



# Life Skills as a Strategy to deal with Psychological Impact of Online Teaching Learning

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**Abstract:** *The emergence of Corona Virus disease (COVID-19) has led the world to an unprecedented public health crisis. (Saha et al. 2020) Emergency protocols were implemented in India to control the spread of the virus which resulted in restrictions on all non-essential public movements and with the closure of educational institutions, the need for a rapid transition from physical learning to the digital sphere of learning emerged and Online learning has been observed as a possible alternative to conventional learning. Though technology has been a harbinger of change yet it has its own effect on the psychology and behavior of its user.*

*The increased usage of technology is causing behavioral and technological changes including less physical activity, social isolation, and lack of peer to peer and face to face communication, irritability, physical changes, stress and lethargy especially among students. These effect of technology on its user especially the students and teachers led us to study the impact technology have on the behavior and psychology of the students and teachers .The study also tried to use life-skills as a strategy to cope with these effects . The life skills included for the study included psychosocial abilities and interpersonal skills decision making skills, problem solving, critical thinking , effective communication, empathy, and coping with the stress and strain of life in a healthy and productive manner.*

*As Life skills are also part of B.Ed curriculum, the present study was conducted on teacher trainees of B.Ed College affiliated to GGSIP University, Delhi. The Objectives of the study is to identify and analyze potential of Life skills in overcoming behavioral problems faced by learner due to online teaching and learning during pandemic. The tool used in study is a self designed online questionnaire and Focus Group Discussion. The findings of the study shall focus on the impact of life skills have in improving the ill effects of too much usage of technology by student and teachers. The study shall also focus on implications for making life skills as a compulsory component for all learners' programmes.*

**Keywords:** *Pandemic, online learning, learner psychology-behaviour, life skills*

## 1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

The emergence of the new corona virus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in December 2019 in Wuhan, China, and a global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020 have resulted in an unprecedented lockdown of national economies and social distancing restrictions, which had far-reaching economic, political, and social (Bretas and Alon, 2020; Nicola et al., 2020) but also educational consequences. The nationwide closures of educational institutions in 143 countries (UNESCO, 2020) have led to the transition from the conventional to the online learning mode, which dramatically changed studying and working patterns (de Haas et al., 2020).

Hence it is an acceptable fact that the emergence of Corona Virus disease (COVID-19) has led the world to an unprecedented public health crisis. (Saha et al. 2020) Emergency protocols were implemented in India to control the spread of the virus which resulted in restrictions on all non-essential public movements. According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the pandemic has interrupted the learning of more than one billion students in 129 countries around the world.

With the closure of educational institutions, the need for a rapid transition from physical learning to the digital sphere of learning emerged (Kapasias et al. 2020) Lockdown and social distancing measures due to the COVID-19 pandemic have led to closures of schools, training institutes and higher education facilities in most countries. There is a paradigm shift in the way educators deliver quality education—through various online platforms. The online learning, distance and continuing education have become a panacea for this unprecedented global pandemic, despite the challenges posed to both educators and the learners. Transitioning from traditional face-to-face learning to online learning can be an entirely different experience for the learners and the educators, which they must adapt to with little or no other alternatives available. The education system and the educators have adopted “Education in Emergency” through va E-learning tools have played a crucial role during this pandemic, helping schools and universities facilitate student learning during the closure of universities and schools (Subedi et al.,

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2020). various online platforms and are compelled to adopt a system that they are not prepared for.

Though technology has a lot of potential and has been integrated into every aspect of modern life. It is not possible in all but the most remote cultures to not be exposed to some sort of technology on a daily basis. Technology allows humans to connect without the limitations of geography, it makes processes more efficient and it supplements the intellect and effectiveness of the human brain. Online learning also allows physically challenged students with more freedom to participate in learning in the virtual environment, requiring limited movement (Basilaia & Kavadze, 2020). But with positive aspect of technology which provided pave for online learning certain danger sign also included. It resulted into psychological impact on learners. The burden of online lecture tasks is one of the contributing factors to students' stress levels, which requires them to use online media that they have just learned and must immediately understand. This is reinforced by research that found that public health emergencies can have many psychological effects on students, which can be expressed in the form of anxiety, fear, and anxiety (Sharp & Theiler, 2018).

