# University Culture and Parental Involvement: Enhancing Resilience and Access to Education during Covid-19

*The study investigated how university culture and parental involvement promoted resilience and access to education among second and third-year students during the COVID-19 lockdown. Using a phenomenological design within a qualitative approach, data was collected from 15 (5 male and 10 female) second-year students and 15 (7 male and 8 female) third-year students from a university in Johannesburg, South Africa. Students from low socioeconomic backgrounds were purposively sampled. Data was analysed thematically, and the findings revealed that the positive university culture improved the students' resilience and access to education. Furthermore, parental involvement fostered resilience and access to education amongst students. Based on the findings, we conclude that supportive university culture and positive parental involvement were critical in promoting student resilience and access to education. Furthermore, we recommend that higher education institutions collaborate with families and communities to support the education of university students.*

**Keywords:** *COVID-19 lockdown, higher education, university culture, online teaching and learning, parental involvement, student resilience*

## Introduction

With the outset of Coronavirus (COVID-19), ways had to be invented to preserve normal human functioning amid lockdown restrictions. Measures to curb the spread of the disease became the main priority worldwide (Anderson, 2020). Many demographics, sectors and institutions felt the disruptive effects of COVID-19, and Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) were not spared (Browning et al., 2021). Students from low socio-economic backgrounds felt the hardest pinch due to IHE closures and shifts to online learning (Rodriguez-Planas, 2020). This shift was necessary to comply with COVID-19 safety protocols. Consequently, students found themselves navigating the new normal in environments that were not conducive to teaching and learning (Esteban, French, Araya, & Zafar, 2020).

According to Logel, Oreopoulos, and Petronijevic (2021), studies conducted to investigate the impact of COVID-19 reveal very little about how HE students from low socio-economic backgrounds responded to this adversity. With the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions being implemented, the students were left with no option but to return to their families. As a result, they faced new challenges in navigating the new ways of teaching and learning engagements. Quach (2021) found that disadvantaged students were impacted by the move from institutions' residences to living with their families and the migration to an online mode of engagement. Considering these adversities, our

1   study sought to find out how university culture and parental involvement aided
2   the students' resilience and continued access to education.
3       According to Lanford and Tierney (2018), most IHEs adopted the online
4   mode of engagement to ensure that the process of teaching and learning
5   continued. Furthermore, online learning replaced traditional face-to-face
6   interaction in HE learning. Quach (2021) found that low socio-economic
7   standing and race exacerbated challenges during the pandemic in terms of
8   obtaining reliable devices, internet access and working spaces. University
9   culture has been placed in the spotlight as a factor which previously determined
10  whether HE students thrive and manage to continue accessing education
11  (Lanford & Tierney, 2018). Shen and Tian (2012) described institutional
12  culture as the uniqueness of an institution in its academic innovations to
13  provide a warm and conducive environment for teaching and learning to take
14  place. In addition, Malla (2022) cited that most South African universities
15  implemented Blackboard as an online learning system. However, this move
16  introduced new challenges. For example, load shedding and connectivity issues
17  led students to move from one house to the next within their communities in
18  search of better connectivity (Mishra, Gupta, & Shree, 2020).
19      Considering that students had to learn online from home, Gumede and
20  Badriparsad (2021) indicated that students drew support from their families as
21  well as communities to ensure maximum educational participation. In such
22  cases, families and communities became the enablers of resilience. Ntekane
23  (2018) asserted that parental involvement in education is linked to enhanced
24  student resilience and academic achievement. Resilience is defined by Kaye-
25  Kauderer, Feingold, Feder, Southwick, and Charney (2021) as the ability to
26  bounce back from adversity. Studies view resilience as a combination of
27  individual traits and contextual factors (van Breda, 2018; Goodman, Disabato,
28  Kashdan, & Machell, 2017). With limited studies done on how university
29  culture and parental involvement enable HE students' resilience and access to
30  education, this prompted the authors to conduct this study as an attempt to
31  contribute to closing the knowledge gap. Therefore, the research question
32  addressed was: 'How did the university culture and parental involvement
33  enhance students' resilience and access to education during the COVID-19
34  lockdown?'
35      In full awareness that some experiences negatively affected the resilience
36  of HE students during the COVID-19 lockdown, this study only focused on
37  positive experiences. To understand the resilience of HE students from a
38  systemic approach, we engage with Ungar's Social Ecology of Resilience
39  Theory (SERT). We thereafter discuss the methodology used in data collection
40  and the themes that emerged from the data.
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42
43  **Theoretical Framework**
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45      The SERT states that individuals' resilience is dependent on their context
46  (Ungar, 2013). Its roots can be traced to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems

1 theory. Holtge et al. (2020 p. 19) defined social-ecological resilience as 'the
2 ability of individuals, families and communities to navigate and seek out
3 meaningful social and ecological resources that provide protective factors in
4 times of stress.' Van Breda (2018) stipulated that resilience is multilevel and
5 integrated. A study by Ebersöhn (2014) added that resilience relies on personal
6 strength and contextual resources, further influenced by the social and cultural
7 values of a community or country. Ungar (2011, p. 1) stressed that 'resilience
8 occurs even when risk factors are plentiful.' Thus, individuals' social ecologies
9 can influence positive adaptation to adversities. For individuals faced with
10 adversities to resile, the interrelationships between the individual features and their
11 context must bring about adaptation.
12 Van Breda (2018) identified that resilience-enablers are mostly in the
13 personal and relational domains and that these domains are inclusive of agency
14 and affective support. As this study sought to explore how university culture and
15 parental involvement promoted resilience and continued access to education
16 among students during the COVID-19 lockdown, this theory was found to be a
17 good fit. The theory enabled us to view students holistically and to explore how
18 the systems around them enabled their resilience.
19 According to Kumper (1999), motivational factors, cognitive competencies,
20 emotional stability, behavioural and social skills as well as physical wellbeing are
21 five individual resources that support resilience. These resources are an integral
22 part of building resilience and are influenced by a supportive social ecology (Hall
23 & Theron, 2016). Social ecology consists of immediate family, extended family,
24 community members, professionals, strangers (van Breda & Theron, 2018) and
25 culture (van Rensburg et al., 2017). Regarding students in this study, their
26 university and families played a critical role in enhancing their resilience during
27 the lockdown. The SERT is applicable in this study because it is based on
28 relationships which interlink at micro and macro levels (Aldwin & Igarashi, 2012).
29 These levels begin hierarchically from students to tertiary institutions. Students are
30 part of a social system and all the systems play an active role in influencing
31 resilience.
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34 **Parental Involvement and Resilience**
35
36 Van Breda and Theron (2018) affirmed that parental involvement is
37 regarded as a resource for resilience. Parents are primary resources for their
38 children who provide the initial context to enable resilience. The immediate
39 surroundings where an individual develops (microsystem) define a setting
40 where an individual has direct, face-to-face relationships with significant
41 people such as parents (Leonard, 2011). Thus, Ungar (2011) stated that the
42 individual's interactions with parents are one of the most valuable resilience
43 resources. Harðardóttir, Júlíusdóttir, and Guðmundsson (2015) found that the
44 motivation and understanding of parents of learners with learning challenges
45 had a resounding impact on their ability to adjust positively. Ungar (2013)
46 found that resilience-enabling resources in the family were healthy family

1  routines, supportive parents and support from extended family. In agreement,
2  Masten (2015) affirmed that resilience is related to close relationships with
3  others such as parents. It is imperative to note that for Black Africans,
4  attachments are not mainly to biological parents, but rather to the extended
5  family (Theron & Theron, 2014) and caregivers, which could be grandparents,
6  neighbours and elders in the community. With the impact of COVID-19,
7  parents and communities had a major role in promoting the resilience of their
8  children. Luthar, Ebbert, and Kumar (2021) found that the resilience of
9  individuals during COVID-19 was influenced by their parents' role in being
10  available and supportive. Thus, access to parental support and involvement was
11  a critical aspect for students to mitigate the negative impact of COVID-19 on
12  their overall functioning.
13
14
15  **University Culture and Resilience**
16
17  Appleby et al. (2022) stated that the COVID-19 pandemic caused major
18  disturbance to university students and had an influential impact on their lives.
19  The COVID-19 pandemic had a profound impact, not only on students' health
20  but also on how they learn, work and live (OECD, 2020). In the face of
21  adversities such as COVID-19, Bartusevičienė, Pazaver and Kitada (2021)
22  stressed that universities and other higher institutions have a critical role in
23  society. In response to COVID-19 challenges, new university cultures evolved
24  and were flexible by adopting remote learning to ensure that students' access to
25  education continued. Despite the challenges students faced, they were able to
26  use the availed university resources to enable their resilience.
27  University culture is regarded as one of the factors that enabled the
28  resilience of students during COVID-19. Universities responded to COVID-19
29  by setting up crisis task teams to mitigate adversities during the pandemic
30  (Malla, 2020). Raghunathan, Darshan, and Sharma (2022) asserted that the
31  university's resilience is determined by its ability to continue to function as
32  effectively as before the change and to adjust when the adversities are sudden.
33  Shaya, Abu Khait, Madani, and Khattak (2022) indicated that several
34  institutions displayed their preparedness to mitigate the impact of COVID-19.
35  Ojo, Fawehinmi, and Yusliza (2021) found that preparation for COVID-19 was
36  notable when institutions upgraded their software, Information Technology
37  (IT) infrastructure and development of staff. Furthermore, Shaya et al. (2022)
38  stipulated that students were also supported by being offered remote lectures
39  and assessments. In this study, we argue that the university's culture in
40  response to COVID-19 enabled the resilience of students and facilitated
41  continued access to education.
42
43  **Access to Education during COVID-19**
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45  With the onset of COVID-19, access to education was compromised. The
46  Constitution of South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1996) stipulates that

