Preschool Teachers' Perception regarding Online Learning during Covid-19 Situation

By

Rifath Akhter Smriti
19155009

A thesis submitted to Brac Institute of Educational Development in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of
Master of Science in Early Childhood Development

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my own original work while completing degree at Brac University.

2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.

4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature:

_____

Rifath Akhter Smriti
19155009

Approval

The thesis/project titled "Preschool Teachers' Perception regarding Online Learning during Covid-19 Situation" submitted by

1. Rifath Akhter Smriti (19155009)

Of Fall, 2020 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Science in Early Childhood Development on December 14, 2020.

Examining Committee:

Supervisor:
(Member)

_____
Ms. Syeda Sazia Zaman
Programme Head
Brac Institute of Educational Development, Brac university

Program Coordinator:
(Member)

_____
Ferdousi Khanom
Senior Lecturer, ECD Academic Program
Brac Institute of Educational Development, Brac University

External Expert Examiner:
(Member)

_____
Dilruba Sultana,
Lecturer III, Med Academic Program
Brac Institute of Educational Development, Brac university

Departmental Head:
(Chair)

_____
Dr. Erum Mariam
Executive Director
Brac Institute of Educational Development, Brac University

Ethics Statement

Title of Thesis Topic: <u>Preschool Teachers' Perception regarding Online Learning</u>

<u>during Covid-19 Situation</u>

Student name: <u>Rifath Akhter Smriti</u>

1. Source of population

Teachers of English Medium School from urban areas of Dhaka city
_____

2. Does the study involve (yes, or no)

    a) Physical risk to the subjects (no)
    b) Social risk (no)
    c) Psychological risk to subjects (no)
    d) discomfort to subjects (no)
    e) Invasion of privacy (no)

3. Will subjects be clearly informed about (yes or no)

    a) Nature and purpose of the study (yes)
    b) Procedures to be followed (yes)
    c) Physical risk (yes)
    d) Sensitive questions (yes)
    e) Benefits to be derived (yes)
    f) Right to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the study (yes)
    g) Confidential handling of data (yes)
    h) Compensation and/or treatment where there are risks or privacy is involved (yes)

4. Will Signed verbal consent for be required (yes or no)

    a) from study participants (yes)
    b) from parents or guardian (n/a)
    c) Will precautions be taken to protect anonymity of subjects? (yes)

5. Check documents being submitted herewith to Committee:

    a) Proposal (yes)
    b) Consent Form (yes)
    c) Questionnaire or interview schedule (yes)

Ethical Review Committee:

Authorized by:
(chair/co-chair/other)   _____

                         Dr. Erum Mariam
                         Executive Director
                         Brac Institute of Educational Development
                         Brac University

Executive Summary

Online learning is increasing due to school closures during COVID-19 (Li & Lalani, 2020). The Minister of Education in Bangladesh stated to give more emphasis on online learning and to have more research on this (The Business Standard, 2020).

The research purpose of the study was to explore the perception of preschool teachers regarding online classes during COVID-19. The nature of the study is qualitative.

The research findings are categorized in four parts: teachers' perception, practices, challenges and supports related to online learning during Covid-19. Most teacher understands the concept of online learning, its effectiveness, using technology, impacts of online learning and importance of home environment. Regarding practices teachers reflect new strategies to enhance children's learning, interaction and assessment. As online learning is a new concept most of the participants are facing challenges in online classes like internet and laptop issues, handling parents and health related issues. All participants revealed need for strong internet connection, good gadgets, support from parents, support from school authority, and children's environment to enact classes successfully.

Further study is needed. Proper system, guidance and policies for online classes should be developed for both teachers and parents.

Keywords: English Medium, COVID-19, Perception, Preschoolers, Online-Learning and Teachers.

Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to all the teachers who dedicate their knowledge, time & energy for the ultimate wellbeing of their children. This journey would have remained incomplete without their cooperation and support.

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Table of Contents

List of Acronyms

CDC   Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

CESA   Continental Education Strategy For Africa

ECD   Early Childhood Development

ECCD   Early Childhood Care and Development

ELDS   Early Learning Development Standard

GED   General Economics Division

ICT   Information and Communications Technology

IDI   In – depth Interview

MOWCA   The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs

SDG   Sustainable Development Goals

SFH   School from Home

UN   United Nations

WHO   World Health Organization

Chapter I

Introduction & Background

Introduction

Learning online isn't the next big thing is the big new thing (Pappas, 2014). The idea is old, but it has begun in many countries now due to this pandemic situation. But the responses of adult students and children students will differ. Online learning for children means any technology or helps children learn from educational websites to videos to course providers, to mobile and educational apps (O'Connell, 2019). There is a significant increase in online learning due to school closures during COVID-19 (Li & Lalani, 2020).

As all over the world, there is a sudden outbreak of COVID- 19 from December 2019. Coronavirus is an infectious disease, and people feel mild to moderate respiratory illness and declared as a pandemic disease in 2020 (WHO, 2020). The pandemic situation of COVID is faced by all over the world, and the whole world was in a sort of lockdown. The Governments of different countries shut everything due to the virus, including schools. According to UN (2020), "*Educational systems were hampered due to closures in 188 countries*" (p. 2). More than 1.5 billion children are deprived of the physical classroom world widely (UN, 2020). Due to school closures, almost most of the countries came up with a solution to online learning.

Learning is the backbone of the nation, and teachers are the vital person to shape the country's education. Teachers are like militaries in the war on this process of online learning during COVID-19 (Global Partnership, 2020). They are the one who regulates the whole education system of the country. They provide the learning to each student. Teachers are the main person to

circulate these online education services among the children. Online learning is a way to teach students through the internet, where direct interactions between children and teachers are possible. Several countries having lockdown have implemented different online learning systems. In several, countries like China, India, the USA, Finland, Indonesia, and Bangladesh, all implement online learning not to hamper their educational system (World Bank, 2020). The teachers are the main person to deal with the children in this process. Teachers need to incorporate technology to successfully implement online classes (Gimbert & Cristol, 2003).

In many cases, it has been seeing that by exploring technology, they can enhance their teaching way into a more creative way (Onuoha, et al., 2015). Teachers' perceptions and activities play a significant role in children (Dong, et al., 2020). The teacher's activities will also vary according to the children's age. Most interestingly are the preschoolers aged between 3 to 6 years old who do not sit for so long at a time, so how the teachers manage this age group on online classes to enhance their learning and wellbeing are issues. Preschool Teachers are trying by playing, singing, doing the scavenger hunt, and yoga in video conferences to grab and keep the toddlers' attention in online classes during COVID-19 (Meisenzahl, 2020).

This study is all about exploring the perceptions of teachers of English medium preschool regarding online classes as the concept of online learning is new to urban areas of Dhaka city in Bangladesh. Almost all English Medium Schools in Dhaka have switched to online courses after the lockdown (Alamgir, 2020). Indeed, how the teachers are collaborating with the new medium of instruction and what they perceive about it is a new area to explore for the researcher. The study is mainly considering English medium preschool teachers as in the mainstream Government school, this online learning for the pre-primary group has not started yet (Abbas, 2020). Exploring this teacher's perceptions and how they are accommodating can give a guideline to those teachers

and the school authority to enact the online classes in the whole country. And various studies were found in the USA, Indonesia, and China, and many more other countries are recently doing tasks to explore the teachers of every level of education to see how they are collaborating with the new teaching method.

Statement of the Problem

In Bangladesh, teachers lack the skills to provide online classes to children (Zaheen, 2020). Whereas, in the process of online learning, teachers are the vital person to continue this operation. The role of a teacher is unique and vast. A teacher can inspire a child to achieve essential life goals after the parent-teacher plays a massive role in their lives. They can be a counsellor, friend, and can also shape the children's thought. But if the teachers are not specialized enough to take classes virtually, this is a very concerning issue. The whole education system will be disrupted. The teachers are the one who is liable to take the classes of the children. They are the ones who are preparing lessons, delivering it to the children, and also making sure that the children are getting the lessons. But if the teachers are not specialized in that area, how they are going to do it. The whole process of learning will be impacted. As there are cases where children don't listen to parents, but they listen to their teacher's words. In online learning, they are the only facilitators to teach the children. The preschool age group is between 3- 5 years old (CDC, 2020). Managing this group of children can become tough sometimes physically. For this reason, the teachers are the one who is responsible for grabbing the attention of the children, consequently if the teachers are not skilled enough, they won't be able to engage the children in educational activities.

Apart from that, teachers earlier used to teach in the traditional classroom. They were comfortable with the whiteboard, students, and classroom. But due to COVID, as schools switched to a new model of teaching, so if the teacher's ability is not nurtured, then how they will be able to conduct

online classes. It is vital to know the teacher's practices and knowledge as they are the one who is handling the most delicate age group of society. And as there is a lack of teachers' skills and lack of resources in rural and urban areas, then how the education system will go on during the COVID situation. And if the education stops, the impact will be more significant on children mentally and wellbeing (UN, 2020, p. 3). Guidelines are provided to both parents and teachers to accommodate the new education method of online Learning to minimize the harmful impact on children (UNICEF, 2020).

English Medium schools in Dhaka are taking online classes, therefore knowing teachers' perceptions regarding online courses can give a detailed study of how they are doing it. Teachers have a significant impact on children from the early years, and it is essential to know their perceptions regarding the online classes in this pandemic situation to nurture children's learning and wellbeing as well as shaping the next generation of society.

Operational Definition

Perception: Perception refers to how people understand and interpret the information in a human's life. Views or opinions expressed by a person based on personal experience and external influences affect that person (Susuwele-Banda, 2005). According to a theorist, perception is constructive, mainly focusing on a top-down approach from sensory data to the knowledge store and the interpretation of what is going (Mcleod, 2018). Each human has a perception regarding everything in their life. From perception, people try to understand their experience and way of enacting actions into their life. Teachers are of no exceptions. In the study, the researchers will try to look for the preschool teacher's perception regarding online classes. The teacher's knowledge, practices, unconscious mind, and expectations can influence their perceptions, and they can act according to it (Susuwele-Banda, 2005).

English Medium: English Medium education system is where the schools use English as the primary medium for instruction. Private English-medium schools are exceptions to medium Bengali and madrasas schools established in 1971 after the Liberation War. Self-owned English Medium schools developed rapidly in the 1980s with the Government of Bangladesh (Shamsi, 2020). There are lots of English medium schools present following British and American Curriculum. They are a bit expensive. As Banu and Sussex (2001) asserts, "English medium education is very costly, mainly the upper class of society can afford such education and parents are very keen to provide such training to their children as it opens up opportunities of the world" (as cited in Haque & Akter, 2013, p. 99). The context of the students, their culture and career preparation, education, quality of teachers, the method of analysis, etc., varies from one medium to another medium, and English medium is in a better position compared to another medium (Kader & Salam, 2018, p. 20852). For the research purpose, mainly English medium has given preference as they are taking online classes for the preschooler in urban areas of Dhaka city.

