

# Digital Learning Readiness and Attitudes toward Online Education among Secondary School Students

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## Abstract

*The digital technologies have made their mark in the environment of school education by creating flexible and technology supported learning conditions. The attitude of students towards online learning is critical to the success of the digital instructional practice. The current research examines the perception of secondary school students to online learning relative to gender, school type, locality and academic performance. The study was conducted through a descriptive survey method. The sample size was 620 students who were in secondary schools in Salem district within Tamil Nadu through random sampling method. The investigator administered a Digital Learning Attitude Scale to obtain the data. The data were analyzed using some of the statistical methods like the percentage analysis, t test, and one way ANOVA. The findings showed that the majority of the students exhibited a moderate degree of positive attitude towards online learning. It was also found that no significant gender difference existed in the way people attitude toward online learning whereas there were significant differences depending on locality and type of school. The research focuses on the necessity of a better technological base and digital awareness training to increase the interest of the students to online learning platforms.*

**Keywords:** Online Learning, Digital Education, Student Attitude, Secondary School Students, Technology Integration

## Introduction

Digital technology in education has altered the conventional learning setting that existed in the classroom, and has brought out new methods of teaching and learning. Presence of online learning has taken the center stage of contemporary education systems especially following the international adaptation of technology mediated instruction in the recent years. Institutions of learning are currently dependent on the internet, virtual classrooms, and the use of online resources to enable them to learn outside the classroom.

Online learning is the application of technologies based on the use of the internet to provide educational content and engage the teacher and the student. Online platforms enable students to learn, engage in discussions, do assignments and contact their instructors, without the geographical limitations. This has made online learning to be a significant alternative to normal classroom instruction. Nevertheless,

the attitude of students towards the usage of digital learning technologies is one of the key factors that influence the success of online education. Attitude is the perception, feelings and willingness of an individual to react to a certain idea or experience. Students whose attitude towards online learning is positive will have the high probability of participating actively in digital platforms and enjoying the opportunities provided by technology based learning.

With online education in the secondary school setting, there are opportunities and challenges associated with this adoption. Although digital platforms allow learning content to be accessed and new learning opportunities are offered, technological access, digital skills and motivation can be some of the problems facing students. The factors can affect the perception of students towards online learning and predisposition towards the online learning process. The attitudes of students towards online learning are vital in enhancing the effectiveness of technology integrated education hence there is a need to understand of the same. The analysis of factors affecting the perceptions of students will allow educators and policy makers to create the strategies and methods to improve the process of digital learning and deliver positive learning outcomes.

### **Review of Related Studies**

There are other studies that have investigated the perceptions and attitudes of students with respect to online learning in various educational settings.

Alodwan (2021) explored the attitude of the English language learners towards online learning during the pandemic period. The results showed that online classes were valued by the students because it offered them flexibility, but they also mentioned difficulties with limited interaction and technical problems.

Benadla and Hadji (2021) conducted a study of the affective attitude of the university students in relation to distance learning in a digital platform. In the findings, the students indicated that there is generally moderately positive attitude towards online learning, but there were problems like the internet connectivity and absence of face-to-face communication with teachers that affected the overall satisfaction of students.

The attitudes of high school students towards online learning on emergency remote education were examined by Jalilinia (2022). The results indicated that students who had more access to digital resources and technological assistance had a more positive attitude towards the online education.

Prakasha et al. (2024) investigated the correlation between e learning attitude of the university students and their academic performance. In the study, the researchers found that there was a weakly positive correlation between the perceptions of online learning and academic performance of the students, which implies the need to establish positive attitude towards online education.

Erdel (2025) compared the satisfaction of students studying online courses and their perception towards e learning in a hybrid learning setting. The findings have shown that the satisfaction of students with online courses greatly affected their general views on online learning.

All these studies have implied that the attitude of the students to online learning has been determined by a number of factors such as the availability of technology and digital competency and environmental learning condition.

### **Variables of the Study**

#### **Dependent Variable**

- Attitude toward Online Learning

#### **Independent Variables**

- Gender
- Type of School

- Locality
- Academic Achievement

**Objectives of the Study**

1. To test the degree of attitude towards online learning among secondary school learners.
2. To test the relationship between the difference in attitude towards online learning depending on gender.
3. To examine the dissimilarity in attitude toward online learning, concerning locality.
4. To investigate the attitude difference between online learning among the students studying in various schools.

