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Education Disparities During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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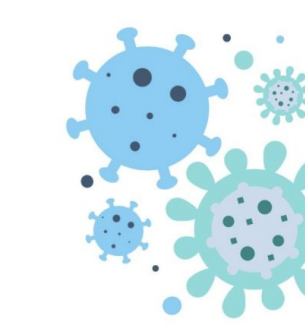
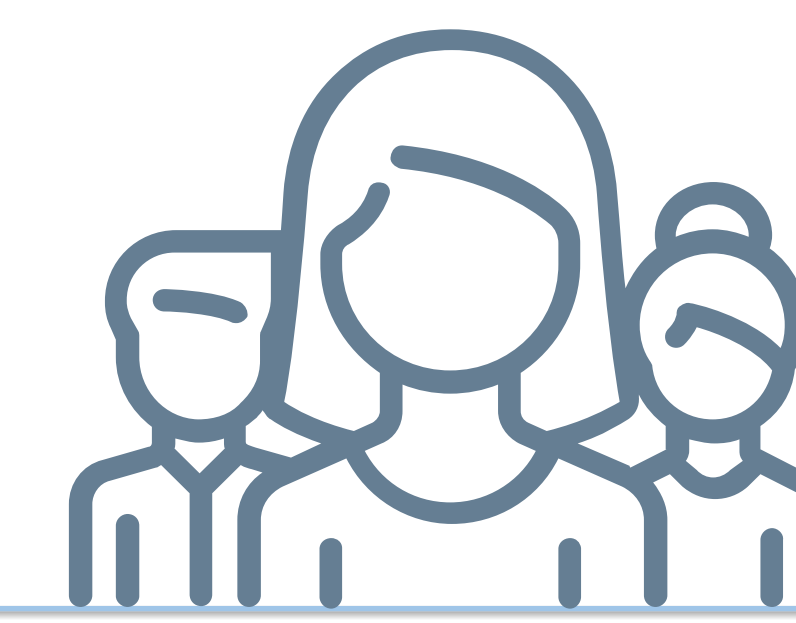
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Education Disparities During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Tracy Shek



OVERVIEW:

This study analyzes the now larger gap that exists between social classes and how that affects students in terms of their technology access, living situation, and guidance. While disparities between social classes have been subject to much discussion before the pandemic, the current context has made the difference between social classes even clearer. Through an examination of online learning vs in-person learning, social and economic effects of the pandemic, as well as interviews and data sets, I demonstrate the negative impact the COVID-19 pandemic has on education and how this effect is more severe among lower-income students.

PURPOSE:

In general, students experience extreme amounts of stress and anxiety during the school year, constantly focusing on their studies and exams. The COVID-19 pandemic brought new obstacles that people, especially students, had to face as a collective. The lack of resources among lower-income students is a serious issue that needs to be addressed and changed. My goal is to bring these issues to light and to help brainstorm ways in order to solve and prevent any of these problems from repeating in the future.

METHODOLOGY:

- Analyzed scholarly articles as well as data sets on things such as:
 - Online learning vs in-person learning
 - Social and economic effects of the pandemic
 - Educational hardships
- Examined Census data (2019-2020)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION:

