



Impact of Covid-19 On Education: Student, Family and Educator

DR. NITHYA RAMACHANDRAN
Lecturer, Department of Business Studies,
Ibra College of Technology,
Al Sharqiyah North Governate, Sultanate of Oman.

Abstract:

The academic landscape at the global level has changed dramatically in the past few months due to the wide spread of coronavirus. The effect of COVID19 on education can be viewed in three different people – a student, his/her family and the teacher/institution. Students' in all levels of education are highly affect due to the pandemic. The factors studied are closure of schools/colleges, postponement/cancellation of assessments, predicted grades, online learning and assessments and finally mental health and wellbeing. The article intends to show how family is affected in terms of education due to the pandemic. The difficulties identified are: lack of financial stability, lack of knowledge and lack of technological resources. The article also highlights the following factors as drawback faced by teachers and institutions in general. Lack of resources for digital education, lack of training to provide online education, lack of finance, lack of interest among the student community, lack of technological aspects in the curriculum. The article shows the ways to arrive at a solution to the problems faced today if the same kind of crisis arises in the future. Develop and implement a strategy, investment, training in skill development, Integrate technology into curriculum.

Keywords: COVID19; education; teaching; learning; family; educators

1. Introduction

The academic landscape at the global level has changed dramatically in the past few months due to the wide spread of coronavirus. The outbreak of the pandemic has caused a serious threat to all sectors and education sector is one among the highly affected. Sudden change in the mode of teaching and learning is not a convenient method for all learners and educators. In recent years, education sector slowly merged with technology to provide student-centric platform for learners. Adding technology to the conventional teaching and learning methods led to Blended-learning. The current crisis has proved that advancement in teaching and learning cannot happen without technology.

The effect of COVID19 on education can be viewed getting into the shoes of three different people – a student, his/her family and the teacher/institution. The article shows a clear picture of how COVID19 has impacted on three view points and also possible solution to build back better education system in the future.

2. Student

Students' at all levels of education are highly affect due to the pandemic. The causes are identified to be: (Simson Burgess, 2020)

- Closure of schools/colleges
- Postponement/cancellation of assessments
- Predicted grades
- Online learning and assessments
- Mental health and wellbeing

Closure of schools/colleges

In March, 2020 many countries closed their educational institutions and instructed the teachers to provide remote learning assistance to the students. (TUAC, 2020). Many studies have proved that going to school is the best way for skill development in a child. Time at school improves social skills. Short or no school time will lead to consequences of skill development. (Carlsson, 2015). Thus COVID19 has effected on social awareness and behavioural patterns of learners.

Postponement/cancellation of assessments

The pandemic has resulted in either postponement or cancellation of exams. The students who are at the finishing level either in school or college are having a difficult time. As admission in college/university happens based on grades at the school level and exam boards are finding ways to calculate grades for cancelled exams. (Hazari, 2020). Graduates moving to the job market are to face a very difficult situation as already there is a raise in the unemployment rates. (Kretchmer, 2020).

Predicted grades

The cancellation of exams led to providing predicted grades to the registered students. Replacing exams with predicated grades are not always accurate. It has more chances of biased marking by the examiners. This method has affected students who are last minute learners who have less marks in their internal assessments conducted before the closure. (Simson Burgess, 2020).

Online learning and assessments

Sudden shift in the mode of teaching and learning has resulted due to the outbreak of the pandemic. This has been a new role to both teachers and students who have not been on the digital platform at the fullest in the earlier learning process. Finding new tools and technology to support the course is a challenge to teacher whereas, following up with online classes and understanding the concepts are difficult from the students view as not all courses can be taught on a digital platform. Lack of adequate technological resources, experience in using the tools are also drawbacks. (D. E. Marcial, 2015).

