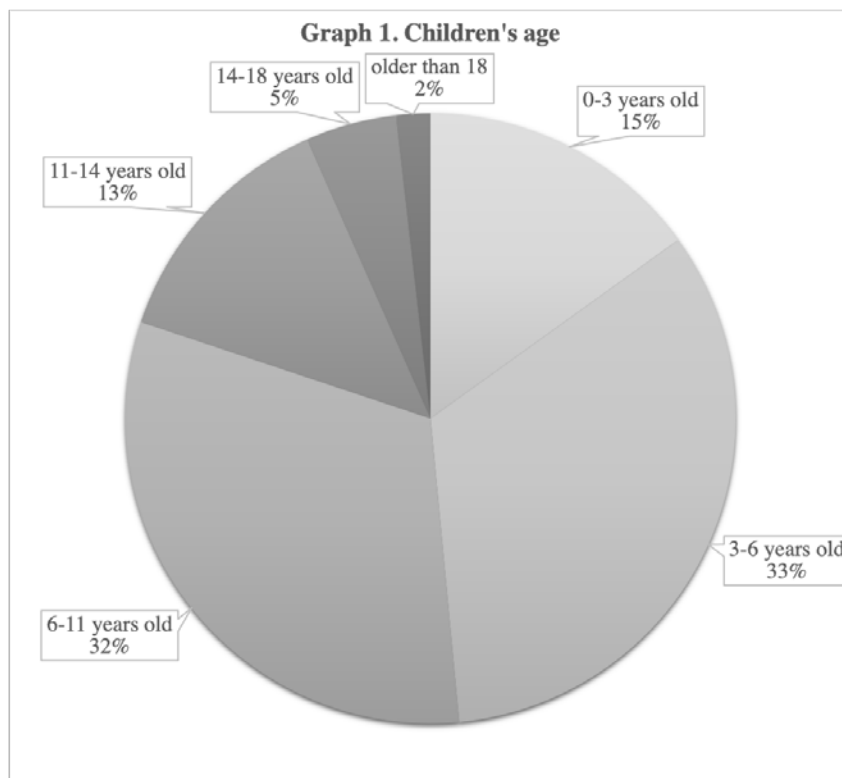
Financial and employment situation

Most respondents (69.1%, N = 105) consider their financial situation as quite adequate, while one fifth of the sample identify it as inadequate.

Considering the period from the onset of the pandemic in March 2020 to the closing date of this questionnaire (10 April 2021), half of the sample suffered from a decrease or interruption of their job (24.3%, N = 37, declare to work with less continuity than before, while 32.2%, N = 49, have completely lost their job); on the contrary, 43.4% (N = 66) maintained a work situation similar to the pre-pandemic period. The way of working has also changed for almost half of the respondents: apart from 34.2% (N = 52) who do not work and 21.2% (N = 32) who go to the workplace, 33.6% (N = 51) work partially from home and 11.2% (N = 17) work totally from home.

