

# CONFLUX

## JOURNAL OF EDUCATION

ISSN 2320-9305 (PRINT) ISSN 2347-5706 (ONLINE)

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A PEER REVIEWED JOURNAL PUBLISHED SINCE 2013

VOLUME 12

ISSUE 2

JUNE 2024

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[cjoe.naspublishers.com](http://cjoe.naspublishers.com)

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## **E- learning: Impact on Psychosocial Competence**

Ms. Rajwinder Kaur  
Research Scholar  
Department of Education  
Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar

Dr. Gagandeep Kaur  
Assistant Professor  
Department of Education  
Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar

### **Abstract**

E-learning or digital learning is the need of the technologically dominated twenty first century in which every bit of knowledge is on the scrolling of the finger. Students of every level of education are much more interested in e- learning due to its numerous advantages and the learning at individual pace is the topmost one. Moreover, at a time when much of the population is practicing social distancing due to the spread of COVID-19, the disease caused by a novel coronavirus, losing direct connection with friends, colleagues and extended family have an impact on the psychosocial competence of the majority of the population. Due to this situation every sector of the society is facing unavoidable changes so as in case of Education. Disclosure of educational institutions has led to a shift in mode of education from offline to online education. In general, humans are social creatures and value their relationships with other people. Due to this shift and growing need of e- learning, students are facing many challenges and these challenges are having direct and indirect impact on their psychosocial competence. This article

will discuss about the online education, social distancing and its impact on psychosocial competence of the students as well, as teachers.

*Keywords:* psychosocial competence, e- learning, challenges

### **Introduction**

E-learning is not a new concept rather it is gaining popularity due to globalisation, technological advancement and disseminating of information from local to global. It has number of advantages and due to easy accessibility students at all levels prefer to use e- learning resources to enhance their knowledge, to complete their educational tasks, to take coaching through e resources and to clear the competitive examinations also. “A few years ago, the whole world was facing a different kind of scenario viz. socially, economically and psychologically, due to the outbreak of the deadly virus i.e. COVID-19. This virus had not only changed the vision and thought process of a common man but all the nations are contributing collectively to fight this virus. To break the chain reaction of this virus WHO and the governments of nations are creating awareness among the masses through various medias as well as had opted the policy of lockdown.”( Kaur & Kaur,2021) One of the techniques to safeguard oneself from this deadly virus is social distancing. Due to this social distancing all the educational institutions has shifted from offline to online mode of education. This type of education is quite different from the traditional mode of education that is education in classroom. This has affected the teaching learning process in different ways. At that time this was only the e- learning resources like you tube, Google classroom, zoom meetings, online delivery of lectures, SWAYAM PRABHA, DEEKSHA, MOODLE and MOOCs learning platforms etc. that has taken the driving seat in the

field of education and different professions. These learning resources have numerous benefits but also posed various challenges i.e. technological, psychosocial as well as emotional challenges for the students, teachers as well as for different professionals. These challenges are linked to the idea of severance between the two main pillars of the teaching learning i.e. the pupil and the master as totally against to the norms of traditional classroom (Moore,2014) and both these pillars don't have the expertise in the new phenomena of online learning (Johnson et al.2020). This severance promotes more onerous situations for the pedagogue to directly liaise with the pupil in an effective manner as they transmit the knowledge to students in conventional teaching (Putri et al.2020). In the views of Bao (2020), "teachers can enhance the teacher-student connectedness using facial expressions and body languages, whose influences could be affected in an online context, which leads to greater reliance on voice communication."

Further difficulties as delineate by researchers is the inability of the teachers in handling the e-learning resources and to utilise them in an effective way as they themselves lack such techno savy skills, and they are not having such resources for the students also. (Verma et al.2020). Same problem has also been discussed in a research paper published by Putri, et al. (2020) wherein they studied the problems faced by the masters of mathematics of various schools of the Indonesia. The results of the study revealed that the teachers are not much confident in using the educational apps and school administrators are also not providing them the required skill training and technological support and moreover the students are also unable to scroll and grasp the e learning material in an effective way. Actually, it is the basic habit of the students to seek emotional and psychological support from their master and guide. The existing litire in the form of research papers and books on impact of COVID-19 on the school education



has shown the same results as recommended by the Verma, 2020 and Putri et. al (2020).

E-learning develops not only the physical gap i.e. social isolation but also isolated them mentally. Isolation is known to cause psychosocial problems, especially for those recognised as vulnerable (SAMSHA,2020). While all humans are at risk of psychological harm when kept in isolation, the most vulnerable in these situations are children and adolescents, older adults, minority groups, those from lower socio-economic groups, females and people with pre-existing mental health conditions (Perrin, McCabe, Everly & Links, 2009). A report published in the Hindustan times highlighted e-learning adversely affect the mental health which will lead to isolation, fear of death, depression, anxiety etc. and will affect their psychosocial competence at a large extent.

WHO (1997) has defined psychosocial competence as ‘Person’s ability to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. It is a person’s ability to maintain state of mental well-being and to demonstrate positive and adaptive approach in dealing and interacting with others in his/her culture and environment. Positive approach implies that a person is forward looking and even in different situations can find a ray of hope and opportunities to find solutions. Competency is more than just knowledge and skills. It involves the ability to meet complex demands by drawing on and mobilising psychosocial resources (skills & attitudes) in a particular context. Psychosocial competence is related with the interaction of an individual with environment, oneself and with the world. In his EVM Model he has defined three dimensions to measure psychosocial competence i.e. Self-Efficacy, Interpersonal trust and coping strategies (Tylor, 1978).

E-learning has its own advantages as it removes the hindrance of time and space.

Students can get plenty of study material through different resources. Teaching can be done in effective way through videos, audios by using various online platforms like google meet, g-suite, telegram, zoom etc. promoting easy accessibility of education to the masses resulting into equity. All the developing nations are giving opportunities to their young generations to pursue higher education and also giving them incentives to accommodate the challenges posed by the technology (Siau, 2018). Despite of all these features and merits online education has some demerits also and the lack of physical and emotional touch is the uppermost one. Students don't have good interpersonal relationships and such type of education is also ruining their stress managing skills like active coping and managing the stress. The basic qualities like self-discipline is also lacking as they are free to spend time on those sites too which are not permissible to them and their educational time can be taken over by the games and social media sites. The students who are using the e learning resources in appropriate way they can be considered as the future investment of the nation and they can contribute towards the development of the country, but e-learning is not only the way and it cannot replace the conventional teaching. Students have more glued to their electronic gadgets like android phones, laptops and many more social networking sites and a sense of loneliness and self-centeredness has developed among them.

According to Renee Cherry (2020), "Many studies has found that while working from home, staying home from school, or being confined to a room while in quarantine; there will be a reduction in physical activity which could lead to added feelings of sadness, frustration, or anger." Many psychologists have reported that technology has the disadvantage of promoting stress and anxiety among the students and their guinness to the electronic gadgets resulted into

ephalates and depression. The happy hormones released into the body only through physical touch and happiness. The lonely person is more prone to mental illness and further conditions of anxiety and depression (Khan,2020).

While during the period of pandemic also the cases of mental illness and suicide among the youth has been raised and it was due to spending more and more time on the screens. “ The issues like sleeplessness, inability to do task efficiently, burden of the tasks, emotional distress, monotony, depressive feelings, fear to stay in the social group, hesitation and lack of effective communication can also be the part of the personality of the child depending upon the e learning resources (Bai et al., 2004;Brooks et al., 2020;Cava, Fay, Beanlands, McCay, & Wignall, 2005;Desclaux, Badji, Ndione, & Sow, 2017;Hawryluck et al., 2004). Moreover, the youth can also be prone to the adverse situations like avoidance behaviour and anger (Hawryluck et al., 2004).

Lack of trust and even less authenticity of the information on some educational sites can promote lack of self-confidence and can promote doubting behaviour. Even the different professional who spent their time on the laptops and other technological gadgets also prone to the above-mentioned mental health issues (Reynolds et al., 2008).

### **Conclusion**

After the COVID-19 pandemic, E-learning has gained more popularity and has become an essential part of mainstream education. This education is providing a wider scope of educational opportunities to cater to the diverse needs of the young generation. But this aspect of education has reduced the physical activity of students and many personality deformities like

isolation, self-centeredness, lack of emotional attachment, poor interpersonal relationships etc. is developing among them. Reason for this is the self-isolation and lack of emotional support from peer group and class teachers. Moreover, students are not taking online teaching so seriously which later on creating stress, burden and feeling of not getting well in academics is also hampering their self-efficacy and interpersonal relationships.

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