Mental health and wellbeing

Mental health of the students is to be highly concentrated during crisis situation. Sudden changes might bring mental illness and behavioural change in children. This cause may differ based on the age and living environment. The NEWS on pandemic sickness are shown on dailies and mental health of people are still an untold story. (Education, 2020) [Children are less physically active, spend much longer on-screen time, experience more irregular sleep patterns, and follow less healthy diets.] (TUAC, 2020)

Spending adequate time with the child can support for wellbeing of a child, but this is not possible in all cases. If in a family both parents are working to cope up with financials needs, chances of spending adequate time with the child might be difficult. In contrast, if one parent is only working, the other has more chances to spend time with the child which again is linked to knowledge of the parent to involve in educational activities.

3. Family

A family living in any part of the globe, under any economical/social situation may undergo difficulties during this health crises. The article intends to show how family is affected in terms of education due to the pandemic. The difficulties identified are:

- Lack of financial stability
- Lack of knowledge
- Lack of technological resources

Lack of financial stability

COVID19 has brought economic activity to a standstill at the global level. This crisis is estimated to be the deepest global recession in eight years. (Malpass, 2020). Financial condition of a family is an important factor that has positive and negative effects on a child's education. A family with adequate financial resources can provide requirements like food, safety, technological aids, etc. to ease studying. Whereas, a family which suffers from financial adequacy cannot provide required facilities to the child.

Lack of knowledge

As the pandemic has forced home schooling, knowledge of the parents is also a notable factor. An educated parent might have knowledge to understand the subject and may try to spend time to teach lessons at home. An uneducated parent can only spend time with the child, but cannot clarify the doubts in the subject. There are cases where educated parents' might be working who may not have enough time to spend with a child to help them in studies as parents involvement is needed in case of online education.

Lack of technological resources

Not all the students are having adequate facilities and resources to support online education. (Simson Burgess, 2020). Not all the countries in the world could offer better infrastructure facilities that can support digital education.

A father from an economically poor background sold his cow to buy smart phone for his daughter to attend online classes. [For a month, Kuldip moved from pillar to post to get a loan of Rs 6,000 to buy a smart phone. He approached banks as well as private lenders but, because of his poor financial condition, none was ready to help him. In tears, Kuldip told said since the schools were closed, he was told by teachers that children needed a smart phone if they wanted to continue their studies. He said as he did not have even Rs 500, arranging Rs 6,000 was a Herculean task. When he failed to get money despite all efforts, he sold his cow for Rs 6,000 and purchased a smartphone for the education of his children.] (reporter, 2020)

4. Educator/Institution

The effect of COVID19 has impacted the role of educators'/teachers in a negative way irrespective of the level of teaching and range of the institutions/universities. The article highlights the following factors as drawback faced by teachers and institutions in general.

- Lack of resources for digital education
- Lack of training to provide online education
- Lack of finance
- Lack of interest among the student community
- Lack of technological aspects in the curriculum

Lack of resources for digital education

The fact to be accepted is that all educational institutions or a teacher's residence does not have adequate online teaching resource in all parts of the globe. Digital transformation is still a dream for many institutions and educators. (UNESCO, 2020). Teaching in an unfriendly environment and sometimes due to pressure from administrators causes mental disturbance to the teachers. (Education, 2020).

Lack of training to provide online education:

Next to frontline workers, the most affected are the teaching fraternity, because they are into a known/partially known/unknown/moderately used/unused field of digital education all of a sudden due to the pandemic. Education sector has slowly moved into blended learning – integration of technology

in conventional teaching and learning methods. (Lalima, 2017). The institutions have not prepared their workforce in advance to support the online mode of education.

Lack of finance

Digital transformation is very expensive and this cannot be done by all institutions as an emergency task due to lack of funds. As many governments impose restrictions on fee collection from students, arranging technology based education could be difficult. Apart from providing technical support to students and teachers the institutions must manage to provide salary to the employees as well. There are cases where there is reduced payment to no payment in many countries. (ILO, 2020).

