# **Online Learning During COVID-19: students’ & teachers’ perspective**

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# **Online Learning During COVID-19: students’ & teachers’ perspective**

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**(1)Abstract:** This paper aims at conducting an online survey regarding teacher's and student's perception and experience related to the ‘‘mass’’ online learning in higher educational institutions all over the country, Bangladesh. Delivery of classes through online medium has been a recent modification brought out by the educational system in Bangladesh in the wake of the current pandemic situation. Therefore, this study employed an online survey to investigate the perception and satisfaction of online learning in higher educational institutions that have been made mandatory in the wake of COVID19 and how students and teachers are coping with these ‘‘new initiatives’’. The sample consisted of 70 teachers and 300 students from colleges and universities all over the country.

The findings from the study suggest that the implementation of online learning programs was a very great idea as the majority of the sampled students and teachers supported the initiative. Another finding that came up during the research is the high cost of participating in online learning. However, our results showed that students spend so much money to buy internet data for online learning. The study discovered that internet connectivity was very slow for participants leaving in rural area. Last but not least, the findings show that the following areas are important for teacher’s and student’s satisfaction with online classes, these areas are: quality and timely interaction between student and professor, technical support availability, structured online class modules, and modifications to accommodate conduction of practical classes.

**(2)Keywords:** Online classes, COVID-19,

Survey, Teachers’ Perspective, Students’ Perspective.

**(3)Introduction:** ‘‘Never before have we witnessed educational disruption on such a large scale,’’ said UNESCO Director General Audrey Azoulay (2020). The global academic calendar has been thrown into a state of disarray by the Coronavirus outbreak. Most schools from basic to universities have shut down their doors and students have returned home to their parents and together self-quarantined (UNESCO, 2020). Convocations and Graduations have been cancelled, and some classes have been cancelled, some examinations have been cancelled; university research programs have been postponed. Leaders around the world are struggling with the decision to finish the spring semester in most cases. Coronavirus (COVID-19) related decisions will forever change the course of history, so it must be thoughtful and accurate.

Online learning and classes are increasingly becoming part of the education system worldwide. Online channel has made education convenient and easily accessible by one and all. Education sector in Bangladesh has been an

ever- growing entity. Though online and distance courses have been there from a long time, introduction of the online mode of taking classes in comparison to the traditional face to face classroom approach in universities and colleges have been considered only in the last few years in Bangladesh. Face to face classroom approach has always been the most prominently used. Familiarity and ease of using offline methods and lack of requirement for online channels of teaching has been the major barriers for adoption of online channels of education. However, in the wake of current COVID-19 pandemic situation conduction of online classes at college and university level has been made mandatory by the educational boards. Covid-19 has brought out a drastic change in the educational system not only in India but rather the entire world. In Bangladesh this transition has been a mixture of both positives and negatives for most private universities, the government colleges and universities are still adapting. While technology makes things accessible and easier, many participants are facing a challenge in terms of accessing to the internet. This in turn leads to issues with attendance and participation in online sessions, thereby making the adaptation of online channels of education a challenge.

When it comes to the Bangladesh’s educational setup, online classes are a newly introduced mode of teaching and not something that has been a part of regular classes. Investigating and analyzing how online classes are being perceived and experienced by students and faculties across different colleges and universities in Bangladesh will help educational experts to understand and make modifications to suit the needs of both, teachers and students. Consequently, educational institutions and management who would be the future deliverers of online learning need more understanding of how students as well as teachers perceive and react to online classes as a learning mode to apply these approaches most effectively. Another important thing noticed in the review of previous studies was that when evaluating online mode of education, student’s perspective has been given importance and taken into consideration over teacher’s perspective. Teacher’s perspective is equally important because if they as provider of education are not satisfied and find the online mode unsatisfactory then the educational base itself becomes weaker. This new introduction of online classes has been equally challenging for teachers, who are also struggling to learn this new way or methodology of teaching. Therefore, the significance of this research lies on exploring the Teachers and students’ perception toward online classes in comparison to face-to-face classes. The survey focused on teachers and students from colleges and universities in Bangalore city. Bangalore being the technology hub could shed light on how the online classes are perceived. Thus, the following article describes the results of the survey which was done to understand how well this new method is being taken by both teachers and students, what are the general problems faced by them while taking online classes so as to help educational instructors and facilitators and college and university managements to understand the modifications that can be brought to make online teaching more effective so that in future it can be integrated along with classroom teaching. The responses from this survey will help to improve or enhance online mode of classes in order to provide a better learning experience for students and a better teaching experience for the teachers.

**(4)Methodology:** For this study, the author formed two short survey’s: one for the teachers’ and the other one for the students’. The survey questions assessed the general perception and experience of both students’

and teachers’ about online classes. The teacher survey had a cross-section of 4 demographic questions and 10 questions regarding teacher’s perception about taking online classes. Out of the 10 questions 3 items were open ended wherein the teachers were asked to tell what according to them were the positive and negative aspects of online teaching and what were the applications usually used by them to take online classes. The students survey consisted of 4 demographic questions and 10 questions regarding student’s perception about online classes. Two open ended questions regarding the positive and negative aspects about online classes were kept. Response choices consisted of pre-defined options of agree, disagree and neutral. The purpose of the survey was not to collect psychometric data and thus the survey did not make use of validated psychometric tools. Due to the current COVID-19 situation, the survey was conducted online using MS Word file. The form was sent through email on 26th August’20 for 10 days. Teachers and students from colleges and universities which were conducting online classes were approached and asked to complete the survey. A total of 70 teachers and 300 students participated in the survey. The data of only 70 teachers and 300 students were considered for the analysis. No incentives were offered for responding to the survey. The details about the survey was shared with the respondents. Completion of the survey was taken as a form of consent to participate.

**(5)Data analysis:** The main purpose of the study was to gather evaluative feedback from university students and faculties on their experience about online mode of teaching. A descriptive approach for data analysis was considered. Responses to the open-ended questions were transcribed, coded, and categorized within each question to determine similar answers. Repetitive content of responses was identified. Finally, frequency counts of frequently occurring responses were tabulated and converted to percentages for reporting purposes. The section below describes the detailed findings of the survey.

**(6)Result:** The survey was done to get an understanding of the experience and perception of teachers and students about the recently introduced online mode of teaching. The survey results are divided into two sections, namely, perception of teachers’ and perception of students’ about online classes. The results for both are discussed separately.

**Teachers’ perception about online classes:**

The teachers’ survey had items assessing three dimensions: online v/s classroom mode, personal factors and students’ factor during online classes. The results of the survey showed that 86.9% of the teachers reported that they preferred classroom teaching method more than online teaching mode. 11.8% preferred online classes.

When teachers were asked about the problems generally faced by them while taking classes online or what were the negative aspects of online classes, majority of them (64.2% of the sample) reported technical issues like poor connectivity, power cuts, broadband issue, poor audio and video quality as the main issue. 37.1% of the teachers reported lack of student involvement and engagement in the classes as a problem. They reported that students during online classes made a lot of excuses and showed lack of seriousness. This in turn tends to make the teachers feel demotivated. 15.7% reported that poor attendance due to reasons like some students being in their hometown where connectivity issues are there, followed by lack of motivation from students’ side to attend classes was another issue faced.

**Students’ perception about online classes:**

The students’ survey had items assessing two dimensions: online v/s classroom mode and personal factors during online classes. The results of the survey showed that 87.1% of the students reported that they preferred classroom teaching method more than online teaching mode. 12.9% preferred online classes.

The students were also asked 2 open ended questions about the pros and cons of online mode of classes. When asked about the problems generally faced by them during classes online or what were the negative aspects of online classes, majority of them (55.7% of the sample) reported technical issues like poor network connectivity, power cuts, broadband issue, poor audio and video quality, problems with the app, getting disconnected in between the classes and finding it hard to log in again as the main issues. 23.3% reported that they found it difficult to concentrate during online classes, distraction at home were more, no structured learning environment makes it harder for the students to focus during the class.

The survey also explored what were the online platforms preferred by teachers and students for taking classes and assigning work online.

0

10

20

30

40

50

60

70

80

90

Zoom

Google Classroom

Microsoft Teams

Skype

Google meet

User %

Online apps

Zoom

Google Classroom

Microsoft Teams

Skype

Google meet

%

81.4

18.5

17.1

15.7

11.4

Preferred Online Platform

Zoom

Google Classroom

Microsoft Teams

Skype

Google meet

Apart from the ones mentioned above some other platforms reported to be used by teachers were: Google Duo, YouTube, Moodle, WhatsApp, Viber.

**(7)Discussion:** The result of this study indicates that face- to- face learning was perceived more positively than online learning in term of social presence, interaction, satisfaction and overall quality. Even though online classes were reported to be convenient in term of saving time, still both teachers as well as the students perceived it to be less effective and structured when compared to classroom mode of learning. Technical support was found to be an important factor critical to determining satisfaction with online classes. Yang and Cornelius (2004) in their study had reported similar findings. They found that students showed dissatisfaction with their courses when instructors were unavailable to provide technical support. Students also reported dissatisfaction when they had limited technical skills (Zeng & Perris, 2004). Thus, these findings from previous studies are in tandem with the current survey results where technical issues were found to be the most influential factor when it came to satisfaction with online classes. The results found here will thus allow college administrators to determine how technical support can be expanded and extended.

Another finding from the current survey which is found to be consistent with previous research (O'Malley & McGraw, 1999), was that students when enroll for online classes they initially feel that they are unable to learn as much in online courses as they used to in faceto-face courses. This dissatisfaction further effects the learning process. Zeng and Perris (2004) also reported similar findings. Therefore, the educational institutions should provide opportunities for students to become comfortable with the medium before they take online classes. Results of the current study indicate that student and teachers’ perceptions are valuable to educational institutions planning to adapt online mode of teaching in the future. However, this survey has its limitations. The small sample may not be completely representative of the majority of students and teachers taking online classes. Social desirability might have colored the test taking behavior of the subjects.

**(8)Conclusion:** Higher education in Bangladesh is currently restricted by the lack of clarity when it comes to regulating online channels of education. Teachers’ and students' comfort with online class design, level of interaction between students and faculties, technical support, and overall experience with online class delivery impact the overall teaching and learning experience and determines the ultimate success or failure of online mode of education. Thus, awareness needs to be increased focusing on the convenience and accessibility aspect in order to increase the adoption of online channels by students and teachers. Improving the quality of online classes with the help of various service providers, along with support from different colleges and universities can help in making online mode of education more effective and easily acceptable all over Bangladesh. Establishing a structured and user-friendly environment for online mode of education, one that is accessible for all without putting financial burden on students and teachers should be the main criteria in the minds of college and university management while promoting online education. Also, the need for providing adequate technological training to teachers about method of conducting online classes should be prioritized as it is found to be a pre-requisite for successful online class implementation. Last but not the least it’s worth mentioning that if poor students are given free internet service, then the participation rate will be increased in online education. It is important to note that the survey showed agreement between faculty and student perceptions of online mode of teaching. The opinion of both were reflective and supportive of one another.

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**Questionnaire for Teachers’:**

**#** In which institution you teach?

**a**. School **b.** College  **c.** Public University **d.** Private University

**1.** Which online platform do you prefer for teaching?

**a.** Zoom **b.** Google classroom **c.** Microsoft Teams **d**. Skype **e.** Google meet

**2.** There is lack of teacher student interaction in online classes

* Agree
* Disagree

**3.** Online classes are more convenient than classroom method

* Agree
* Disagree

**4.** Technical issues disrupt the flow and pace of online classes

* Agree
* Disagree

**5.** Technical issues effect the flow and pace of online classes

* Agree
* Disagree

**6.** Learning and Knowledge transfer happens

more in online class

* Agree
* Disagree

**7.** Online classes are not safe and secure method

* Agree
* Disagree

**8.** Difficult to keep classes for longer duration during online classes

* Agree
* Disagree

**9.** It is difficult to control group interaction during online classes

* Agree
* Disagree

**10.** Online classes are more effective than classroom mode

* Agree
* Disagree

**Questionnaire for Students’:**

**#** Which institution are you from?

**a**. School  **b.** College **c**. Public University **d.** Private University

**1.** Online classes are more effective than classroom mode

* Agree
* Disagree

**2.** There is lack of interaction during online classes

* Agree
* Disagree

**3.** Online classes are more convenient than classroom method

* Agree
* Disagree

**4.** Technical issues disrupt the flow and pace of online classes

* Agree
* Disagree

**5.** Technical issues effect the flow and pace of online classes

* Agree
* Disagree

**6.** Learning and Knowledge transfer happens

more in online class

* Agree
* Disagree

**7.** Online classes are not safe and secure method

* Agree
* Disagree

**8.** Difficult to keep classes for longer duration during online classes

* Agree
* Disagree

**9.** It is difficult to control group interaction during online classes

* Agree
* Disagree

**10.** Online classes are less structured than classroom mode

* Agree
* Disagree