Domestic and family situation

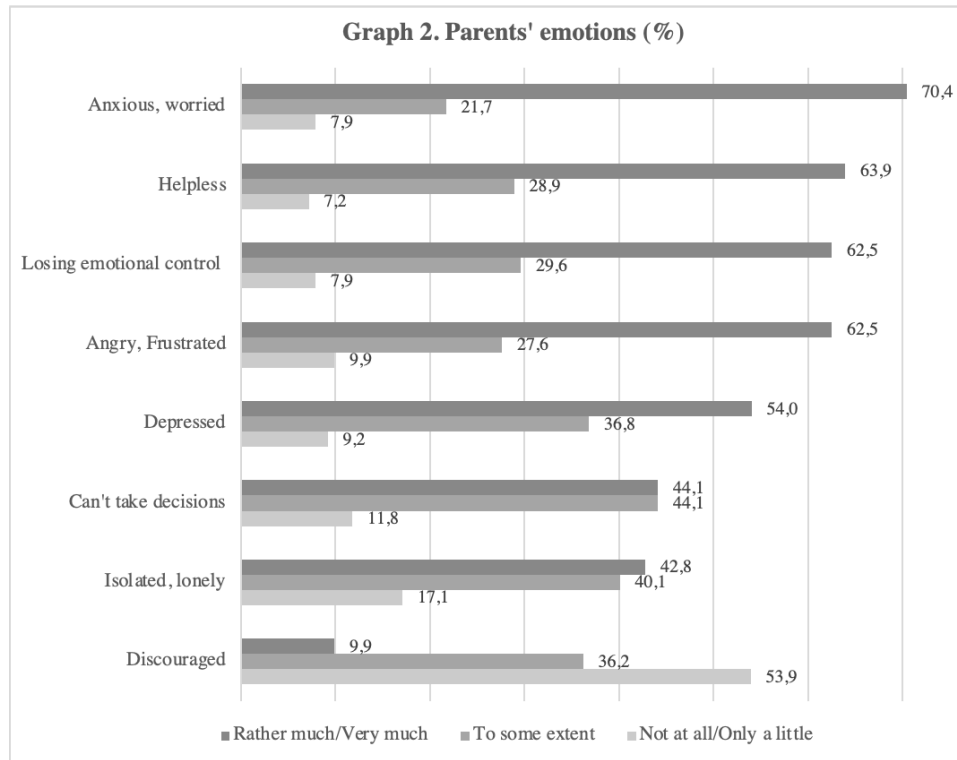
In most cases (89.5%, N = 136) the cohabiting family unit consists of two adults and the children; in some cases (7.2%, N = 11), however, other adults are also present, while in some situations (3.3%, N = 5) there is only one parent. Most respondents have more than one child: 44.7% (N = 68) has two children and 31.6% (N = 48) has three or more. As shown by Graph 1, most children are between 3 and 10 years of age.



Most families (75.0%, N = 114) live in a house of 60-80 m², while 5.3% (N = 8) live in smaller houses. Few (15.8%, N = 24) have an outdoor area (garden, terrace, courtyard) attached to their house.

Parents' emotions

Graph 2 shows the answers to the question: “Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, how often have you felt: [...]”⁴.



Thus, the prevailing emotions were anxiety/concern, sense of helplessness, anger/frustration, loss of emotional control, depression. The data on discouragement is interesting, as it seems to be the least tried experience of all, despite the complexity of the situation.

There were relationships between some feelings and the current job position or the change in the job situation due to the pandemic:

- 83.7% (N = 41) of those who lost their job declare that they have felt rather much/very much anxious, compared to 60.6% (N = 40) of those who work as before ($\chi^2 (4) = 13.7, p = .008$);
- 87.8% (N = 43) of those who lost their job felt rather much/very much angry/frustrated, compared to 40.9% (N = 27) of those who work as before ($\chi^2 (4) = 27.5, p < .001$);
- 83.8% (N = 31) of those who suffered a decrease in their work felt rather much/very much helpless, compared to 48.5 % (N = 32) of those who work as before ($\chi^2 (4) = 14.4, p = .006$);
- 62.2% (N = 23) of those who suffered a decrease in their work felt rather much/very much depressed, compared to 43.9% (N = 29) of those who work as before ($\chi^2 (4) = 9.78, p = .044$);
- 58.9% (N = 33) of the unemployed felt rather much/very much isolated/lonely, against 33.3% (N = 32) of the employed ($\chi^2 (2) = 11.4, p = .003$).

