

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF ONLINE EDUCATION: A LITERATURE ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Online education has become an increasingly popular learning method, especially in the digital and post-pandemic era. However, its impact on learners' social and emotional aspects is still a topic that needs further research. This literature analysis aims to understand the effect of online education on students' social interaction and emotional well-being. The results show that online education can lead to social isolation due to limited face-to-face interaction and affect students' interpersonal skills. In addition, emotional aspects such as stress, anxiety and technology adaptation challenges are significant impacts, although some students are able to experience benefits such as increased self-confidence. The conclusion of this analysis emphasises the need for a holistic approach that includes social support, interactive programmes and teaching strategies that focus on emotional wellbeing to maximise the potential of online education.

Keywords: Social, Emotional Impact, Online Education, Literature Analysis.

Introduction

Online education has become one of the main ways of organising learning. Online education is a form of learning conducted through digital platform, where learners and teachers utilise information technology for knowledge transfer process (Judijanto & Aslan, 2025). In online education, learning materials are delivered using various interactive media such as videos, digital documents, learning applications, and online discussion forums. This learning process uses internet connectivity as the main means to connect learners and teachers, allowing learning to take place without having to physically meet in a classroom. Online education has grown rapidly thanks to technological advances, which significantly increases accessibility and flexibility in learning (Komari & Aslan, 2025).

Online education is gaining popularity as an alternative learning method, especially in the ever-evolving digital era. Today, online education is not only a solution for distance learning, but also an innovation for traditional education

systems that integrate technology. The COVID-19 pandemic has also catalysed the massive adoption of online education, as physical restrictions have forced many institutions to switch to online learning (Purike & Aslan, 2025)

Since the emergency, many educational institutions have shifted from traditional face-to-face learning methods to online-based learning systems. This rapid shift has had a significant impact on various aspects of learners' lives. While online education offers flexibility in time and place as well as wider access to learning resources, it also raises a number of new challenges, particularly regarding the social and emotional impacts experienced by learners (Chandra, 2021).

One of the most prominent impacts of online education is the change in social interaction. In traditional learning, the school or campus environment is the main space for children and young people to develop social relationships with peers, teachers and various related parties (Nguyen, 2022). However, online education tends to reduce direct contact with the learning community, which risks leading to social isolation, feelings of loneliness, and reduced ability to share social experiences in person. This aspect is an important concern considering that social interaction plays a vital role in learners' emotional development (Chen & Zhang, 2021).

In addition to social impacts, online learning mechanisms can also pose significant emotional challenges. Learners often face difficulties in adjusting to new learning methods, especially when faced with technological demands, lack of direct assistance from teachers, and a sense of isolation from the learning community. This can lead to stress, anxiety and even lower motivation to learn. In the long run, this can have a negative impact on learners' emotional well-being and academic performance (Gonzalez & de la Fuente, 2021).

While various studies have been conducted to identify the impact of online education, the focus of most studies is still on the academic aspects, such as learning effectiveness and learning outcome achievement. Meanwhile, the social and emotional impacts of online education do not always receive equal attention. In fact, social and emotional aspects are important components that affect learning success holistically (Johnson, 2025).

In this context, literature review-based research is needed to uncover in-depth the social and emotional impacts of online education. This research aims to identify the findings that have been presented by previous studies, elaborate on the factors that contribute to these impacts, and provide insights that can guide the development of more inclusive and sustainable education models.

Research Methods

The study in this research uses the literature method. The literature research method is a research approach conducted by collecting, analysing, and interpreting

information derived from various written sources, such as books, scientific journals, papers, articles, reports, documents, and other publication materials. This method is usually used to formulate a theoretical framework, understand existing concepts, or compare previous research results to produce new conclusions (Green et al., 2006) ; (Galvan & Galvan, 2017) . literature research does not involve direct data collection in the field, but instead focuses on exploring and synthesising readily available information. This approach is crucial in understanding previous studies as a basis for further research, as well as to strengthen the argument and relevance of a study (Torraco, 2005) .

Results and Discussion

Positive and Negative Impacts of Online Education

Online education offers many positive impacts in increasing the accessibility of education for all levels of society. One of the most striking advantages is the flexibility of time and place. Learners are no longer bound by a specific time schedule or need to be present at a physical location, allowing them to learn according to their own time and conditions. This is particularly helpful for individuals who have geographical limitations, such as living in remote areas, as well as for those who have other responsibilities such as work or family (Firmansyah & Aslan, 2025a) ; (Firmansyah & Aslan, 2025b) .

Ease of access is also a major plus point of online education. Through internet connectivity, learners have access to a wide range of learning materials from around the world, whether in the form of videos, academic journals, or online courses. This abundance of resources allows them to explore topics in greater depth and even gain a global perspective from reputable educational institutions. Not only that, online education also provides opportunities to take courses that may not be available locally (Rokhmawati et al., 2025) .

Online education also encourages the utilisation of technology in the learning process. Learners learn to use digital devices, such as laptops, smartphones and learning apps as the main tools in their studies. This indirectly improves digital literacy skills, which is one of the important competencies in the modern era. Technology also enables more interactive learning, such as the use of animated videos, simulations, and online discussion platforms that facilitate collaboration (Lee & Kim, 2023) .

In addition, the cost of online education tends to be more affordable than conventional education, which is why many people choose this method. Educational institutions usually save on operational costs, such as maintaining physical facilities, and can offer courses at a lower price. Learners can also cut additional costs such as transport, accommodation, and uniforms, making education more inclusive for all (Grewenig et al., 2020) .