Teachers: Teachers are the one who specializes in guiding children in their learning activities. Teachers are the ones who teach children in school settings. Preschool Teachers are individuals who are responsible for taking care of and nurturing the children's Learning for their whole life. They are the ones who create the base of every child. Preschool Teachers are responsible for creating an environment and opportunities to expose them to different cultures (ELDS Pakistan, 2010). In the Early Learning Development Standards of Pakistan (2010), teachers were given a significant role in enhancing children's skills, nature, character, and learning. As Feinberg, et al., (1999) asserts, "Children who have close connections with their preschool teachers have displayed more excellent academic abilities in language and mathematics from preschool to primary school grades (as cited in Choi & Dobbs-Oates, 2015, p. 16). Mostly it can be seen that most preschool

teachers are female. For this research, only the preschool teacher will be considered as a teacher who teaches 3 to 6 years old children.

Preschoolers: Preschoolers are children between 3 to 5 years old (CDC, 2020). According to Piaget's theory, 2 to 7 years old is in the preoccupation stage that is developmental of language, memory, and imagination happen most here. The Rauche Foundation asserts, "85% of the brain developed of a person by the age of 5" (as cited in Higham, 2013). For this reason, it's essential to nurture the early years. Children's nutrition helps protect children's brains from stress by knowing their needs and responding sensitively. Talking to children and introducing them to books, stories, and songs help to improve the language and communication of the child, leading them to the success of schools and learning (Children's Bureau, 2018). As a result, this age group is very much essential to get adequate stimulation. Most of the countries follow this age cohort for preschool.

Moreover, in Bangladesh, the age cohort is considered 3-<6 years old for the pre-primary group. But due to fewer resources and to implement the program effectively, the expertise has fixed the age cohort for pre-primary 5- 6. Still, the experts, Bangladesh ECD networks are working hard to develop the plan (Banglapedia, 2015). This is mainly for mainstream children. In Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, the English medium preschools are emerging at a higher rate. People are now thinking more about investing in the early years of their children to nurture their development. For this study, the preschooler age is 3 to 6 years of children in Dhaka city.

COVID -19: The COVID -19 pandemic is also called the coronavirus pandemic. This is a transmitted disease that attacks the body's respiratory function and can be spread from one person to another person (CDC, 2020). COVID-19 is declared as a pandemic disease in March, 2020 (WHO, 2020). Though its first cases were reported in Wuhan, China, in December 2019

gradually, the whole world got attacked. The main symptoms are chilled fever, coughing, shortness of breath, and muscle pain (Nazario, 2020). The deaths are happening more in the above 60 age groups (The Guardian, 2020). For this pandemic, diseases all over the world were in lockdown. Lockdown is a situation where everything was closed, people were not allowed to come out of the houses for any purpose, and the problem is devastating. Due to this COVID-19, there has been a significant impact on social interaction and the economy to reduce the transmission of the virus (Darmody, et al., 2020). Still, the vaccine has yet to come. Dhaka has reported its first case on 8th March 2020 (Hasan & Shaon, 2020). Till now, Dhaka has COVID cases of nearly 5 lacs till November, 2020 (Worldometer, 2020).

Online–Learning: Through virtual media, people are learning things as E-Learning is referred to as acquiring knowledge through electronic technologies and media (Tamm, 2020). Online Learning is a new way of teaching. According to the World Economic Forum (2020), "The COVID-19 pandemic has changed education forever" (Li & Lalani, 2020). People use different kinds of gadgets to adapt to the online learning method. As Fessakis, et al., (2013) asserts, "Introduction of technology in early years will lead to having positive results in learning variety of subjects" (as cited in Fotii, 2020, p. 22). Due to COVID-19, online learning is adapted globally (UN, 2020). This sudden introduction of online classes has been equally difficult for students and teachers, who are still struggling to learn this new way (Nambiar, 2020). During this COVID-19 online learning is the only way to mitigate some impacts of learning in children due to school closures (Li & Lalani, 2020). Children adapt to the new normal situation and switch to online learning (UNICEF, 2020).

Purpose of the study

The broader purpose of the study is to explore the perceptions of preschool teachers regarding online learning during COVID-19.

English medium is taken specifically for this study as in mainstream still, the availability of online learning is limited. Simultaneously, most of the English medium schools in Dhaka city have started their operations at their best. This study intends to explore regarding English medium preschool teachers' perception (knowledge and practice) on online learning and how they are accommodating (challenges and support) themselves into it.

Significance of the study

This research is a new ongoing topic happening all over the world. As online learning is a new situation for Bangladesh, with the glimpse of the study the Ministry of Education in Bangladesh, Government Schools, Private schools, English medium schools, and the policymakers can bring changes to run the online classes effectively during the pandemic situation. As well as collaborating work can help to sustain the new mode of teaching.

Moreover, according to Bronfenbrenner Ecological theory, schools are at the microsystem, which means teachers play a vital role in every child's learning and wellbeing. Preschoolers are between aged 3-5 years after parents; they are highly dependable on teachers. And WHO (2020) stated that "Due to school closures, children may no longer have that sense of structure and stimulation that is provided by the environment"(as cited in Chandna, 2020). However, they are not the biggest victims of the pandemic directly; they are getting victimized by staying home for so long. Also, it has a significant influence on Early Childhood Development as they are physically inactive, there

is the possibility of an emotional explosion, and cognitive stimulation can again be interrupted (Chandna, 2020).

BBC (2020) stated, "Children can transmit the virus at the highest rate". Henceforth, opening up preschools and schools is not an option. Consequently, online learning is the only option that can at least help children to nurture their learnings, wellbeing, and develop appropriately. Where teachers are the primary stakeholders who are responsible for bringing the change into the children. Online learning can reduce the retention rates of children by between 25% and 60 % (Li & Lalani, 2020).

"Every Dollar invested in increasing enrollment in pre-primary education returns $9 in benefits to society into form of reduced repetition and dropouts in primary & secondary level as well as it increases lifetime earnings of an individual" (UNICEF, 2020, p. 3). For this reason, investing in early years have a more significant impact on the whole life of a child. In Bangladesh, the early childhood age cohort is conception to 8 years old, and the preschoolers' age is 3 to 5 years old. For every child, the critical time frame in conception to 8 years of age (MOWCA, 2013). Bangladesh is in progress to attain SDG as recently Bangladesh SDG 2 to end hunger is achieved. As well Bangladesh has reduced the percentage of stunted children under five years by almost half from 60 per cent in 1996-1997 to 29 per cent (Dhaka Tribune, 2020). Bangladesh needs to work for pre-primary as SDG 4.2 is considering the access of pre-primary educations to every boy and girl (GED, 2018). Therefore, it is essential to know how their schools and teachers are nurturing this age group for learning and wellbeing in this pandemic situation. And to achieve SDGs, the children learning should be continued, but due to the lockdown in COVID situations, the school are closed, and children cannot go to schools. This means that, to continue the learning in this pandemic online learning should be enhanced.

Besides, the Minister of Education in Bangladesh started to give more emphasis on online learning and to have more research on this (The Business Standard, 2020). Though there was some report found mainly on primary school and universities but not in Bangladesh context. Henceforth, it is crucial to explore the perceptions of preschool teachers regarding Online learning during Covid-19 situation. By exploring the perceptions of the teachers, it could say how they are doing it and where the alteration is needed to make the online learning more effective. The study can help both the mainstream and English medium school to design the program more effectively at least for the preschoolers. As the Ministry of Education is trying so many options to provide the learning through TV broadcast, live broadcast, etc. but online sessions have not yet started at a larger scale.

Moreover, most of the preschools and English medium schools in Dhaka city has started taking classes online. In Comprehensive ECCD Policy, it mentioned to improve the quality of pre-primary school and to regulate technology to collaborate with the process during any disaster; as it is an emergency to take care of the children (MOWCA, 2013).

As now a pandemic situation is going on, consequently it's an arising topic, and few studies were found relevant to the topic. But in the Bangladesh context, there were still no studies on the perception of preschool teachers regarding the online class.

It's better, therefore investing in the early years. "Early investment produces the greatest return in human capital" (Heckman, 2019). Due to this fact investing in the early years will help the nation to get a better generation. The importance of learning in the early years is associated with lowering the repetition rates and having a better future in later life (MOWCA, 2013).

Online learning is the easiest way to continue the learning process in this pandemic situation (Allo, 2020). Though in Bangladesh, online teaching has been started from July session in English medium school but at the mainstream school reaching such a vast no. of students is becoming difficult. In Bangladesh, it is hard to undertake live online classes because teachers or students are not adapted to it (Adil, 2020). As a matter of fact, this can become an issue of how and what preschool teachers are exploring regarding online classes during this pandemic situation. Thus, this study is designed to gain an In-depth understanding of the perceptions of preschool teachers regarding online learning during Covid-19 crisis. The findings of the study will give the relevant stakeholder the idea of teachers' perceptions, how the teachers are conducting online classes and where the changes are needed in the procedure to improve early childhood development.

Research Topic & Research Questions

Research Topic: Preschool Teachers' Perception regarding Online Learning during Covid-19 situation.

This study aims to obtain answers to the following questions:

- How do preschool teachers perceive (knowledge) online learning in COVID -19 situation?
- What are the practices being provided by preschool teachers in online classes?
- How preschool teachers are taking preparations (training) to accommodate an online learning system?
- What are the challenges being faced by preschool teachers in online classes?

Chapter II

Literature Review

To understand the importance of exploring Preschool teachers' perceptions regarding online classes during Covid-19 systematized literature have been reviewed by following the key terms: perception, teachers, English medium, preschoolers, online learning, and COVID-19. This section mainly focuses on different perspectives that have been encountered by teachers for the new online learning method. Though there are different types of researches found on teacher's perceptions regarding children's social, learning activities but very few were found globally regarding the online classes of preschoolers. After reviewing the literature, it has been categorized into different themes which are listed below:

Perception of Teachers regarding Online Learning during COVID-19

Teachers' perceptions significantly impact their activities towards the children (Pajares, 1992). The interactions with significant adults (e.g., parents, teachers) are young children's main source for their development (Smith, 2006). It signifies the importance of the teacher in a child's life. It was revealed that where teacher-child closeness was strong in classrooms that attain children to achieve higher math skills at the beginning of the school year (Choi & Oates, 2014). Teachers are the most important person, not only to attain educational grades but also to become a better person in life. Teachers' play a significant role in the community, offering encouragement, academic strength, commitment and serving as a role model for children (Henry, 2019). As Drenoyianni & Selwood (1998) asserts "most of the teachers in a study, had positive views regarding online learning though it doesn't change their teaching strategy but online classes can enhance children learning" (as cited in Onuoha, et al., 2015, p. 007).

Moreover, online learning is learning performed on the internet by whatever means that the gadget can be TV, phone, device, etc. As now during COVID situation, online learning is happening, two ways were defined by teachers in literature. There are two methods of online learning, one is synchronous learning which means direct interactions between student and teachers' concurrently using online forms, and another one is asynchronous learning which is learning indirectly using an independent learning approach like LMS on Moodle, email systems, Wikipedia, videos, and other platforms (as cited in Rasmitadila, et al., 2020, p. 91). So, both ways can be used by the students depending on their level. As preschool children are within the age of 3-5 years, so depending on their age method can be chosen to make the learning most interactive one for them. As managing children of ages 4-6 years old is even more difficult and challenging for the teachers (Fotii, 2020).

Apart from that, recent studies are concentrating on the perceptions of parents, teachers, and students regarding the e-learning system during COVID -19. Online Learning was introduced way before, especially for adult learners, but now it is adapted by everyone, including children. A case study was done in Indonesia to know the perceptions of Primary School teachers regarding online learning. The research was a qualitative one. The researchers of the study categorized into themes like instructional strategy challenge to online teaching, support, and teacher motivation (Rasmitadila, et al., 2020).

Another Quantitative survey research was done in China to explore the teachers' perceptions regarding online classes. In the report, it showed 52.12 % of teachers supported the e-learning system, 55.31% of teachers received training by different methods like TV videos, live videos, online tutorials, and relevant courses as well. The study revealed teachers received training did better. But 41.26% of the teachers of the study find online teaching somewhat difficult (Yang, 2020).

Whereas, another report on preparation for distance education found 90 per cent of preschool and special education teachers surveyed were inspired to implement distance learning regardless of the shortage of experts, diverse students, medical assistance (Fedina, et al., 2017).

Teachers Preparation for Online Learning during COVID-19

In a study, in USA Martin, Budhrani and Wang (2019) asserts "The readiness, attitude, and ability to teach online like how to create the content, how to manage the time, and technical issues are rated high" (as cited in Lapada, et al., 2020, p. 129). Teachers had to look at different approaches to choose their delivery platforms like zoom meeting, Google classroom, YouTube videos. Some chose both the synchronous and asynchronous way. Phan & Dang (2017) asserts, "During COVID-19 factors like time management, technical competencies, methods, training, skills, and pedagogy are the basic elements for online learning" (as cited in Lapada, et al., 2020, p. 129). Like one music teacher in the USA uses asynchronous classes for discussions and synchronous classes for scheduled classes, as well as providing tutorials about online classes to parents and asking students to evaluate their performances in online classes (Kim, 2020). This means that, the teachers are working hard enough to settle down in this new normal situation.

Teachers training programs that develop their ICT skills and simultaneously strengthen their ICT related attitudes by sharing acceptable practices and positive experiences with online education in their work environment may be an effective way to prepare teachers for online education in a way that reduces their work-related stress and increases the sense of organizational support (Alemu, 2015). Whereas, in another report teachers and school advisers mentioned having preschool or younger children at home showed more tension related to their online teaching (Kosir, et al., 2020).

Importance of Online Learning for preschoolers during COVID-19

Sudden school closures due to COVID-19 has affected around 1.6 billion children all over the world (UNICEF, 2020, p. 1). Though there was an online learning platform, 40% of the pre-primary aged children cannot get access to online learning due to resources, challenges, and limitations of young children as well (UNICEF, 2020, p. 1). Moreover, Global entities like UNICEF, World Bank, and Global citizen urges all the countries to invest in early years to achieve SDG 4.2 and CESA commitments to early childhood education (Lucas, 2020). Sustainable developmental goal (SDG) 4.2 stated: "Around 2030, each of the girls and boys should be assured to get access to early childhood development (pre-primary education) to ready them for primary education" (UN, 2020). As preschoolers are at the age between 3 to 6 years old, and if these children are staying out for a school for a long time can affect mental health (Fore & Hijazi, 2020). So, for this most of the global entities are working together and emphasizing online learning so that children are not hampered in any way (Lucas, 2020). As staying home for so long may develop some social developmental issues, some are becoming shy due to isolation henceforth, children need to be online to interact (UNICEF, 2020). Due to COVID-19, there is no other option other than online learning, so this multimodal approach can only be successful with the parent's and teacher's support for the children (Dong, et al., 2020).

Children's Engagement in Online Learning during COVID-19

Children need to engage themselves in online learning as it has been seeing that due to school closures the children are not connected to education; as a result, it is worsening their performance (Garcia & Weiss, 2020). During this COVID situation, as most of the countries switched to online Learning. Under these circumstances, children are automatically adapting this strategy. Earlier there has been a concern as Nardo (2008) asserts "children can learn from computer as long they

can connect online experience to the real world" (as cited in Panagiotakou & Pange, 2010, p. 3056). Online learning is all about visualizing things as preschoolers love to learn through the visual, something like animated videos, pictures, music etc. (Roskos, et al., 2012).

Whereas, In Greece as Ministry of Foreign Affairs (2011) asserts "children use internet software and services, organically integrating ICT into the daily activities of kindergarten as supervisory means of teaching, as tools for exploring, experimenting and problem solving and as tools for information management, digital literacy and expression in multiple ways, creation, communication and cooperation" (as cited in Fotii, 2020, p. 21).

Impact of Screen time on Preschoolers

Online learning is now enhancing screen time for all ages (Barton, 2020). There is a standard requirement set by American Academy of Pediatrics for 2-5 years old children that they should not see the screen for more than one hour a day and the content has to be of very high quality and educational (Ryan, 2019). In a study, it was revealed that children of 3-5 years were facing cognitive and language developmental delays due to screen time as it changes the brain region (Hutton, et al., 2019). In addition, screen time can also cause obesity, attention problems, sleep problems, behavioral problems and lower school achievement (Mason, 2016).

Whereas, on the other hand in a study it was seen that if the children are supervised by adult during their screen time can enhance their learning, cognitive skills and behavioral skills (Hinkley & McCann, 2018).

The Global Context in Online Learning

One hundred eighty-eight countries have imposed school closures world widely (UN, 2020). More than two- thirds of the countries switch to online distance learning, but only 30 % of the low-

income countries were able to do so (UN, 2020). More than 90% of Ministries of education have come up with policies to provide digital and broadcast remote Learning (UNICEF, 2020). Online learning was adopted in some countries like USA, Australia, and Canada but for children, it is a new concept as the screening time is considered a barrier for their development (physical, cognitive, social and emotional, language). Online Learning can open up the children's mind to think analytically, and can do more problem solving, reasoning, logical activities (Clements & Sarama, 2003). Recently as globally, 1.6 billion children are impacted by the sudden closures of school for COVID -19. Never in this era were these number of children out of school for so long (UNICEF, 2020). Different countries have taken different approaches to continuing the learning of children. UNICEF is working closely with states to ensure the learning facilities of the children. In UKRAINE, UNICEF and Microsoft have launched an online curriculum through learning passports to help children to continue their learning at home (UNICEF, 2020). In China, after the outbreak of COVID-19, everything was closed including schools, but they continue the school online by early February 2020 (Rasmitadila, et al., 2020). Whereas, in North Macedonia UNICEF and its government came up with a TV classroom and classes are taken by voluntary teachers (UNICEF, 2020). UK government is giving funds to North Macedonia to develop a social program for preschoolers during this COVID-19 (World Bank, 2020).

On the other hand, different other forms of online learning for hard of hearing children like in Vietnam as there are children of hearing impaired, as UNICEF and Vietnam's Ministry of Education worked together to prepare sign language lessons, and developed online and offline learning including physical exercises to nurture their physical and mental health during school closures (UNICEF, 2020).

According to the World Bank (2020), many countries in the world have implemented online learning as the primary method to continue the learning. Bulgaria's Ministry of Education and science has launched the e-learning education system in the early APRIL, 2020 (Rasmitadila, et al., 2020). In Indonesia, UNICEF is collaborating with the government providing distance learning guidelines as well as broadcasting in TV program to reach those children with limited access (UNICEF, 2020). In Bhutan students from PreK-12 are getting lesson through educational television and YouTube (World Bank, 2020).

This means that, globally every country is trying hard to emphasize online Learning to reduce the harmful impact of this sudden school closure of the preschoolers. But overall compared to other levels, pre-primary got less attention as 40 million children are deprived of early learning and stimulation this year (UNICEF, 2020).

Bangladesh context in online Learning during COVID-19

In Bangladesh, the lockdown started from 18 March 2020 (UNICEF, 2020). School closure has been extended till 3rd October by the Ministry of Education (The Daily Star, 2020). UNICEF is collaborating with the government to execute online Learning effectively for underprivileged children as well through TV, phones, and radio. But from March, Bangladesh government has launched pre-recorded lessons for primary and secondary classes on SHANGSHAD TV (Islam, 2020). The Government launched a program named as "My school at home" for 6 to 10 grades, and the lesson is also uploaded at Bangladesh YouTube Channel (World Bank, 2020). In Bangladesh, there are many education systems, but the most demanded are government schools, private schools, and English medium schools. Government schools and private schools mainly follow the National Curriculum and Text Board. Whereas, English medium schools follow the British and American curriculum.

Besides that, the private schools and the English medium schools are taking classes on Google classroom, zoom meeting, and other social Media from May (Abbas, 2020). But some of the preschools or kindergartens are shut down due to the COVID-19 as the cost cannot be covered by the directors leading to shut down of those preschools. The Chairman of Bangladesh Kindergarten School stated: "Almost 100 schools have been put up for sale and they estimated the numbers to be around 60,000 kindergartens to face the same situation across Bangladesh" (Alamgir, 2020). General Secretary of Bangladesh School Medium Association stated: "Most of the English medium schools in the capital are taking online classes" (The Daily Star, 2020).

Also, another concern is coming; there is a lack of skilled teachers to start online classes, and the student has problems with electricity, internet, and devices and children are also losing interests from education staying at home (BRAC, 2020). Though, these are the main concerns, but as the English medium schools are taking online classes, it is important to see how the preschool teachers are perceiving in Bangladesh is a new area to explore.

English Medium Schools Situation in Bangladesh during Covid-19

English Medium education system is where the schools use English as the primary medium for instruction (Kader & Salam, 2018). In Dhaka, there are lots of English Medium School where the children are enrolled from playgroup to A level. But as in Bangladesh, the lockdown leads to school closures most of the English Medium Schools in Dhaka has switched to online courses after the lockdown (The Daily Star, 2020). Teachers of English Medium School tried to give supports to students just after the lockdown due to COVID-19 by giving homework through social media (Shamsi, 2020). Though there were no formal online classes from June session most of the English medium school launched online class over different online mode. The teachers are the vital person to continue the process, but regular classes impair the emotional wellbeing of the female teachers

with no fixed routine (Shamsi, 2020). As well as there has been a problem occurring between school authority and parents regarding the tuition fees of the children. Parents are asking to waive 50% of the tuition fees from English Medium Schools due to COVID situation (Alamgir, 2020). In addition, parents of English medium schools are also demanding not to increase the tuition fees for the upcoming three years (The Daily Star, 2020).

