

IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON TEACHING AND LEARNING

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Abstract

The pandemic added to the system's shocks by forcing schools to close during the lockdown time and forcing students and teachers to switch to online teaching-learning. Around 250 million kids in India were affected by school closures as a result of COVID-19-induced lockdown. The COVID-19 pandemic has caused a major disruption to education systems in human history, affecting approximately 1.6 billion students in over 200 nations. More than 94 percent of the world's student population are admitted to schools, institutions, and other universities. This has resulted in significant changes in all facets of our life. Traditional educational techniques have been considerably disrupted by social alienation and limited movement policies. Reopening schools when restrictions have been lifted is another difficulty, with numerous new standard operating procedures in place.

Many scholars have shared their work on teaching and learning in various ways in the short time after the COVID-19 pandemic. Face-to-face instruction has been phased out at several schools, colleges, and universities. There is concern that the 2020 academic year, or maybe more, will be lost shortly near future. The necessity of the hour is for alternative educational systems and assessment methodologies to be innovated and implemented. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided us with an opportunity to pave the route for the use of digital learning. The purpose of this article is to present a complete assessment of the influence of the COVID-19 epidemic on online teaching and learning of various papers, as well as to suggest a course of action.

Keywords

COVID-19, Education, Online Teaching, Internet Use, Learning

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Introduction

The threats we confront are growing in tandem with the world's increasing interconnectedness. COVID-19 has not stopped spreading across national and international lines. People of all nationalities, levels of education, money, and gender have been affected. However, the same cannot be said of the repercussions, which have disproportionately impacted the most disadvantaged. In December of 2019, the pandemic was first discovered in Wuhan, China. The public has been warned by countries all around the world to be cautious. Handwashing, face masks, physical separation, and avoiding big gatherings and assemblies have all been used as public health strategies. To flatten the curve and control illness transmission, lockdown and stay-at-home techniques have been implemented.

There is no exception in the field of education. Students from privileged backgrounds who are encouraged by their parents and who are motivated and able to learn may be able to make their way through closed school doors to alternative learning methods. Those from poor backgrounds were frequently shut out when their schools closed. This issue has exposed many deficiencies and injustices in our education systems, ranging from access to bandwidth and computers required for online education to the supporting surroundings required to focus on learning.

Higher education has been severely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, with universities closing their doors and governments closing their borders in reaction to lockdown measures. Even though the fact that higher education institutions were eager to replace face-to-face lectures with online learning, these closures had an impact on learning and examinations, as well as the safety and legal status of overseas students in their host country. Perhaps most importantly, the issue calls into question the value of a university education, which offers networking and social possibilities in addition to academic material. Universities will need to reimagine their learning environments so that digitalization widens and complements student-teacher and other relationships to order to remain relevant.

However, the difficulties do not stop with the immediate situation. Education spending, in particular, may be jeopardized in the future years. Long-term public investment in education is under threat as public finances are channeled to health and social welfare, despite short-term stimulus programs in some nations. As the economy weakens and unemployment rises, private funding will become limited. At the postsecondary level, the decrease in international student mobility as a result of travel restrictions is already lowering finances available in countries where foreign students pay higher fees. The lockdown, in general, has intensified worker inequality. While teleworking is frequently a possibility for the most qualified, it is rarely a

choice for people with lesser levels of education, many of whom have been on the front lines of the pandemic response, delivering critical services to society.

According to the research, some deficiencies exist, such as a lack of online teaching infrastructure, a lack of exposure for teachers to online teaching, an information gap, a non-conducive environment for learning at home, equity, and academic excellence in higher education. This paper assesses the global impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on the teaching and learning processes. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the challenges and potential of online and continuing education are highlighted, and a path ahead is given.

