

# SELF-REPORTED EFFECTS OF COVID-19 HEALTH MEASURES ON EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS' VOICE AND COMMUNICATION: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

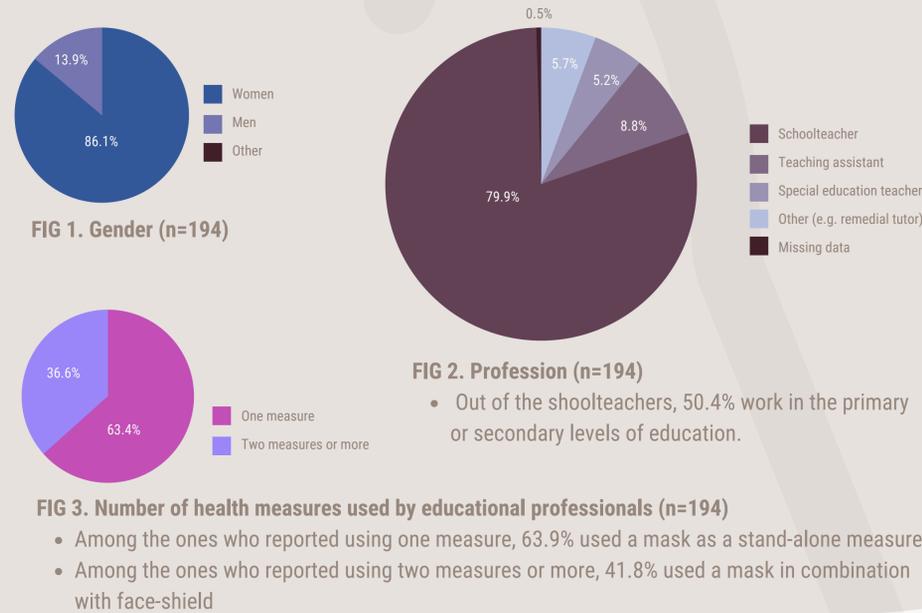


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## INTRODUCTION

- CONTEXT**
- Voice is a critical working tool for educational professionals in schools and early childhood settings.
    - These professionals present a higher risk of developing voice disorders.
  - In September 2020, the COVID-19 health measures implemented in educational settings contributed to creating adverse communication climates.
- RESEARCH AIM**
- To document the self-reported vocal difficulties experienced by educational professionals a few weeks after the implementation of COVID-19 health measures in educational settings in Quebec.
- RESEARCH QUESTIONS**
- What are the vocal difficulties experienced by school and early childhood professionals when teaching during COVID-19?
- Do educational professionals feel equipped to deal with their vocal difficulties?
  - Which situations are particularly problematic?
  - Are the vocal experiences of educational professionals dependent on gender, specific profession and teaching level?

## SAMPLE DESCRIPTION



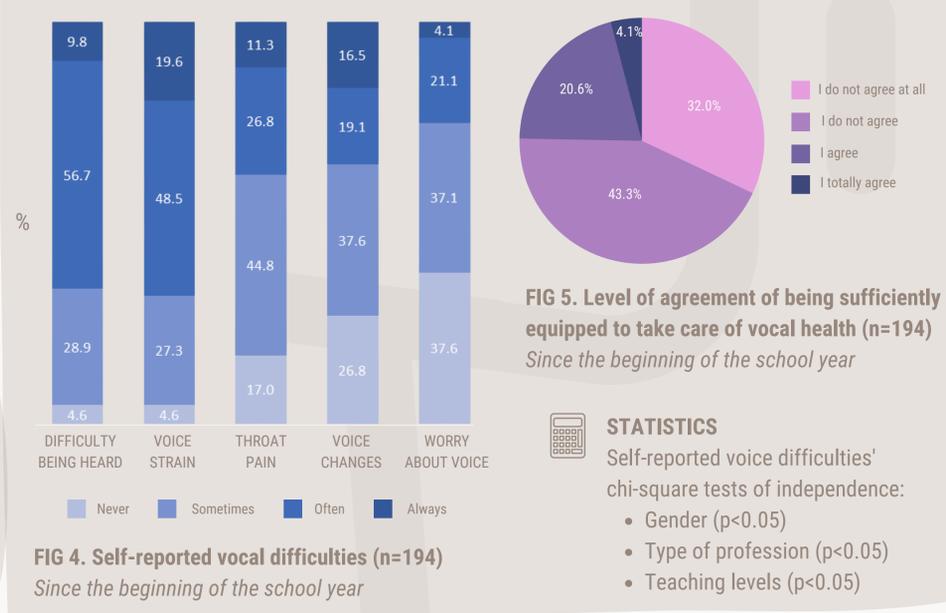
## RESULTS (QUALITATIVE)

- "Describe a particularly problematic situation related to their use of voice at work"
- In total, 139 respondents (72%) offered an answer to this question. The qualitative analysis of these answers yielded 276 coded elements that were categorized into five main themes. Each theme was then differentiated into sub-themes, for a total of fifteen sub-themes. Below, these themes and their sub-themes are detailed. The number in parentheses refers to the number of respondents that mentioned the theme or subtheme.
- MAIN THEMES (5) AND SUBTHEMES (15)**
- Compensatory Strategies (67)**
    - Speak loudly/shout (49)
    - Repetition (13)
    - Non-harmful solutions (5)
  - COVID-19 Specific Barriers (83)**
    - Auditory barriers (63)
    - Visual barriers (14)
    - Self-echo (6)
  - Contributing Factors (29)**
    - Noise & excitement (18)
    - Distance (11)
  - Specific Situations (56)**
    - Large groups (21)
    - Outdoors (16)
    - Counselling (17)
    - Getting attention (2)
  - Symptoms (41)**
    - Exhaustion (14)
    - Vocal manifestations (13)
    - Breathing/hydration difficulties (14)

## METHODOLOGY

- TOOL**
- Anonymous and voluntary **online self-report survey on voice** consisting of 10 questions on:
- Background variables: Specific profession, teaching level (preschool, primary, secondary, etc.), self-identified gender, age, and health measures implemented in the workplace.
  - Reported frequency of: perceived difficulty of being heard; straining the voice; experiencing throat pain (e.g. sore throat); experiencing voice changes; feeling worried and concerned about the voice
  - Reported level of agreement of being sufficiently equipped to take care of vocal health
  - Voice-related problematic situation
- PARTNERSHIP**
- 
- LOCATION**
- 
- TIME PERIOD**
- Distribution in October 2020
- SAMPLE**
- 194 EDUCATIONAL PROFESSIONALS**  
(school teachers, special education teachers, remedial teachers, etc.)

## RESULTS (QUANTITATIVE)



## DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

- MAIN TAKEAWAYS**
- Educational professionals experience a **variety of vocal difficulties** (e.g. voice strain, vocal fatigue, voice changes) that are specifically linked to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 health measures.
- They **DO NOT** feel equipped to deal with these difficulties and take care of their vocal health.
  - Educational professionals go through problematic situations that are worsened by the COVID-19 health measures.
  - Self-reported voice difficulties varied as a function of gender: Women experience more vocal difficulties than men. Women also feel less equipped to take care of their vocal health.
  - Self-reported voice difficulties varied as a function of type of profession and teaching levels.
- CONCLUSION**
- Owing to the cross-sectional nature of our research, it is impossible to determine causation. However, based on the qualitative analyses of the open-ended answers to our survey, COVID-19 health measures stand out as a risk factor of self-reported voice difficulties for educational professionals in Quebec.