

Analysing the Changing Trends among Students in the Post-Pandemic Phase

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Abstract: It has been widely observed and researched that the Personality of the students to a large extent influences their academic and non-academic performance. In recent years the students have gone through the phase of covid-19 pandemic. They got to experience variations in academic environment at educational institutes and at home. They faced changes in their physical, behavioral, and mental health patterns. There were a lot of lifestyle changes caused by the pandemic. There is a remarkable difference in their learning preferences, attitudes, approaches and academic and non-academic parameters. The research paper aims to capture the gradual changes that were introduced with the outbreak of the pandemic. These changes occurred in both the teaching and learning styles. It is interesting to find out these variations and analyze their behavior in the post pandemic phase. A survey has been carried out to understand these factors.

Keywords: Covid-19 pandemic, mental health, assignment submission, gadgets.

I. Introduction

The personality of the students has a tremendous influence on the academic performance of the students. This is evident since ages. Extra-curricular and co-curricular activities are a part of the educational system (Lahak Bhalla et al., 2023). Even in the gurukul system the teachers focused on shaping the overall personality of their disciples. Nurturing the positive aspect of the students' personality and helping them cope with their drawbacks was a part of the education system. Over the decades gradual changes were introduced in the system and now we are into an era where we conduct mentor-mentee meetings with the students. This helps the teachers (mentors) to understand where exactly the student is lagging. It helps teachers know the areas that require counseling.

Over the years, there are lot many aspects that changed in the education system. The changes accelerated with the advent of the pandemic. The teaching-learning process shifted to online mode owing to the pandemic. The changes eventually reflected in several areas related to education system. For instance, the concentration of the students, use of gadgets, attitude towards teachers, self-discipline, physical and mental health, assignment submission methods etc. changed to large extent. The paper through a survey recorded and evaluated the four attributes mental health, Social and emotional state, Assignment submission, Physical health consciousness, use of gadgets and extracurricular activities. The questions related to these parameters were asked to the students considering the period prior to covid, during covid and post-covid. The objective was to understand the changes in all these factors brought about by covid.

➤ Research Objectives

1. To evaluate the overall positive and negative impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the students.
2. To analyze the mental health of the students.
3. To investigate the changes in the social-emotional state of the students.
4. To understand the student preferences in academics and assignment submissions.
5. To find the amount of awareness students developed regarding physical fitness.

II. Methodology

To meet the research objectives following parameters were considered:

Mental Health

This is a very important parameter. It is quite relative to the age, demographics and educational level of the student. The effect of the pandemic affected the mental health of the students. The pandemic lasted for around two years, and there were tremendous changes brought about by the pandemic (Beatta_Zarowski et al. 2024). The paper identified the changes prior to the pandemic, during the pandemic and post-pandemic. Some Students experienced mood swings, depression, and anxiety in the pandemic phase. The survey questions were framed to know if the students experienced such negative emotions prior to the pandemic, in the pandemic phase or after the pandemic. The analysis was done for all these questions.

Social and Emotional Aspect

The social and emotional aspects were measured for understanding variations in the socializing factors of the students. To what extent they enjoyed the online social conversations, whether they were able to find new methods of socializing. If the students found themselves connected. Some students were not able to go to their hometown when the pandemic started. So, do they felt isolated or were satisfied with the online mode of social connect.

Changes in Academics

Prior to covid, assignment submissions in schools or colleges were done in offline mode. Students used to submit handwritten assignments. The objective was to make the students understand the topics properly and practice the questions based on it. Writing assignments was a good practice. Eventually, things changed students started referring to the internet for the assignment solutions. Due to online submissions students just copied the content, pasted it and completed the task. They then, became comfortable with this method. Throughout the pandemic period the student got accustomed to these practices. Though the educational institutes were taking efforts to monitor the students individually they were not able to implement it precisely.