Lack of interest among the student community

Technology based education is not conveniently accepted by students from all backgrounds. A student without needed resources cannot swiftly move to digital platform. The learning environment is not also friendly for all students to accept the change. Like educators, students also do not have required knowledge in using the digital tools effectively. Many academicians urge students to self-motivate themselves in order to adopt for the new version of education. In e-learning process, students work independently which will be a difficult task for slow learners to understand the concepts like in face to face education. (M. Samir Abou El-Seoud, 2014). The students are very much familiar in using mobile technology but they are not familiar in using e-learning tools. (Anchalee Ngampornchai, 2016)

Lack of technological aspects in curriculum

The integration of ICT tools in education is still an ongoing process in many universities/institutions. (Sara Hennessy, 2005). The role of teachers is not only transfer of knowledge but also inculcate critical thinking, problem solving skills in students. (Ziphorah, 2014). Digital education emphasis on what is being received then what is being delivered which also imposes an active role on the learner than on the educator. Turning teaching materials into digital format at short notice is a challenge as few teachers have strong digital and ICT skills. (UNESCO, 2020)

Possible Solution

Every problem has a possible solution. The article shows the ways that could support to solve the problems faced today if the same kind of crisis arises in the future.

- Develop and implement a strategy
- Investment, training in skill development
- Integrate technology into curriculum

Develop and implement a strategy

Governments/educational institutions/universities/educators and learners must put up a strategy for implementation of digital education at their levels concerned. Policies framed must support and motivate use of technology in education.

Investment, training in skill development

The administrators must not hesitate to make investment in improving the infrastructure to cope up with the digital world. The users of technology must be provided with adequate training so as to prepare self-motivated and lifelong learners ready to face any crisis in the future.

Integrate technology into curriculum

Results of researches on integrative curriculum must be used to convert traditional methods of teaching into technology based education as well as enhancing the content to support the changes in the modern world.

References

1. Anchalee Ngampornchai, J. A. (2016). Students' acceptance and readiness for E-learning in Northeastern Thailand. *s International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 1-13.
2. Carlsson, M. G. (2015). The Effect of Schooling on Cognitive Skills. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 97(3), 533-547.
3. D. E. Marcial, R. D. (2015). "I AM OFFLINE": MEASURING BARRIERS TO OPEN ONLINE LEARNING IN THE PHILIPPINES. *Information Technologies and Learning Tools*, 28-40.
4. Education, E. C. (2020). COVID-19: Mental health and wellbeing of all learners come first. *European Civil Society for Education*.
5. Hazari, A. (2020, April 6). With school exams postponed or cancelled over coronavirus pandemic, students worry about their university prospects. *South China Morning Post*.
6. ILO. (2020). COVID-19 and the education sector. *International Labour Organization*.
7. Kretchmer, H. (2020). How coronavirus has hit employment in G7 economies. *World Economic Forum*.
8. Lalima, K. L. (2017). Blended Learning: An Innovative Approach. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 5(1), 129-136.
9. M. Samir Abou El-Seoud, I. A.-E.-K. (2014). E-Learning and Students' Motivation: A Research Study on the Effect of E-Learning on Higher Education. *iJET*, 9(4), 20-26.
10. Malpass, D. (2020). *Global Economic Prospects*. Washington, DC: World Bank Group.
11. reporter, N. (2020, July 23). Himachal man sells cow to buy smartphone for kids' online classes. *India Today*.
12. Sara Hennessy, K. R. (2005). Teacher perspectives on integrating ICT into subject teaching: commitment, constraints, caution, and change. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*.
13. Simson Burgess, H. (2020, April). The impact of COVID19 on education. *Research - based policy analysis and commentary from leading economist*.
14. TUAC. (2020). *Impact and Implications of the COVID 19-Crisis on Educational Systems and Households*. Paris: OECD.
15. UNESCO. (2020). *A new world for teachers, education's frontline workers - COVID-19 education*. UNESCO.
16. Ziphorah, R. M. (2014). Information and communication technology integration: Where to start, infrastructure or capacity building? *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 3649 – 3658.