**Hypotheses of the Study**

1. No strong dissimilarity in the attitude toward online learning exists between the students of the secondary school concerning gender.
2. Attitude towards online learning does not show a substantial locality difference among the students of secondary school.
3. There is no notable variation of the opinion towards online learning among the secondary school students as regards the type of school.

**Methodology**

**Research Method**

The current research was based on the descriptive survey approach to understand the opinions of students toward online studying.

**Population and Sample**

The sample size was comprised of all students studying in the Salem district, Tamil Nadu in secondary schools. A sample of 620 students was picked based on simple random sampling method in government, aided and government and private schools.

**Tool Used**

The investigator developed a Digital Learning Attitude Scale that includes 30 statements. The scale was on the five point Likert scale where the answers were strongly agree, strongly disagree, strongly agree, and strongly disagree.

**Data Analysis and Interpretation**

**Table 1: Level of Attitude toward Online Learning among Secondary School Students**

Level of Attitude	Number of Students	Percentage
Low	146	23.55
Moderate	304	49.03
High	170	27.42
Total	620	100

The findings show that most of the students (49.03) portrayed moderate degree of positive attitude towards online learning, 27.42% of the students portrayed the high degree of positive attitude. The percentage of students with low attitude to online learning was less.

**Table 2: Difference in Attitude toward Online Learning with respect to Gender**

Gender	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Boys	285	112.63	18.45	0.94	0.347
Girls	335	113.97	19.12		

The t value calculated (0.94) is not significant at the level of 0.05. Consequently, the attitude to online learning has no great difference between boys and girls.

**Table 3: Difference in Attitude toward Online Learning with respect to Locality**

Locality	N	Mean	SD	t-value	p-value
Rural	360	111.45	19.83	2.87	0.004*
Urban	260	115.98	18.74		

\*Significant at 0.05 level

The results show that the calculated t value (2.87) is significant at the 0.05 level. Urban students demonstrated comparatively higher attitudes toward online learning than rural students.

**Table 4: Difference in Attitude toward Online Learning with respect to Type of School**

Type of School	N	Mean	SD	F-value	p-value
Government	210	110.72	20.11	4.12	0.017*
Aided	235	112.94	18.97		
Private	175	117.83	17.56		
Total	620	113.41	18.89		

\*Significant at 0.05 level

Private school students showed higher attitudes toward online learning compared to government and aided school students.

## Discussion

The research outcomes have shown that the majority of secondary school students have an average degree of positive attitude towards online learning. This means that, students are slowly getting used to the digital learning conditions but they still need additional support and resources to get full advantages of online learning.

It was also found that the gender did not have a significant effect on the attitude of the students towards online learning. The boys and girls seem to share perceptions about the digital learning platforms. This implies that the availability of online learning opportunities is also equal to the students regardless of gender. The locality was however established to have a significant impact on the attitude of students towards online learning. Students in urban areas displayed more positive attitudes than the students in rural areas. Such disparity could be explained by the higher level of technological infrastructure, access to the internet, and access to digital devices in large cities. On the same note, school type was also identified to affect the attitude of students towards online learning. The students of the private schools demonstrated a relatively better level of the positive attitude towards the online learning. This could be as a result of superior technology facilities, organized digital learning programs and increased access to online learning tools in the privately operated institutions.

## Conclusion

This research points to the increased significance of online education in the secondary education. Although the students are mostly moderate in their acceptance of the digital learning platform, their attitudes are predetermined by a number of factors, such as locality and school type. Digitizing the rural population, offering them affordable internet options, and improving their technological literacy will help students to take advantage of online learning space and improve their engagement with it significantly. Training programs should also be offered in schools to enable the students learn digital literacy and viable online learning skills. The teacher is also very instrumental in influencing the attitude of the students towards online learning by creating interactive digital lessons that involve using of technology to promote collaboration during learning. Educational leaders should thus aim at enhancing the teaching systems that have incorporated technology in supporting the dynamic needs of the modern students.

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