But despite the positive impacts, online education also has some negative impacts that need to be considered. One of the main challenges is the lack of in-person social interaction. In online learning, learners interact more often through screens than face-to-face. This can reduce the ability to develop social skills, such as co-operation, empathy and interpersonal communication (Bao, 2020).

Another negative impact is the risk of low learning motivation due to unstructured learning patterns. The absence of direct supervision from the teacher has the potential to make learners feel more relaxed, even less disciplined in attending classes or completing assignments. For some people, learning independently requires a level of responsibility and motivation that is not always easy to maintain (Salmon, 2021).

In addition, online education also faces technology and connectivity constraints. Learners who live in areas with poor internet networks or who do not have adequate devices often find it difficult to keep up with online learning. This reinforces the disparity in access to education between regions, especially in developing countries. Technological limitations are a real barrier for many individuals to optimally utilise online education (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020).

Learners and teachers also often face fatigue due to prolonged use of digital devices. Screen-centred learning activities can trigger health issues such as eye disorders, posture, and stress due to digital multitasking. These issues, if not managed properly, can lead to reduced productivity and mental wellbeing of learners (Anderson, 2022).

In addition, sometimes the learning materials provided in online education are less customisable to individual learning styles. Not all learners are able to learn effectively through digital methods, especially those who are more accustomed to face-to-face approaches or kinesthetic methods. This mismatch of methods can lead to difficulties in understanding concepts, which ultimately impacts learning outcomes (Caroline & Aslan, 2025).

The credibility of online education is also often debated, especially in terms of evaluation and monitoring. Online examinations have a higher risk of cheating, given that supervision is not as strict as in the conventional system. This can affect the validity and trust value of certificates or diplomas produced through online education (Ridwan et al., 2024).

Overall, online education is an innovation that has helped overcome many challenges in the world of traditional education. Its role as a complement or alternative to conventional learning systems opens up great opportunities to create an educational ecosystem that is more inclusive, flexible and adaptive to the needs of the times. Although there are obstacles and negative consequences, solutions to overcome them continue to be developed so that online education can provide

maximum benefits for all parties.

Social and emotional impact of online education

Online education has become a key solution for many educational institutions, especially during the global pandemic. While it allows for the continuation of the learning process amidst social restrictions, this approach presents various social and emotional impacts for learners that need to be considered. Switching from face-to-face interaction to distance learning brings significant changes, both positive and negative (Saputra et al., 2024).

Firstly, from a social aspect, online education tends to reduce direct interaction between students. As a result, learners lose the opportunity to establish close social relationships with peers. Their absence in the physical school environment makes the socialisation process less optimal, which in turn can affect the development of communication and cooperation skills (Chandra, 2021).

In addition, online education can also create social isolation. Many students feel disconnected from their school community, which is usually one of the sources of social support. The lack of interaction with teachers, friends and group activities causes some students to feel lonely, especially those who live in less supportive neighbourhoods (Nguyen, 2022).

The emotional impact is more complex. One of the main issues is the rising level of stress and anxiety among students. Challenges such as understanding the material without direct guidance, technical difficulties and poor timing often leave students feeling overwhelmed. Plus, the pressure to meet academic standards without direct interaction can increase mental and emotional strain (Chen & Zhang, 2021).

Another impact is the occurrence of "Zoom fatigue" or fatigue due to constant video conferencing activities. Many students feel bored and tired from staring at a screen for long periods of time, which jeopardises their mental health. This intensive use of technology often creates an aversion to the learning process itself (Gonzalez & de la Fuente, 2021).

However, online education also has its positive impacts. Students who are used to learning independently during online education have the opportunity to develop critical thinking and time management skills. This encourages them to become more independent and take responsibility for their own learning, which are important qualities in modern education (Johnson, 2025).

In addition, students who are less comfortable interacting directly in the classroom get the space to study in a quieter atmosphere at home. A flexible learning environment can help students who have special needs or certain preferences to focus more on understanding the material (Coman et al., 2020).

However, these positive impacts do not apply to all students. Online education generally requires students to have high discipline, emotional resilience

and adequate access to technology. Students from underprivileged families often face a technology gap that puts them behind their peers, exacerbating educational inequality (Adnan & Anwar, 2020).

In the long run, poorly facilitated online education can result in emotional impacts such as low self-confidence and motivation to learn. Therefore, it is important for schools, governments and families to collaborate so that negative social and emotional impacts can be minimised through support-based approaches, more active interaction and equitable access to technology (Dhawan, 2020).

Ultimately, online education presents new challenges that require adaptation from various parties. Its social and emotional impact should be a major concern, so that innovative solutions to support student well-being can be optimally implemented.

Conclusion

The social and emotional impact of online education suggests that despite providing greater flexibility and accessibility in learning, online education can pose significant challenges in social interaction. Students who study online often feel social isolation due to the lack of direct interaction with peers and teachers. This can lower their social skills and reduce the opportunity to develop important interpersonal relationships during their education.

Besides the social impact, online education also has notable emotional implications. Some students report increased stress and anxiety due to difficulties adapting to the online learning format. Factors such as lack of technological skills, distractions from the home environment, and difficulties in organising time can contribute to emotional distress. On the other hand, there are also students who feel more relaxed and confident with online education as they can learn at their own pace.

Overall, although online education offers many advantages such as flexibility and independence, social and emotional challenges should be given special attention. Additional support from teachers, the use of interactive technologies, and the development of teaching programs that emphasise social engagement and emotional well-being can help minimise the negative impacts and maximise the potential of online education.

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