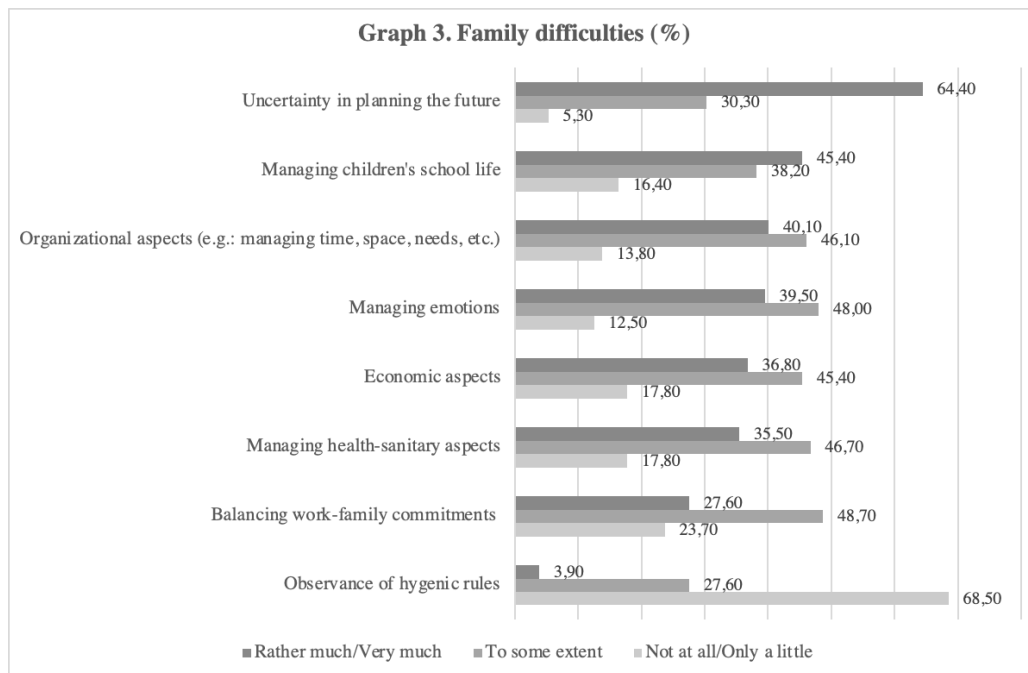
Family difficulties

Differently from the other surveys conducted using the same questionnaire with Italian parents (Gigli, 2021; Gigli, Trentini, 2021), three quarters of the sample (73%, N = 111) stated that their family’s discomfort/difficulty was rather much/very much due to the pandemic. 91.8% (N = 45) of those who lost

4 In this and many other questions, the questionnaire provides 5 choices: not at all (1), only a little (2), to some extent (3), rather much (4), very much (5). In the analysis phase, the results were aggregated by combining “not at all” with “only a little”, and “rather much” with “very much”.

their job declare rather much/very much discomfort/difficulty due to the pandemic, compared to 56.1 % (N = 37) of those who work as before ($\chi^2 (4) = 21.7, p < .001$).

The areas where families found difficulties were (see Graph n.3):

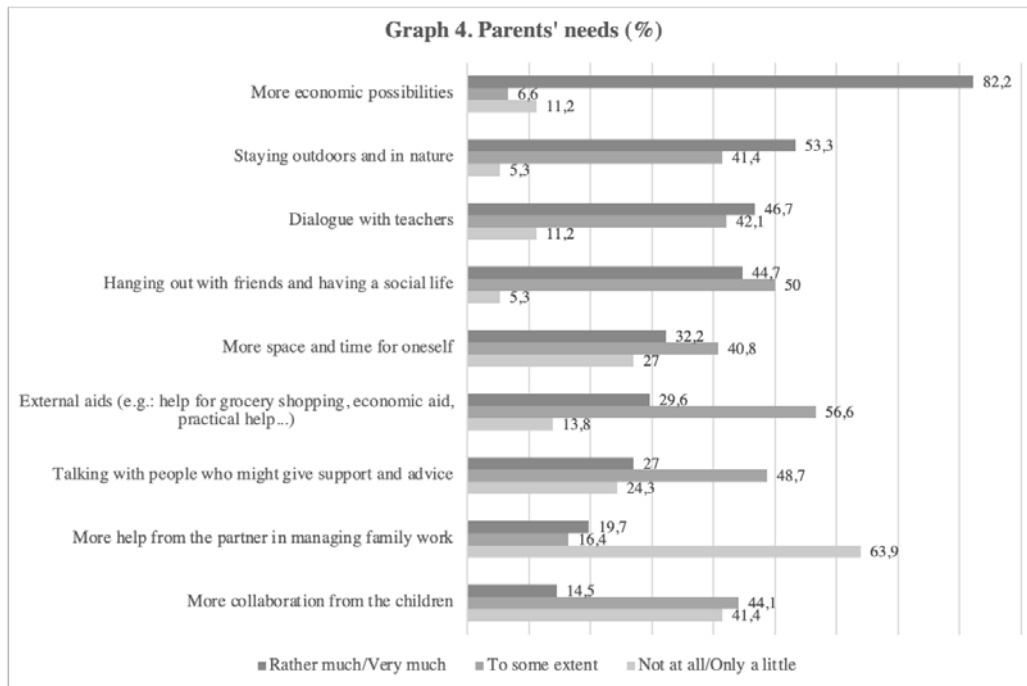


Some significant relationships were found:

- between organizational aspects and change in the work situation: 51.1% (N = 26) of those who lost their job had rather much/very much discomfort in managing organizational aspects, compared to 31, 8% (N = 21) of those who work as before ($\chi^2 (4) = 14.9, p = .005$);
- between economic aspects and the current job position: only 5.4% (N = 3) of those who are currently not working declared that they had not at all/only a little economic difficulty compared to a quarter of those who have a job ($\chi^2 (2) = 13.2, p = .001$). Moreover, 55.1% (N = 14) of those who lost their job declare rather much/very much discomfort under the economic point of view, compared to 19.7% (N = 13) of those who work as before ($\chi^2 (4) = 24.0, p < .001$);
- between family-work balancing and the current working situation: differently from what could be expected, those who do not work declared to have had greater difficulties in balancing professional life and family care work (41.1%, N = 23, declares rather much/very much discomfort) compared to those who have a job (19.8%, N = 19), ($\chi^2 (2) = 8.87, p = .012$). Furthermore, while almost half of those who lost their job (44.9%, N = 22) affirm that they experienced rather much/very much discomfort in balancing work and family commitments, a third of those who work as before (30.3%, N = 20) declare that they have had not at all/a little discomfort ($\chi^2 (4) = 13.6, p = .009$). Although it might appear counterintuitive, this may be motivated by an interpretation of the question on family-work balance not merely on a practical level, but connected to the questioning of one's own role inside the family: since the respondents were mainly fathers, we can presume that losing their job might have resulted in a difficulty for them in understanding or accepting to cover a different role from the one that fathers usually cover (typically breadwinners).

Parents' needs

In Graph n. 4, parents' needs are reported:



Changes in the employment situation due to the pandemic are related to some of the needs expressed by respondents. Those who have completely lost their job or those who have suffered decreases in their work especially need:

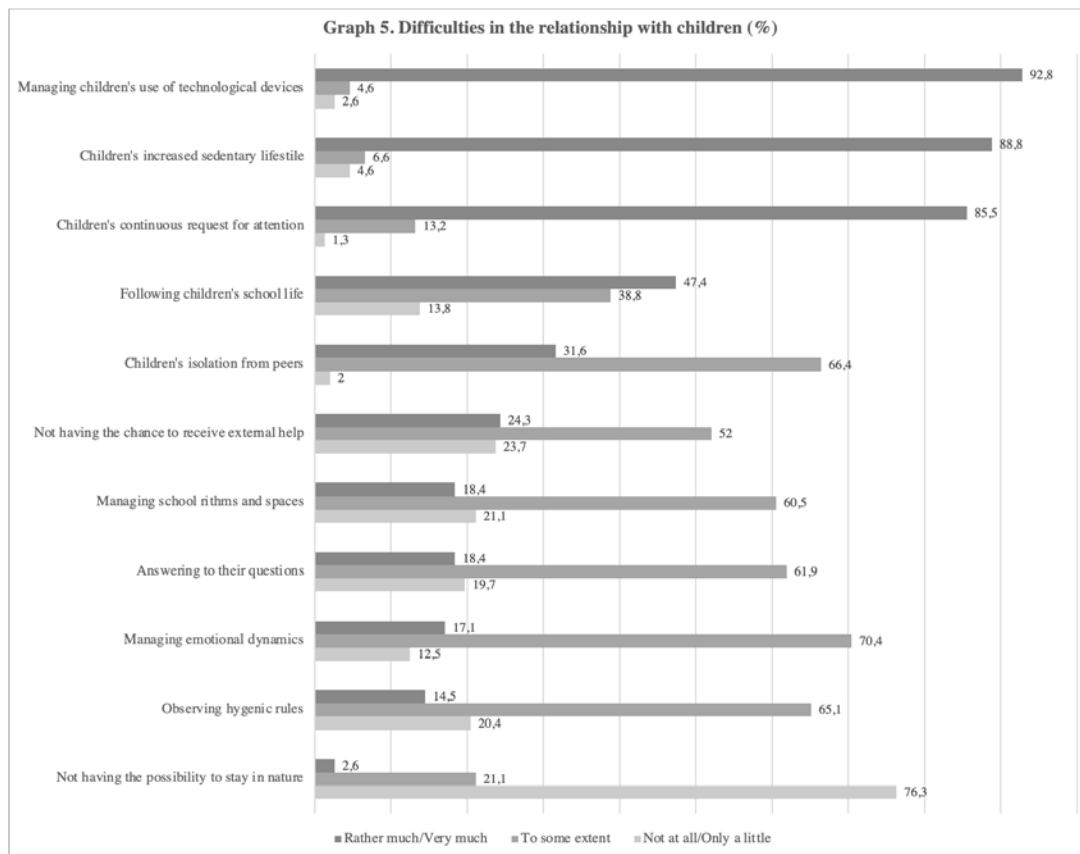
- external aid (e.g. for grocery shopping, economic aid, practical help): 46.9% (N = 23) of those who lost their job need it rather much/very much, compared to 10.6% (N = 7) of those who work as before ($\chi^2 (4) = 24.0, p < .001$);
- talking with people who might give advice and support: 38.8% (N = 19) of those who have lost their job need it rather much/very much, compared to 13.6% (N = 9) of those who work as before ($\chi^2 (4) = 11.4, p = .021$);
- greater economic possibilities: 95.9% (N = 97) of those who have lost their job need it rather much/very much, compared to 69.7% (N = 46) of those who work as before ($\chi^2 (4) = 24.6, p < .001$).

