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Attitude of Parents towards Digital- Education for Higher Education Learners in West Bengal

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Abstract

Introduction: The rapid growth of technology has significantly impacted education, with digital learning becoming an increasingly popular mode. The study aims to understand the attitudes of parents towards online education, especially for higher education children, as this age group acquires critical skills that impact their future learning.

Objectives: The primary objective is to examine the attitudes of parents (both fathers and mothers) towards online school education for higher education students.

Methodology: The study employed a random sampling technique to select 100 parents from the North Kolkata region. The researchers developed a Likert-type attitude scale and a self-constructed attitude scale to gather data, which was then analyzed using percentage analysis.

Findings: The analysis revealed that a significant majority of parents have reservations about the effectiveness of online education. Concerns include lack of motivation and engagement (79%), inadequate development of personality and social skills (72% and 60%), and reduced opportunities for extracurricular activities (63%). Additionally, logistical issues like internet connectivity (47%) and challenges for families with lower financial resources (67%) were noted. Some positive aspects acknowledged include cost savings (62%) and utility in critical situations (83%). However, these are overshadowed by the concerns about comprehensive development offered by traditional learning methods.

Conclusion: The study concludes that most parents surveyed are not in favour of online education for higher education children, citing various disadvantages such as limited development of social and emotional skills, lack of physical activities, and the need for significant parental involvement. The researchers suggest that while online education can be an effective medium in critical situations, it should only be a temporary solution and not a replacement for traditional face-to-face learning.

1. Introduction

The advent of digital learning has revolutionized the educational landscape, offering new opportunities and challenges alike. In West Bengal, the attitude of parents towards digital learning for higher education learners is a subject of immense significance, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic which has necessitated a shift from traditional classroom settings to virtual platforms. The rise and spread of technology have become an important part of human life. Online schooling is one of the fastest-growing advancements in the use of technology in education. The bond between an instructor and a student is one of deep love and belief in good behavior and successful outcomes. Parents are also an important aspect of this triad (Shonfeld & Ronen, 2015) [10]. The transition to digital learning has been met with a mix of optimism and concern among parents. On one hand, there is an appreciation for the continuity of education it provides during times of crisis, and the potential for interactive and engaging learning experiences. On the other hand, apprehensions about screen time, the effectiveness of online learning for young minds, and the lack of physical interaction with peers and teachers are prevalent concerns. A teacher's online communication with young students should include a brief description of the activities expected during online class, daily conferences, and parent interactions with the child. These activities will be spaced throughout the day to keep students busy. Parents will be present at any virtual session. Electronic content and learning applications are not games, allowing children to experiment and learn in the process. E-learning can help children improve their cognitive and social skills. E-learning can have a strong impact on children's behavior. Children may feel more excited about learning when they see an immersive, colorful

computer. (Sharma and Das, 2015) [9]. E-learning sites also contain a variety of interactive resources that allow children to interact with other children and teachers. Through teamwork and commitment, children understand things faster and provide deeper perspectives. At the preschool level, children have to draw or do crafts. These can be completed through homework assignments in the digital learning system. Online tutors are accessible to students through digital learning sessions and communicate with parents via phone and email to address any student queries or complaints.

2. Operational Definitions of Key Terms

The different key terms used in the study, the operationally defined as the following terms are:

Attitude is an individual's perception of an object, entity, idea, organization, or circumstance, influenced by their beliefs and expectations, derived from direct experience or empirical learning.

Online-learning is characterized as an organized learning experience that uses technology and Internet-based tools and resources as a distribution mechanism for teaching, study, evaluation, and communication.

Kindergarten is a pre-school education method focused on learning, together with dancing, music, physical practices, drawing, and social communication as part of the transition from home to school.

Online teaching is a process where the teacher teaches with Internet technologies through a structured educational method.

3. Review of Related Literature

For the review of literature, several sources like Educational Research Surveys, some published journals and relevant websites have been searched.