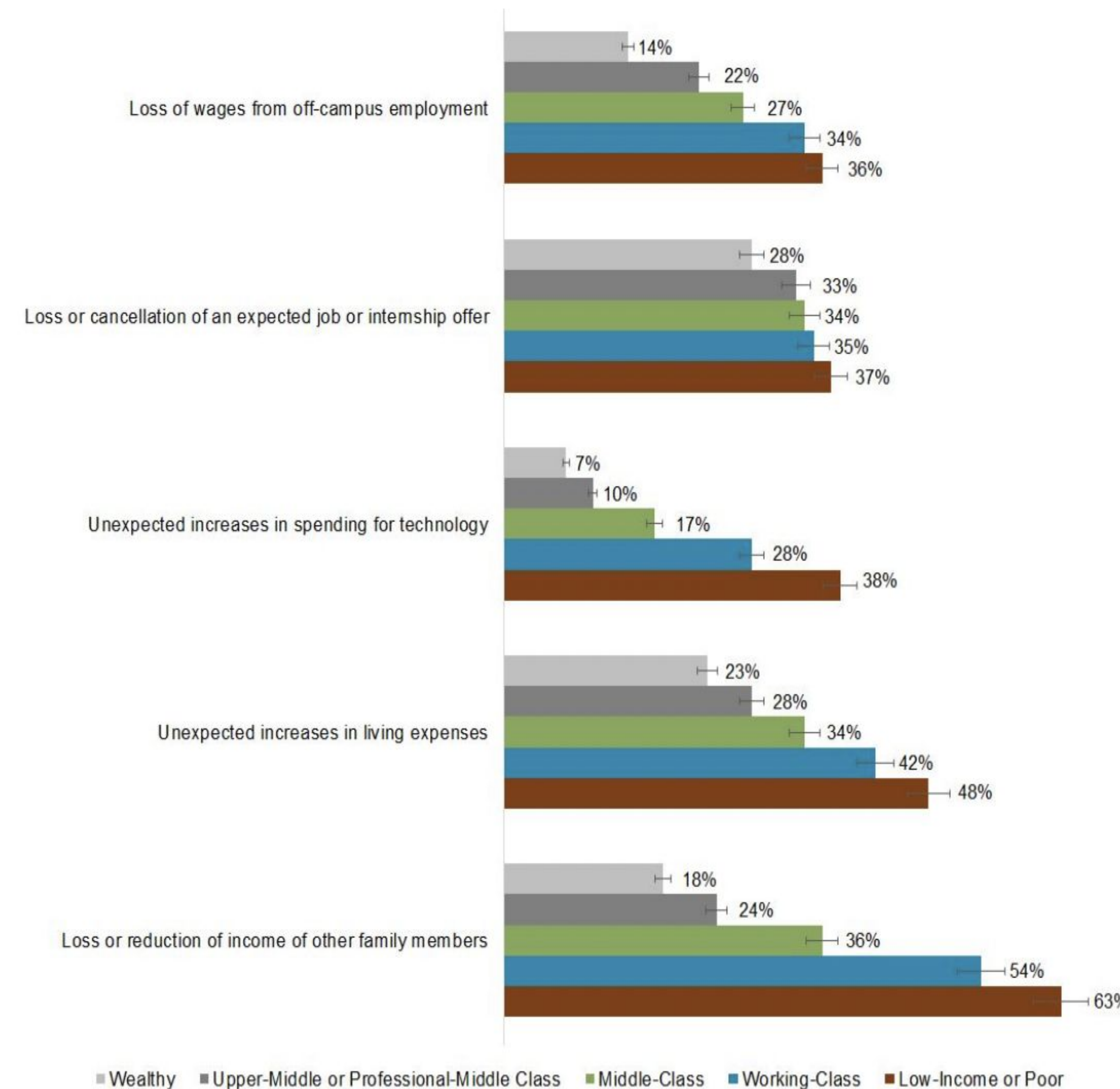


Figure 1: Students' Financial hardships During the Pandemic by Social Class (Soria, K. M., & Horgos, B., 2020, p.3)

- "...kids in remote-learning situations are falling behind academically, especially children who were already struggling. Schools provide more than education. They serve as a safety net for many kids, offering free meals and a safe place to spend the day." (Willyard)
- "While some pupils were very well equipped at home and supported by their parents, others lacked basic material such as a working personal computer or their own desk or had to deal with dysfunctional family arrangements." (Tomasik, M. J., Helbling, L. A., & Moser, U.)
- "Unforeseen extended school closures can lead to lower test scores, lower educational attainment, and decreased earning potential." (Masonbrink, A. R., & Hurley, E.)



CONCLUSION:

The transfer to online learning was not easy for everyone. By looking at these results, we can see that the pandemic did in fact have an impact on education and that these impacts were a lot more severe among lower-income students. Many schools were unprepared for this sudden change, including teachers, families, and even students themselves. Not only were lower-income students affected academically but for many, school provided them with free food, and a safe place for the day. Lower-income families were already focused on things like putting food on their tables and paying rent. With the transfer from school to online, these issues were just more things to pile on their plates.

NEXT STEPS:

- Government officials should work on providing accessible education for all students in need. This can include things like:
 - Access to internet and technology
 - Free meals
 - Tutor services
 - Financial assistance

REFERENCES:

Scan the QR code to see full bibliography of sources used in this study:

