

Navigating Online Education in Primary Level : Implementation and Challenges

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Online Education, COVID-19, Remote Teaching, Technology

Received : 5 July

Revised : 23 August

Accepted: 23 September

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ABSTRACT

The majority of children engaged in online education featuring diverse content, instructor-led and comprehensive learning platforms; at the same time, online education influenced children's mental well-being. Besides, guardians appreciate offline education as they are not accustomed to online education. From my perspective, the abrupt introduction of statewide online education generated several obstacles and offered practical implications for nations implementing online education. Gradually, online education is becoming progressively vital as instruction transitions to a digital format. This article analyzes the theory of "constructivism and connectivism". Additionally, it explores the incorporation of these ideas in the implementation of online learning environments, emphasizing student participation, technical accessibility, and knowledge networks. The significance of online education in addressing the diverse needs of learners globally is emphasized, particularly regarding adaptability and accessibility. The benefits of online learning are emphasized, encompassing self-directed education, digital proficiency, and inclusivity. The research employs a qualitative methodology, integrating literature review, educator interviews, and personal observations

INTRODUCTION

Pokhrel and Chhetri portray “The COVID-19 pandemic, which has influenced approximately 1.6 billion students in the world, is responsible for the biggest demolition of the education sector in human history. Education institution closures have had an impact on over 94% of students worldwide” (2021). In general, coronavirus epidemic compelled state to recommend that individuals implement essential precautions. Besides, Hassan (2021) delineates “Hand hygiene, facial coverings, and physical separation have impacts on public health measures, and to keep ourself safe, the majority of educational institutions were compelled to close for extended durations. Social exclusion and limited mobility regulations have profoundly affected conventional educational methodologies”. Olawade et al. (2020) delimitate “Due to the cancellation of classes and the restricted travel, students became more reliant on the internet”. Additionally, Hodges et al. (2020) add “Online education is not a novel phenomenon. Since its establishment in the late 1990s, it has rapidly advanced. Online education has always been regarded as a feasible alternative, particularly for adult learners. Nonetheless, the COVID-19 epidemic has compelled educators and learners at all levels to rapidly adapt to online instruction”. Redmond et al. (2014) add “It gives access to high-quality educational tools and content, no matter where you are or how much time you have. Students can access it from any location on the globe and learn at one’s own speed”. Additionally, Siemens & Baker(2012) address “Online learning comes in a variety of forms, including synchronous, asynchronous, blended, massive open online courses, microlearning, and personalized learning”. Kuleshova et al.(2020) depict “It offers learners access to a range of educational options, encompassing varied material, evaluations, and feedback. It provides students with a tailored, cost-effective, and stimulating educational experience that can facilitate the attainment of their success”. In most cases, online education was deemed the optimal solution at COVID-19 to mitigate sustain education at all levels globally. Palvia et al. (2018) portray “In developed countries, online education has flourished among teachers and students and is becoming more widely accepted as a legitimate form of education due to the high quality of instruction and accessibility of the online mode”. .Additionally, Peruzzo et al.(2022) portray “The Department for Education established the EdTech Demonstrator Programme in 2020 with the intention of assisting schools and institutions in enhancing their use of technology for distance education during the COVID-19”.

Conversely, many developing nations lack sufficient internet connectivity to support their populations . Furthermore, shortages of devices, network issues, financial constraints, and insufficient knowledge of online pedagogy and operational abilities hinder online education in underdeveloped nations (Pandey et al., 2021). Dutta and Smita (2020) highlight “Since online education is still a relatively new form of instruction in developing nations like Bangladesh, students have difficulty adapting to this new mode due to insufficient resources and different barriers”. Tabassum et al. (2021) say “After COVID-19, the Bangladesh government took different initiatives to promote

online education at all levels of the education sector. As it is a comparatively new mode of education in Bangladesh, students suffer from limited technical assistance, device and internet shortage, a weak network, a costly internet package, and so on". Therefore, Roy et al.(2023) portray "these challenges affect students' motivation toward online learning" . From research works, we acknowledge the importance of online learning throughout elementary, and secondary school in Bangladesh. However, the comprehensive investigation revealed a paucity of research about the perceptions of primary students in Bangladesh towards virtual learning, but there should have done more researches in this field.