Kurni, M., & K, S. (2021) [6] in their paper **"Applying Collaborative Learning for Enhancing the Teaching-Learning Process in Online Learning through Social Media",** found that Collaborative learning is about learning in communities organised to achieve educational objectives. In this research, WhatsApp, a typical social networking application, is used to create learner groups. The results of these experiments demonstrate how better learning can be achieved when collaborative learning is used well. The STAD (Student Team-Achievement Division) activity was chosen to implement the collaborative activity for the sixth semester curriculum design model, B.Tech (Computer Science and Engineering). Team building plays an important role in collaborative learning. Several approaches can be used, generally homogeneous or heterogeneous. The procedure used in this research is observation of the STAD activity, which was given before the introduction of STAD in the online course. They concluded that collaborative learning represents a paradigm shift for most students away from quick and smart active learning approaches and towards sharing their ideas.

Mohamed Z & Kingsley S (2015) [8] in their paper **"Web-Based E-learning System for Pre-school Kids"** explores three potential approaches that can enhance pre-school learning and teaching. The researchers demonstrated the value and effect of ICTs on pre-school education and learning. It addresses, however, the pros and cons of a web-based e-learning program over conventional children's education.

Tyagi & Singh published a paper on **"Status and Scope of e-education in India"** in **2014**. The researchers studied the importance, scope, benefits, and drawbacks of e-learning in India. To fulfill its connectivity needs and take market opportunities, they find that India should pursue the idea of e-Learning.

4. Objectives of the Study

The following objectives are given below:
- To examine the attitudes of parents towards online school education for higher education students.
- This study investigated the attitude of parents, both father, and mother, towards the e-learning of their child.

5. Delimitations of the Study

The present study was delimited by the following aspects:
- The parents of higher education students (pursuing Master Degree in Science and Arts) from the North Kolkata region of the Kolkata Metropolitan Area were taken as a sample.
- The study was limited to higher education children only.
- The study was limited to parents of higher education students only.

6. Methodology

The present research aims to study the attitude of parents towards the online-learning of higher education students. The following are the methodologies used for the research.

6.1 Population and Sample

Parents of the North Kolkata region of Kolkata metropolitan was considered as a population of the study. The collection of samples was performed using a random sampling technique (lottery method). 100 parents (including both genders) were selected as the sample for the present study using purposive sampling methods.

6.2 Tool Used

With the help of experts, a 5-point Likert-type attitude scale and a self-constructed attitude scale were developed. A five-point scale was determined with 40 test items against five different answers: "Strongly agree" (SA), "Agree" (A), "Undecided" (UD), "Disagree" (DA), And "Strongly Disagree" (SD).

6.3 Statistical Analysis

The data from the present study were analyzed in accordance with the objectives formulated by the researchers. A percentage statistical technique is used to analyze the data.

7. Discussion

### 7.1 Analysis and Interpretation of Data

Analysis and interpretation of the data are the heart of the research report. The raw score fails to reveal any result unless itis critically analyzed and scientifically interpreted. The whole work is based on the data collected from the proposed sample. The data collected from the sample is statistically analyzed by using the appropriate statistical technique.

Attitude of Parents towards Online Learning of Kindergarten Students

Parental attitudes toward online education for higher education students were analyzed based on 40 different items. Here is a summary of the percentage analysis of fathers' and mothers' attitudes toward digital learning for higher education children.

