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OPTIMAL SOCIAL RELATIONS BETWEEN TEACHERS AND STUDENTS IN ONLINE LEARNING: A STUDY EXPLORING STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract-

The study was to determine students' perceptions towards social relations between teachers and them during online learning at the time of the covid-19 lockdown. The research was conducted using the survey method by giving questionnaires to 415 students of higher education. The findings reveal that teachers asked about students' well-being before starting the lecture to give a warm-up to learning. They were concerned about the technical issues related to audio/video in case any student was confronted. Teachers encouraged them to provide and seek responses to the learning queries in order to make the class interactive. It is concluded that social relations between students and teachers in terms of cooperation, individualized attention, involvement, and socio-emotional bonding in online learning have been perceived positively by students.

Keywords: Online learning, Social relations, cooperation, individualized attention, involvement, socio-emotional bonding.

1. Background-

Developing healthy and fervent social relations in classrooms is a vital aspect for the social and mental well-being of students. Good social relations of students with peers and teachers contribute to developing physically and mentally fit learners as a feeling of closeness among them increases their longevity and strengthens their immune system (Chuter, 2019). It has a direct positive impact on cognitive processes in students influencing their academic progress (Benningfield et. al, 2015). Social relations comprise interpersonal bonding, cooperation, individual attention, involvement, socio-emotional bonding etc. Cooperation in social relations takes place when other people's acts have a beneficial influence on people's accomplishments. In the context of teacher-student cooperation, it pertains to the extent to which teachers support and contribute to students' achievement of their learning objectives; what teachers do to facilitate students' learning more effectively. *Individual attention* entails valuing and respecting every student as a distinct individual with something to offer the learning community. However, it poses a serious problem in the context of online education (Dhawan, 2020). *Involvement* in social relations refers to connectedness in the

student-teacher relationship. The students feel more a part of the group as a result. It is due to involvement that teachers understand and cherish the students' thoughts and feelings in addition to what they are teaching or discussing with them in the classroom. Social ties that share good emotions like trust, compassion, affection, etc. are referred to as *socio-emotional bonds* (Ainsworth,1989). It is a state of being socially and emotionally attached with each other. It preserves people's close proximity to others and controls social behaviour. For example, the teacher's recognition of whether a student is sad or well.

Establishing social relations with students is one of those crucial strategies that teachers need to be skilled in. Social relations between students and teachers positively correlate with students' academic success and learning satisfaction. In traditional classes, students find themselves in a social environment in the company of their peers. They see each other, they interact with each other, and they collaborate to learn, and so don't feel isolated. However, they find all these missing or rarely experienced in online classes. Healthy social relations in online classes can alleviate feelings of isolation in students, and create an online community among them that assists the learning process (McInnerney & Roberts, 2004). Keeping in view the importance of social relations in e-learning also, a research study is drawn to investigate students' perceptions about their social relations with their teachers during online learning practices. In all, 415 students from different higher educational institutes in India participated in this investigation and detailed their perspectives on social interactions with their teachers in online classes. The perception of learners was judged on four dimensions of social relation that is cooperation, involvement, individualized attention and socioemotional level.

2. Objectives of the study-

To study the social relations between teachers and students during online learning in terms of-

- 1. Cooperation
- 2. Individualised Attention
- 3. Involvement
- 4. Socio-emotional bonding

3. Methodology of the study-

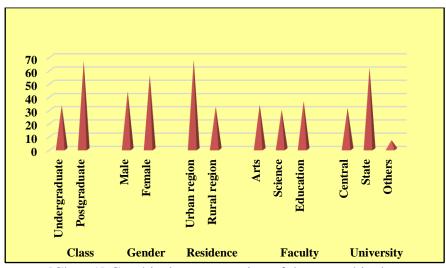
An exploratory descriptive research was conducted on higher education students from different faculties. A total of 415 students from Uttar Pradesh studying at Central, State and other Universities, participated in the study. The study's data were gathered using a pre-designed and pretested three-point perception scale. The perception scale consisted of a total of twenty-three items from the different dimensions of the variable of the study, that was, social relations. According to the dimensions of the study's variable, the data was collected via the online Google form and had been tabulated and segmented for analysis. The analysis of the data was qualitative.