METHOD

This study does not follow empirical based research rather it is based on theoretical analysis. To put it forward, I reviewed more than thirty journal articles, critical blog writing , renowned newspaper , critical book series, and my own experience of the situation respectively. This study takes a qualitative approach, combining a thorough literature analysis, interviews with Rajshahi Model School educators, and the author's personal observations .The literature study includes educational theories that support the dynamics of online learning, such as constructivism (Piaget, 2013; Srikanth, 2024; Vygotsky, 1978) and connectivism (Alam, 2023; Siemens, 2004). Semi-structured interviews with Rajshahi University educators shed light on the effectiveness, problems, and future possibilities of online education. These findings are supplemented by the author's observations, which reflect instructional strategies, technology tools, and student interaction practices in approved online programs, resulting in a complete review of the quality and recognition of online degrees.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Diverse educational philosophies have endorsed change of online learning, highlighting the learner as an active, social, and technologically facilitated endeavor. Constructivist theories and connectivism theory provide robust foundations for comprehending the development of online learning environments that promote student engagement and learning outcomes.

Constructivist Theory: What do Piaget and Vygotsky say?

According to Jean Piaget's constructivist theory, "learners construct knowledge via their interactions with the world. This process is internal and self-regulated, implying that learning is an active endeavor in which students add new knowledge to their current cognitive structures" (Piaget, 2013; Swargiary, 2024). Piaget delineated stages of cognitive development and underscored that learners go through these phases by actively interacting with their environment. Exploration, experimentation, and problem-solving all contribute to fostering engagement, which is crucial for successful learning.

Application to Online Learning

"Online learning environments promote constructivist theories by allowing students to actively participate in their learning processes. For example, interactivitiesimulations, virtual labs, and problem-based learning scenarios enable students to explore and apply theoretical information in real-

world settings, resulting in the development of new understanding through experience” (Anderson, 2011; Jivram et al., 2021). Furthermore, internet platforms promote collaboration and communication, which aligns with Vygotsky's emphasis on social interaction. “Video conferencing, chat rooms, and collaborative documents allow students to communicate with their peers and teachers, resulting in a dynamic learning environment that promotes cognitive development” (Fatani, 2020; Garrison et al., 1999; Karal & Kontek, 2022).

Connectivism in the Digital Age

Siemens (2004) introduced “connectivism as a learning theory pertinent to the digital era, contending that learning occurs through a network of connections rather than alone within an individual”. This hypothesis underscores the importance of access to diverse and continuously expanding information sources facilitated by technology. Connectivism posits that the capacity to integrate diverse knowledge from many sources is essential for effective learning. Connectivism emphasizes numerous characteristics that are essential in online learning contexts. Diversity of viewpoints is essential, since exposure to many perspectives and information sources enhances the learning process. Secondly, the establishment of networks is crucial; knowledge is disseminated throughout a network of connections, and learning entails traversing and augmenting these networks. Third, due to the fast evolution of knowledge, remaining informed and capable of identifying and reacting to new information is essential. Ultimately, decision-making is essential, since the ever-changing landscape of learning necessitates that students make educated choices regarding the information they seek and apply (Siemens, 2004). Simultaneously, online learning environments are optimally designed to enhance connectivist learning. They facilitate connections with experts, peers, and global communities. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) facilitate student participation in global discussions, access to lectures by distinguished professionals, and interaction with an extensive learning community. Social media platforms, online forums, and professional networks substantially facilitate connectivist learning by enabling ongoing participation and knowledge sharing (Alam, 2023; Kop & Hill, 2008).