Table 1: Parents' Opinions on Online Education

S. No	Statement	Percentage
1	Online classes discourage children from going to school.	78%
2	E-learning gives information to parents on a day-to-day basis.	92%
3	Online classes are not motivating for students.	79%
4	Digital learning does not develop the personality of the child.	72%
5	Parents cannot give time to digital learning for their students.	81%
6	E-learning is not as interesting as face-to-face learning.	54%
7	Digital learning is helpful for parents.	49%
8	Online classes do not help working parents.	50%
9	Digital learning saves on transportation and other associated costs.	62%
10	Students learn more in conventional learning than in digital learning.	58%
11	A lack of internet connectivity hampers online classes.	47%
12	Students learn more through collaborative learning.	55%
13	Online classes are not meant for students but may be beneficial for higher-class students.	75%
14	Digital learning distracts children's concentration.	49%
15	No extracurricular activities can be learned in online classes.	63%
16	The mental health of the students does not improve through digital learning.	61%
17	Social disturbances hamper digital learning.	57%
18	Both parents and their children should be actively involved in online classes.	58%
19	Online education does not help in the social development of the child.	50%
20	Online education does not help in the emotional development of the child.	60%
21	Digital learning is beneficial only in critical situations.	83%
22	Online education can be provided to children in a short period of time.	79%
23	Online education increases overall educational costs.	52%
24	All parents are satisfied with online education.	74%
25	Online classes reduce their child's interaction with other children.	84%
26	Digital learning is monotonous.	64%
27	Digital learning does not involve any physical activity.	62%
28	Teachers cannot properly understand the academic progress of their students through digital learning.	45%
29	Online education decreases the chance of getting good academic scores.	45%
30	E-learning materials are more helpful for children.	43%
31	The mutual interaction of parents and students is hampered by online education.	45%
32	Children are more attracted to watching cartoons than attending online classes.	64%
33	Online classes are more comfortable for students.	51%
34	Through digital learning, parents can get information about the global online education system.	49%
35	Students cannot understand the importance of classroom activities.	68%
36	Online education hampers the physical growth of their child.	79%
37	Missing online classes is more harmful than being absent from school.	71%
38	Parents have to be more actively involved in online classes than their children.	61%
39	Online education is not possible for families with low financial backgrounds.	67%
40	Online education is not beneficial for less-educated parents.	54%
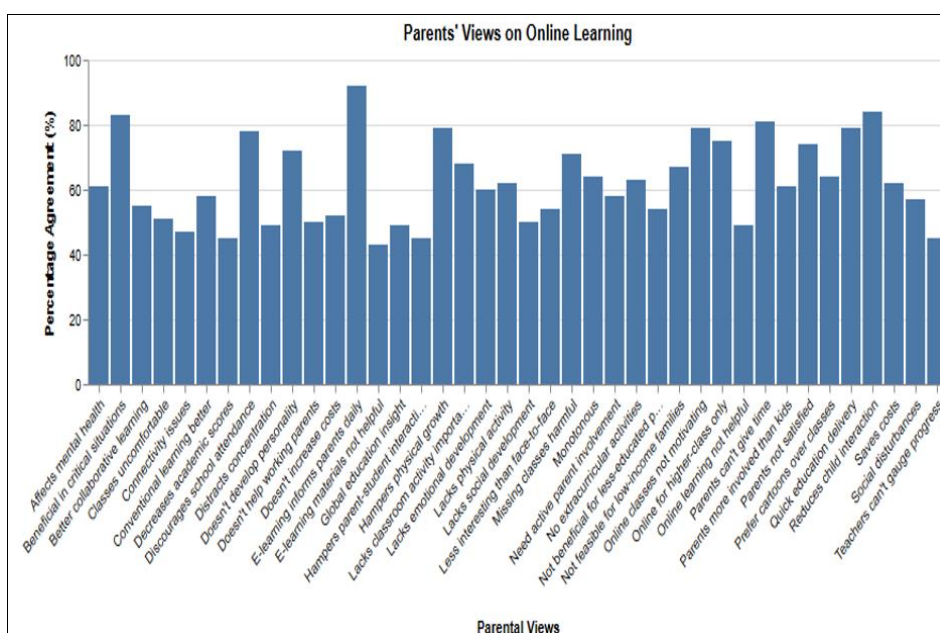
Fig 1: Parental Views on online Learning