4. Results and Discussion-

The demographic information for the study participants is presented in [Table-1] and graphically shown in [Chart 1]. 33.3% of the research participants were studying at the undergraduate level, while 66.7% were at the postgraduate level. 43.9% of the participants were men, and 56.1% were women, according to the gender breakdown of the group. 32.3% of the participants in the survey come from rural regions, compared to 67.7% who live in urban areas. 33.7%, 29.9%, and 36.4% of the participants, respectively, were from the Faculties of Arts, Science, and Education. 31.2% of the participants were studying in Central Universities, 61.9% were from State Universities, and 6.9% belonged to other types of institutes.

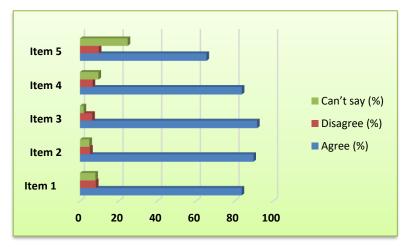
Characteristics	%of participants			
Class				
Undergraduate	33.3			
Postgraduate	66.7			
Gender				
Male	43.9			
Female	56.1			
Residence				
Urban region	67.7			
Rural region	32.3			
Faculty				
Arts	33.7			
Science	29.9			
Education	36.4			
University				
Central	31.2			
State	61.9			
Others	06.9			
[Table-1]: Demographic characteristics of				

[Table-1]: Demographic characteristics of the study participants (N = 415)



[Chart 1] Graphical representation of demographic data

Item No.	Details	Agree	Disagree	Can't
		(%)	(%)	say (%)
1.	Teachers tell about rules for appropriate	83.7	8.3	8
	behaviour that they expect during online			
	interaction.			
2.	Encourage students for active	89.8	5.3	4.9
	participation in online learning			
3.	Teachers actively take part in online	91.7	6.4	1.9
	discussions along with students.			
4.	Teachers encourage you to respond to	83.8	6.6	9.6
	learning queries raised by your peers.			
5.	Teachers seek your suggestions and make	65.5	9.8	24.7
	alterations in their teaching strategies			
	accordingly to give you the best.			
[Toblo	[Table-2]: Cooperation between teachers and students			
Liable	[Table-2]. Cooperation between teachers and students			



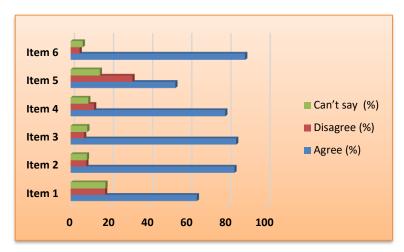
[Chart 2] Item-wise perception of students towards cooperation in the online classes

[Table 2] depicts the perception about cooperation between teachers and students during online teaching and learning, while [Chart 2] gives a graphic sketch of the item-wise percentage of responses of the participants. According to 83.7% of those surveyed, their teachers explained the expectations for proper conduct in online classes. A similar result was revealed by Savery (2005). Whether the learning is taking place offline or online, discipline is a crucial component. Online classroom etiquettes foster the best learning environment. Teachers must thus instruct pupils on appropriate behaviour while they are learning online. Teachers should provide clear guidelines to ensure that students adhere to accepted standards of conduct in online classrooms (Mintu-Wimsatt et al., 2010), such as punctuality, acceptable clothes, focused attention, refraining from multitasking, cautious word use, etc.

89.8% of students reported that their teachers inspired them for dynamic participation in online learning activities like discussions, collaborative work etc. Blondy (2007) reported the same result. To make the class more progressive and interactive like in the face-to-face settings, teachers themselves effectively participate in online discussions and forums alongside them, as revealed by 91.7% of respondents. Lantz-Andersson et al. (2007) reported the same finding.

Teachers emboldened students to reply to learning queries asked by their peers, as indicated by 83.8% of students. This approach of teaching encourages peer learning, reducing the isolation that online students frequently perceive (Raymond, et al., 2016). 65.5% of students responded that their teachers took feedback from them to improve their teaching. Getting feedback from students and making teaching flexible is a significant way to offer effective online learning (Mahmood, 2021).