In terms of study experience, students are often dissatisfied with remote learning, as they miss interactions with peers and teachers (de Haas et al., 2020). They perceive their academic experience as difficult and worse than before the pandemic due to the chaotic organization of online learning and a lower quality of online classes as compared to traditional ones (Wilczewski et al., 2020). Moreover, a lack of Internet infrastructure in some underdeveloped locations or unfavorable study conditions in the household prevents students from full engagement in online learning (Kapasias et al., 2020).

Hence, impact of online learning was found over entire education system from primary to higher education level. Even in Teacher Preparation Programmes at Pre-Service Level it was experienced that student became bore feel isolated due to lack of physical interaction, no interaction with peers which led to anxiety, stress among them. All these situations lead to exploration for strategy which could help to overcome psychological impact of online learning with this view point.

## 2. LIFE SKILLS AND ITS IMPACT ON TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS

“The impact of the pandemic on people’s mental health is already extremely concerning. Social isolation, fear of contagion, and loss of family members is compounded by the distress caused by loss of income and often employment.”

Several studies have demonstrated a positive relationship between teachers’ well-being and their efficacy in teaching. However, practical and applied research on training programs to improve teacher well-being and efficacy is still needed, particularly in light of the extreme challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis. Furthermore, even if teachers do receive

training in educational methodologies to manage stress, classroom-level implementation can remain low

It is important to consider in order to support and design efficient training programs like this and according to previous researches, that the resources that can mitigate or reduce teacher stress and burnout are internal (managing classroom self-efficacy and instructional self-efficacy) and external (school support resources). Both (internal and external resources) have shown a negative effect on job stressors. For example, as Doménech-Betoret and Gomez-Artiga pointed out, there is a strong and significant association between self-efficacy and the coping strategies used by teachers, and coping strategies act as moderator on burnout dimensions.

Appropriate training can mitigate work-related stress among teachers by furnishing them with the skills, strategies, and resources needed to manage stress, improve efficacy, and increase workplace satisfaction. The key to the effectiveness of such training is to provide teachers with useful strategies and resources and facilitate effective transfer of these skills to the classroom to buffer against teacher stress in everyday school life, as the program developed in the present study does.

On this way, teacher burnout is a serious problem in schools, with links to impoverishment of the teaching occupation, frustration and dissatisfaction with teaching, and job absenteeism. It is critical to train teachers to face this difficulty, safeguard themselves, and achieve optimal psychological development at work. Training to prevent teacher burnout plays a protective role and improves the psychosocial environment and health of teachers’ work life. It also increases teachers’ engagement, resilience, perception of their teaching value, self-efficacy, and ability to thrive within their. Thus, a positive relationship exists between teachers’ well-being and their efficacy in teaching.

Similarly, preventing teacher burnout has been linked to decreases in disruptive behavior among students and greater general stability of the classroom as well as student motivation and academic commitment. Teachers with low stress levels and no burnout symptoms and classes with high coping skills have been associated with enriched student outcomes. **The Life Skills and Citizenship Education (LSCE)** initiative provides a transformative vision to re-imagine education for better (life) outcomes for children and young people. The conceptualization of this vision is based on four essential premises:

- A holistic approach to learning considering the whole learner by acknowledging the multidimensionality of education for cognitive, individual, social and economic development.
- A humanistic and rights-based approach to learning with a transformative effect and a strong ethical foundation, recognizing that education fosters human dignity and promotes human rights-based values.