1   the right to tertiary education is progressive and dependent on the state's ability
2   to provide it under reasonable conditions. This means that HE students cannot
3   claim their right to education immediately if there are other pressing issues that
4   the state needs to attend to (McConnachie, Skelton, & McConnachie, 2017).
5   During COVID-19, the state could not meet the students' needs for them to
6   continue accessing education as it was focused on curbing the spread of
7   COVID-19. Thus, universities and families were left with the added burden of
8   making sure that the students had continued access to education despite the
9   challenges they were facing. Such responsibilities included the provision of
10  resources such as laptops, data bundles, conducive learning environments and
11  educational support. Thus, this study explored how university culture and
12  parental involvement enabled the students to continue accessing education,
13  given that the state could not guarantee this under the circumstances.
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16  **Methodology**
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18      A qualitative research approach was used because we sought to investigate
19  the participants' experiences during the COVID-19 lockdown.  We used an
20  interpretive research paradigm as a framework to demarcate our thinking
21  (Sefotho, 2018). Through this paradigm, we gained an in-depth insight into the
22  lived experiences of the students regarding how their institution's culture and
23  parental involvement contributed to their resilience and enabled them to
24  continue accessing education. The study explored the beliefs and
25  interpretations of these students without imposing the researchers' views
26  (Mayan, 2016). Throughout the study, both subjective and objective knowledge
27  of the participants about their social contexts was empathetically valued in
28  agreement with the description of the interpretivist paradigm (Patton, 2015).
29  A phenomenological design was chosen as the lens to guide the study, as it
30  places particular interest on the various aspects of life that mattered to the
31  participants (Larkin, 2015).
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34  **Sampling**
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36      During the sample selection, the emphasis was on quality rather than
37  quantity, where the objective was to become "saturated" with rich, in-depth
38  data on the topic (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Purposive sampling facilitated an
39  in-depth investigation of 30 students from low socio-economic standing, who
40  were 12 males and 18 females in their second and third year of study at a
41  university in Gauteng Province. The number of participants was guided by the
42  purpose of the study and what would be useful, credible and possible
43  considering the time and available resources (Vaismoradi et al., 2016).
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**Data Collection**

The researchers collected data using in-depth, semi-structured individual interviews. This data collection tool provides the researcher with rich information pertaining to participants' lived experiences and worldviews (Henning, van Rensburg, & Smit, 2004). According to Creswell (2014), good quality phenomenological enquiries depend almost exclusively on lengthy and in-depth interviews. Furthermore, in-depth interviews are effective for collecting data on individuals' personal histories and experiences, particularly when sensitive topics are investigated (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019). Thus, we used in-depth interviews in this study, using open-ended questions to obtain rich data from the participants (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010). The interviews were conducted in English, which the participants were all fluent in, using the Microsoft Teams platform. The participants were made aware that the information would be audio-recorded, notes taken and that their consent would be required to maintain trustworthiness of the process. Each interview sessions lasted for more than an hour, was conversational, and we made allowance for follow-up interactions in the event of clarity being required during the transcription phase (Busetto, Wick & Gumbinger, 2020). Once the interviews were concluded, data was transcribed, and all three authors checked the transcripts against the audio-recordings for accuracy.