Chapter III

Methodology

This chapter discusses the research methodology used in this study. Research methodology shows the direction along which these researchers systemize their problem and objective and present their findings from the data accumulated during the period studied (Sileyew, 2019). The multi-stage research methodology approach starts with the design and method of the study, the research site, the research sample, the sample characteristics, the instruments used, consists of a brief discussion of data collection, the process of data analysis and ethical issues.

Research Participants

For the study, the population was the teachers from preschools of English medium in Dhaka city. The English medium was chosen as they were providing online classes to preschoolers at Dhaka city. So, the population was only the teachers of the English medium school in Dhaka city.

Research Site

Six English medium schools where at least 3-6 years aged children studied at Bashundhara, Gulshan, Uttara, Banasree, and Dhanmondi, were in urban areas of Dhaka city. Data were collected from the urban Dhaka area that represented the urban area of Bangladesh in this study.

Research Approach

This study approached qualitative method. Qualitative analysis is the best way to collect social responses to the pandemic (Teti, et al., 2020). It is recommended that leading global health organizations such as the World Health Organization and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention use qualitative methods in epidemiologic research (Wolff, et al., 2018). As a result, a

qualitative approach was the best one, as the researchers' objective was to explore the perceptions of teachers regarding online classes during the Covid-19 situation so knowing their experiences in- depth is only possible in qualitative research. Qualitative research is the descriptive study, and this exploration of the knowledge and practice study is a descriptive one.

Data Collection Methods

Two different data collection instruments were used to conduct the study:

- Thematic In-depth Interview (IDI) Questionnaire
- Group Discussion Guideline

The approaches of two different types of instruments enhanced the process of data triangulation and enabled the researcher to accumulate the information into a reflective, explanatory, and constructive understanding. In-depth Interview questions revealed the demographic information of the preschool teachers.

To conduct the study, primary data have been collected through Group Discussion and In-depth interview. Two Group discussion have been conducted, with teachers of English medium preschools. In each Group Discussion, the number of participants was three teachers, where a Group discussion guideline prepared by the researcher have been used. Another instrument that has been used in this study is an In-depth interview. In total, four teachers from Group Discussions have been interviewed In-depth. All six teachers were selected from English medium preschool level. The In-depth interview questionnaire has been developed by the researcher and used in urban settings over the phone and virtual meetings like zoom and Google meet. Participants have been contacted before the interview to seek their consent. Each session for In-depth interviews lasted about 30 minutes to 1 hour. Whereas, for Group discussion, it lasted for around 90 minutes. In administering the interview session, each question of the questionnaire was

explained in the local language or the language suitable for the participants wherever necessary for their better understanding. The interview was recorded in the cellphone with the consent of participants.

Sampling Procedure

In this case, the study population comprises of all preschool teachers of English Medium schools of Bangladesh in urban areas of Dhaka city. Purposive sampling, also known as judgment sampling, depending on the experiences and the knowledge of the researcher selects the participants who can provide the information (Etikan, et al., 2016). Since the context, in this case, is somewhat similar, through purposive sampling 6 preschool teachers of English Medium schools have been selected for collecting the necessary data for the research. Everyone participated voluntarily in the study. No Government Bangla medium or private Bangla medium preschool teacher was chosen for this study. 6 English Medium preschool teachers were selected for Group discussion and IDI.

Sample Size

The total sample size was six teachers from 6 English medium preschools of a homogeneous group. For the data collection methods sample were selected by a non- random purposive sampling technique.

Sample Characteristics:

Inclusion Criteria:

- Teachers of children aged between 3 and 6 years from English Medium School.
- Teachers from urban areas.

- Teachers were selected as per their voluntary participatory role.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Teachers from rural areas.

- Teachers were excluded from another medium of schools.

- Teachers who were not willing to participate or discontinue at any point in time.

Data Management Analysis

As now the whole world is facing a pandemic situation, so In-depth interviews (IDI) was taken over the phone with the teachers and Group discussion was done virtually over Zoom or Goggle meeting. But for that, teachers were communicated personally and purposively for the interviews to give their convenient time to contact for data collection and asked to provide written consent through email. The samples were selected by the researcher purposely. Interviews were semi-structural/ informal and In-depth. And using the IDI guideline and Group discussion guideline the interviews were taken.

For Group discussion**,** the researcher developed Group Discussion guideline for the teachers of children aged 3 to 6 years in English Medium schools. The researcher did two Group Discussion for the teachers of children aged 3 to 6 years in English Medium schools. There were two separate groups; each one consisted of a set of 3 to 4 teachers of 3-6 year-old children from different English medium schools. Due to the COVID-19 situation, the Group discussion was done virtually over Zoom and Google meet. And the number of participants was three as conducting Group discussions with a large no. of participants could create a lot of hassle and could misinterpret the information.

Whereas, for Thematic In-depth Interview (IDI), four teachers of 3-6-year-old children were taken from the same participants of Group discussion paired with a set of a semi-structured questionnaire. The interviews were conducted over the phone, and Google meet depending on the participant's convenience.

Data collection was done following In-depth thematic semi-structured interviews and Group discussions. The researcher developed an Interview questionnaire and Group discussion guideline for convenience. Preschool teacher's perception regarding online class during Covid-19, the knowledge they have, the practices they are doing, the challenges they are facing, their supports that they are getting. They need to continue this online Learning to cope up with this COVID situation; all were sequentially covered in the interview questionnaire. The researcher did the rapport building with the participants to make them comfortable for the interview and Group discussion session. Then participants were asked to give oral consent and let them know the purpose of the research and interviewed one by one to their convenient time. In the In-depth interview method and Group discussion, the primary goal was to explore the perceptions, so descriptive data was required for which phone recorder and zoom recorder were used to record data. But for that, the participant's consent was also taken orally to record the whole conversation.

Also, pilot interviews of teachers were done to check out the validity and identify any gaps in the process. Pinpoints (important and interesting) was written during the interview and Group discussion for the documentation of data. Documentation of the information of these two procedures was stored digitally using separate identification numbers even there were separate files for two Group discussions to manage the data sequentially. Verbatim transcription of interviews & Group Discussions was done with the help of the trained researcher, and for Group discussion, there was one note-taker as well.

Data analysis has multi-stages which generates simultaneously with data collection. The qualitative study refers to descriptive data collection, so data are collected in an unorganized manner. But when the interaction starts between the participant and the interviewer, data analysis begins from that point. A systematic formal procedure was followed. The first step was debriefing and transcription, reading and memoing, and describing, followed by categorization and lastly coding theme and interpretation. The data analysis plan was followed in both In-depth interview and for Group discussion as well. The steps are described below:

Debriefing and Transcription: The data analysis plan started after collecting data from the participants from the recorded data that was transcribed by the researcher (reading and memoing) from every participant of the interview and Group discussion. After the transcription, the files were given identification numbers for the respected file for later convenience. The researchers for later use also organized the field notes but in separate files. Back up of files were kept in Google Drives and pen drive to prevent the risk of losing data at any point in time.

Reading, Memoing, and Describing: Then, the researcher read rigorously and memo the field notes and transcripts various times.

Categorization: Data were organized and categorized relevant to the research question multiple times for proper reflection. And depending on the categories, each participant's answers were saved into separate category files.

Coding theme and Interpretation: Then Data from the In-depth interview of each participant and Group discussion was categorized separately into themes and sub-themes, which is the content analysis. Under the article of researchers' findings, insights and interpretations were written. The patterns of knowledge of teachers, practices by teachers, the support given to

teachers, and challenges faced by teachers were analyzed as a theme. The themes were restructured and compiled analytically following the steps that were mentioned for data analysis. The researcher then interpreted the findings of both measures.

Ethical Issues

To conduct the research ethical approval was obtained from Brac Institute of Educational Development, Brac University. Written consent from the participants were obtained through email to conduct for both In-depth interviews and Group discussions as well. Voluntary participation was required, and the participants had the right to withdraw at any time. The researcher maintained the confidentiality protocol of the participants. The report should be free from researcher biases, and the data had to be gathered and transcribed accurately. The research report should be free from plagiarism and had to give references for the taken information.

Validity & Reliability

In-depth Interview questionnaire and Group discussion guideline were prepared related to the research questions and reviewing different kinds of literature. The face validity of the tools was examined with the expert feedback from Brac Institute of Educational Development, Brac University and suitability of the questions were obtained by piloting the questions for the In-depth interview. The In-depth interview questionnaire was piloted with preschool teachers. After reviewing and piloting the tools, it was altered and then was finalized for collecting data.

Limitations of the Study

This study might have some limitations. As, this research was a small representation of preschool teachers so couldn't be generalized. To conduct the research only English Medium schools were chosen as they are the one providing online classes in. Data were collected only from the urban area.

Chapter IV

Findings & Discussion

This chapter consists of two sections where the first section shades light on the findings followed by the analysis of the data collected from this research in the second section. Two instruments have been used to conduct the research where Group discussion and In-depth interviews were taken, which generated all the depth information on Preschool teachers' perception of English medium school regarding online learning during COVID-19.

Findings

This chapter reflects the findings that have been collected from the primary data. Two instruments have been used to conduct the research where Group discussion and In-depth interviews were used. Following content analysis, themes and sub-themes were first identified and analyzed. The themes were accumulated through the categorization & coding process following the research questions Depending on that information, findings were organized. So, this chapter comprises of two sections where the first one contains the participants demographic details, and the other one presents all the results based on knowledge, practices, challenges and support. Hence, findings derived from the data collection tools enhanced the researcher to answer the research questions.

Demographic Information

A total of 6 teachers were interviewed, where all of the participants were from English medium preschool's level. All the participants were female. The participant's age ranges from 21 to 33 years. All of the teachers were selected from English Medium Schools of the urban areas of Dhaka city. Three participants had the educational background of Post Graduate, two of the participants were Graduate, and only one of the participants is continuing ACCA degree. Most

participants came from different academic backgrounds; only one participant had a post-graduate diploma in Early Childhood Development. All of the teachers of English Medium have received some short training/courses for the early years. None of them mentioned anything about other training. Among the six teachers, their experience level varies from 1 year to 8 years. 4 participants had more than two years of experience, only two of them had one year of experience.

Theme 1: Knowledge of Preschool Teachers on Online Learning in COVID -19

Preschool teachers have exhibited different views regarding online learning, its importance for preschoolers, effectiveness of online learning, technology, involvement of preschoolers, environmental support, and impacts of screen time. These concepts influence their online teaching for the preschoolers.

