AN INVESTIGATION INTO HIGHER SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS ONLINE CLASS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC SITUATION

Dr. M. J. Senthilkumar
Head & Associate Professor,
Department of Commerce (CS), Sri Kaliswari College (Autonomous), Sivakasi – 626130
Email Id: mjs.senthilkumar@gmail.com
Orcid ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6745-5443

Dr. S. Kulothunga Pandian
Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce,
Sri Kaliswari College (Autonomous), Sivakasi – 626130
Email Id: kulothungapandian@gmail.com
Orcid ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5780-3336

ABSTRACT

The entire world is battling against the COVID-19 pandemic situation. Work from home is the talk of the day and has become the norm in most of the industry. To reduce the spread of COVID-19, most countries around the world have decided to temporarily close in-person instruction and moved to remote learning and teaching from March 2020 onwards. However, the educational sector takes concerted efforts to maintain learning continuity during this period. Students have to rely more on their resources to continue learning remotely through the Internet, television, or radio. Teachers also adopt new pedagogical concepts and modes of delivery of teaching, for which they may not have been trained. Likewise, the learners in the most marginalized groups, who don't have access to digital learning resources or lack the resilience and engagement to learn on their own, are at risk of falling behind. The problems like poor attendance, lack of personal touch, and lack of interaction due to connectivity issues were not only faced by the faculty members but also by the students. It increases the stress level among the young generation and increases the negative attitude towards the education system. The present article highlighted the Higher Secondary School Students' attitude towards online classes.

INTRODUCTION

The main core of education is to learn. Learning could be a method of feat data or skills through study, expertise, or being educated. Any freak accident that happens within the world can continuously leave its impact on education. The COVID-19 has affected people regardless of gender, caste, education, nationality, or income. It affects every industry or sector as well as every activity of Individuals. Education is not exempted from this. Moreover, the education sector is the worst affected sector than any other sector during the pandemic situation. The COVID-19 lockdowns interrupted the traditional schooling system. It also leads to many inadequacies and inequities in our education systems. It requires access to broadband and computers for online education, and the supportive environments required to focus on learning. The misalignment between resources and needs leads to nationwide school closures in most countries. Students from affluent backgrounds could find their way to alternative learning possibilities past closed school doors. Those from disadvantaged backgrounds often remained shutout when their schools shutdown. Governments around the world are making efforts to facilitate the continuity of education for all using different digital modes of learning. According to a survey report of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India, there are 993 universities, 39931 Colleges, and 10725 standalone institutions listed on their portal, which contribute to education (DNS Kumar, 2020). Even though the country has been adapting to the new-age learning, but they still lie an obstacle in achieving entire success as only 45 crore people of our Internet/e-learning access is open to the entire population of the world. People living in rural areas are also seriously deprived of technology, hampering the root cause of online education. On the other hand, the switch over from offline to online learning negatively affects the students, who have higher difficulties in adapting to the new learning environment. Similarly, most of the students' communities are not having relevant learning digital resources (e.g. laptop/computer, broadband internet connection), home learning

environment (e.g. a quiet place to study or their desk) support from their parents. All these factors make the students to hopeless in their education and it will affect their future growth and aim.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The closures of the educational sector due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation have led to an unprecedented impact on education. According to UNESCO, since the outbreak of COVID-19 began, 1.37 billion students in 138 countries worldwide have been affected by school and university closures. The classroom is no longer home to almost 60.2 million school teachers and university lecturers. It leads by online seminars, teleconferencing, digital open books, online assessments, and participation in virtual worlds to the digital revolution in the education system. Both the students and teachers are facing many problems in the virtual teaching-learning process. Before the pandemic situation, online teaching was not a major form of education in schools. So most of the teachers have no or minimal experience in online teaching. Likewise in conventional classroom teaching the students and lecturers have face-to-face interaction. It increases socialization. Social issues like students' involvement in group work, helping each other to perform assignments, and looking at the facial gestures of lecturers when explaining a point are instrumental to facilitate learning in the conventional classroom. These things are very low in an online learning situation. Problems in assessing course material, absence of socialization, and not possible to interact with the course teachers and friends are increasing the stress level of the students.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Due to the rapid spread of COVID-19 across the country, schools have shut their doors. The classes have moved online mode to slow the spread. The transition to virtual learning has impacted not only teachers but also the students who have had to adjust to anew learning environment. One of the major consequences of the transition to e-learning is an impact on student health. Virtual learning has also inevitably increased the number of time students spends on digital devices every day. Online learning has also impacted students' patterns of physical exercise. Due to e-learning walking between classes or between homes to school has dramatically reduced and some students stationary for hours on end in front of their computers. It also reduces the social interaction among the students. Due to that students are not only physically depressed but also mentally affected by stress. Therefore it needs to study the students' attitude towards online education.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