Health Consciousness and Physical Fitness Awareness

Every situation comes with its positive and negative impacts (Na-Hye Kim et al.2022). This implies to the covid-19 pandemic. If we talk about the positive aspect, students got technically upgraded. Many students learned many things online. Some students developed and nurtured their hidden talent by joining online hobby classes. Thus, they utilized their time properly. On the other hand, there were students who were not able to focus online on any of the curricular, co-curricular or other activities. This positive and negative effect was also prominent in the parameter of health consciousness and physical fitness. There were students who very well utilized the time by engaging themselves in physical exercises, planning and following their diet. Rather they got time to follow their physical fitness routine in a proper manner. They got habituated to a disciplined lifestyle and physical fitness routine that even after the pandemic they continued with the same. There were some students who faced several health issues during the pandemic so, started following fitness routine, or there were some who realized the importance of maintaining good health and became health conscious.

Use of Gadgets

There was an exponential growth in the use of devices by the students. In the pandemic period students had to shift to online learning and thus were introduced to several tools and techniques. With the shift to remote learning, gadgets like computers, tablets, and smartphones become necessary for accessing learning resources, completing assignments, and attending virtual classes.

Educational apps and platforms such as Zoom, Google Classroom, and Microsoft Teams have become essential teaching tools. Students improved their technological skills by learning how to use different platforms, solve technical problems, and handle digital data. Exposure to new abilities like using cloud-based applications for collaborative work, and creating digital presentations. Prolonged use of screens for social contact, education, and entertainment lead to eye strain, mental exhaustion, and decreased physical activity.

Bad posture, irregular eating and sleeping habits and short attention spans were some of the health consequences that were faced by the students.

Survey Method

Online survey was framed to collect responses from students with respect to the parameters discussed above. The opinions of around 100 students were recorded for the post covid phase. The questionnaire was designed using a “Jotform”. Total twenty-seven questions were framed to understand the students’ perspective on mental wellbeing, physical health, assignment submissions, their social and emotional state and the use of gadgets.

Following questions were asked through Jot form

<p>Student Survey</p> <p>Student Name</p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p>First Name <input type="text"/> Last Name <input type="text"/></p> <p>Location</p> <p><input type="text"/></p> <p>Educational Level (Select and write from the options below)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Undergraduate</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Postgraduate</p>	<p>Section A: General Mental Health</p> <p>1. Post the COVID-19 pandemic, to what extent you feel anxious or nervous?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Never</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Always</p> <p>2. Do you find variations in your concentration/focus after the pandemic?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>3. Have you experienced any sleep disturbances (e.g., trouble sleeping, sleeping too much)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Often</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Never</p> <p>4. Have you accessed mental health support (e.g., counsellor, therapist) after COVID-19?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>5. Have you been victim of the Covid-Pandemic?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>6. Is there any immunity issue raised after the covid-pandemic?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
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<p>Section B: Social and Emotional Impacts</p> <hr/> <p>1. Has your social life changed significantly due to the pandemic?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes – more isolated <input type="checkbox"/> Yes – more connected <input type="checkbox"/> No change</p> <p>2. How connected do you currently feel with peers or friends?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Very connected <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat connected <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral</p> <p>3. Do you find it harder to make new friends post-COVID?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure</p> <p>4. Are you comfortable engaging in group settings (e.g., classroom, events)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not sure</p> <p>5. Is there any change in Tours/ Field Visits/ Excursions</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>Section C : Changes in academics</p> <hr/> <p>1. How did remote learning during COVID affect your academic performance?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Improved <input type="checkbox"/> Same <input type="checkbox"/> Declined</p> <p>2. How motivated do you feel towards your studies now?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Highly Motivated <input type="checkbox"/> Somewhat Motivated <input type="checkbox"/> Not at all Motivated</p> <p>3. Are you now more comfortable with digital tools for submission than before the pandemic?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Agree <input type="checkbox"/> Neutral <input type="checkbox"/> Disagree <input type="checkbox"/> Strongly Disagree</p> <p>4. Are you able to concentrate well during classes now (online or in-person)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Sometimes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>5. Have your grades changed significantly after returning to in-person schooling?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Improved <input type="checkbox"/> Same <input type="checkbox"/> Dropped</p> <p>6. Did your interest increased due to ICT based tools or Pedagogies?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>7. Did the use of tools raised your interest in the subject?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>8. Do you find any negative impact on your overall working?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>
<p>Section D:Health Consciousness and Physical Fitness Awareness</p> <hr/> <p>1. How would you rate your physical activity levels compared to before the pandemic?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Improved <input type="checkbox"/> Stayed the same <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced</p> <p>2. Did you adopt any new health or fitness habits post pandemic?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>3. Have your eating habits changed since COVID-19?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Healthier <input type="checkbox"/> Unchanged <input type="checkbox"/> Less healthy</p> <p>4. Do you experience fatigue or lack of energy more often now?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>	<p>Section E: Use of Gadgets</p> <hr/> <p>1. On average, how many hours per day do you spend on screens (not including academic use)?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> less than 2 hours <input type="checkbox"/> 2-4 hours <input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 hours <input type="checkbox"/> More than 6 hours</p> <p>2. Main reason for current use:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Continued remote work/study <input type="checkbox"/> Increased reliance on technology <input type="checkbox"/> Social media and entertainment</p> <p>3. How do you rate your priority for onscreen time?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Entertainment <input type="checkbox"/> Gaming <input type="checkbox"/> Social Media <input type="checkbox"/> Exploration</p> <p>4. Have the usage of ICT tools/AI tools help you to</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Improve Performance <input type="checkbox"/> Maintain the performance <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced your performance <input type="checkbox"/> No change in Performance</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Submit</p>