Understanding online learning concept

Most participants viewed online classes as technology-based learning, distance learning, and limited access, using multiple approaches like Google slides, PowerPoint, Excel, and jam board. One of the participants mentioned, *"Online classes are mainly taking classes through devices using internet. Mainly, giving lectures to children through internet and device."* (Personal communication: Interview# 3, 12-10-20)

Another participant mentioned, *"Online learning is using technology we are trying to provide education to children from distance or trying to present lesson to children through online platform."* (Personal communication: Interview# 4, 16-10-20)

Therefore, it can be sum up from the above findings is that most of the participants referred online learning as using technology, devices providing classes to children where there is no physical

touch like earlier in physical classes. This finding also concludes that only one participant lack this understanding of online learning; she could not answer it.

Importance of online learning for preschoolers during COVID-19

All participants in In-depth interviews and Group discussions have concluded that it is the only option to continue learning for preschoolers in this situation. Otherwise, most of the participants said the children would be deprived of basic knowledge.

One of the participants mentioned, *"As the children are not able to go outside the home like going to park but through this online learning at least they are somewhat connected to teachers and learning otherwise they were like disconnected to learning as well."* (Group Discussion # 1, 09-10-20)

Most of the participants mentioned that engagement and interaction to learning are only possible through the online class. A few participants said children are becoming shy as they are not going out or meeting any relative, so interaction is needed. According to them, that is only possible through online learning.

Whereas, on the other hand, one of the participants stated, *"This is now fine for this situation but, for long time it can be a problem for children's learning and development."* (Personal communication: Interview# 2, 11-10-20)

From the findings, it can be said that all of the participants agreed to the matter of importance in online learning for preschoolers ignoring the drawbacks. But most of the participants said in this situation this is the best option to build their basic etiquettes and knowledge to prepare them for the next classes.

Effectiveness of online learning

Most of the participants concluded that online learning is effective for this crisis; otherwise, it is ineffective for preschoolers. Most of the participants mentioned that the preschooler needs hands-involvement, which is only possible in physical classes. One of the participants mentioned, *"At least through these online classes children are learning something. But, if you compared it to physical classes then I will say 50 50 because physical room is 100% effective."* (Personal communication: Interview# 2, 11-10-20)

Most participants had the same feeling of having challenges, nervousness, fear, and doubt while taking online classes regardless of their technical skills.

One of the participants mentioned*, "The first feeling was like how it is even possible as in physical class we take so many ready things, but still can't deliver physically. So had the doubt whether I will be able to give my 100%. As online learning is new to everyone the fear was whether I'll be able to deliver them."* (Personal communication: Interview# 3, 12-10-20)

Whereas, all of the participants mentioned, they miss and want the physical classes again. Most of the participants also mentioned online classes; there are so many drawbacks: delivering method, no physical touch, health-related issues, social deprivation, etc.

One of the participants revealed, *"Obviously I miss taking physical classes. Though I am taking classes from home sitting down at chair and table but still teachers are known as children's second parents. I miss feeling, hugging, dancing, singing with them."* (Group Discussion # 2, 10-10-20)

The above findings showed all the participants had the same view that online learning is effective in this pandemic situation but less compared to physical classes. All the participants demonstrated physical classroom as their priority and most enjoyed rather than online classes.

Technology

All of the participants mentioned basic things are needed in terms of technology: high-speed internet, suitable devices, specifically laptop or desktop, the guideline to operate the systems. Few of the participants mentioned it is necessary to keep an extra mobile data connection to prevent class disruption. Few Participants also said the phone couldn't be an option to take the classes as so many options can't be enabled in virtual classes.

One of the participants mentioned *,"Obviously in order to take online classes, one need a good internet connection, good internet device as if the internet connection is not good then the classes will be disrupted as well as good device is needed to share the screen, videos, slides in order to present in front of the children."* (Personal communication: Interview# 3, 12-10-20)

Few of the participants mentioned about the technology-friendly thing that *"It is seen, aged teachers are facing problem as they are not technologically friendly, so it is a necessity to be technology friendly in order to continue this online classes."* (Group Discussion # 2, 10-10-20)

All participants also mentioned that they prefer two-way connection approaches. The preschoolers are very little, so they need to interact a lot, so all the participants prefer two-way communication. One of the participants mentioned, *"As they are very little only after providing videos, is not enough we need to talk a lot with them, we need to interact with them a lot so for me two-way interaction is the best."* (Personal communication: Interview# 2, 11-10-20)

From the above findings, it can be seen that teachers mostly mentioned two-way communication, high-speed internet connection, good device, guidelines to run these virtual systems, and an extra internet connection for both teachers and parents.

Involvement of preschoolers in online classes

All of the participants viewed involvement of preschoolers is important for the successful implementation of the online classes. One of the participants mentioned, *"Obviously children's involvement is important but not in terms of study rather the importance should be given on their involvement and they are also engaging in to the activities."* (Personal communication: Interview# 1, 09-10-20)

All the participants informed that these classes were taken for the children's betterment, so for what they would take the lessons and activities if they were not involved.

One participant mentioned*, "Children's involvement is obviously necessary as we are trying so hard to take these classes, so if their involvement is not there then taking these classes won't be possible. But what we observed if the duration is long then they may get distracted."* (Personal communication: Interview# 3, 12-10-20)

The above findings showed all the participants showed the importance to involve preschoolers in online classes and then also mentioned they have to come up with different activities and videos to get the preschoolers' attention and involvement.

Home environment during online classes

Almost all of the participants came up with different supports like parent's support, quiet place, and class's background. Most of the participants mentioned, there has to be a connection between

parents and teachers to implement the classes successfully as the children are very little. They termed the connection as 50 50 contribution of teacher and parents.

One of the participants expressed, *"The most important thing is a noise free place, where there will be no bed otherwise it can be seen that they are lying in the bed in between classes, coming up with dolls. So, we instructed parents to make them sit in a quiet place, where there will be only chair and table and necessary materials."* (Personal communication: Interview# 2, 11-10-20)

In contrast, few participants said that parental support is required but not during the class, but before or after the class is required.

Another participant revealed, *"As if the parents are all the time what we observed children can't give proper attention and I also feel uncomfortable rather parents can set up the environment providing necessary materials. So, I think the support is needed but before the class starts but not during the classes."* (Group Discussion # 2, 10-10-20)

The above findings reflect most of the participants' mentioned regarding essential environment were parent's support, quiet place, and relevant materials. But in case of parents support there were different views.

Impacts of COVID-19 and screen time on preschoolers

Almost all of the participants are very much concerned about these preschoolers if this situation continues. The most common answers were social deprivation, behavioral problem, physical and mental development will be hampered during COVID-19. One of the participants mentioned, *"Though they are connected to studies but they are deprived of the social skills and learning moral etiquettes also. They are learning only by words but can't connect to the experiences."* (Group Discussion # 1, 09-10-20)

One of the participants mentioned, *"One of my colleagues shared about her child as the child was not going out of the house for so long, so one day when he was on the car with his parent he was constantly murmuring that everything was moving and was shouting. This child used to mix up with everyone very easy but after the lockdown he is not even able to play with the relative's child."* (Personal communication: Interview# 2, 11-10-20)

Most of the participants mentioned regarding the device and screen time impact. Most of the participants mentioned due to prolonged screen time the children might develop eyes problems and other developmental problems. As few participants mentioned before staring the online classes the children were not allowed that much screen time on the other hand online classes are full of screen time so it may develop confusion according to them. One of the participants mentioned, *"If this thing continues like this then the children will be dependent on devices. As earlier we used to say it's a very negative thing. But as children are now in to devices so it is hampering their creativity as well as health like eyes problems are happening more."* (Personal communication: Interview# 4, 16-10-20)

The above findings are directing that most of the participants think children will lose their creativity as they will be dependent on devices a lot. Overall, almost all the participant mentioned if this situation continues like this will hamper children in many ways like mentally, physically, and socially.

Theme 2: Practices provided by Preschool Teachers in Online Classes

Participants practice several techniques and methods to address and solve challenges related to online classes. Here practices to take online classes were captured through their discussions of

what they are doing with these preschoolers in this new learning process and how they are doing it.

Teaching strategy used by teachers in online classes

Most of the participants viewed that the teaching strategy has been changed in online classes. As when there were physical classes, there was physical touch like hugging and greeting. But in online classes, these things are not possible in virtual classes, according to the participant.

One of the participants expressed, *"Though the routines are same but still there are no physical work like greeting and hugging so we are missing the emotional and physical bonding in online classes. As the classes are more technology based so in physical classes, we used to show them rhymes two days a week but now it has to be shown regularly."* (Group Discussion # 1, 09-10-20)

Most participants said they have to come with different activities every day, which they did not do in physical classes. Gathering these things and making these videos are tough.

Another participant revealed, *"In these online classes we have to come up with different activities like videos, slides, rhymes every day. A new thing is added is that we have to self-made video rewarding a specific topic and need to present it in front of the children in online classes which was difficult for me at first."* (Group Discussion # 2, 10-10-20)

Most of the participants were mentioning about reward system in online classes. Like earlier, they used to give stickers in physical classes. But now they are offering these rewards virtually. One of the participants mentioned, *"I try to make stickers and then laminate it and then show it children, they become very happy."* (Personal communication: Interview# 2, 11-10-20)

Few of the other participants also mentioned virtual reward stickers, emoji stickers, dollar pictures.

Few of the participants also mentioned the teaching strategies' changes like earlier; they used to have physical movement a lot like dancing, but these things are not possible in the online class.

One of the participants revealed, *"Like earlier we had singing, dancing, and playing movement activities but now in online classes we are just doing basic activities like moral, manners, etiquettes, sharing tiffin and hand washing and so on and everything we are doing in front of the parents."* (Personal communication: Interview# 3, 12-10-20)

The above findings show that most of the participants reflect changes in teaching strategy like in activities, in-class duration, their way of delivering, and all these things they are doing in front of the parents. According to them everything is dependent on technology, starting from lessons, attendance, and rules and regulations.

Teaching materials

Most of the participants mentioned the teaching materials are quite the same as physical classes; there is no physical contact; more varieties are added to it like videos, slides, etc. Things are going slower due to time constraints. *"There are material changes like earlier we used to do 3D paper crafting, cutting but now we are opted to slides, videos."* (Group Discussion # 2, 10-10-20)

All the participants mentioned they miss their physical writing board as now they are doing it on a virtual board like in Google jam board and Zoom whiteboard.

One of the participants mentioned, *"There are lot of changes in teaching materials like we are taking classes in small boards from our side but while sharing screen we are using zoom's white*

board where sometime if we allow then the children can write also but where as in physical

classes we were more in to colors, chart papers, scissors etc." (Personal communication:

Interview# 4, 16-10-20)

Almost all the participants mentioned that even if the teaching materials are present on both sides,

children's engagement is missing somewhere. Regarding the content, most of the participants said

that like storytelling session was like 40 minutes, but now it is reduce to around 20 minutes.

