Research Article

Parents' Perception of Online Enrichment Classes During COVID-19: Challenges and Scope

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ABSTRACT

Social media usage and online learning for education has increased because of COVID-19. The purpose of the paper is to investigate how parents feel about the increase in online enrichment programs during the COVID-19 pandemic and the part that social media played in it. The data was gathered, and the study objectives were analyzed using the online survey. A survey of 100 parents was completed in total. By encouraging learning and encouraging students to be active participants, the use of social media by higher education institutions positively impacts the educational process. There were also some challenges found in the teaching and learning process. The physical closure caused a quick transition to remote learning, which gave parents and guardians more responsibility for their children's education. It is important to investigate parents' interactions with their children during remote learning because they are one of the key participants in the educational process. Parents have shown keen interest in enrolling their children in online enrichment classes like chess, rubric cube, dance, arts and craft, among others. Learning objectives based on socialization, interpersonal interactions, and interpersonal problem-solving require special consideration. Young learners participate in play-based learning and pick up skills like taking turns, cooperating in groups, and forming good relationships with peers. The study will be significant in analyzing the role of social media in promoting enrichment classes and how effective were these online classes. These interactions and learning activities, specific to the lower grades, need connections with classmates. There is also a claim that this use of online education will continue, albeit in a limited capacity, after the pandemic.

INTRODUCTION

New age parenting strategy focuses on giving children the best opportunity in a competitive world while also nurturing their talents, skills, and abilities to prepare them for maturity. Parents, especially middle-class parents, are more driven than ever to provide their kids with the skills they need for a good childhood so they can advance in their schooling and other spheres of life, giving them a competitive advantage (Lareau, 2003; Stirrup et al., 2014 Wheeler & Green, 2014). Vincent and Ball (2007) Showcase the effects of class differences on child raising, and the investment middle-class parents make in their kids by enrolling them in a variety of enrichment programs.

Providing many possibilities in a variety of activities has become an expected modern component of parenting practice for parents who can afford it. (Gabriel, 2017). A growing trend is to make it easier for kids to advance in their academic and social lives. (Lareau, 2003; Stirrup et al., 2014; Wheeler & Green, 2014)

Even if the pandemic may have run its course and we are all back to our normal lives, online education for children is here to stay. Lessons are given at times that work for you and your child's schedule, right in the comfort of your own home. There is no need to go out of the house, no commute time, and no parking difficulties. Virtual classes for kids may have risen in popularity at

the peak of the pandemic. However, they continue to be a great alternative to supplementing your child's school curriculum because of how convenient they are.

Children's participation in a wide range of activities is increasingly considered a sign of "excellent" parenting and a solution to allay concerns from middle-class parents about giving their kids well-rounded, scheduled activities. (Allen *et al.,* 2021; Wheeler, 2018)

Online enrichment activities are marketed at parents in ways that play into contemporary concerns about good parenting and cultivation. Parents who can choose from activities are touted as crucial for their child's development (Stirrup *et al.,* 2014). The present study attempts to understand parents' approach and the pressures on parents to provide meaningful and cultivating online enrichment activities for their children during a pandemic.

A relatively new online education system that equips children with abilities that clearly set them apart from their peers is available to parents who can afford it. Wider social changes, such as the increase in dual-income households and modifications to the work-life balance, may have changed perceptions of the experiences that are available to young children.

Enrichment classes, which had been a common occurrence in the lives of many children, were discontinued once the global epidemic struck. Preschoolers are now using technology at younger ages and are adept at navigating online and offline environments. (Laidlaw *et al.,* 2021) Byrne et al. (2021) highlight that young children spend more time on screen-based devices. Although screen-based gadgets can provide cognitive engagement and educational opportunities that may have some benefits, parents frequently worry about the possible drawbacks of excessive screen time, such as poor sleep, cognitive delays, a lack of physical activity, and obesity.

Objectives of the study

This study aims to investigate parents' perceptions regarding online enrichment classes. It is important to assess the parents' perspectives of their children's experiences using the online learning system during the COVID-19 pandemic because parents bear the primary responsibility for their children's education and are the true observers of children in the online learning environment. Therefore, this study came to investigate the following objectives:

- To study parents' perception of online enrichment classes in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- To find the reasons for preference towards online enrichment classes.
- To investigate the use of social media in online enrichment classes.
- To analyze the role of social media in promoting online enrichment classes.

- To find the scope of online enrichment classes post-pandemic.