**Data Analysis**

Thematic data analysis was used following Yin's (2011) three-phase format, which includes compiling, disassembling and reassembling data. During the data compilation phase, the researchers immersed themselves in the data by reading and rereading what was obtained from the transcribed notes pertaining to the students' experiences. While disassembling the data, the researchers organised it into emergent categories and tabulated them. Finally, data was reassembled by colour-coding it into patterns as per emergent themes (Saldaña, 2021). This means that the patterns, categories and themes "emerged out of the raw data when it was organised and colour-coded, instead of being put in place prior to data collection and analysis" (Mayan, 2016, p. 87). Finally, the researchers wrote a narrative account of the findings and supported the arguments for each theme with verbatim excerpts from the transcripts.

**Ethics**

Ethical clearance to conduct the study was obtained from the University of Johannesburg Ethics Committee (Ethics number: Sem 2-2021-073). In addition, the students consented to participate after the purpose of the study was explained and an opportunity was given to them to ask questions. Furthermore, students gave additional consent for their interviews to be audio-

1    recorded. Pseudonyms were used throughout the study to avoid linking their
2    responses to their true identities. The participants were informed that they
3    could withdraw from participating at any time if they felt uncomfortable,
4    without any action being taken against them. They were informed about the
5    educational psychologist on standby for the duration of the study and given the
6    South African Depression and Anxiety Group's (SADAG) toll-free number in
7    case they needed psychological services after the study had been concluded.
8    The participants were assured that their information and interview transcripts
9    would be kept confidential and only used for the purpose of research without
10   divulging their identity.
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13   **Findings**
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15      Two main themes emerged from the data, namely supportive university
16   culture and positive parental involvement. This section discusses the two main
17   themes and the subthemes that emerged under each theme. The verbatim
18   excerpts from the participants are used to support the themes.
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20
21   **THEME 1**: **Supportive university culture**
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23      Supportive university culture was regarded as a resilience factor in this study.
24   According to the participants, the university they attended had a supportive
25   institutional culture which promoted their resilience and resulted in them accessing
26   their education during the COVID-19 lockdown. Under this theme, four
27   subthemes emerged, namely supportive lecturers and tutors, provision of resources
28   by the university and support from university management.
29
30   *Supportive Lecturers and Tutors*
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32      Lecturers and tutors were critical in enabling students' resilience and
33   access to education during the lockdown. Most of the participants reported that
34   their lecturers and tutors were supportive and did their best to ensure that they
35   continued learning. This is evident from Mary (female third-year) who stated
36   that: '*During lockdown, the lecturers went the extra mile to put extra additional*
37   *material in terms of the content so that we better understand. Also, there were*
38   *recorded lectures, which I feel like was something that they used to help a lot*
39   *of students that maybe couldn't connect during the class.*'
40      Mcedisi (male second-year) also expressed that '*the lecturers were very*
41   *effective, and I can say they did everything for the team. They made sure that*
42   *they delivered instructions clearly and if a student had a problem, there was a*
43   *quick response.*'
44      Most participants highlighted that supervisors went the extra mile to
45   support them. This is illustrated by Sphiwe (female third-year) who said:
46   '*Actually, they made themselves available and sometimes I felt that we were*

*even invading their privacy because we would just send a message even on*
*Sunday and we would say we don't understand this and they would try their*
*best to clarify the concept. I felt like sometimes we were abusing them. They*
*communicated and gave feedback.'*

Mpilo (male third-year) also agreed with this and stated: '*I don't want to*
*lie, they were very supportive and went extra miles like doing tutorials*
*midnight because we would want to use the night data.'*

*Provision of Resources by the University*

Research studies abound on resource provision as resilience enablers and
the findings of our study confirm this. Most participants alluded that the
university acted swiftly to ensure that students were provided with the
necessary resources which enhanced their resilience and continued access to
education. The resources provided include the monthly data bundles and
laptops. Ivy (female second-year) expressed: '*Also, the universities gave us*
*some form of compensation like data so that we could connect to our lessons*.'
Mxolisi (male third-year) concurred and said: '*Starting with the infrastructure*
*that was put in place by the university, they did give us data monthly.'* Thando
(female second-year) added: '*l didn't have laptop, so… l managed to [tell]…*
*this lecturer that I don't have a laptop, then she recommended me that there is*
*a loan device service and l can loan a device; that's when l started getting*
*resources.'*

