

Job Satisfaction of Secondary School Teachers in the Hybrid Teaching Scenario

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Abstract

Hybrid learning, also known as blended learning, is an educational approach that combines both traditional face-to-face classroom instruction with online learning activities. It seeks to integrate the best elements of in-person teaching and digital technology to create a more flexible and personalized learning experience. Post pandemic this method of teaching has been widely accepted and adopted across different educational institutes. Although there are significant benefits with Hybrid mode of educations, it has also thrown a new set of challenges for both Teachers and Students. This has in a way lead to much unwarranted stress and work pressure on the teachers. Out of the many factors which influence job satisfaction, stress, compensation, job security, job fit and meaningful work are a few factors which have a strong influence. This new mode of teaching learning has impacted these factors among teachers. This paper explores all the positives and the negatives which have been brought in by Hybrid education method on school teachers, and how these new challenges have actually influenced their stress. The change in the job satisfaction has also been explored based on some qualitative random interviews among secondary school teachers in Kolkata, West Bengal.

Key Words: Job Satisfaction, Hybrid Education, Secondary School Teachers, Covid-19, Workload, Work-life balance, Compensation

Introduction

The post covid world has disrupted the world of education in many ways, with schools and educational institutions around the globe facing unprecedented challenges. The entire learning-teaching scenario has undergone a major shift and that shift is going to stay. As the world begins to accept the changed normal, there are several trends and changes that are likely to shape the future of education in the post-COVID world. The pandemic has accelerated the adoption of hybrid learning models that combine in-person and remote instruction. In the post-COVID world, hybrid learning is likely to become more prevalent, with schools and institutions offering students greater flexibility in how they learn. Hybrid learning, also known as blended learning, is an educational model that combines both in-person and online instruction. In a hybrid learning environment, students attend classes on campus for some portions of the week and engage in online learning activities for others. Hybrid learning is often used to provide more flexibility in the learning process. For example, it allows students to complete assignments online, review lectures or other materials at their own pace, and engage in online discussions with classmates and instructors. Though the concept of Hybrid learning existed for a long time and there was adaptations of the same in higher education and advanced learning areas, the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption of hybrid learning in many educational institutions around the world starting from the primary to advanced degrees. With the need for social distancing and remote learning, hybrid learning became a necessary tool to ensure that students can continue their education in a safe and effective manner. Though the new learning-teaching method did have its share of benefits, it also led to changes in the workload, teaching style, and communication methods for school teachers. Job satisfaction is a critical factor in teacher retention and student success. The new model suddenly created a lot of stress among teachers and that further lead to other related issues which affected the quality of teaching and learning. This paper aims to explore the job satisfaction of secondary school teachers in the hybrid teaching scenario.

The Good, Bad & Ugly of Hybrid Education.

The physical classroom as we know it is changing and evolving in new ways. Hybrid education, also known as blended learning, is a mode of education that combines traditional face-to-face classroom teaching with online learning. As a result, students have more access and get better results overall with hybrid learning models that blend the real and virtual worlds.

Initially remote learning had become increasingly popular as a component of hybrid education due to various factors, such as surges in COVID cases, and the need to reach students residing in remote areas & limited transportation options. The recent increase in the demand in Hybrid education is due to the flexibility which this form of education offers to the students.

Here are some advantages of hybrid education:

1. **Flexibility:** Hybrid education provides flexibility in terms of learning schedule, location, and pace. Students can access course materials and complete assignments online at their convenience, while still having the opportunity to interact with teachers and peers in person.

2. **Personalization:** Hybrid education allows for a more personalized learning experience. Students can work at their own pace and receive individualized attention from their teachers. They can also choose to focus more on the areas where they need more help.

3. **Cost-effective:** Hybrid education can be cost-effective for both students and educational institutions. It can reduce the need for classroom space and resources, as well as transportation costs for students.