R.Radha, et all, in their research pinpointed that the online method of learning is best suited for everyone. Many individuals want to train at a suitable moment, based on their availability and comfort. This encourages the learner to view information modified anytime they want it. He also pointed out that E-learning has become quite popular among students across the world particularly, during the lockdown period due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Emmanuel Aboagye et all revealed that accessibility is the most important challenge students are facing in a complete online learning situation although all the other challenges reported higher means. Again, the study further revealed that students were not prepared for a complete online experience while social issues and lecturer issues affect students' intentions to study online. Before adopting e-learning, an organization should consider the business environment, technology, content, training procedure, culture, human resources, and financial considerations.

Pravat Kumar Jena, in his article, pointed out that, the outbreak of COVID has worked as a catalyst for educational institutions to grow platforms with technologies, which have not been used before. Because of the current option of digital channels, students who are not fortunate as others will struggle. But universities and the government of India are relentlessly trying to come up with a solution to resolve this problem. The priority should be to utilize digital technology to create an advantageous position for millions of young students in India.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of this study are:

1. To analyse the demographic profile of the students.
2. To identify the positive factors towards the online classes.
3. To find out the problems faced by the students in their online learning.
4. To understand the students' expectations in online classes.
5. To give suggestions to increase awareness about social insurance schemes.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In view of considerable data from survey research as well as secondary sources collected and presented in this research report, 'descriptive research' is considered the most appropriate for the present study. The analysis suggestions emerge from the data attained from the sample survey of Virudhunagar District respondents.

A total of 250 respondents were selected by the researcher from 154 higher secondary schools in Virudhunagar District. An online survey technique was used to gather data about the higher secondary school students' attitudes towards online classes. The questionnaire was designed with the help of a literature survey and informal discussions with the students who are currently attending the online classes.

The secondary data were collected from published documents, leading journals, magazines, newspapers, standard textbooks of related topics, and sources from the internet.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

DEMOGRAPHIC CLASSIFICATION OF RESPONDENTS

Demography profile can be defined as "the study of the composition of a social entity in terms of its members' attributes" (Pfeffer 1983)[(5)]. Student's perception towards online education differs from gender, a group selected residential area, etc.

The inquiry about demographic classification describes that among 250 higher secondary students 57.6 percent of the respondents are boys students, 64 percent of the students are studying in matriculation schools, 54.4 percent of the respondents are belonging to an arts group, 59.2 percent of the students are living in an urban area, 36.8 percent of the students' family members are earning between Rs.15,001 and Rs.20,000. These particulars are portrayed in the following table 1.1.

TABLE 1.1

DEMOGRAPHIC CLASSIFICATION

Demographic Factors	No of Respondents	Percentage
GENDER WISE CLASSIFICATION		
Boys	144	57.6
Girls	106	42.4
NATURE OF SCHOOL		
Government School	36	14.4
Aided School	54	21.6
Private/ Matriculation School	160	64.0
GROUP SELECTED		
Arts Group	136	54.4
Science Group	114	45.6
RESIDENTIAL AREA		
Rural	102	40.8
Urban	148	59.2
MONTHLY FAMILY INCOME		
Below Rs.15,000	84	33.6
Rs.15,001 to Rs.20,000	92	36.8

Rs.20,001 to Rs.25,000	42	16.8
Above Rs.25,000	32	12.8
Total	250	100

Source: Primary Data

GADGET USED

The technological revolution leads to a major impact on contemporary education. Technological changes play a major role in all new pedagogical skills in education at all levels. Digital devices are not only used for entertainment but also make more opportunities for the students in engaging learning activities especially during the COVID 19 pandemic situation. The researcher gathered the information about the device used by the students to access the online classes.

The survey reveals that, out of 250 respondents, 62 percent of the students' preferred mobile phones for e-learning, followed by 21.2 percent of the respondents are using the Laptop for e-learning and the remaining 16.8 percent of them are accessing the online class by using the mobile phone as well as the laptop. This information is depicted in table 1.2.