Integration of Theories in Online Learning Design

Employing constructivist and connectivist theories in online learning design can yield more effective and engaging educational experiences. Constructivist principles can facilitate the development of interactive, student-centered educational experiences that promote active engagement and knowledge generation. Connectivist principles can aid in the creation of networked learning environments that enhance access to diverse information sources and facilitate relationships among learners (Alam, 2023; Downes, 2010). These strategies leverage the flexibility and connection of online learning while preserving the social and interactive elements of conventional training. Additionally, Garrison and Vaughan (2008) depict “Students may participate in online discussions and research before attending in-person seminars for collaborative projects and practical exercises. This technique guarantees that learners benefit from both autonomous online education and social

engagement, culminating in a more holistic learning experience". By employing these approaches, educators may create dynamic online learning channel, and all can get benefits in any terrible situation.

Online Learning Challenges

Bao portrays "The effective integration of instructional design with students' learning processes, the proficient delivery of online classes, insufficient administrative support, minimal student engagement in learning activities, and the absence of contingency plans are among the challenges that online learning must address"(2020). Besides, Ferri et al. (2020) depict "The efficient delivery of online lessons can be hampered by technological problems. Limited access to dependable internet connectivity and a lack of technological resources can make it difficult to access educational materials and cause connectivity issues".Moreover, Roy et al. (2023) say "Students' levels of self-control and time management typically need to be higher for online learning. Some students may find it difficult to stay involved and focused due to the lack of in-person interactions and the physical classroom atmosphere".Furthermore, Nambiar (2020) adds "A major barrier to online learning can be the lack of timely clarification and feedback from teachers. Online learning environments can make it challenging for students to get prompt assistance, which can cause delays in grasping topics or answering questions". Furthermore, Khan et al. (2021) portray "online learning raises problems regarding the cost and equality of education. The educational inequality stemming from the inability of low-income households to acquire devices and data plans impedes the attainment of sustainable development goals". Additionally, Moorhouse and Kohnke (2021) add "teachers lack of technological knowledge and skills, lack of online pedagogy, and teachers overall preparedness are major concern for online learning .

Frequently, we see "During the COVID-19 global pandemic, social distancing and lock-in measures were used to limit the spread of infection, forcing schools to end teaching and learning abruptly. As a result, more than 1.5 billion children and adolescents were prevented from school learning" (UNESCO, 2020). The designated school environment and the established schedule for commuting minimized the discord between children's educational pursuits and parental responsibilities. Parents must allocate additional time and resources, and students should listen to their parents. Consequently, online learning is not so easy for students to learn quickly , and avoid the traditional system of learning.

Parental Perception toward Online Education

As we can see, most families do not appreciate online education as students are not accustomed to it . "Ensuring education quality and parental satisfaction is the challenge facing online education. The Internet has resulted in significant changes in curriculum content, and teaching elements such as generation and uncertainty have been affected. The teacher has changed from the master of learning to the adviser and instructor of learning" (Mills & Tain, 1996). Hong et al. (2013) portray "Parents exhibited notable disparities in their perceptions of the quality of online education. A geographical disparity in online education was observed, indicating a perceived inequity among parents

across various regions, maybe resulting from the uneven advancement of information education services in the Eastern, Central, and Western areas". Moreover, technology helps educators across several schools, enabling students in underperforming institutions to experience superior classroom instruction. Nonetheless, disparities in infrastructure exist among locations, resulting in significant variability in online education. At the same time, the geographical disparities did not align with variations in economic growth. Secondly, educational institutions have to consider parents' perspectives on online education and strive to answer their concerns. Teacher training may enhance the quality of online education. "Educational institutions might offer live observation sessions, instruction on online pedagogical abilities and techniques, and assistance for technological challenges encountered throughout the online teaching time. Given that primary school pupils lack familiarity with online education, schools ought to instruct kids in online learning competencies and reduce course durations"(Boettcher & Conrad, 1999 ; Shin, 2002). Thirdly, educational institutions and families must proactively facilitate home-school collaboration to alleviate parental anxiety and hardship. To keep students safe in the school is a challenging task at that time as anything can happen . From my perspective, schools should ensure psychological counseling while staying or not in the institution.