Item	Details	Agree	Disagree	Can't say
No.		(%)	(%)	(%)
1.	Teacher inquires about student's non-appearance if he	64.5	17.6	17.8
	disappears/leaves due to network error.			
2.	Teachers inquire about your well-being before starting	83.7	8	8.3
	the lecture.			
3.	Teachers call your name when responding to your	84.6	6.9	8.5
	work/query.			
4.	Teachers ask you to call them telephonically or send an	79.0	12.0	9.0
	email after the online class if having any learning-			
	related queries.			
5.	Teacher delays starting his lesson till the time all the	53.5	31.6	14.9
	students join the online class.			
6.	Teachers guide and assist in techno-issues	89.2	4.6	6.2
[Table-3]: Individualized Attention by teachers				



[Chart 3] Item-wise perception of students towards getting individual attention from their teachers

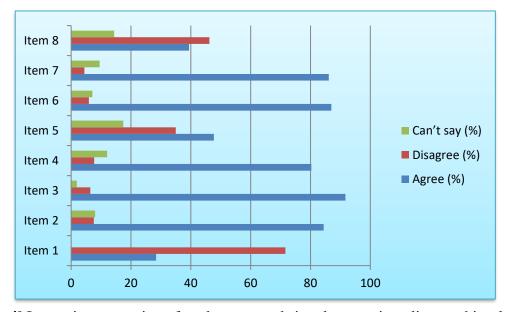
Data from [Table 3] illustrates how much individual attention teachers paid to them in online classes. [Chart 3] represents the item-wise data in the form of a graph. 64.5% of respondents reported that their teachers used to inquire about any student's non-appearance if he became disappeared or left due to network error. It shows that teachers used to monitor students' presence and absence in online classes also. If a teacher pays attention to every student by acknowledging their presence in the online class, they feel welcomed and valued even in the virtual class (Cost, 2012). 83.3% of students reported that their teachers ask about their well-being before starting the lecture. The need for this behaviour of teachers in the online class was felt significant by McInnerney & Roberts (2004) as it helps students get warmed up to study and incorporates them more readily in learning. 84.5% of the respondents reported that their teachers used to call their names while answering their assignments or questions. This behaviour of teachers makes students feel that their work or questions have been well read and taken up by their teachers and acknowledged personally.

79% of respondents stated that their teachers instructed them to call or email them after the online class if they had any questions related to their learning. It is particularly beneficial in students' learning since they anticipate receiving supportive and corrective guidance from their teachers via email or telephone rather than in a public venue (Cost, 2012).

According to 53.5% of students, occasionally, teachers delay starting lessons until all students have joined the online class. Teachers were well aware that no student should miss any part of the lesson. Otherwise, it would have been challenging for students to get the missing component of the lesson from their teachers or their peers after class, as they would not have an opportunity to discuss together on the lesson in a way as they used to do earlier in traditional classes.

Teachers were concerned about the technical issues related to audio/video in case any student was confronted with, as reported by 89.2% of students. Accordingly, it very well may be derived that teachers paid individualized attention to them. Learners were not being given only academic guidance and but also, they were assisted by their teachers if there was occurrence of techno-issue because they might understand that the online mode of learning was entirely new for a maximum of the learners.

Item.No.	Details	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Can't say
1.	Teachers pay more attention to students' learning in online classes than that in traditional classes.	28.4	71.6	0.0
2.	Teachers prompt students to seek and give answers in the class.	84.4	7.6	8.0
3.	Teachers give encouraging messages to students to continue their studies through online mode without fearing from COVID-19 pandemic.	91.7	6.4	1.9
4.	Teachers are enthusiastic to interact with students in online classes.	80.3	7.7	12.0
5.	Teachers restart or repeat the content if any student joins late in the online class.	47.7	35	17.4
6.	Teachers encourage to revise the lesson at home through the e-content provided by them	87	5.9	7.1
7.	Teachers try to rejoin the class in case of any techno failure.	86.1	4.4	9.5
8.	Teachers are in the hurry to complete the syllabus.	39.4	46.2	14.4
[Table-4]: Involvement in online teaching-learning				