Activities for engaging children

Most of the participants mentioned that they are doing the same activities as rhymes, jokes,

crafting, and drawing, but there is no physical touch like earlier. Most of the participants

mentioned they are more focusing on play rather on learning to engage the children. Few of the

participants also said that they are having class parties, poetry competition, and art competition in

online classes to engage the children.

As one of the participants mentioned that, *"Earlier we used to do rhymes in classes and now we*

are doing but added moving hands in order to attract them. But there are drawbacks like we are

not able to help them when they are doing mistakes like in writing we earlier used to hold their

hands." (Personal communication: Interview# 1, 09-10-20)

Whereas, another participant mentioned, *"We are asking our parents to gather things earlier that*

we need in classes, like paper, color scissors. So, the children are doing like the way but not in a

perfect way, but still, they are doing. We are doing cooking in classes and physical exercises as

well." (Personal communication: Interview# 1, 09-10-20)

The above findings indicate that most of the participants are doing play-based activities in classes like they are doing rhymes, crafting, class parties, cooking classes, and competitions, etc., but there is no physical touch.

The delivery platform of teachers in online classes

All of the participants stated for the online class; the only way is two-way interactions. According to them, these children are little, so two-way interaction is the preferable one. One of the Participants mentioned, *"As the children are very little so I prefer two-way interactions and as they are children, they need lots of interaction like student-teacher, teacher- teacher interaction."* (Personal communication: Interview# 4, 16-10-20)

Most of the participants use Google classroom for homework, classwork, quizzes, and jam boards. Few of the participants mentioned they are using Zoom to take the live classes, but other materials like giving classwork, homework, videos, and links are provided through the Google classroom. And most of the participants mentioned they are using Google Meet to take the live classes.

One of the participants said, *"Earlier what we used to do we used to take classes on whiteboard on walls but now we are taking classes in Google classroom with the jam board options showing them with videos, slides. As well as we have to decorate our background like classroom with different materials like Bengali alphabets, crafted materials and with a board as well."* (Personal communication: Interview# 2, 11-10-20)

The teachers above responses indicate that they preferred two-way interactions and there has to be a learning system like they are mostly using Zoom and Google meet for live classes and for other purposes like activities, classwork, homework, jam board they are using in Google classroom.

Children's participation

Most of the participants mentioned that the children's participation couldn't be ensured 100%, but still, they are trying their best. *"Ensuring children's participation is not possible 100% but still we are trying our best."* (Group Discussion # 2, 10-10-20)

The participants demonstrated in class Children's participation in online classes. Most of the participants said they are showing the children different videos, slides, and rhymes, so the smart children are taking it quickly.

Most of the participants mentioned other approaches for weak children or who have less attention span. Most of the participants said, calling out the name again and again in classes, and few of them mentioned taking extra classes. One of the participants mentioned that, *"Now we are taking a new one extra supplementary class with only 2 students where we review the topics so there, we can see as the children no is less so they are participating more than in regular classes."* (Group Discussion # 2, 10-10-20)

Another participant revealed that*, "We take attendance and mostly we call out the names when we see they are not responding. We don't create any pressures rather we do fun activities and try to make sure that they are participating."* (Personal communication: Interview# 2, 11-10-20)

Most of the participants demonstrated that they are giving homework to involve them after schools. One of the participants mentioned, "*All children are not participating while submitting the homework, so that time their work is showing missing. So, then we knock the parents in order to remind them to submit the children's work. In this way we are ensuring the participation after class as well."* (Group Discussion # 2, 10-10-20)

Whereas, one of the participants revealed, *"Earlier we used to give homework during the weekends but now we are not giving any homework as the parents are already staying for the whole class."* (Group Discussion # 1, 09-10-20)

The above findings reflect that most of the parents had similar approaches regarding during class time they are calling out names and showing them different activities of their interest. Whereas, after school time, some of the participants are giving homework, and most of them are giving extra time to ensure children's participation.

Children's interaction in online classes

Almost all the participants viewed interaction as two sides are children-children interaction and teacher-children interaction.

Teacher-child interaction: As almost all the participants preferred two-way interaction, mostly because they have to talk to children all the time. Most of the participants mentioned children could also take teachers' instruction and bring pieces of stuff, mute audio, or unmute it.

One of the participants mentioned that, "*As our audio and video are on during the classes, when I ask them to quiet, they are silent. Self-controlling is happening there also. Whereas, if I mute them, they will not learn anything; instead, we give them the instruction to keep quiet, and they follow it.*" (Personal communication: Interview# 3, 12-10-20)

Child-child interaction: Most of the participants demonstrated they are willingly giving the option to talk in between the children in classes during tiffin time and through role play and other activities. Few of the participants also mentioned children's language development due to the constant interaction in class.

One of the participants mentioned, *"I already mentioned parents have informed us children are now talking in English at home as we have provided them the option to talk between the classes, during tiffin time."* (Group Discussion # 1, 09-10-20)

Few of the participants also mentioned due to limited time, and the children cannot interact during class time and during class time. The interaction between children can make the class a bit chaotic. One of the participants revealed, *"This is not possible during the class, we don't allow this. So rather we give them time on Thursday after school, we allow a session so that they can talk to each other."* (Personal communication: Interview# 2, 11-10-20)

The participants' response indicated that most of the participants viewed these interactions as the most important one for their language and social development during this online session. A few of them do not allow child-child interaction in between class, but they provide some other options like role play, after class sessions, etc.

Children's assessment

Most of the participants mentioned they are taking internal assessment where after a topic is over, the participants are taking an assessment in class, but the children don't know it. As well as most of the participants are giving them homework to see, they can catch the concepts. Very few of the participants are not providing homework as it may create hassle for parents. As the parents are responsible to submit the homework through pictures or other approaches.

One of the participants only mentioned that *"We are taking two monthly internal assessments in class which the children don't know and we are taking one class evaluation but give them prior notice about it."* (Personal communication: Interview# 4, 16-10-20).

One of the participants also mentioned that *"The body language of the children shows whether they are able to understand or not and our school authority have not provided any notice regarding the assessment yet but we are giving only homework to assess."* (Personal communication: Interview# 4, 16-10-20)

The above findings are showing that the participants are mostly taking the internal assessment and giving homework. Only one of the participants mentioned about class evaluation, and one of them are not taking any assessments other than homework. Another participant mentioned they are taking an internal evaluation, but no homework is given to reduce hassle for parents.

Theme 3: Challenges faced by Preschool Teachers in Online Classes

While teaching online, teachers faced challenges. The challenges are mostly related to introducing new activities to grab attention, following other issues like accessories, time management, technical skills and parental interruption.

Common challenges faced by teachers

The challenges mentioned by different participants are internet, gadget, handling parent, health issues, introducing new activities and hands-on learning activities, and environmental disturbance.

The majority of the participants mentioned the internet and gadget related issues they faced at the beginning of the online classes. One participant mentioned, *"For me the two most common problem that we are facing is internet and laptop."* (Personal communication: Interview# 2, 11-10-20)

Half of the participants mentioned the parents' handling (before, during, and after) on these online classes.

One of the participants revealed that, *"There are sometimes environmental disturbance happens, then the parents feel shy to communicate with us and then again they judge us. So, making them understand become difficult for us. 90% of the parents are supportive only 10% of parents can cause difficulties."* (Personal communication: Interview# 4, 16-10-20)

Few of the participants mentioned introducing new activities every day is a challenge and hands-on learning is difficult on videos.

Half of the participants mentioned about health-related issues as one of the participants said that *"I am facing migraines problem, dry eyes due to over screen time and back pain sitting for so long for these online classes."* (Group Discussion # 2, 10-10-20)

The above findings indicate that most of the participants are facing challenges in online classes. Most of them are facing internet and laptop issues. Half of them are facing handling parents and health related issues. Few mentioned regarding the introduction of new activities is challenging.

Apprehending children's attention

The majority of the participants mentioned they are having problems to grab and keep the children's attention in classes. One of the participants mentioned, *"Yes, obviously we are facing problem in order to grab their attentions, as there are some children who want to participate and some who doesn't. For which reason we planned our lesson with warm-up session, transition, activities (moral things, rhymes, physical)."* (Group Discussion # 1, 09-10-20)

Most of the participants mentioned that coming up with new and variety activities is a challenge for them. One of the participants mentioned, *"Earlier we used to have structured preplanned activities for them, but we have to prepare self-videos, slides, variety of options has to be there, which is difficult for me."* (Group Discussion # 2, 10-10-20)

44

Whereas, another participant revealed that, *"As I am working with the kids for 8 years, so I know how to grab and keep their attention. I am not facing any challenges regarding this. It's just the lesson have to be fun."* (Personal communication: Interview# 3, 12-10-20)

These findings show that most participants face a problem, but they are planning their lessons to grab and keep their attention in online classes.

Teaching accessories

There was a mixed response of the participants regarding the teaching materials. According to most of the participants, the content is the same, so the school authority also provides the teaching materials. One of the participants mentioned, "*The materials we need we need to give them the school authority the list and they provide us."* (Group Discussion # 1, 09-10-20).

Whereas, another participant revealed, *"The materials we need, it has to be managed by ourselves. It would be better if the school authority would have provided this. As it's a hassling for us to manage these things during this situation."* (Personal communication: Interview# 1, 09-10-20)

The above findings indicated that more than half of the participants received support from school authority regarding the teaching materials. A few of the participants mentioned collecting materials as a challenge during this COVID-19 situation.

Time management

All the participants mentioned the class duration of different schools was limited to 40 minutes. Other schools are taking a different number of classes. Like in one school they are taking only one class, in another, they are taking two classes, and the maximum no is five classes per day subject

wise. *"We have the flexibility to change the class but for that we need to communicate with school authority and parents first"* (Personal communication: Interview# 4, 16-10-20).

Whereas, on the other hand, one of the participants mentioned, *"No we don't have that option as our classes are happening in morning and evening shift depending on the campus as we have 8 campus so the school authority decides."* (Personal communication: Interview# 1, 09-10-20)

Most of the participants mentioned that they are taking morning classes like earlier in school, but 40 minutes. Only few of the participants said that they are taking evening classes convenient to the parents as there are working parents as well.

Most of the participants mentioned that they have very little time between switching classes, which is hassling for them. *"According to me there should be 20 minutes break in between classes to move around as we are sitting for so long in one place but we are only getting 10 minutes."* (Personal communication: Interview# 4, 16-10-20)

Half of the participants mentioned they faced trouble while fixing the time schedule during the online classes. Most of the participants also said that they have to slow down their delivery speed and the lessons due to less time and for online classes.

One of the participants mentioned, *"As earlier we used to take classes at morning but now due to parent's convenience, we are taking two shift classes: morning and evening so we have to give more efforts and time now."* (Group Discussion # 2, 10-10-20)

The above findings can be concluded that most of the participants are taking morning classes and half of the participants mentioned regarding the reduced time. Few of them are taking evening classes for the convenience of parents. As well as most of the participants have to slow down their

delivery speed due to the time constraint, and half of the participants faced problems to fix the time for the classes.