Adoption of Online Education

As we can observe, the COVID-19 epidemic has changed education industry. Frequently, we see the transformation of traditional classroom though it has both opportunities and difficulties. This change, termed emergency remote teaching (ERT), has expedited the advancement of digital education while underscoring critical areas for reform and investment. Hodges et al. (2020) indicated that this was a swift change that exposed significant deficiencies in technology and internet accessibility. A significant number of students and teachers were ill-equipped for the challenges of online learning, resulting in a considerable learning curve. The swift transformation necessitated the timely creation and implementation of digital learning tools and resources, illustrating online education's capacity to provide learning continuity despite physical disturbances (Maspul, 2024b). "The outbreak revealed previously obscured inequalities in access to technology and internet connectivity, both essential for effective online learning. Students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, remote areas, and developing nations encountered significant obstacles, such as inadequate equipment, unreliable internet access, and restricted digital literacy" (Brief, 2020). The digital gap underscores the urgent necessity for substantial infrastructure investment to facilitate equitable access to online education. Numerous educational institutions have used hybrid methodologies that integrate online and in-person learning in reaction to the epidemic. Means (2009) underscores the benefits of these approaches, which encompass enhanced flexibility and accessibility. Hybrid learning integrates the advantages of both modalities, providing students with the convenience of online education while preserving the benefits of face-to-face interactions. This technique considers various

learning styles and requirements, enhancing educational standard.

Universities are investing significantly in digital infrastructure, acknowledging the significance of robust online education systems. This entails upgrading technical tools, enhancing internet bandwidth, and ensuring secure and reliable online platforms. Moreover, there is a significant focus on educating academics in digital pedagogy. Effective online instruction requires distinct skills and methodologies compared to conventional classroom teaching. Faculty development programs increasingly incorporate training on designing and delivering engaging online courses, effectively utilizing digital technology, and assessing student learning in virtual settings (Baran et al., 2011). In general, online education plays a major role to make a creative course design. Institutions are developing courses that use multimedia resources, interactive elements, and immediate feedback systems to enhance the educational experience. Online platforms facilitate the implementation of many pedagogical approaches, where students can keep communication with teachers and classmates in an effective way. This approach enhances the dynamism of learning while promoting deeper understanding and information retention (Jiang et al., 2022; Maspul, 2024a).

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Ultimately, we see the pressing need to shift to online platforms, and all countries struggle a lot during COVID-19 time. This study may aid other nations in adopting online education post-pandemic, since it has become an only way to save ourselves from coronavirus. Utilizing the theoretical frameworks of Piaget's constructivism, Vygotsky's social constructivism, and Siemens' connectivism make easily online learning environments. These ideas advocate for active, self-directed learning, social collaboration, and interconnectedness as essential elements for creating engaging and dynamic online courses. Educators may significantly improve student engagement and learning outcomes by utilizing tools that promote interaction and cooperation, so establishing online education as a legitimate alternative to conventional classroom settings. Subsequent research might focus on the enduring efficacy of these theoretical frameworks across many educational contexts, along with the potential for hybrid learning models. Moreover, examining the influence of advancing technology in facilitating these concepts promotes the evolution of online education, assuring its relevance and ability to meet the evolving needs of learners. These findings will be crucial for educators and policymakers as they enhance online learning methodologies and advance educational equity and accessibility globally.

FURTHER STUDY

This article lacks empirical research , and I do not collect any data physically. In future, researcher can collect data from door to door for fairness and clear observation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I want to dedicate this article to those students who died for the new Bangladesh , and back our rights, freedom of speech and quality education. At the same time, no financial organisation interferes my studies, and I do not take any funds from others while writing this article.

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