- A lifelong learning approach understood as a cumulative investment from an early age onwards throughout life to learn through multiple opportunities and fulfill personal potential.
- A multiple pathways approach to learning in formal and informal settings of learning, fostering learning and individual empowerment for creating an environment enabling social inter-connectedness. Aiming at higher-order life outcomes, life skills and citizenship education aims at equipping individuals with a set of skills allowing them to learn, to work, to be personally empowered, and to be active citizens.
- Understood as higher-order, transversal and transferrable skills, life skills enabling individuals to develop knowledge, attitudes and behaviours to deal with everyday life and enable them to be and act in a constructive way, while taking into account the context and being able weight in choices.
- The LSCE Framework (see Figure 1) sets out 12 core life skills (thereafter known as ‘the 12 Life Skills’): creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, cooperation, negotiation, decision making, self-management, resilience, communication, respect for diversity, empathy and participation (UNICEF and partners, 2017). These skills have been selected as those most needed for the life outcomes of learning, employability, personal empowerment, and active citizenship (UNICEF and partners, 2017).



Fig. 1. The 12 Life Skills of the LSCE Framework

Life skills are also part of B.Ed curriculum also. Hence the present study on the basis of responses of student about online learning on their behavioural aspects through questionnaire life skills were considered as a strategy which was used during

classes to help students overcome impact of online learning. Hence title of the study **Life Skills as a Strategy to deal with Psychological Impact of Online Teaching Learning**. The findings from study would reveal potential with hold in Life Skills in enhancing psychology of learner in positive manner.

### 3. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This pandemic carries not only the risk of death from a viral infection but also psychological stress for people throughout the world (Xiao, 2020). Continuous dissemination, strict isolation measures, and online learning problems at all levels of education are expected to affect mental health, including students. **According to the Council on Communications in Media (2011)** media use is associated with “sleep issues, aggressive behaviour and attention issues in preschool and school age children” (p. 1,042).

### 4. PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT ON STUDENTS DURING COVID-19

As stated by Sutarto et al. (2020) the learning process, initially was conducted face-to-face in the classroom, but has been shifted to home learning using the online system or distance learning (Nasiret al., 2018) through the use of various existing media. The online learning was used for their daily lesson and to assess their academic performance and it somehow causes the students to get stressed. It is supported by Irawan et al. (2020) where they mentioned one of the contributing factors to students’ stress rate is the pressure of online lecture tasks, which requires them to use online media that they have only learned and must comprehend instantly.

This pandemic does not only mentally affect adults but also students. Corresponding to Chang et al. (2020a) and Chang et al. (2020b), they pointed out the psychological effect of the public health crisis is long lasting. The worries about pandemic usually will dissolve after a period of time. However, the impact of normalizing new things and it might affect students’ academic achievement as well.

Kamaludin et al. (2020) stated that fear and the risk to the health of a person can gradually dissipate as the pandemic reaches its tail end. Nevertheless, the idea of the disease itself and the desire to switch to a “new normal” will have a long-term psychological effect on the students. In exchange, this can influence the academic performance of the students.

In the feedback of the online classes in India, 97% of the students (among which 87% were of the post-graduate class) were satisfied with this new mode of learning and suggested it to be a part of their curriculum [27]. Another study reported that most of the students in the **Philippines** were facing connectivity issues and were not ready for this mode of learning On the contrary, in **Georgia**, the experience of online learning was successful. The factors behind this success were that almost 79% of their homes have easy access to the internet and almost

62% of homes have computers which were substituted by smartphones in rural areas. Recently, in a study conducted in **Pakistan** on a small number of such students (126), it has been reported that the majority of the students (71.4%) found online learning non-motivating, 50.8% of students were reported to have difficulty in completing courses and 78.6% students were of the view that there should be mandatory physical presence of the teacher in class for learning [25]. Therefore, the students' feedback regarding satisfaction from online classes was important.