*Support from the University Management*

The findings of our study revealed that student resilience and continued
access to education were further enabled by supportive university management.
The university management was commended for constant communication and
giving students the right to access information. This is evident from the words
of Nola (female third-year) who said: '*If you contacted the faculty, you would*
*get assistance, and our Vice-Chancellor, all the time on the social media*
*platforms, was updating us about the progress of the university and how we*
*are adapting to this online system.'*

Vukosi (female second-year) further supported this and said: '*I would say*
*that the faculty did it's best for us; they attended to our queries and also they*
*would address queries from the questionnaire where we gave responses in*
*which they would try to improve the online learning, asking questions like*
*where do you think we are getting it right and wrong so that they could*
*improve the learning experiences. In a way it actually showed that they care*
*for us. The communication was awesome it's like they put themselves in the*
*shoes of the students.'*

Rubi (female third-year) also pointed out that *'they recommended the*
*students to go for psychological services for those who felt that they weren't*
*coping with psychological problems that were free and available to students so*
*that through their constant communication they showed that they care, not only*

1 *about academics but also about our well-being.'* Lucky (male second-year)
2 further mentioned: '*The university management was awesome, they organised*
3 *for online meetings with the students especially before the exams and we would*
4 *attend a session that will give you guys tips on how to study for exams, and*
5 *how to prepare for exams from a physical, emotional and psychological point*
6 *of views.'*
7
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9 **THEME 2: Positive Parental Involvement**
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11     The second main theme that emerged from our study was positive parental
12 involvement. Most participants expressed that positive parental involvement
13 was noted to contribute to improved students' resilience and continued access
14 to education during the lockdown. Parental support was evident in the two
15 subthemes that emerged, namely availing of resources by parents and
16 emotional support from parents, which are discussed below.
17
18 *Availing of Resources by Parents*
19
20     Our study showed that parents availed resources that were needed by the
21 students to continue accessing education. This became a factor that enhanced
22 their resilience during the lockdown. As evidenced by most of the participants,
23 their parents went the extra mile to provide them with data bundles and laptops
24 to use for online learning. Leko (female second-year) expressed the folllowing:
25 '*The positive side about my learning experience during lockdown is that my*
26 *parents tried, they went the extra mile and bought a router for me.'* Echoing
27 Leko's sentiments, Kevin (male second-year) also mentioned: '*Even though my*
28 *parents are poor, my family sacrificed to provide me with a router and data*
29 *bundles ... so I would be able to attend classes.'* Tuli (female third-year)
30 added: '*When l did not have a laptop last year my father was able to organise*
31 *one at the beginning of the second semester; he borrowed money to buy me the*
32 *laptop as it was very difficult to use a phone.'* Kay (male second-year) also had
33 a similar experience as Tuli and said: '*My adoptive mother was supportive and*
34 *she just wanted me to just pass my academic year. She got me a router and*
35 *borrowed a laptop for me.'*
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38 *Emotional Support from Parents*
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40     Emotional support has been known to enhance resilience in the face of
41 adversity (Theron, 2016). Given that the lockdown resulted in a lot of
42 emotional distress for many (Le Grange, 2020), HE students were not spared.
43 Our study revealed that the impact of COVID-19 on the emotional distress of
44 participants was lessened by the support rendered by their parents. This also
45 included support from other family members. Pinky (female third-year) pointed
46 out: '*I had a baby in first year so l was worried that l would fail because the*