Continuing Education through Online Pedagogy

While students were unable to attend school, countries used a variety of resources to support their learning, including instructional packages (textbooks, worksheets, and printouts), radio education, educational television, and internet instructional materials. In order to reach the greatest number of students feasible, countries often used a combination of tools. During school closures, the most preferred tool was internet platforms.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most countries have implemented lockdown and social distancing measures, resulting in the shutdown of schools, training institutes, and higher education facilities. A paradigm shift is occurring in the way educators deliver quality education via multiple online venues. Despite the problems that educators and learners face, online learning, distance learning, and continuing education have emerged as a remedy for this unprecedented worldwide pandemic. Transitioning from traditional face-to-face learning to online learning can be a completely different experience for both learners and educators, one they must adapt to with few or no other options. The school system and educators have accepted “Education in Emergency” through various online platforms and are being forced to adopt a system for which they are unprepared.

During this pandemic, e-learning platforms played a critical role in assisting schools and universities in facilitating student learning while universities and schools were closed. While adjusting to the new changes, staff and student readiness must be assessed and supported as needed. Learners with a fixed mindset struggle to adapt and modify, whereas learners with a growth mindset adapt easily to a new learning environment. There is no such thing as a one-size-fits-all pedagogy for online learning. There are numerous subjects with various requirements. Different subjects and age groups necessitate various ways of online learning. Online learning also gives physically challenged students more freedom to participate in learning in a virtual environment that requires little mobility.

Students, parents, and educators around the world have felt the unanticipated rippling impact of the COVID-19 pandemic as schools have been closed to deal with the pandemic outbreak. While governments, frontline workers, and health officials fight tirelessly to contain the outbreak, education systems strive to continue providing high-quality education to all students during these tough times. Many students have experienced psychological and emotional hardship at home/living environment and have been unable to interact successfully. The optimal methods for online homeschooling are still being researched.

The use of appropriate and relevant pedagogy for online education may be dependent on both instructors' and learners' experience and exposure to information and communications technology (ICT). Some of the online platforms that have been used so far include unified communication and collaboration platforms like Microsoft Teams, Google Classroom, Canvas, and Blackboard, which allow teachers to design educational courses, training, and skill development programs (Petrie, 2020). They feature office chat, video meetings, and file storage solutions to keep classes organized and simple to work with. They often allow for the sharing of a wide range of content, including Word, PDF, and Excel files, as well as audio and video files. These also enable tracking of student learning and assessment through the use of quizzes and the rubric-based evaluation of submitted assignments.

The flipped classroom is a basic approach for offering pre-class learning resources such as articles, pre-recorded films, and YouTube links. The time spent in the online classroom is then used to further understanding through discussion with teachers and peers. This is an extremely successful method of stimulating problem-solving, critical thinking, and self-directed learning. Videoconferencing technologies (Google Hangouts Meet, Zoom, Slack, Cisco, and WebEx) and configurable cloud-based learning management platforms (Elias, Moodle, Big Blue Button, and Skype) are rapidly being used in virtual classrooms.

Challenges in Teaching and Learning

With the availability of a plethora of platforms and online educational resources, users-both educators, and students-experience frequent difficulties when utilizing or referring to these tools. The following are among the issues discovered and emphasized by various researchers:

The most commonly mentioned e-learning issues are accessibility, cost, flexibility, learning pedagogy, life-long learning, and educational policy. Many countries face significant difficulties in obtaining a dependable Internet connection and access to digital gadgets. While many economically disadvantaged students in developing nations are unable to buy online learning gear, online education exposes

the learner to increasing screen time. As a result, offline activities and self-exploratory learning have become increasingly important for pupils. Another issue is a lack of parental mentoring, especially for young learners, when both parents work. There are practical concerns about physical workstations that are favorable to various modes of learning.

The naturally driven learners are generally unaffected in their learning since they require little supervision and assistance, but the susceptible group, which includes pupils who are weak in learning, faces difficulties. Some academically capable students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds are unable to access and afford online education.