Technical skills for the teachers

The majority of the teachers' revealed they faced the problem regarding the technical management of online classes, but online training helped them a lot. Only two of the participants mentioned that they did not face any problem regarding this.

One participant mentioned that *"Earlier I didn't even understand how to take the online classes, how to present slides. But in our trainings the problems were found out first then the solutions were given so for that reason first I faced some problem but due to the training and demo classes now I am not facing any problems."* (Personal communication: Interview# 2, 11-10-20)

Whereas, another participant revealed that *"I did not face any problem regarding technology, as I am very much technology friendly and I explore things a lot. So, exploring this helped me a lot to learn many things and the training was there also."* (Personal communication: Interview# 4, 16-10-20)

It can be concluded from the findings as mentioned above that the majority of the participants faced a problem regarding technology at first before the class starts but later on, the training helped them a lot to continue taking the classes.

Parental interruption on online classes

Few of the participants also mentioned parents faced problem to get gadgets on time. As according to them mobile phones cannot have everything, so laptops and tablets were required.

The majority of the participants mentioned earlier when they did not communicate with the parents at that time; they faced some problems. The majority of the participants are communicating with the parent on a regular, weekly basis, and on parents-teachers' meeting.

One of the participants mentioned, *"Every month we have one parents teachers' meeting, we exchange views there. So then if we bring any changes and don't communicate with them then things can create some problem. But later on, when we communicate with them and explain them it is better for the children, then they understand but at first all parents doesn't react positively."* (Personal communication: Interview# 3, 12-10-20)

The above findings indicate that parents faced problem to open up accounts, how to operate the virtual classes and to manage gadget. As well as most of the participants mentioned there are sometimes parents react, but they also mentioned these things can be handled easily if the teachers communicate properly with parents.

Theme 4: Support for Preschool Teachers to continue this Online Class during COVID-19

Teachers mentioned a number of supports to solve the challenges to teach online. Through their discussions of what sort of supports they want followed by common supports, for skill development and support they want from school authority.

Common support

Almost all of the participants mentioned about these common supports are an internet connection, children's environment, school management's support, good gadget, and support from parents. These were mainly the support needed by teachers to continue the online class during COVID-19 mentioned by all the participants.

One of the participants mentioned that, *"As I have mentioned earlier the most important thing is internet connection, parents support, children's environment, a nice gadget."* (Personal communication: Interview# 4, 16-10-20)

The results from the findings mentioned above show that teachers strongly want a good internet connection, good gadgets, support from parents, support from school authority, and children's environment to enact classes successfully.

Capacity development / Skills development

All of the participants mentioned they received training to take online class. But the duration of training was different for the participants. Half of the participants received one-week training. Two of the participants received one-month training. Only one of the participants is still receiving training, and it started in October and it will continue till December 2020. One participant mentioned, *"We are still receiving training like I take classes other teachers evaluate it, what are the flaws and techniques others can adapt. This training has started from October and it will lasts till December."* (Personal communication: Interview# 1, 09-10-20)

Moreover, the training was given by school authorities like the IT department, HR department, senior teacher, Principals, and Vice- Principals. The persons varied between the participants.

One of the participants said, *"As our session was about to finish so before CORONA we had training. We took classes on zoom. Then we had training for the next session and that was in front of the vice-principal. And before every classes we had to practice demo classes, the training and the demo was very effective. And then we had training on Google classroom by HR before the new session started."* (Group Discussion # 2, 10-10-20)

Majority of the participants mentioned the parents faced problem regarding opening up accounts for online classes and how to operate the virtual learning systems. Half of the participants mentioned it is necessary to train the parents as well. The participants also mentioned they open up the account on behalf of the parents. One of the participants mentioned, *"Earlier the parents were not able to open up the account instead we open email accounts for the children for the convenience of the parents."* (Group Discussion # 1, 09-10-20)

The findings can be concluded that the training and demo classes helped the teachers develop their skills to take online classes. As well according to participants there has to be a training for parents regarding online system as well.

Support required from school authority

The majority of participants mentioned about the cost of the internet is provided by themselves. They mentioned it would be better if the school authority would provide them. As they have to take two options of Wi-Fi and mobile data as well. One of the participants revealed that, *"No apu it's our personal cost but if school authority would have provided this, it would be a great help."* (Personal communication: Interview# 2, 11-10-20)

Most of the participants are getting materials from the school authority; only a few of the participants mentioned that they need materials and training on development of activities from school.

Half of the participants mentioned about the coordinator, supplementary teachers were kept when the calls get disconnected; those teachers can take classes.

One of the participants revealed that, *"As when the internet connection goes off, when I get disconnected some other person becomes the host which becomes very hectic, where as if the*

school management would take this in to account this would be a great help. As sometimes it is see that mobile data doesn't even work at all." (Personal communication: Interview# 2, 11-10-20)

Few participants mentioned to look and support at those teachers who are shy and aged to open up regarding the skills as well financially incapable of buying any good gadget. Whereas, on the other hand half of the participants also mentioned that the school authority provided them webcam, laptop, and other necessary material that they needed.

The findings hint that the participants have mixed demand from the school authority. But the most common is the internet cost and relevant materials.

Discussion

This study has added a new dimension in online classes in our country by understanding the perception of preschool teachers regarding online classes during the COVID-19 situation. This research pursued exploring English medium preschool teachers' perception of online classes during COVID-19 crisis from different perspectives named as knowledge, practices of preschool teachers & challenges they have faced and are facing, and the support they got and required.

The researcher analyzed the preschool teacher's perception of online learning, practices, challenges, and support during COVID-19. In the following section of the paper, the researcher is going to answer the mentioned research questions by thoroughly describing teacher's understanding of online classes from different perceptions, practices while they are providing online classes, challenges that they are facing and support that they got and need in this online classes during COVID-19.

Perception of Teachers' on Online Classes

The study's data findings suggest that teachers' understanding of how they define online classes is almost the same in In-depth interviews and Group discussions. Teachers with an academic qualification till Master's degree referred to online learning as using technology and devices are providing classes to children. Participant below bachelor's degree couldn't answer it, and she mentioned she couldn't define it with technical terms. Similar findings have been seen in a study, on distance learning at the kindergarten level in Greece, as Schlosser and Simonson (2002) asserts, "The word distance learning is used to describe those learning practices in which the learner is at a natural distance from his teacher and uses some form of technology to communicate with him and get educational materials" (as cited in Fotii, 2020, p. 20).

The study findings revealed that in Group discussions and In-depth interviews, most teachers perceive online learning as the best option in this COVID-19. According to them, it has a lot of importance on preschoolers in this situation build their basic knowledge and etiquettes. Similarly, another study for early years revealed among 101 participants (teachers), 42.6% mentioned distance learning as the most important for the state of COVID-19 (Fotii, 2020).

Another study showed that this online learning is good only for the pandemic situation; otherwise, many things are required to successfully implement online classes, including internet access, financial issues, and others (Allo, 2020). The data findings of Group discussions and In-depth interviews reflect that online learning is effective in this pandemic situation but compared to physical classes, there are so many drawbacks.

In a study, it is reflecting that children are limiting their physical activities and due to screen time of online classes there might be an increase of Myopia amongst children. Children will have negative impact on their development according to the study (Wong, et al., 2020). Similarly, the

findings from the Group discussions and In-depth interviews are showing that children will be negative impacted by these online classes physically (dry eyes, less movement), mentally and socially.

It is also evident from the study findings that most of the participants were saying about two-way communication, high-speed internet connection, good device, guidelines to run these virtual systems, and an extra internet connection for both teachers and parents in terms of technology competencies. Similar findings have been seen in a study, in India that the basic requirement for online learning is a gadget and good internet access. So, they mentioned for both teachers and students need for electricity, internet and laptop is a must (Mandapaka & Prakash, 2020).

Also, in another study in Sweden, they are following two methods for communicating with students; one is synchronous learning where children and teachers share virtually, and another form they are doing for rural areas is hybrid teaching where the teachers are connecting to students from another location (Bergdahl & Nouri, 2020). In the study, the findings from Group discussions and In-depth interviews revealed that all the participants mentioned about two-way communication are best for preschoolers. As they are very little, just giving them videos will not be enough; rather, they said interaction and participation are needed for this group thus, synchronous learning is preferable.

It was concluded from the study findings that in both Group discussions and In-depth interviews, participants were mentioning regarding children's participation and involvement in online classes is highly required by them but not forcibly. Contrarily in a study, it was revealed that 73.9 % of children are losing their focus in online classes (Lau & Lee, 2020).

The data findings suggested that almost all the participants' asked for supports from parents and school authorities. Specifically mentioned about the quiet place for both the parties to sit on the online classes. Whereas, in a study it was revealed that regarding inadequate space for teachers and not that much support the teachers were getting from the school (Chang & Fang, 2020). In another study in Indonesia, it was revealed that during this COVID-19, there has to be coordination between parents and teachers to make the learning effective for the children (Pajarianto, et al., 2020). Consequently, in order to implement the online classes successfully there has to be a coordination between teachers and parents, otherwise children will not be able to get any benefits from online classes.

Practices provided by Preschool Teachers in Online Classes

Findings from the data demonstrate that majority of the participants reflect changes in teaching strategy and teaching contents are more based on technology like zoom, Google classroom, jam board, video, slideshows, etc. starting from lessons, their way of delivering, and all these things they are doing in front of the parents. A study revealed that the teachers added few things along with existing strategy, and content is more based on technology like videos, whiteboard, PowerPoint, etc. (Kim, 2020). For this result, there is a requirement of online learning system in order to implement the classes successfully.

It is evident from the study findings that the time duration of all classes has been reduced as in a study, it was 30 minutes per session for all grades and if the teacher wants, they can take an additional 10 to 15 minutes (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020). Likewise, the data from the findings also reflecting that the duration is also limited to 40 minutes; the number is the same mentioned by every participant. As well as they are providing extra time after classes.

It was concluded from the study findings to engage children that they are calling out names and showing them different activities of their interest and giving them extra time after classes. Whereas, in another study, Mandapaka & Prakash (2020) revealed that though the teachers are providing so many activities, the students' participation is not that much.

A study regarding parents' perception regarding online classes reflected that they want customized pre-recorded videos for kindergarten level (Lau & Lee, 2020). Similarly, the study results show most of the participants are doing self-recorded and prerecorded videos to provide different lessons to the children. Coming up with new videos and lesson is a difficult job for them so they demanded for a training. Earlier in physical classes they had curriculum but as the new online classes start according to them things get tougher.

Besides, Bergdahl & Nouri (2020) revealed in a study that student's interaction in class is highly appreciated by the majority of the teachers. Similarly, the study results show the majority of the participants indicate that children's interaction is the most important one for their language and social development during this online session.