1   *baby needs attention and my family took care of the baby and always told me*
2   *to calm down and focus on my academics.'* Skeema (male third-year) also
3   said: '*So, having parents that normally check up on you from time to time was*
4   *good because you wouldn't find yourself feeling down or feeling demotivated*
5   *because you knew that parents would be there.'* Siya (male second-year)
6   supported this by saying: '*My parents were the ones who gave me hope and*
7   *took control even if it was difficult, but they helped me to adapt to the new way*
8   *of learning. So that's the thing that kept me going, so I don't think I would be*
9   *here if my parents were not supportive.'* Lilly (female second-year) agreed by
10  saying: '*Emotionally, my father had been there and supportive even when I am*
11  *lazing around he pushed me to get schoolwork done.'*
12
13
14  **Discussion**
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16      The focus of this study was on the positive role played by university
17  culture and parental involvement in enhancing student resilience and continued
18  access to education during the COVID-19 lockdown. Our findings generally
19  showed that despite challenges that were encountered by the students, their
20  universities and parents assisted to lessen the impact by responding positively.
21  Teaching staff have been noted as a critical part of young people's social
22  ecologies and a source of resilience (Ungar, Russel and Connelly, 2014). In
23  South Africa, Black African females are the most marginalised part of the
24  population. This is also evident with the number of Black female students in
25  our study, which outnumbered the males. Thus, lecturers have a critical role to
26  play in enhancing the resilience not just of female black students but also of
27  male students (Ungar, Russel and Connelly (2014). This was the case in our
28  study where the students found that lecturers' supportive nature with online
29  learning during lockdown was a source of resilience which also enabled them
30  to continue accessing education. Theron (2016) argued that teachers who
31  facilitate youth resilience are found to be empathetic to students' problems and
32  tend to support students with the problems they face. This was clear in our
33  study where participants praised their lecturers for doing their best to
34  understand and support them with their learning during lockdown. This
35  enhanced their resilience during the difficult times.
36      Although not all lecturers can facilitate resilience among students, our
37  findings show that a majority of the lecturers were doing this, and they are
38  commended for doing so. Our study further found that tutors' supportive nature
39  enhanced students' resilience during the lockdown. These findings are in line
40  with those of Simons et al., (2018) who found that students in their study rated
41  the highly supportive nature of their tutors who gave them tailored and detailed
42  feedback on their assignments. In our case, the tutors even went the extra mile,
43  holding tutorials outside their contracted times. While Kosse et al. (2020)
44  argued that online tutoring may not be easy due to geographical distance, our
45  findings show that this was not a barrier; rather, the positive student-tutor
46  relationship enhanced the students' resilience and access to education. Like

1    what Simons et al., (2018) found, the tutors in our study were influential in
2    assisting students to adjust to the new normal and promoted students' learning
3    through provision of timely and appropriate feedback and support.
4        According to Bashorun, et al., (2021), it is the responsibility of tertiary
5    education institutions to provide quality education for their students. This can
6    be achieved through the provision of necessary teaching and learning
7    resources. Participants in our study confirmed that their resilience and ability to
8    access education was enhanced by the efforts made by their university in
9    providing them with data bundles and laptops. Although some indicated that
10   the data bundles were not always enough, they acknowledged how the
11   allocation reduced their stress and helped them to carry out their studies.
12   During the lockdown, this responsibility was put to the test, as HE institutions
13   had to ensure that students continued to enjoy quality education, despite the
14   sudden change of ways of teaching and learning. Students were supposed to
15   continue learning and accessing educational materials. With the changeover to
16   online learning, this meant that some students from low socioeconomic
17   backgrounds faced challenged,as they did not have the required resources to
18   continue learning. This could result in stress and lack of resilience for some.
19   Awoke et al., (2021) argued that the provision of required resources is essential
20   to assist students in coping with stress and other mental health problems. du
21   Plessis et al., (2022) stated that universities appealed to public and private
22   sectors to help disadvantaged students with data and laptops to enable them to
23   continue learning remotely. Thus, in our study, it was evident that the
24   participants' university played a vital role in meeting students' needs of data
25   bundles and loaning some students laptops to use during lockdown. As
26   confirmed by our participants, the provision of the required resources to
27   students to continue accessing education reduced the impact of stress. Raffaelli
28   et al., (2013) further argued that in some cases such effects can be totally
29   eradicated Thus, the critical role of HE institutions in enhancing student
30   resilience and facilitating continued learning for disadvantaged students is
31   highlighted.
32       When considering the role played by university management in facilitating
33   resilience and access to education during the lockdown, our study found that
34   this was positive. This is in line with Appolloni et al. (2021) who argued that
35   strong leadership and effective communication with all stakeholders contribute
36   to promoting resilience. Dohaney et al. (2020) further supported that institutional
37   factors such as leadership and communication strategies are resilience enablers.
38   In our study, communication from university management and good leadership
39   at all levels enabled students to be resilient and continue toward their
40   educational goals. Kaye-Kauderer et al., (2021) posit that trust and institutional
41   support can assist students to cope during a pandemic. Thus, open
42   communication, seeking feedback from students and implementing suggestions
43   for change all work to build trust in students. This can, in turn, promote
44   resilience as students will develop confidence in their institution. Our findings
45   further support those of Appolloni et al. (2021) who found that effective

1 leadership and communication were critical factors in facilitating resilience
2 among their participants.