**Training preservice teachers** toward effective integration of online environments. Researchers (Holmes et al., 2018; Kennedy, 2016; Lampert, 2010; Tsai & Tsai, 2019; Zilka, 2020; Zilka et al., 2018; Zilka et al., 2019) claim that the key to effective use of digital environments is to choose meaningful pedagogy, appropriate for the content and the needs of the learners. They claim further that effective teacher training programs should be based on learning experiences, with an emphasis on the use of pedagogical models for the effective integration of digital environments in teaching. Training programs should address the needs of different learners and build collaborative learning communities, enabled by identification of the obstacles that preservice teachers encounter in the online teaching and learning processes in digital environments. The goal is for the preservice teachers' training process to increase their e-readiness for effective integration of digital environments.

## 5. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### *THE AIM OF THIS STUDY*

The aim of this study was:

- To shed light on the productive, challenging, and thwarting factors that pre-service teachers encountered during their studies and in the course of their student teaching during the COVID-19 period, from the perspective of pre-service teachers.
- To examine which factors promote and which ones hinder learning in an online environment for pre-service teachers; the social and emotional aspects of preservice teachers' experience; identified critical elements and frustrations in stressful situations; identified positive and negative elements in the learning experience;

*This study examined the following questions:*

- What are the factors that advance or hinder learning in an online environment for preservice teachers?
- What are the critical elements that cause preservice teachers' stress, frustration, and overload?
- Which tools and digital skills were used, and were these tools and skills appropriate?

- Which skills were used for teaching and collaborative learning, and how?

### *METHOD*

This was a mixed-method study. The questionnaire and FGD contained closed and open-ended questions. The data were collected in 2020-2021. The study was both quantitative and qualitative, based on triangulation to verify and validate findings. Wining and thick description are two common practices in this research method. In this study a great deal of winnowing was used to highlight the main findings. Winnowing allows one to focus on what is most important and present what is most meaningful and convincing (Ely et al., 1997; Wolcott, 2001). All participants were adults who consented to participate in the study and completed a questionnaire.

### *Sample*

The present study was conducted on a group comprising of 50 Pre-service teacher Trainees of B.Ed college affiliated to GGSIPU, Delhi who opted Life Skills as an optional subject in final year of their B.Ed course.

Pre-service teachers experienced learning in online courses at the teacher training institution where they studied, and also experienced teaching students in schools in an online environment, coached by their own teachers.

### *Research Tool*

1. **Self designed online questionnaire:** Researcher developed questionnaire to know the perception of Teacher Trainees about online learning mechanism.
  2. **Focus Group Discussion:** Researcher conducted online FGD with Life Skills Group to know the impact of different life skill strategies used during classroom interaction process on psychological behaviors.
  3. **Analysis of Data:** Data was analysed both quantitatively and qualitatively.
- **QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY.** Discourse analysis was conducted on the findings obtained from the answers to open-ended questions, based on the approach described by Adler and Adler (2008), Atkinson and Delamont (2006), and Hammersley (2008). The students' answers were analyzed, coded by themes, and classified into factors. Distinct elements were identified, and contrasting, complementary, and explanatory themes were formulated. The frequency with which themes were addressed by respondents was mentioned. Zilka 147 Emphasis was placed on analyzing the contextual discourse regarding the complexity of the experience in the online environment, and in the learning and teaching process, with the aim of creating a comprehensive mapping of the factors that promote, challenge, and hinder learning in the shadow of COVID-19.

**6. RESULT AND DISCUSSIONS:**

- Perception of pre service Teacher Trainees about transaction of context in online mode.