On the other side, 79.6% (n = 39) of those who lost their job state they need help from the partner only a little or not at all, compared to 62.1% (N = 41) of those who work as before ($\chi^2 (4) = 15.0, p = .005$).

There are also interesting relations between some needs and the age of the respondents: the youngest seem to feel the need for help from the partner slightly more (28%, N = 26, of parents under 40 years need it rather much/very much, against 6.8%, N = 4, of the over 40s, $\chi^2 (2) = 11.8, p = .003$), and to feel the need for religious resources significantly less (71.0%, N = 66, of the younger parents need it rather much/very much, against 91.5%, N = 44, of the over 40s, $\chi^2 (2) = 9.23, p = .010$). This may indicate interesting transformations in both the roles and values in younger generations of immigrants compared to the older ones.

Difficulties with children during the pandemic

The answers to the question “In the relationship with your children, what is more difficult for you in this situation?” show an interesting and diverse picture, as can be seen in Graph n. 5:



The main difficulty is managing children’s use of technological devices, which becomes even more interesting if we consider the age of the children, in most cases between 3 and 10 years old. Many parents (88.2%, N = 134) have noticed an increase in the use of technological tools for purposes other than school⁵.

Resources

78.9% (N = 100) of respondents find religious resources rather much/very much useful in order to cope with the pandemic situation, while 65.8% (N = 100) affirm that web resources are rather much/very much useful (only 5.3%, N = 8, found the web not at all useful, or only a little).

On the other side, some aspects were not considered as useful resources, such as the possibility for children to maintain virtual contact with school and friends (only a little/not at all useful for 63.2%, N = 96) and the dialogue and relationship with teachers (only a little/not at all useful for 55.9%, N = 85).

6. Discussion

The sample of parents of Pakistani origin is mainly composed of fathers (unlike what usually happens in similar studies, including those carried out in Italy during the pandemic, as described above); most of them are educated, married, residing in Italy from quite a long time and with an economic situation self-defined as quite adequate. Almost half of the participants have two children, a third have three.

In the pandemic, half of the sample suffered a loss or decrease in their job; 40% say they work at least partially from home. The living spaces are medium-small in size (3/4 of the sample live in 60-80sqm), especially considering the number of family members, and very few have access to green areas.