Research Methodology

The researchers used the descriptive survey method to investigate parents' perceptions regarding online enrichment classes during the COVID-19 pandemic. The data was gathered, and the study hypotheses were tested using the online survey. An online survey of 100 parents was completed in total. The sample selection was done by creating a database of 100 parents with children aged 7 to 15. The questionnaire consisted of 7 close-ended questions and one open-ended question.

Data Analysis

Parents' Perception and Enrollment in an Online Enrichment Class

When parents were asked whether they enrolled their child in any online enrichment class during the pandemic, 97% of the respondents said yes, and 3% did not enroll their child in any online enrichment class during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Online Enrichment Class and Medium of Promotion

Parents were asked about the source of information from which they came to know about the online enrichment classes. 93% of the respondents opined that they saw the online enrichment class advertisement on Facebook. 4 % of the respondent got awareness from WhatsApp groups. 1% of the respondents found it through Twitter, and 2% opted for other communication mediums.

Children's Interest and Online Enrichment Class

When parents were asked, 'Did your child take the interest online enrichment class?', 87% of the respondents said that their children had taken an interest in the online enrichment class, while 11% said that their children were not interested n online enrichment class. Only 2 % opted for can't say.

Types of Online Enrichment Classes

Parents want their children to have an all-rounder personality. They want them to learn new skills which will enhance their personality. Respondents were asked which online enrichment class they enrolled their child. The majority of respondents opted for dance class (25%), followed by music (23%). Some respondents opted for arts and crafts classes (15%) and coding classes (20%). 17% of the respondents opted for others, in which they mentioned classes for rubrics cube, chess, and piano lessons.

Online Enrichment Classes and Creativity

Creativity is an integral element of enrichment classes. Parents were asked about whether the creativity of the enrichment classes is maintained in online mode.85%

of the respondents said agreed that the creativity is maintained in online enrichment classes and 10% of the respondents said that the creativity is lost in the online enrichment class.5% of the respondent were not sure about the same.

Reason for Preference of Online Enrichment Class

Parents were asked the reasons for preferring online enrichment classes. Most respondents (45%) preferred Flexibility as the reason to go for the online enrichment class. Personalized learning was another reason to prefer online enrichment classes (20%). Time management (20%) was effectively managed in online enrichment class, which was one reason to prefer an online enrichment class. Cost-effective (13%) was another reason preferred by the respondents. 2% of the respondents opted for others.

Online Enrichment Classes are Value for the Money

Parents were asked about whether the online enrichment class is value for money, to which the majority of the respondents (89%) agreed, while 7% of the respondents did not agree with the statement. Only 4% of the respondents were not sure about the same.

Effectiveness of Online Enrichment Class

Parents were asked to rate the effectiveness of online enrichment classes for their children. Most respondents (85%) rated online enrichment classes as good, while 10% rated them as average. However, 5% of the respondents rated online enrichment classes as poor.

Continuity of Online Enrichment Class Post-pandemic

Respondents were asked whether they wanted their children to continue online enrichment classes after the pandemic. Most respondents (88%) said yes, while 7% said no, and 5% were unsure about the same.

The Learning Environment at Home

In an open-ended question, parents were asked about the challenges faced in providing a proper learning environment to children during the online enrichment class. Parents said that they provided comfortable learning, smartphones, laptops, and Wi-Fi as the learning tools to make a proper learning environment at home. This will be great for children to study harder and in turn, will achieve great achievements.

Conclusion and Implications

This study aimed to investigate parents' perceptions of the online enrichment class during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study results demonstrate that parents were satisfied with the online enrichment class. In addition, the results show that parents find online enrichment classes as an effective medium to impart new skills to their children. Social media played an important role in promoting awareness about online enrichment classes. This study can inform decision-makers, educational administrators, and industry experts about

how parents perceive online enrichment classes and how to best use it to meet children's requirements better. By reflecting on the parents' impressions of the existing use of this teaching and learning avenue and maximizing the benefits of distant learning, stakeholders can make use of these perceptions. Children can explore new hobbies, learn new skills, obtain homework assistance at home with the help of online enrichment programs. The pandemic has resulted in restrictions in the movement of people, but technology has given new options to continue learning options for children. Further research should investigate the learning outcomes of these online enrichment classes in the long run. Knowing these perceptions can give stakeholders opportunities to maximize the benefits of online enrichment classes and reflect on the parents' perceptions regarding the current application of this teaching and learning avenue. The study concludes that the use of online enrichment classes will continue, albeit in a limited capacity, after the pandemic.

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