3       With the new mode of teaching and learning engagement during the
4 COVID-19 lockdown, the participants in this study reported that the provision
5 of resources by their parents ensured continued access to education and
6 strengthened their resilience. In addition to data bundles and internet routers,
7 the resources required included reliable mobile phones, tablets and computers.
8 Logically, for parents to provide the necessary resources, they needed to be in a
9 good financial standing. Our study findings are also in line with a study that
10 specifically investigated the resilience of Black South African university
11 students and linked improved resilience to how parents urgently sourced funds to
12 provide learning resources (Dass-Brailsford, 2005). Similarly, our participants
13 reported that improved resilience and continued access to education meant that
14 the psychological impact of the COVID-19 lockdown was minimal.

15       Masten (2015 p. 152) also postulates that students whose parents provide
16 the necessary educational resources seldom report any impact on their
17 psychological well-being in the duration of their studies. In support of this claim,
18 adults who are successful in life despite having faced adversities during their
19 studies, often describe their families as "extraordinarily supportive" (Ofiesh &
20 Mather, 2013, p. 339). This was the case in our study when it became clear that
21 our participants described their parents as extremely supportive. This support
22 included parents who continued to encourage academic progress through the
23 provision of educational resources. Studies conducted on the resilience of youth
24 from sub-Saharan Africa confirm that it is the role of parents to assist their
25 children to mitigate the impact of unavoidable adversity (Camfield, 2012). The
26 same finding emerged when the resilience of South African learners was
27 researched (van Breda & Theron, 2018). Echoing the documented literature, the
28 availing of resources by parents during the COVID-19 lockdown emerged as one
29 of the factors that enhanced the students' resilience in this study.

30       In addition to the provision of educational resources, parents also played a
31 role in enhancing the students' resilience, through providing emotional support
32 during the lockdown. This supports claims by Romero et al. (2018) that
33 emotionally supportive parents promote resilience by reducing the impact of
34 adversity. Emotionally supportive parents may not be able to prevent adversity,
35 but they can offer comfort and support children in adjusting and making
36 meaning of the experiences of adversity. In this study, it could not be ignored
37 how most participants mentioned their female parental figures as those who
38 were mostly available to provide emotional support. This finding supports Zulu
39 (2018), who postulates that women parent-figures are prominent in accounts of the
40 enhanced resilience of African adolescents. In South Africa, this prominence
41 could, potentially, be explained by contextual realities that women head 28.6%
42 of nuclear households and 49.9% of extended family households (Ratele &
43 Nduna, 2018). Often, fathers are absent from these households because they are
44 migrant workers, deceased, unwelcome or unknown (Padi et al, 2014).
45 Moreover, women's prominence could also be explained by traditional Black
46 African families' perpetuation of gender stereotypes, that tend to confine

women to subservient and caregiving roles (Block, 2016). In line with our study findings, only two out of thirty participants mentioned male parents' involvement. Hence this study confirms the literature on the patterns within Black African communities.


**Conclusion and Implication for Practice**

The shift from face-to-face teaching and learning to online learning at HE institutions introduced several adversities to students across the globe. This shift aggravated the adversities students from low socioeconomic backgrounds were already facing. Since resilience is visible amid hardships (Ungar 2013), the study investigated how university culture and parental involvement enhanced students' resilience and access to education during the COVID-19 lockdown.

Reaffirming prior studies' findings on resilience, our study found that several factors enhanced students' resilience when faced with adversities during lockdown. Specifically in our study, these factors included a supportive university culture and positive parental involvement. Within the university culture, supportive lecturing staff and tutors, provision of resources by the university and supportive university management enabled students to be resilient and offered them opportunities to access education despite online learning challenges. Positive parental involvement was also evident in enhancing resilience and access to education through availing of resources and emotional support to students. The study was limited to only one university and 30 students, which limited generalisation of findings. However, the aim was not to generalise, but to gain a deeper understanding of the role played by the university and parents in enhancing resilience and continued access to education during lockdown.

This study provided insights into the critical role the university stakeholders and parents played in fostering students' resilience and ensuring that students' education was not compromised. Despite their low socioeconomic backgrounds, parents were proactive in fulfilling their parental role by providing their children with emotional support and educational resources. Thus, they enabled the resilience of their children.

Although the university and parents played their role in assisting students to buffer the adversities students faced, no collaboration between the university and parents was reported in this study. Therefore, the authors recommend the adoption of HE institution-family-community collaborations going forward, and innovative ways should be considered to initiate this collaboration. Future research should therefore focus on innovative ways to promote the proposed collaboration.

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