4. **Increased engagement:** Hybrid education can increase student engagement using interactive online materials, multimedia resources, and collaborative learning activities. It can also provide immediate feedback to students, which can improve their learning outcomes.

5. **Improved accessibility:** Hybrid education can improve accessibility for students who live in remote areas, have disabilities, or have other constraints that prevent them from attending traditional face-to-face classes.

Hybrid education provides a flexible, personalized, cost-effective, engaging, and accessible learning experience for students, while also providing the benefits of face-to-face interaction with teachers and peers.

But while these positives are definitely there, there is also a flip side to this new medium of teaching. And these points affect both the teachers and the students. Few of the overbearing challenges faced by both Students and Teachers are,

Technological Challenges:

One of the most significant challenges of hybrid education is the reliance on technology. Students need reliable access to the internet and the necessary devices to participate in online learning, which can be a challenge for students who come from low-income families or live in rural areas. Moreover, technological difficulties such as connectivity issues, software malfunctions, and other tech-related problems can interrupt the learning process and can negatively impact the student's motivation and engagement.

Lack of Personal Interaction:

While hybrid education provides some opportunities for face-to-face interaction with teachers and peers, it may not be enough for some students who thrive on personal interaction. Socialization and interaction with peers are essential for the student's growth and development, and not having enough of it can make students feel isolated or disconnected from the learning community, which can further affect their motivation and engagement.

Time Management:

Hybrid education requires students to manage their time effectively and be self-disciplined, which can be challenging for some students who need more structure and guidance. Balancing online and in-person activities can be difficult, especially if students have other responsibilities such as work or family obligations. Moreover, some students may struggle with self-motivation and may not be able to keep up with the course's pace, which can lead to a decline in their academic performance.

Reduced Accountability:

Hybrid education can provide some flexibility, but it can also reduce accountability. Students may be tempted to procrastinate or skip online activities, which can affect their learning outcomes. Additionally, teachers may have difficulty tracking student progress and ensuring that they are meeting learning objectives. Therefore, it is essential to have systems in place that can monitor student progress and ensure that they are meeting the course's objectives.

Unequal Access to Resources:

Hybrid education may widen the gap between students who have access to resources such as technology, quiet study spaces, and supportive home environments, and those who do not. Students who come from low-income families or have limited access to technology may struggle to participate in online learning, leading to inequities in educational outcomes and opportunities. Moreover, the lack of access to quiet study spaces and supportive home environments can further impact the student's motivation and engagement.

Thus, while hybrid education can offer many benefits, it is essential to address the potential challenges and negative points to ensure that all students have equal opportunities to learn and succeed. To overcome these challenges, it is essential to provide students with the necessary resources and support to participate in online learning and to have systems in place that can monitor student progress and ensure that they are meeting the course's objectives.

These challenges also put a lot of pressure on teachers. A efficient teacher always wants to ensure equal development of all their students, but in the above mentioned circumstances this is not possible. In turn this develops additional stress on the teachers leading to lack in satisfaction, unnecessary mental stress and overall disinterest in teaching.

Factors affecting Job satisfaction among teachers

Attracting and retaining high-quality teachers is a significant challenge faced by educational institutions. A positive approach is an essential quality that every teacher must possess. It is crucial for teachers to have the potential and a clear intention to perform their duties with utmost

dedication and derive satisfaction from their work. Job satisfaction is a combination of emotional and psychological experiences related to work. It is the relationship between one's expectations and achievements in the workplace. Job satisfaction is essential for effective work performance, and it is especially crucial for school teachers, who play a crucial role in building the nation and shaping the future citizens. Satisfied teachers are more likely to be interested in teaching their students effectively, which is critical for improving the quality of education in the country and meeting the demands of globalization. The productivity and performance of schools depend on the job satisfaction of their teachers. Therefore, job satisfaction is a crucial phenomenon that must be addressed in every sector, particularly in the teaching profession.