5 Further data on the increase in children’s use of technological devices due to the pandemic can be found the article that presents the other part of this research: “Famiglie pakistane in Italia nel Covid-19: una rilevazione su problemi, bisogni e risorse nel rapporto con le istituzioni educative e scolastiche” (in submission).

The main emotions felt by the participants related to the pandemic crisis are above all anxiety, anger/frustration, helplessness, loss of emotional control and depression. These feelings look different from similar surveys carried out using the same questionnaire with samples of Italian parents (Gigli, 2021; Gigli, Trentini, 2021), which seem overall more positive: although a real comparison is not possible (due to the type of sampling), however, important points of reflection may arise on the different conditions experienced by these groups.

73% of the participants declared that they experienced rather much/very much discomfort due to the pandemic situation. These discomforts are felt to an even greater extent by those who have lost their job or have suffered a work reduction. This data results different from the aforementioned surveys with Italian parents, in which only 12.4% felt rather much/very much discomfort related to the pandemic (Gigli, 2021; Gigli, Trentini, 2021). The most encountered difficulties in this sample of families of Pakistani origin concern the uncertainty in planning the future, the balance between domestic and work commitments, and the management of the children's school life.

It is interesting to note that, unexpectedly, the work-family balance appear to be more complex for participants who have lost or decreased their job: it is hypothesized that, because of cultural references that consider parental roles as distinct on the basis of gender and where the contribution of the fathers (who represent the prevalence of the sample) lies above all in the work activity, the change in the situation has caused imbalances and difficulties in reviewing one's role.

Most participants would need more financial possibilities (rather much/very much for more than 82% of the participants) and to spend more time outdoors and in nature. While on the one hand being outdoors and doing activities in nature was perceived rather much/very much as a need by more than half of the sample, on the other hand the impossibility of being in contact with nature was not perceived as a difficulty in the relationship with their children.

Participants do not seem to need more help from the partner: this may perhaps be due to the predominantly male composition of the sample in a context of cultural references with a rigid division of gender roles. Interestingly, however, this need is felt to a much greater extent in younger parents (under 40). Younger parents also feel less the need of spiritual/religious resources compared to participants over 40 years old. We might hypothesize that the new generations of Pakistani immigrants are experiencing a change both in the division of domestic and family burdens, and in the perception of the normativity of religion on family dynamics.

In the relationship with children, the main difficulties concern the use of electronic devices (almost 93% had rather much/very much discomfort), the sedentary lifestyle of the children and their greater demand for attention. Given the prevailing age of the children considered in the sample (48% 0-6 years old; 31% 6-10) we easily understand the greater demand for attention, while the data on sedentary lifestyle and on the use of electronic devices amaze and worry, in line with the other surveys carried out in Italy.

The resources considered by the participants as most helpful in dealing with the emergency are above all the religious ones and the resources offered by the web. An alarm bell for the scholastic world lies in the fact that the dialogue with the teachers has not been identified as a resource by more than half of the sample.

The limitations of this study can be found:

- in the sampling mode and size, which do not allow more refined statistical calculations or the possibility of generalization;
- in possible inaccuracies in the translation from Italian to Urdu, both at a linguistic and cultural level, which may have caused misunderstandings of the meaning of some questions;
- in the gender imbalance in the composition of the sample: if on the one hand it is extremely rare and therefore precious to have the point of view of fathers in this type of investigation, on the other hand the numerical imbalance did not allow to analyze statistical relationships based on the variable genre, which would undoubtedly be interesting.

At the same time, there are important strengths in this investigation, not frequently found in similar studies:

- the presence of the fathers;
- the possibility of grasping the point of view of a social group (families of immigrant origin, specifically of Pakistani origin) that it is difficult to reach to this extent.

Therefore, despite the impossibility of generalizing the results, this study might give the opportunity to access the point of view and experiences – even if partial – of an important slice of the population that is usually difficult to involve. Furthermore, the value of this study lies in the fact that it has turned a first glance towards a theme that has not yet been investigated, albeit particularly relevant from a social and pedagogical point of view, especially in this emergency period. The topic deserves further study, both through other surveys (hopefully with larger and more representative samplings) and using qualitative methods to deepen the experiences and perspectives.

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