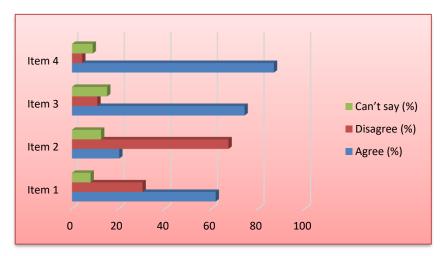
[Chart 4] Item-wise perception of students towards involvement in online teaching-learning

[Table 4] shows the data of students' perceptions regarding how much involved teachers and students were with each other during online learning. [Chart 4] represents the same data in the form of a graph. Only 28.4% of students reported that their teachers paid more attention in online classes than in face-to-face classes. On the contrary, most of them felt that their teachers used to pay more attention to them in traditional classrooms. Teachers have been teaching in traditional classrooms for a long time and are, therefore, less interested in online teaching (Peterson, 2001). They must have believed that this was a temporary arrangement of teaching; after the pandemic was over, everything would return to its traditional teaching-learning approach. In contrast to the findings presented by Xue & Xu (2022), which found that teachers were only active and students had a passive engagement in online learning, 84.4% of respondents in the present study reported that teachers encouraged them to provide and seek responses of the learning queries in order to make the class interactive.

The majority of respondents (91.7 %) found that their social relations were quite intense with their teachers and reported that while communicating about their stress, dread and strains due to pandemic circumstances all around, their educators consistently gave positive and empowering comments and persuaded them to proceed with their studies with a similar enthusiasm as that was there in earlier days. Obviously, It was because the teachers realised how typical and natural the 'stress' in demanding situations like the covid pandemic was, and it was their responsibility to prepare learners to cope with it. 80.3% of students reported that although they interfaced without precedent for online classes with their teachers, they received welcoming and enthusiastic behaviour from them. It tends to be gathered that teachers with this sort of behaviour fetch students not only in academic commitments but meet their emotional needs as well. 47.7% of students disclosed that their teachers resumed or repeated learning material when they joined late for eclassroom, while 35% of them reported the opposite. This demonstrates how anxious the teachers were to ensure no student would miss any of the instruction. They thus exerted all effort they could to make it happen. The facts confirm that none of the students wants to be late for the class, yet here it occurs on occasions on account of some technical issues. It is suggested that all the teachers ought to be a little considerate in this regard and should repeat the essential points while summarising the lesson in order to avoid learning impedance, but simultaneously, learners should also be perceived the beginning of the classes as important.

After the class was over, according to 87% of the respondents, the teacher instructed them to review the lesson at home using the e-content provided. The finding is supported by Mensch (2017) and reveals teachers' concerns about every student's learning even in the online classes as they were in offline classes. 86.1% of the students reported that their teachers attempted to rejoin the online class in the event of a technical failure. The online teaching mode is entirely novel for many teachers. Due to their little knowledge of technology and computer applications, they may have technical issues. Another big obstacle to online teaching-learning is a bad internet connection. However, teachers do not have the knowledge to address technology-related problems (Khanna and Prasad, 2020). Nevertheless, if they try to rejoin the online classes by resolving technical issues with their efforts, it demonstrates their technical readiness in online teaching and their concerns for students learning. 39.4% of respondents felt that their teachers were rushing to finish the syllabus in the class. That might be possible as educators needed to check their other official assignments and household tasks as well. Even though teachers had clear concerns about their academic suspension due to the COVID lockdown and tried to compensate for it by providing e-learning material to students after the classes.

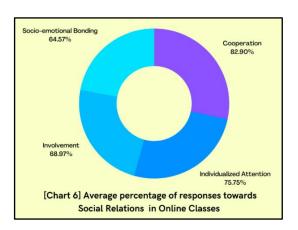
Item. No.	Details	Agree (%)	Disagree (%)	Can't say (%)
1.	You feel shy about asking your doubts to your teachers if you don't	61.7	30.3	8.0
	understand something.			
2.	Teachers become harsh or lose	20.3	67.2	12.5
	control at times while giving feedback on your activity.			
3.	Teachers try to reduce students' fear on being 'Not so Techno-friendly'.	74.1	10.9	15.1
4.	Teachers are sensitive to your conflicts related to academic performance affected from the	86.7	4.4	8.9
	pandemic.			
[Table-5]: Socio-emotional bonding between students and teachers				