In a study in Sweden, the teachers are asking the question to assure their attendance and giving them assignments, and taking internal assessments, but according to them, it is not working like physical classes (Bergdahl & Nouri, 2020). Likewise, the above findings show the majority of the participants are mostly taking the internal assessment and giving homework to assess the children.

A study in India revealed that 86.9% of teachers preferred traditional classrooms rather than online classes (Nambiar, 2020). Also, both Group discussions and In-depth interviews show that all the participants prefer physical classrooms rather than online classes.

Challenges faced by Preschool Teachers in Online Classes

The data findings suggested that most participants mentioned they are facing challenges regarding internet and gadget issues, and half of the participants also said about the back pain, migraines, and dry eye due to greater screen time. Similarly, in a study in India on online education, revealed that the challenges were like the availability of internet, relevant devices, and physical issues like back pain, eye problems are also happening due to over screen time (Wadhwa, 2020). To gather device, it was a common challenge for parents and teachers.

In the current study, the findings reflected that most participants mentioned parents faced problems to open accounts and to run virtual classes. Similar findings were found on Group discussion and In-depth interviews regarding the problem faced by the parents. As parents were not able to open up the accounts for that teachers did that for them and provided them guideline, how to join the classes.

In a study, regarding the impact of online classes, 56.5% of teachers faced problem while engaging students in online courses, 71.1% of teachers felt it is tough to keep the online classes' duration for a long time, and 90.8% of teacher felt the flow of online classes is being disrupted by the technical problems (Nambiar, 2020). Similarly, the results of the study reflect that the majority of the participants face issues to grab the children's attention as well; due to technical problems and limited time duration of the class, they have to slow down their delivery speed.

In addition, in the study majority of the participants mentioned that parents could cause trouble if they are not communicated properly. Similarly, in a study in Hong Kong, it was revealed that if the parents get support from teachers and school authorities, it can lower their stress (Lau & Lee, 2020). As in both Group discussion and In-depth interviews it was revealed that children have to be supervised by adults but as there were working parents also which encountered some problems.

Support for Preschool Teachers to continue this Online Class during COVID-19

The researcher identified from the findings that the majority of the teachers strongly want a good internet connection, good gadgets, support from parents, support from school authority, and children's environment to enact classes successfully. Similarly, in a study in Indonesia regarding teachers' perception of online learning, findings show that there has to support from the school, parents, and government to enact the SFH system, and internet connection and devices can be a barrier to it (Rasmitadila, et al., 2020).

Also, findings showed that the training and demo classes helped the teachers develop their skills for online classes. Contrarily, in a study of higher education, the teachers did not receive any training, there was inadequate support from the school, so they face problems to deliver in online classes (Chang & Fang, 2020). Whereas, in another study the teachers received training, tutorials regarding online technical issues and provided various activities and feedback to students in the classes successfully (Konig, et al., 2020). Without training teachers will not be able to adapt in to the online system.

Besides, in a study it was revealed that aged teachers are not that technologically friendly, they need more training. Similarly, in the study, participants also mentioned providing extra training by school authorities for the aged teachers to deliver in the online classes (Alea, et al., 2020).

Moreover, the most common support was mentioned by the majority of the participants was the internet cost. Similarly, in a study in Bangladesh on preparedness for online classes Ramij & Sultana (2020) revealed that 58% of the participants found the internet cost as an expensive one. As this online class is new platform so according to the participants the school authority should provide them the internet cost.

Conclusion

This was indicated in the previous reviewed literature that due to COVID-19 children of early years are having developmental issues physically, mentally and socially and online learning can mitigate some of its impact during this COVID situation. Although there are some drawbacks in online classes but still if the online classes are taken taking some measures then the online classes can be effective during this situation. Teachers' perception on online learning is important to know as in this society teachers are mainly considered as the one providing education to the children. Thus, the study tried to explore the significance of studying teachers' perception regarding online classes, as they are one who are providing the online classes, shaping the next generation and trying to mitigate the adverse impact of school closures during COVID-19.

Recommendations

The study provides recommendations extracted from the overall results of the study to provide support to preschool teachers regarding online classes. Recommendations are as follows:

- Large scale study has to be done with large sample and from other medium of preschools for more exploration on this topic.

- System should be developed to support and guide parents regarding preparation and home environment for online classes.

- Policy formulation is needed addressing implementation of online classes, (internet access, online education's quality, mechanism). The Government and school authority should come up with an online learning system for the preschoolers like Google Classroom.

- National level standard for the practitioners for online learning system for preschoolers.

- Government and authority should ensure professional capacity development regarding online classes on every medium and for every level.

- Advocacy for incorporating play-based pedagogy in the teaching learning materials for the preschoolers in online system.

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Annex-1: Thematic In-depth Interview Questionnaire

Research Title: Preschool Teachers' Perceptions regarding Online Learning during COVID-19.

Section A: Demographic information

SL NO.	DOT	Name	Age	Sex	Educational Qualification	Employment Status
Interview#	Interviewee's Information					
	Name of School:					
	Teaching Experience (Please specify in years)					
	Received training on early childhood Development/Education training (If yes, please specify)					
	Received any other training (If yes, please specify)					
	Address:					
	Date:					

Section B: Questionnaire

Introductory questions:

How are you?

How is everyone at your home?

Preschool Teacher's Knowledge about Online Learning:

- As you are taking online classes, can you please explain what this is?
- As online Learning means to you this, so could you please tell me the importance of online Learning for preschoolers?
- Due to COVID-19 online Learning has been introduced recently in our country, what is your opinion regarding this?
- When you first hear that you are about to take online classes initially how did you feel? What is your opinion regarding the effectiveness of online Learning?
- As preschoolers are different from others, do you think online classes will be an effective way for learning to them during COVID-19? If, yes can you please explain how?
- According to you, what are the components of technology should be there for preschoolers and teachers? Which method do you prefer for preschooler?
- What is your opinion regarding the online learning involvement for preschoolers? What is your opinion, regarding the schedule and teaching materials for preschoolers in online classes?
- As children are participating in online classes from home so according to you how much the environment is very important? What should be there in the environment to enact the online class effectively?
- To enact online classes effectively other than teachers whose involvement and which other matters should be there?

Preschool Teacher's Practices in Online Classes during COVID-19?

- As online Learning is a new concept what are the changes you have to make to your teaching strategy during this COVID-19 situation?
- As you are a preschool teacher, are there any particular things you are doing for the preschoolers?
- What are the changes that you have in the content (class time, teaching materials/content) for this online classes for the preschoolers?
- Now what is the duration of each session of the class? Do you have the flexibility to change the class timing?

- Has there been any significant changes to the delivery method in this online learning process? (What, When, How)
- Initially the way you have started taking online classes in any way it changed or going in the same way? Which medium and method of technology you are using for the online classes for the preschoolers?
- Do children have opportunity in your class to communicate with teachers and other children? How and why you are providing this?
- How do you ensure all the children's participation over the online class?
- How do you engage children in hands-on learning to build logical understanding of words and knowledge over this online class?
- Previously the classes were face to face but now what types of songs, rhymes AND riddles are practiced in your class? How does preschoolers understand in the online classes when you are shifting from one to other sessions?
- How do you know that the preschoolers are making progress? Is there any measure taken by you as a teacher?

Challenges faced by Preschool Teachers in Online Classes during COVID-19:
- According to you what are the challenges that teachers generally faced during online classes?
- Preschoolers are very little at age, are you facing any challenges to grab and keep their attention?
- In terms of teaching materials and time schedule, are you facing any problems to deliver it to preschoolers?
- Are there any specific challenges like technical competencies have you experienced during this online class?
- As you have mentioned earlier due to online classes there are some ongoing changes so how does parents respond to it? Did you face any challenges regarding this?

Support for Preschool Teachers to continue this Online Class during COVID-19

- According to you, what types of support teachers should get to enact online classes?

- For preschoolers is it necessary to get any special training to enact online classes?
- In this COVID situation, how would you like to receive your training? Did you receive any training/ structured instruction? How many times you get it?
- As there may be, challenges like internet issues, technical competencies, what rather support you expect from school authority?

Concluding Question:
- According to you, which method of learning you enjoyed the most?
- What are your thoughts/expectations regarding the future of these preschooler?

Annex-2: Group Discussion Guideline

Research Title: Preschool Teacher's Perceptions regarding Online Learning during COVID-19

Guiding Question:

Introductory Questions:

How are you?

How is everyone at your home?

1. As you're taking classes online, could you please explain what it's about?
2. Could you please tell me the importance of online Learning during this COVID-19 situation? As preschoolers are different from others, do you think it will be an effective way for learning to them? If, yes can you please explain how?
3. What is your opinion on the technical management components for productive online classes?
4. To continue online classes other than teachers whose participation should be and what other issues should be there?
5. How are you adapting your teaching strategy to this new online teaching method?
6. As you are a preschool teacher, are there any particular things you are doing for the preschoolers? What are the changes that you have in the content (schedule, teaching materials) for this online classes?
7. In your classroom, how the preschoolers are interacting with teachers during the class time? If, not then how you are interacting?
8. How do you ensure all the children's participation over the online class?
9. According to you what are the challenges that teachers generally faced during online classes?
10. Technical management is a new thing for each of us, how you are managing it?
11. Preschoolers are very little at age, are you facing any challenges to grab and keep their attention?

12. As you said earlier, there are some ongoing changes because of online classes, so how do parents respond? Have you been faced with any challenges?

13. According to you, what types of support teachers should get to enact online classes?

14. Did you receive any training/ structured instruction? How many times you get it? How effective you think the training was to you?

15. Preschoolers are very little at age, is there any specific supports you want from school authority or parents or any other support to enhance the online classes?

16. According to you, which method of learning you enjoyed the most? What are your thoughts/expectations regarding the future of these preschoolers?

Annex-3: Consent Form for the Teachers

Title of the Research: Preschool Teachers' Perception regarding Online Learning during Covid-19 situation

Principle Investigator: Rifath Akhter Smriti

Dear Teacher,

I am Rifath Akhter Smriti, as part of an academic requirements from Brac Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University, doing this study to investigate preschool teachers' perception regarding Online Learning during Covid-19 situation.

As a preschool teacher, you will be approached for an interview to share your experience, attitudes, knowledge and practices regarding online classes during COVID-19.

If you wish to participate, you will be invited to share with me your experience, attitudes, knowledge and practices about online classes for preschoolers. It's going to take around 1 hour.

All the personal information collected from you will remain strictly confidential. I would be delighted to answer your any questions regarding the report and you are welcome to reach me.

Your participation in the study is voluntary. You are the ultimate authority to determine if you would like to take part in this research. If you agree with my proposal to enroll in the study, please place your signature in the space below.

Thanks a lot for your cooperation.

_____   _____

Signature of Investigator   **Signature of Participant**

Date: **Date:**