III. Key Findings and Discussions

1. The pandemic left a positive or negative impact on the students.

➤ **Positive Impact**

1. Students started learning and using online applications.
2. Students quickly adapted to online platforms like Zoom, Google Classroom, and educational applications.
3. Flexibility in learning was introduced students could learn at their own pace as they had access to recorded sessions.
4. Students gained access to global range of resources, sessions and workshops.

➤ **Negative Impact**

1. The sudden shift to remote learning interrupted students' daily routines and learning habits, leading to confusion and decreased motivation for some.
2. Students missed the interaction with the teachers and their friends, which is crucial for social and emotional health.

3. Post-covid the students became less sincere and serious towards their studies.
4. Lack of self-discipline and punctuality is observed. The reason could be the disturbance in the daily routine caused by the pandemic.
5. Numerous students exhibited a tendency for late submission of assignments or non-submission altogether.
6. Students are not able to develop the reading and writing skills. They are losing on the language proficiency due to which they are not able to express the knowledge gained and concepts in their own words.
7. The advent of ChatGPT and similar other tools have affected the logic building capacity and programming skills of the students.
8. Reduced participation in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities by the students.
9. Less or limited social interaction led to loneliness which could further impact the mental health and social-emotional well-being.

➤ **Graphical Analysis:**

2. Impact on General Mental Health:

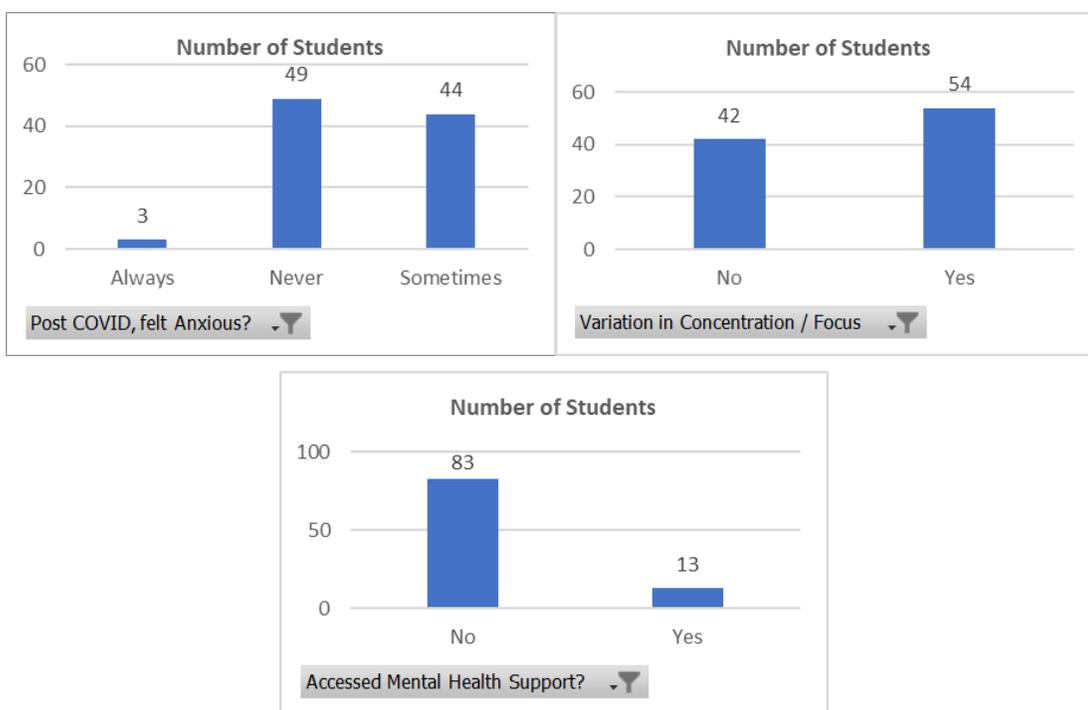


Fig. 1 Analysis of mental health of the students

It was observed that there was no significant change in the anxiety levels of the students. Also, the students didn't approach for any mental health support from counsellor. But there was a noticeable variation in the concentration of students. Post- covid the students are finding it difficult to focus on their academics and overall activities.

3. Impact on Social and Emotional Health:

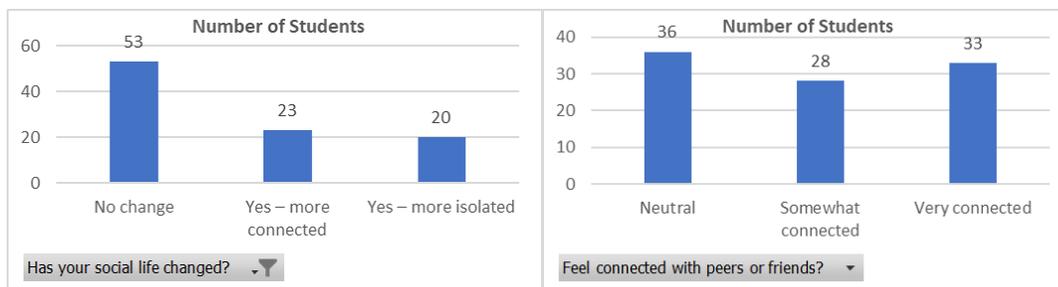


Fig. 2 Analysis of Social and emotional health of the students

Due to whatsapp and other messaging applications students remain connected with each-other. But the level of emotional attachment is a question. This is evident from their responses about how connected they feel with their friends.

