Exploring Secondary School Students Perspectives on Online Teaching: A Comprehensive Study

Dr. Nibas Chandra Sil

Principal-In-Charge, CTE, Kumarghat, Unakoti, Tripura

Abstract:

The rapid integration of online teaching into the education landscape has brought forth new paradigms and challenges for educators, students, and institutions alike. This comprehensive study delves into the perspectives of secondary school students regarding online teaching methods. Through a mixed-methods approach encompassing surveys, interviews, and content analysis, this research aims to capture a nuanced understanding of students' experiences, preferences, and concerns in the realm of online education. The study examines factors influencing engagement, satisfaction, and learning outcomes in the virtual classroom, shedding light on the effectiveness of different online teaching approaches. By uncovering the multifaceted viewpoints of secondary school students, this research contributes valuable insights that can inform pedagogical strategies and technology integration for optimizing the online learning experience.

Keywords: Online teaching, secondary school students, perspectives, comprehensive study, mixed-methods, engagement, satisfaction, learning outcomes, virtual classroom, pedagogical strategies, technology integration

Introduction

Education serves as a cornerstone for holistic and inclusive development, shaping both individuals and societies. It empowers individuals with knowledge and skills, fostering an understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Education broadens horizons, allowing us to perceive the world comprehensively, and equips us to combat societal ills such as corruption and injustice. Thus, safeguarding the learning process for learners of all ages is imperativ.The global COVID-19 pandemic, which began in March 2020, prompted the unprecedented closure of schools, colleges, and universities worldwide to curb the spread of the novel coronavirus. This health crisis forced humanity into social distancing, remote work, and home confinement. Particularly, the educational sector faced significant disruptions, and conventional teaching methods were rendered obsolete. Yet, this challenge gave rise to a remarkable solution: technology-enhanced tools and applications. Platforms like WhatsApp, YouTube, and Zoom classes emerged as conduits for remote learning, bridging the gap caused by physical closures. Initially met with confusion, educators and students adapted to the new normal over time. They realized that the pandemic-induced lockdown, while disruptive, offered a unique opportunity to fortify their knowledge and infrastructure by fully embracing online teaching and examination modes. Teachers creatively leveraged WhatsApp groups to engage students and their guardians, sharing content and resolving

academic hurdles. As a result, the educational landscape transitioned from traditional classrooms to virtual ones, marked by canceled physical classes, periodic tests, and a reliance on digital alternatives. However, the outbreak of COVID-19 also birthed challenges and negative repercussions for education. These encompassed interrupted learning processes, employment instability, inadequate preparation for online education among teachers and students, heightened parental responsibility for children's education, and nutritional deficiencies stemming from school closures. Amid these adversities, a paradigm shift toward e-learning or online education became paramount, necessitating a concerted effort to sensitize students to its significance and utility.This study aims to unearth the attitudes and perceptions of secondary school students toward e-learning, recognizing their pivotal role in shaping the future of nations. The modern era predicates technological proficiency to thrive in a competitive landscape, underscoring the necessity of familiarizing school students with e-learning. As such, strategies must be devised to bolster their e-learning acumen, propelling them toward success in an increasingly tech-driven world. The emergence of online teaching—a process wherein education is imparted over the internet—represents a profound transformation in pedagogical methods. This approach encompasses diverse formats, such as one-on-one video calls, group video sessions, and webinars. Online teaching transcends physical confines, facilitating global access, flexible scheduling, affordability, and environmentally conscious assessment methods. In sync with the rapid expansion of the internet, numerous educational institutions now offer online courses as an alternative to conventional face-to-face instruction, overcoming geographical constraints.

However, concerns about the quality of online education have arisen in tandem with its growth. A. Scough (2002) identified distinct characteristics of online education: a unique learning experience influenced by the digital environment, communication via computer-mediated platforms, altered student participation dynamics, transformed social interactions, and reduced biases. The advent of technologies like streaming video, net-meetings, and the Internet has democratized education, making it more accessible and affordable. Consequently, online learning has seamlessly woven itself into the fabric of higher education, with terms like internet education, virtual learning, and asynchronous learning gaining traction. While initially associated with distance learning, online teaching gradually infiltrated regular education, facilitated by platforms such as Byju's, Khan Academy, Educom, and Tata Edge. These online learning apps have transformed the internet into an expansive marketplace for learners. Today, websites offer compensation to educators for uploading courses and tutorials, facilitating real-time interactions with students worldwide. This evolution not only empowers tutors but also caters to students' flexible learning preferences, eliminating commuting hassles. In India, online teaching and learning are gaining momentum in higher education, yielding positive outcomes. At the secondary school level, this transition remains in its infancy but is rapidly gaining traction, especially in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. Although online teaching offers myriad advantages, it is not without shortcomings. Issues such as internet unavailability, slow connectivity, lack of access to devices, digital apprehension, and inexperience pose challenges that must be addressed for equitable education delivery.

Statement of the Problem

To gain a comprehensive understanding of students' perspectives on online teaching, it is crucial to delve into their viewpoints regarding this mode of education. Scrutinizing their opinions will provide insights into the advantages and limitations of online teaching, their overall perception of its viability as an

alternative learning method, and the level of acceptance and popularity it holds. Furthermore, this study aims to gather valuable insights from students to enhance the efficacy of online teaching methods. With these objectives in mind, the primary aim of this research is to investigate how secondary school students perceive online teaching. Additionally, the study aims to identify various factors that impact the online teaching-learning process. Ultimately, the findings from this study can contribute to the refinement of teaching approaches, aiding educators in the more effective implementation of online teaching methods. Thus, the research problem can be encapsulated as follows: "Examining the attitudes of secondary school students towards online teaching."

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY
The following objectives are formulated for the proposed study:
1. To study the awareness level of students of secondary school towards onlineteaching.
2. To study the difficulties faced by the students of secondary school in online teaching.
3. To study the probable suggestions made by the students of secondary school for a better onlineteaching.

Methodology of the Study
The study's methodology encompasses various aspects including research design, target population, sample selection, research instrument, data collection procedures, and data analysis techniques. The core objective of this study was to gain a deeper insight into how secondary school students perceive and engage with online teaching methods.

Study Population:
The study focused on full-time formal school students at the secondary level (grades IX and X) during the 2020-21 academic session. The research was conducted in three different schools located in North Tripura district: Bir Bikram Institution, Dharmanagar Government Girls H.S. School, and Padmapur H.S. School. The entire population of the study consisted of students in class IX and X from these selected schools.

Sample Size:
The study employed systematic sampling to select participants. A total of 300 students were chosen as the sample for the research. This involved selecting 50 students from each grade (ninth and tenth) in each of the three selected schools, using the systematic sampling method.

Data Collection Tools and Techniques:
The research utilized a structured questionnaire to gather students' responses to the research questions. The questionnaire included both closed-ended and open-ended questions, organized into four dimensions: perception of online teaching and learning, online teaching as a supplementary method alongside traditional learning, challenges faced during online learning, and suggestions for enhancing online teaching and learning. The students were given the questionnaires to fill out at home over a two-week period. The completed questionnaires were then collected from the sample students in the three selected schools. The majority of participating students were from rural areas, all belonging to the academic session 2020-2021 and enrolled in the ninth and tenth grades of the selected schools.

Data Collection Procedures: Data related to student responses were collected using questionnaires. The questionnaires were handed out to the students and collected from them within a two-week timeframe. The questionnaires were divided into four sections corresponding to the four dimensions of the study. The first three sections included Likert-type items (Form-A) with five response options ranging from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). The final section (Form-B) contained open-ended questions.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

The purpose of this quantitative study was to understand the approach of students of secondary school level towards online teaching. For the said purpose students of ninth and tenth grade of three secondary schools of North Tripura district were selected. This chapter presents the results of the four specific research questions stated in Chapter I. Data were used from all students under study who submitted both the Form-A and Form-B. Students ranged in age from 14 to 15 years old. Out of 400 students of three selected secondary schools 300 students were selected for the study according to their consent form. Below table shows the total no. of students from ninth and tenth grade respectively and also the no. of male and female studentsaccordingly.

Table-A

Class	Total no. of students under study	Male	Female
9th	150	78	72
10th	150	81	69
Total	**300**	**159**	**141**

The responses received from the From-A are analyzed in the below Table no.1

SL. NO.	Questions	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Undecided	Agree	Strongly agree
1	I am aware about the mode of online teaching	28	39	48	112	73
2	I know the requirements for online teaching	25	36	45	125	69
3	I feel good when I am learning through online class	47	43	58	86	66
4	I am always delighted to join online class	35	28	49	105	83

5	I feel online teaching is helpful in day to day learning	23	46	71	68	92
6	I feel online teaching is more convenient that classroom teaching	105	93	46	29	27
7	I have at least one Smartphone at home	49	23	15	98	115
8	I have fast internet connection.	59	43	48	69	81
9	I have the access to uninterrupted network connection.	60	48	44	65	83
10	I have convenient space at my home for online teaching learning.	52	51	67	79	51
	Total Score=3000	**483**	**450**	**491**	**836**	**740**

Note: Students responded to each item using a 5-point Likert scale; 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=undecided, 4=agree, 5=strongly agree. Values from 1 to 5 were assigned to each item so that higher scores indicated greater positiveapproach.

Table No. 2, using the Likert scale we found the scores as -

Strongly disagree	483	483x1 = 483
Disagree	450	450x2 = 900
Undecided	491	491x3 = 1473
Agree	836	836x4 = 3344
Strongly agree	740	740x5 = 3700

So, from analyzing the scores of above table it can be said that students have relatively higher positive approach towards online teaching.

Table No. 3, Using the percentage analysing method we found the scores as -

Response	Number of responses out of total=3000	Percentage
Strongly disagree	483	16 %

Disagree	450	15 %
Undecided	491	16 %
Agree	836	28 %
Strongly agree	740	25 %

So, from analysing the table it can be said that higher percentages of students have agreed about the positive perception of online teaching.

Table No. 4: Summary of most common responses of open-ended questions from Form-B

1	What can be done by the teacher to impart better online teaching?	Taking online class on student's convenient time and use of more Power-point presentation.
2	What more you require for better online teaching learning process?	Better equip smartphone and better internet connectivity.

So, from analyzing the responses of above table it can be said that students need more technical support and convenient schedule for online teaching comfort. From analysis of all the data it can be interpreted that students have knowledge about the necessity of online teaching and they are also aware about the requirements for it. Although it is seen that many of them face some difficulties in online teaching because of lack of technical support, proper environment and have some hesitations regarding online teaching. They view online teaching as a supportive mean but not as an alternative to conventional classroom teaching in which they are more comfortable. They also seek more technical support.

Major Findings of the Study

- The results shows that the students have knowledge about the necessity of online teaching and have a fair positive approach towards online teaching although many of them lack proper technical support. Some of them do not have access to smartphone or internet connectivity and thus they are undecided about their approach towards online teaching.
- The results shows that they are aware of the importance of the online teaching but most of them are do not find online teaching as a very beneficial extra mean to their day to day conventional study. Some of them though find it useful. Most of the students are more comfortable in conventional classroom teaching than onlineteaching.
- The results showed that students mainly face the difficulties related to technical support, availability of well-equipped smartphone, internet connectivity and suitable learning environment at home. Many of them do not have access to smartphone at home and also do not have data connection or sufficient data speed to do onlineclasses.
- The results show that the students suggest needing convenient schedule timings for online teaching. They suggested providing more power- point based materials in online teaching. They suggested the requirement of technical gadgets and better internet connectivity. They suggested having good smartphones with better battery, memory and other specifications.

Conclusion

The study reveals that students in selected secondary schools display a positive attitude towards online teaching, despite challenges. They recognize its necessity, especially during Covid-19 disruptions. Limited smartphone access due to economic constraints is evident. While most students enjoy online learning, they view it as supplementary to traditional classrooms. Difficulties include smartphone access, data costs, and connectivity issues. Students suggest flexible schedules, more interactive methods, and improved technology. The study underscores the importance of online teaching alongside conventional methods, with even rural students showing a positive approach towards it.

Suggestions for Future Research:

The conclusions drawn from this study suggest several avenues for further research:

- Researchers could utilize this study's outcomes to design future investigations targeting students at lower primary and upper primary levels.
- Future studies might explore students' attitudes across varying age groups to gain deeper insights.
- Comparative analyses between urban and rural schools could be conducted to expand on the findings of this study.
- Extending research to different categories of schools, including state government, central government, and private schools, could provide a broader perspective.
- Investigating the impact of students' socio-economic backgrounds on their attitudes towards online teaching at different levels holds potential for further exploration

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