Due to reduced contact hours for learners and a lack of consultation with teachers when experiencing difficulties in learning/understanding, the quality of academic performance of students is likely to drop for classes held for both year-end examination and internal examination.

Student assessments are completed online, resulting in a great deal of trial and error, ambiguity, and confusion among teachers, students, and parents. The method used to conduct online examinations differs depending on the convenience and expertise of the educators, as well as the compatibility of the learners. Appropriate methods to prevent plagiarism have yet to be implemented in many schools and institutions, owing to the vast student population. The closure of schools and colleges has impacted not only internal assessments and examinations for major public certifications such as the Secondary Education Examination Board (SSLC), but also Pre-University Education (PUC). Depending on how long the lockdown lasts, postponing or canceling the full evaluation assessment is a real possibility. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and nationwide lockdown, many state-level board exams, recruitment exams, university-level exams, and entrance exams have been postponed across India. Several entrance exams (including BITSAT 2020, NATA 2020, CLAT 2020, MAT 2020, and ATMA 2020) have also been postponed or rescheduled. The ongoing situation has had a significant impact on the education system in schools, colleges, and universities across the country.

It is also likely that the pauses will enhance certain students' careers. In Norway, for example, it has been agreed that all 10th-grade students would be issued a high school diploma. According to a study conducted in France, the 1968 abandonment of standard test procedures in France as a result of student riots resulted in favorable long-term labor market consequences for the afflicted group.

Aside from being enjoyable for the children, school time helps them develop social skills and awareness. While kids are away from the typical school schedule,

they face economic, social, and psychological consequences. Many of these pupils have now enrolled in online programs, spending more time on virtual platforms, leaving children vulnerable to online exploitation. Increased and unstructured time spent on online learning has exposed children to potentially hazardous and violent information, as well as increased the risk of cyberbullying. Due to school closures and rigorous containment measures, more families are relying on technology and digital solutions to keep their children interested in learning, entertained, and connected to the outside world, but not all youngsters have the requisite knowledge, skills, and resources to do so. More families are relying on technology and digital solutions to keep their children engaged in learning, entertained, and connected to the outside world as a result of school closures and strict containment measures, but not all children have the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to keep themselves safe online.

In India, the majority of online learners come from rural communities, where their parents are generally illiterate farmers. Students assist their parents with farm activities such as agriculture, animal husbandry, and domestic work. Some students even requested that their exams be moved to the afternoon since they needed to work on the fields in the morning.

Some students expressed that they had to attend to their ailing parents/grandparents/family members and take them to hospitals. When they get home in the evening, it becomes tough for them to keep up the lesson. Parents with children in lower grades believe it is preferable to allow their children to repeat the academic year. In addition to poor Internet connectivity, the majority of pupils do not have access to smartphones or television at home. Due to the closure of businesses and offices, a large portion of the population has no or little income. The data package (costs) are rather high in comparison to average earnings, and maintaining continuous Internet access is a costly business for farmers. Most people prefer online face-to-face classes (video). However, some students (particularly those from low-income families) have complained that face-to-face online session uses more data packages. Teachers are torn between who to listen to and which tools to use. Some believe that pre-recorded videos could help, but this would limit interactions. It's challenging to create a system that meets all students' learning demands while also being convenient.

Opportunities for Teaching and Learning

Although there have been numerous problems for educators, schools, institutes, and the government in regard to online education, the COVID-19 pandemic has created multiple chances for those who are unprepared or have long-term intentions to deploy an e-learning system.

It has strengthened the bond between instructors and parents like never before. During this continuing disaster, children with disabilities require additional and specialized assistance.

For the first time ever, online platforms such as Google Classroom, Zoom, virtual learning environments, and social media, as well as numerous group forums such as Telegram, Messenger, WhatsApp, and WeChat, are being studied and tested for teaching and learning to continue education. Even after face-to-face instruction resumes, this can be investigated further, and these platforms can supply learners with more materials and coaching.