TABLE 1.2
GADGET USED

Gadget	No of Respondents	Percentage
Mobile Phone	155	62.0
Laptop	53	21.2
Both Mobile phone and Laptop	42	16.8
Total	250	100

Source: Primary Data

Table 1.2 reveals that the majority (62%) of respondents are using mobile phones for their online education.

TIME SPENT FOR ONLINE EDUCATION

During the COVID 19 situation, teachers are getting more confident with the new ways of teaching and students are getting used to screen-learning. The Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) has recommended a time limit for the online classes as no more than two sessions per day for students in classes 1 to 8, and no more than four in classes 9 to 12 for pupils, each session lasting a period of 45 minutes. To find out the number of hours the students attend the online classes the survey was made. It reveals that, among 250 students, 7.2 percent of them are attending the 2 hours per day, followed by 16.8 percent of the informants are listening 2 to 3 hours per day, 50.8 percent of the informants are spending 3 to 4 hours and the remaining 25.2 percent of the students are attending the online classes for more than 4 hours per day. This information is depicted in table 1.3.

TABLE 1.3
TI ME SPENT ON ONLINE CLASSES

Time Spent	No of Respondents	Percentage
2 and less than 2 Hours	18	7.2
2 – 3 Hours	42	16.8
3 – 4 Hours	127	50.8
More than 4 Hours	63	25.2
Total	250	100

Source: Primary Data

The above table 1.3 makes it obvious that 50.8 percent of the students are attending online classes between 3 and 4 hours per day.

FACTORS INSPIRING TOWARDS ONLINE EDUCATION

In this pandemic situation, there is no way for teaching in the classroom. All educational institutions are forwarded to the e-learning environment. E-learning helps the students to learn the subject at their comfort and requirement. The survey reveals that out of 250 respondents 26.8 percent of the informants felt that the online classes help them to know the latest technology, followed by 22.4 percent of the students' self-learning process are increased due to online classes, 33.2 percent of the students have identified the online mode of attending classes as the alternative way for accessing the material, 11.6 percent of the students feel that online classes are more comfortable than the traditional schooling system and the remaining 6 percent of the students opined that the online classes save their time. It has been brought to the forefront in table.1.4.

TABLE 1.4
FACTORS INSPIRING TO LEARN THROUGH ONLINE

Inspiring Factors	No of Respondents	Percentage
Help me to know the latest technology	67	26.8
Increase the self-learning process	56	22.4
Identify the alternative way to access material	83	33.2
Feel comfortable at home than at school	29	11.6
Save the time	15	6.0
Total	250	100

Source: Primary Data

From the analysis of the above table, it is understood that online classes help nearly one-third (33.2%) of the students to identify the alternative way to access their study material.

STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS

E-learning poses a challenge to both teachers and students over technology and access, but it is keeping everyone busy with worksheets, video lectures, and assignments. The researcher gathered information about the students' expectations to carry out the online classes effectively and efficiently. The study reveals that, among 250 respondents, 20.4 percent of the students expect that the online class should be an interactive session, followed by 34.4 percent of the informants who expects the multimedia presentation, 16.8 percent of the students required the simplified study material, 14.4 percent of the students are pointed out that, the classes should be taken in vernacular language and the remaining 14 percent of the informants expected that the demonstrating the subject must be as it's in the traditional class. The result of the study has been expressed in the following table 1.5.

TABLE 1.5
STUDENTS' EXPECTATIONS

Expectations	No of Respondents	Percentage
Interactive session	51	20.4
Multimedia Techniques	86	34.4
Simplified study material	42	16.8
Explanation in vernacular languages	36	14.4
Demonstration	35	14.0
Total	250	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Table 1.5 has brought to light that, more than one-third (34.4 percent) of the students are expecting a multimedia presentation.

HYPOTHESIS: 1

Ho: There is no significant association between gender and students' expectation towards online education.

H1: There is a significant association between gender and students' expectation towards online education.

To test the above Hypothesis, the researcher used the Chi-square Test. The result has been displayed in table.1.6.

TABLE 1.6.
GENDER AND STUDENTS' EXPECTATION TOWARDS ONLINE EDUCATION

Factor	Chi-Square Value	Significant	Accept/ Reject Ho
Gender and students' expectation towards online education.	30.130	.000	Rejected

Source: Computed Data

Since the P-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected at a 5% level of significance. Hence, the researcher concluded that there is a significant association between gender and students' expectation towards online education.

PROBLEMS IN ACCESSING ONLINE CLASS

The interviewer gathered the information about the problems faced by the students in accessing the online classes. All the respondents were asked to rank the problems in order of magnitude. Each respondent was instructed to indicate the most important reason by assigning rank 1, rank 2 to the next reason, and so on for the difficulties faced by the students in their online education. By using Henry Garret Ranking Technique the total score and mean score was calculated and presented in the following table.

TABLE 1.7
PROBLEMS FACED BY RESPONDENTS

Problems	Total Score	Garrett mean Score	Rank
Network problem	7670	34.09	1
Unpleasant Environment	7587	33.72	2
Screening Problems	7389	32.84	3
Lack of support from the parents	7112	31.61	4
Voice clarity	6555	29.14	5
Electric/ Charging Problems	6554	29.13	6
Health Problems	6489	28.84	7

Source: Primary Data

The above table reveals that for accessing the online, class the students require the quality and uninterrupted network; the network problems adversely affect the students' education and their concentration power and is ranked as 1st rank, and its total score and the mean score were 7670 and 34.09 respectively. A pleasant and supporting environment is necessary for education. The students do not effectively attend the class due to the absence of a supportive environment and it has scored as 2nd rank, where the total score is 7587 and the mean score is 33.72.

PROBLEMS IN ONLINE LEARNING

Learning is a process of increasing the skills, acquiring knowledge, and helps in the improvement of their career opportunities. There's no chance of educating in the classroom in this pandemic environment. All educational institutions are forwarded to the e-learning environment. . In the classroom teaching the students and staff members have face-to-face interaction, helping each other to perform assignments, and looking at the facial gestures of teachers when explaining a point are instrumental to facilitate learning in the conventional classroom. But it is not

possible in online learning. Therefore the interviewer gathered the information about the problems faced by the students during their online education time. Using the Friedman test the attitude of the respondents is estimated and converted into mean rank and the result has been displayed in table.1.8.

TABLE 1.8
PROBLEMS IN ONLINE LEARNING

Problems	Strongly Agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Friedman Mean Rank
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Difficult to access the material	21	8.4	32	12.8	86	34.4	63	25.2	48	19.2	2.38
Not possible to clear doubts satisfactorily	84	33.6	72	28.8	36	14.4	31	12.4	27	10.8	3.85
Absence of practical explanations	76	30.4	69	27.6	54	21.6	30	12	21	8.4	3.21
Not using updated ICT tools	24	9.6	32	12.8	51	20.4	67	26.8	76	30.4	2.46
No review on the previous class	36	14.4	43	17.2	52	20.8	61	24.4	58	23.2	2.33
Rush up the syllabus	91	36.4	65	26	53	21.2	27	10.8	14	5.6	3.97

Source: Primary Data

It is inferred from the recap of problems of students in online learning that, “Rush up the syllabus” is the main problem faced by the students in their online class with Friedman's mean rank of 3.97. It implies that compare with conventional classes, the number of teaching hours in an online class is low; therefore the staff members are concentrating only on the syllabus and try to complete the syllabus in a limited time. But the students are not able to follow their staff members. Followed by “Not possible to ask doubt" with Friedman's mean rank of 3.97. It implies that in conventional class the students frequently interact and asked their doubt their teachers but it's not possible in the online class. Therefore they are unable to ask their doubt and clarify the same.

SUGGESTIONS

1. The online classes are required to identify, use the latest technology, and alternative way to access the online material. Therefore the staff members help the students to access and operate the latest technology.
2. The staff members should increase their ICT technology to deliver their subject effectively and efficiently.
3. To attract and inspire the students the staff members must use multimedia technology.
4. The teachers are concentrating on rushing up the syllabus. Instead, the staff members should practically explain their subject.
5. The staff members must allow the students to ask their doubts and frequently ask the questions to identify whether the students properly listen to the class as well as to verify whether they understand the topic or not
6. Like a conventional class, the faculty members review the previous class before starting the session.

CONCLUSION

The disruption in learning caused by COVID-19 is unprecedented. The adoption of online classes is the only way to ensure the continuity of education following the physical closure of schools. The switch over from offline to online learning caused by COVID-19 is likely to affect negatively also. Online education is not only new to the students but also to many of the teachers. The success of online education depends on the teachers. Therefore teachers themselves must increase their knowledge of ICT. Online education also increases the self-learning concepts and technological knowledge among the students. To make the online class more effective the staff members use multimedia technology. Moreover, instead of time-bound rushing up the syllabus the practical demonstration, clarifying the students’ doubt and frequent interaction with the students make the online class more pragmatic and effective.

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