On the basis of responses of students through **self designed questionnaire** following perspectives were analysed :

*TABLE 1: Perception of pre service Teacher Trainees about transaction of context and interaction with students in online mode.*

ITEM	SUB ITEMS	PERCENTAGE
Technical conditions	• Technical problems while learning online (frequently and very frequently)	65
	• Use of multiple online platforms (depending on the teachers' preferences)	15
	• Lack of student's adequate technologies	20
Technical conditions	• Lack of teacher's technical skills (lack of interest for improving their skills, disorganization)	72
Teaching style	• Lack of adaptation of teaching style for the online environment (which generated difficulties of assimilation and understanding)	58
	• Unbalanced teaching style (theory versus-practical tasks) (either just theory or just practical tasks)	12
	• Unbalanced task allocation (students either have too little free time or too much) Imbalance regarding the assignment of tasks that should be completed in a specified time	30
Interaction with students/teachers	• Lack of support from teachers in the learning process	78
	• Lack of interaction with peers/teachers	22

**7. INTERPRETATIONS OF THE DATA COLLECTED:**

From the table No 1 it can be analyzed that students suffered lot of technical difficulties while attending online classes as 65% of the reported that they used to face lot of stress due to technical errors which used to make them aggressive, frustrated and many of them faced difficulties 15% due to multiple platforms used by teachers.

Another major perspective which revealed that students were not satisfied with teaching style as there was imbalance among theory and practical components and too much focus on theory perspective make students boreded them and lack of interest in the classes. Moreover behaviour of student got disturbed as no interaction like in physical mode of classes amng students and teachers so they felt isolated

**TABLE2: The perception of students about the ability to learn and assimilate information in the context of exclusively online learning.**

Item	Sub items	Percentage
How satisfied are you with your experience with the	1. Not at all satisfied	75
		15
		10

online teaching system on the E-learning platform	2. Fairly satisfied	
	3. Very satisfied	

The table 2 revealed that 75% students not satisfied with online mode of learning and only 10% very satisfied with online learning.

**8. FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION ANALYSIS :**

On the basis of analysis of questionnaire researcher conducted FGD with students in online mode from which it was analysed that psychological well being of students have been affected due to numerous factors discussed above which lead to negative impact on their developmental aspects.

Researcher during FGD with trainee teachers asked how come Life skills period help them on the basis of their responses it was analysed that through different strategies used in life skills classes they felt relaxed their mood changes and they become lively.

Analysis of reflected that strategy of Group discussion, storytelling, online games , Art work, music Dance in activity mode in class help students to overcome psychological impact of online learning due to pandemic. .

- **Implications for use of Life Skills as continuous part of Educational curriculum :**

**Online Teaching Learning Psychological Implications for enhancement of life skills among youth.**

- **Parents are the best ‘role model’** for children and home is practically the best place to learn the ‘life skills’. Hence, this is the best time for parents to model the most important life skills i.e. coping with stress, coping with emotions, and problem-solving with their children
- This is an opportunity for older children to **learn responsibility, accountability, involvement, and collaboration**. By taking some responsibilities at home on an everyday basis, for instance maintenance of their belongings and utility items
- In such conditions taking up **creative pursuits** like art, music, dance and others can help to manage mental health and well-being for everyone. Inculcating self-driven reading by making them select books of their choice and discussing about them helps in adolescent development.
- They can **conduct creative online** academic and non-academic sessions by making their classes more interactive, engaging students in the form of quizzes, puzzles, small competitions, and giving more creative home assignments to break the monotony of the online classes
- Teachers have a role to play in the **promotion of mental health among students**. They can discuss what is wellbeing and how it is important for students. They can assist in teaching simple exercises, including deep breathing, muscle relaxation, distraction, and positive self-talk. Virtual workshops can be conducted in which ‘life skills’ related to coping in stress can be in focus by using more practical examples.
- Teachers can make children understand the importance of **prosocial behavior** and the importance of human virtues like empathy and patience among others. This can help them to understand their role in the society and understand how social distancing is not equivalent to emotional distancing.
- The teachers need to **interact with parents** online or through phone regarding feedback about students and their mental health. Because of the digital divide they can call parents, make their contact available to parents and devote a time slot when they can be available to parents to communicate.
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## 9. CONCLUSION

The present study revealed that Life skills have lot of potential to deal with psychological problems can enable to lead a positive life. Hence they should be one of the main component of curriculum.

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