Teachers must come up with innovative ideas to help overcome the constraints of virtual instruction. Teachers are working together to develop online teaching approaches at a local level. As instructors, parents, and children share similar experiences, there are unrivaled chances for collaboration, innovative solutions, and a readiness to learn from others and explore new methods.

Many educational organizations are making their tools and solutions available for free in order to assist and support teaching and learning in a more interactive and engaging manner. Online learning has allowed teachers and students to teach and learn in new ways that are not possible in a traditional classroom setting.

Discussion

As of July 2020, the pandemic has afflicted 98.6% of learners globally, totaling 1.725 billion children and youth in 200 countries, ranging from pre-primary to higher education. As a result, it has become imperative to make learning possible and accessible through homeschooling.

Online learning does not allow for the use of pedagogy that is available and employed in face-to-face learning. Despite the fact that a variety of pedagogy has been developed for online and distance learning, teachers who are technologically illiterate require suitable professional development and training to align themselves with their students.

Authentic assessments and timely feedback are critical parts of the learning process. The availability of helpful formative evaluations and fast feedback to online learners is a critical component of online distance learning. This has been shown to be difficult for instructors and the educational system. Due to bigger class sizes, a lack of online teaching infrastructure and professional development, and the students' non-participative character, it is more difficult in India.

In educational circles, the expression "Maslow before Bloom" is commonly used. For the continuation of education during the current pandemic, this must be the mission of online learning. Before beginning online learning, we want to make sure that our students are safe and that their basic needs are satisfied. Domestic violence and

child abuse are on the rise, with abusers frequently present at home or in the neighborhood, causing mental distraction and posing a threat to students. With students now experiencing homeschooling as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the home environment is not uniformly conducive for students of all standards and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Studies should be conducted to assist the economically disadvantaged people who have been affected the hardest. There have been stories of students dropping out or choosing to stop going to school in India. Due to the long pause imposed by the school closure during the COVID-19 pandemic, this has happened. Even though the fact that no studies have been conducted to assess the direct influence of the pandemic on the dropout rate, research in this area would reveal the facts.

Many educational firms have created a variety of online infrastructure that has been offered free for study throughout this pandemic. It is still a struggle to make these online infrastructures affordable and accessible to all learners from various economic situations.

Students with specific requirements, such as hearing impairment, vision impairment, or mobility limitations, require specialized training, as well as support and supervision. Many caregivers and parents at home are unable to meet these needs, which impede this group's learning. As a result, time and resources should be spent exploring and researching the best options for these students' special educational needs (SEN).

Because all students' assignments and exams are completed at home, educators have a difficult time determining the authenticity of the work and the actual learning that is taking place. Furthermore, many parents guide and encourage their children during the learning process, with varying degrees of success. Another topic of research is student grading, as no adequate standards have been created and used.

Conclusion

Although various studies have been conducted, the study on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching and learning around the world concludes that, in the case of developing countries, appropriate pedagogy and platforms for different class levels of higher secondary, middle, and primary education need to be explored further.

Internet bandwidth is limited, with fewer connection points, and data packages are expensive in contrast to people's income in many developing nations, limiting accessibility and affordability. To ameliorate the situation, policy involvement is essential. A research field is further inquiry and investigation of effective pedagogy for online teaching and learning. Another topic of research is the need for developing methods for authentic assessments and quick feedback. The affordability and accessibility of educational tools for all learners from all economic backgrounds has been noted as a difficulty, for which educational tool developers

might concentrate on personalization. Intervention at the policy level is also critical. Given the current situation, education systems all over the world, including India, must invest in teacher professional development, particularly in ICT and effective pedagogy. Another area of research and development is using user-friendly tools to make online teaching more creative, inventive, and participatory. This would help and prepare the educational system for future uncertainties.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown us that teachers and students/learners should be educated on how to use various online educational technologies. When normal courses resume following the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers and students should be encouraged to continue using online technologies to improve teaching and learning.

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