[Chart 5] Item-wise perception of students towards socio-emotional bonding

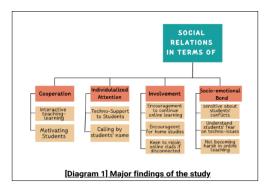
[Table 5] represents the data showing socio-emotional bonding between teachers and students as perceived by students in online classes. [Chart 5] shows the item-wise data in the form of a graph. Of those surveyed, only 30.3% reported that they didn't hesitate to ask their teachers if they didn't understand something during online instructions. However, 61.7% of students were hesitant in this context. Wut & Xu (2021) made a similar observation, stating that students rather solve their own problems or ask their friends for assistance than ask their teachers.

Anger is an emotion that people experience when they are unhappy with a certain activity. When asked if their teachers had lost control when providing feedback or answers on their learning difficulties, 67.2% of the students said "No." Fadillah & Indriani (2022) observed similar findings. It demonstrates that teachers were sympathetic to online learners' learning challenges and delighted to address their concerns. 74.1% of students indicated that teachers helped them in reducing their technology-usage-related fears. The online learning environment for students was new and therefore lacked technical skills (Nugroho, 2020) and expressed frustrations regarding technology (Hagedorn et al., 2022). Hence, in order for students to feel at ease in online classrooms and for their online learning to be effective, the help of the teachers was very significant. 86.7% of respondents stated that their teachers were vulnerable to conflicts related to their academic performance due to the covid-19 pandemic. Students were stressed about their grades in academics (Rodríguez-Planas, 2022), lack of academic support (Al-Maskari et al., 2022), academic achievements, educational quality (Villa Castaño et al., 2022), and their educational future (Gupta et al., 2022) etc. At that time, teachers recognized and respected their academic concerns and were fretted about their students' psychological well-being. Similar results were reported by Drescher et al. (2022).



[Chart 6] represents the dimension-wise average percentage of responses towards social relations with teachers in online classes. It reveals that as per 82.9% of students' responses, their social relations with their teachers were cooperative in online classes. This finding backs up the findings presented by Duraku and Hoxha (2020). 75.75% of respondents said that their teachers paid individual attention to them during online learning. Gupta & Pathania (2021) reported a similar discovery to it. 68.97% of respondents found their teachers intensely involved in online teaching-learning activities. A similar finding was reported by Zulfikar et al. (2019). 64.57% of students reported that they were socio-emotionally bonded with their teachers, which was consistent with the findings of Delahunty et al. (2014) and in contrast to the findings of Literat (2021).

[Diagram 1] indicates the study's significant findings regarding cooperation, individualised attention, involvement and socio-emotional bonding in social relations between students and teachers. Students found an engaging teaching-learning environment where their teachers encouraged them to participate actively in learning activities when it comes to the cooperation provided by the teachers during online learning. Teachers provided individualised support to students when they struggled with technology in online classes. By pushing students to continue their online studying with all their might and enthusiasm, they were discovered to have a strong connection with them. Sensitivity, comprehension, and affection were all parts of their socio-emotional relationship.



5. Conclusion and Recommendations-

The results of this study conclude that social relations between students and teachers in terms of cooperation, individualized attention, involvement, and socio-emotional bonding in online learning have been perceived positively by students. It reflects that despite practising with a very new-fangled mode of teaching, most of the teachers had acknowledged it in an exceptionally inviting manner which was offering academic support to learners as well as giving them the social and emotional support that encouraged them to feel inclined in their learning and diminished their stress and anxiety at the time of covid crisis when the entire world was experiencing life uncertainty and statics.

Teachers are suggested here some strategies to make social relations better in the online teaching-learning process. In order to avoid having students miss any part of the lectures, it is advised that teachers should encourage their students to come on time for online classes. Students who are absent from class or who are not participating in learning activities should be contacted by teachers utilising chat boxes to get their attention in class. This will alert students throughout the lesson that their teachers can call them at any moment in the class. Teachers should be humble and sensitive with students about the issue of not being technologically abled and should offer all assistance they can in developing their technical skills, keeping in mind the digital divide problem in India.

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