7.2 Findings of the Study

The data provided presents a diverse range of parental perspectives on digital learning, predominantly skewing towards concerns and challenges. A significant majority, ranging from 61% to 84%, express reservations about online education's effectiveness in various aspects. Key concerns include the lack of motivation and engagement (79%), the inadequate development of personality and social skills (72% and 60%, respectively), and diminished opportunities for extracurricular activities (63%). These statistics indicate a prevalent belief that digital learning may fall short in fostering holistic educational growth. Furthermore, logistical and accessibility issues are also highlighted, with 47% pointing out the barrier of internet connectivity, and 67% acknowledging the challenges faced by families with lower financial resources. Interestingly, while a substantial portion of parents (58% to 61%) believe that active involvement from both parents and children is crucial in digital learning, there's a significant concern (81%) about their inability to commit time to assist their students. On the other hand, some positive views are also noted, such as the cost-saving aspect (62%) and its utility in critical situations (83%). However, these positives seem to be overshadowed by the predominant view that digital learning might not be as comprehensive or effective as traditional classroom learning, particularly in the areas of social, emotional, and physical development. The data reflects a clear call for addressing these perceived gaps in online education to better align it with the holistic needs of students.

8. Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of the present study is that it relies on parents' self-reported data regarding their attitudes toward their children's online education. The population of this study includes parents from the Calcutta metropolitan area whose children attend higher education. The results of the study cannot therefore be directly generalized to all parents and all learners. The results represent the general situation of this specific investigation.

9. Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the above findings, the researchers made the following suggestions for further research:

- Research can be conducted on teachers' opinions to develop attitudes towards digital learning among higher education learners.
- Research can be done on more samples at the state or district level.
- The study can be extended to larger samples, including different levels of education.

10. Conclusion

Nowadays, online courses have developed. From the above research, it can be concluded that parents are not in favor of online education for their children. In their opinion, it can be concluded that online courses have many disadvantages. Online courses are not intended for higher educationist, but they may be suitable for children of other ages. Parents find that learning in class is better than online lessons. Studying in class contributes to the overall development of the child. Children learn to use words, integrate their oral language and images, print and play in cohesive mixed media, and develop and express their meanings at school in a variety of ways. But this cannot be achieved in online education. The lessons give children the opportunity to express themselves daily in their notebooks, learning to pronounce correctly and compose neutrally without any limitations. Teachers can plan scenarios and effectively engage children in these classroom situations. But this cannot be achieved effectively through online courses. Just like in childhood, a child's brain grows every day. Therefore, children must receive the necessary stimuli for their brains to develop. Therefore, only teachers can provide this encouragement in face-to-face teaching. Light from monitors can strain children's eyes and contribute to long-term vision problems. Looking at a computer is often a passive activity that can make children sleepy and affect their thinking. Schools should always keep this in mind when creating web content aimed at young children. Lessons should be structured in a way that encourages children to look at the computer for a few minutes. This can be achieved by integrating different functions into classes. Teachers often do not receive instant feedback from students regarding course progress; they have to ask their parents for feedback. If students don't benefit from face-to-face or peer-less classes, they can quickly lose control of their digital learning. Therefore, online education can be used as a teaching medium for higher education students, but only in a critical situation and for a short time.

The data in the study indicates a predominantly negative perception of online education among parents. A significant majority express concerns about its impact on children's motivation, social and emotional development, and overall academic performance. Parents highlight several drawbacks of online learning, such as reduced physical activity, lack of extracurricular learning, diminished interpersonal interactions, and insufficient support for students with lower socio-economic status or from less-educated backgrounds. While some parents acknowledge benefits such as cost savings on transportation and the utility of digital platforms in critical situations, the overarching sentiment suggests that online education is seen as inferior to traditional face-to-face learning, particularly concerning its ability to engage and support children effectively. Concerns about the necessity for increased parental involvement and the challenges of maintaining academic continuity online further underscore the perceived limitations of digital learning environments.

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