Due to Covid-19 and the unexpected changes that it brought into our lives, specially in the education sector put in a lot of stress on the teachers. This was even more for the secondary school teachers who had to prepare the students for their students for first board exam, which was also uncertain. Every week there were new directives from the government about how the exam would happen. They had pressure of the curriculum completion, practical labs and projects, which are all important components of the 10th standard board exam. Suddenly the entire education went into the Hybrid Mode which was a absolutely new concept to many of them. Some of the factors which influence the job satisfaction of secondary school teachers in the hybrid teaching scenario are,

Workload: Teachers may feel overwhelmed with the increased workload of hybrid teaching, which involves planning and delivering lessons for both in-person and remote students, as well as managing online platforms and providing additional support to students who are struggling.

For every lesson, they have to make material for both Online and offline platforms. This is basically doubling the work.

Technology: The use of technology can be both a boon and a bane for teachers. While it provides greater flexibility in teaching and allows teachers to reach more students, it can also be a source of frustration when technology malfunctions or students struggle with access to devices and internet connectivity. While taking a class in a flow, such technical interruptions are very frustrating as that breaks the continuity of the class. Many times the classes are incomplete and the entire process needs to be redone.

Many teachers, had to make themselves fluent with using computers, internet and mobile apps to make themselves apt for online teaching. This was and still is a major issue with many teachers.

Student Engagement: Teachers may find it challenging to keep students engaged and motivated in the hybrid teaching scenario, as remote students may feel disconnected from the classroom and struggle with online learning. It is also very difficult for any teacher to keep track of the students online. Many of them switch of their camera and certain apps would not show all the students at the same. And even if they do, it is not possible to keep an eye on all the screens at the same time.

Work-Life Balance: The hybrid teaching scenario may blur the boundaries between work and personal life, as teachers may feel pressured to be available for both in-person and remote students outside of traditional work hours.

Due to hybrid classes, schools are extending their class hours and working hours. This has majorly affected the morale of the teachers.

Communication: Effective communication is essential in the hybrid teaching scenario, as teachers need to communicate with students, parents, and colleagues through a variety of channels, such as email, online forums, and video conferencing. Poor communication can lead to misunderstandings and frustration for all parties involved.

Compensation: Finally compensation is another major issue which has affected the job satisfaction of many teachers. Many educational institutes were forced to bring down their fees of the students as the classes went online. That directly affected the teachers as their salaries were reduced with the logic that they don't need to travel to schools anymore, not take physical classes etc. While the work increased two folds, in many cases the salaries were halved. Even after the new normal has set in now, many institutes have not brought back the salaries to the pre-covid levels.

With online classes and hybrid teaching, as there is no limitation to the number of students which can be in a class, many institutes have also reduced the number of teachers. This job insecurity has further lead to frustration among teachers.

Conclusion

The job satisfaction of secondary school teachers in the hybrid teaching scenario will depend on how well they are able to adapt to the new teaching environment, manage their workload, and maintain effective communication with students, parents, and colleagues. While that is true, schools and institutes need support teachers by providing training on hybrid teaching strategies, technology tools, and communication skills, as well as by promoting work-life balance and recognizing the challenges that teachers face. They should ensure that proper compensation and benefits are provided to the teachers by recognizing the extra effort which needs to be put to make this new mode of teaching successful. Also while the number of students can be limitless in an online class, the institutes need to acknowledge the fact that teaching is not just mere taking

classes. Thus the effective student to teacher ratios needs to be maintained. Reducing the number of teachers is basically creating a bigger problem in the longer run. More and more youngsters would be demoralized to take up the teaching profession which would lead to crisis of teachers.

The government also needs to have policies which are just towards teachers and they should ensure that the rules of examination, syllabus and methodologies should be structured around the new ways of teaching. They should help develop free and easily accessible website which have relevant content and can help teachers in preparing for lessons, creating online content and reference material for their students.

In short, to ensure that the job satisfaction among schools teachers is not diminished over time, the entire educational ecosystem needs to work and structure based on the new normal of Hybrid teaching-learning.

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