4. Impact on Academics Pattern:

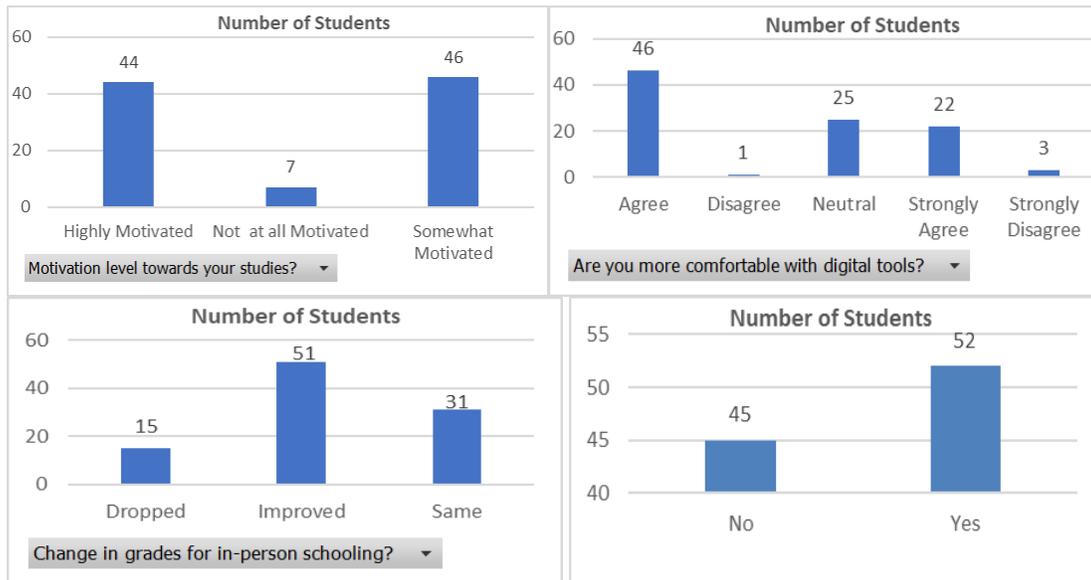


Fig.3 Analysis about the changes in academic patterns of the students

Most of the students have agreed that their grades have improved since they shifted to offline classes. Also, the students are comfortable using the digital tools. But there is a significant drop in their motivational levels.

5. Impact on Health Consciousness and Physical Health Behaviour:

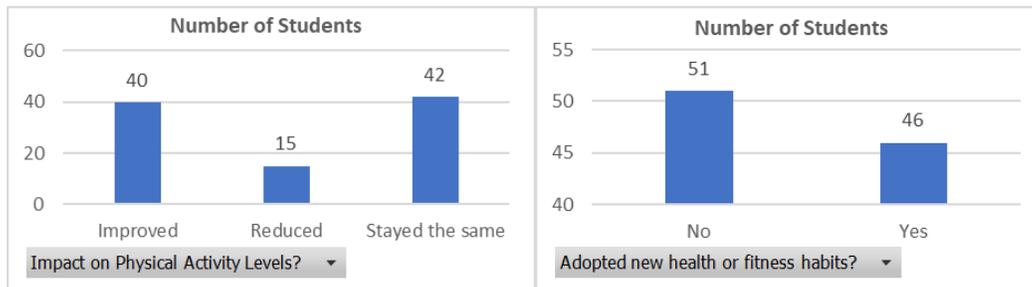


Fig.4 Analysis about the awareness about health and physical fitness of the students

According to the student responses neutral effect was displayed on the health and physical fitness patterns.

Impact on Usage of Gadgets:

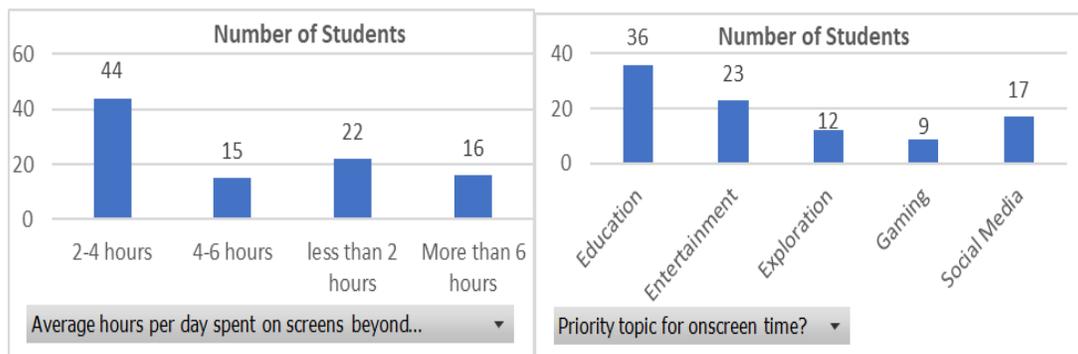


Fig.5 Analysis about the use of Gadgets by the students.

Most of the students are show an average screen time in between two-four hours daily. About the priority of the screen time the students are found to use it for the purpose of education followed by entertainment, social media, exploration and then gaming.

IV. Conclusion

While thinking about the benefits of the pandemic one thing that immediately triggers is the incorporation of technology into the educational system. More blended learning models (a combination of online and offline learning) emerged as a result of the pandemic's acceleration of technology integration in education. The pandemic elevated the use of technical tools to a new level. Post- pandemic, educational institutes are using edtech tools and digital evaluations more frequently. It was a forced changed. But in the pandemic phase that was the only solution that the policy makers could provide in order to impart education.

However, incorporating new technology into the classroom does not ensure that the students and teachers will interact more effectively, meaning that the instructor will present the content more effectively and the student will comprehend it completely. When used properly, new technology opens up greater opportunities for both teachers and students.

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