



A Psychological Reflection on Virtual Learning: An Exploratory Study

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Abstract- The virtual education is being used as an educational platform for imparting education to students since several years. In this paper the researcher has tried to provide a psychological perspective of students in virtual education. This paper has tried to analyze the perceptions of secondary school learners with regard to emotional aspects in virtual learning by using an exploratory research method. As positive and negative emotions influence in teaching learning process, so learner's perception involved in it must *be* appraised as a way to determine the effectiveness of this trending virtual learning method, as long as it is crucial in the academic particulars. So, this study plans to assess the students' perceptions on emotional aspects when a virtual platform is used for learning purpose. In the study, it has been found that maximum of students feel the importance of emotional well being, emotional support, emotional security and self-regulated learning in virtual learning. On the other hands some students have responded that they feel emotionally insecure and isolated in virtual learning platform. The overall result of the study signifies that certain problems exist on the online learning including the emotional problems should be resolved by adopting different principles by the facilitators.

Keywords: Virtual Learning, Emotional Engagement, Positive Emotion, Learning Environment, perception.

I. INTRODUCTION

Students look for scholastic chances in styles that encounter their way of life today, and virtual learning pledges to meet student's learning demands. Positive perceptions and emotions are escort to teaching-learning process. "Those who are engaged in online learning deal with the effects of emotion on a daily basis, whether in designing instruction, teaching or learning online" (Cleveland & Campbell, 2012). "From a learning designer's standpoint, emotion is a effective tool and it can engage, improve retention, spark behavioural change and sometimes just make learning that much more interesting. On a general level, we could say that it's better to spark positive emotions than negative ones, and that people associate easier with other people than things" (Learning Crafters, 2020). "Feelings of learners and their emotions can impact learning in online and blended environments, specifically motivation, self-regulation and academic achievement" (Rienties & Rivers, 2014). There is a great role of emotion in both face to face and virtual learning for effective teaching learning process. The enlightenment operation of a student is greatly dependent on his emotions which can hugely influence performance and behaviour. We all know that there are two types of emotion i.e. positive emotion and negative emotion. Positive emotions are joy, happy, enthusiasm, pleasant etc. and fear, angry, sad etc are termed as negative emotion. "Students who are anxious, angry, or depressed don't learn; people who are caught in these states do not take in information efficiently or deal with it well" (Goleman, 1995). When a person experiences effective emotions, the person learns well. Like in face to face learning some positive emotional aspects ought to be given extremely focused in virtual learning also. The positive perceptions of students on virtual learning and their emotions are jointly important for effective learning process. "The forecast of positive emotions, on the part the emotionally intelligent teacher, may aid in broadening behavioral repertoires and increasing student attention" (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005). So the role of teacher need to be produced to give rise an efficacious interchange with the learners in traditional classrooms as well as virtual classrooms also. When a facilitator is fluent in the use of the tools, the virtual classroom fades into the background and learners start to ignore the technology. This makes them experience as if they are in a real studying environment, encouraging them to engage wholly in the training experience. "Intellectual and environmental engagement are powerful in modern learning. But nurturing emotional engagement increases their effectiveness and effect by personalizing the experience" (Hofmann, 2020). So it recommends that dynamic teaching, establishing collective or cooperative knowledge of the instructor and he should sense how to recognize feelings and emotions, control and dispense proper representation of appearance in virtual learning especially when it comes to negative emotions, which are stiffer to recount in a gracious way in many times. "Schools should focus more on meta-cognitive activities that

encourage students to talk about their emotions, listen to their classmates' feelings, and think about the motivations of people who enter their curricular world" (Sylwester, 1994).

II. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Realizing the importance of psychological perspectives in virtual education, the investigator desires to make a humble attempt to present and study students' perception on virtual learning in regard to emotional aspects because there is a great role of emotion in virtual learning. As positive and negative emotions influence in teaching learning process, so learner's perception involved in it must be appraised as a way to determine the effectiveness of this trending virtual learning method, as long as it is crucial in the academic particulars. Like face to face learning, consideration of psychological aspects in virtual learning is also very important to make learners engage in learning environment and for making learning more interesting and without this effective learning outcome is not possible.

III. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Jin Su Jeong, Gomez, & Canada, (2016) [8] had discussed on Students' Perceptions and Emotions toward Learning in a Flipped General Science Classroom and they found that the students have the overall positive perceptions to a flipped classroom setting. Particularly, over 80% of them considered that the course was a valuable learning experience.

Melanie Stephan, Stefan Markus, & Zikuda (2019) [9] had made a study on Students' Achievement Emotions and Online Learning in Teacher Education The purpose of this study was to analyze students' technology acceptance and achievement emotions after participating in an online course in teacher education. They found that online students reported significantly higher levels of achievement task value and technological control.

Papas, c. (2015) [12] made a study on The Impact of Emotional Intelligence In eLearning. in order to explore how emotional facilitation of thinking improves audience's engagement and performance, the researcher explore five components of emotional intelligence, three of which concern personal competence- self awareness, self motivation and self regulation and two of which correspond to social competence that are social awareness and social skill.

Amritesh & Subramanian (2019) [13] made a study on student's perception towards virtual learning environment and the purpose of the study was to fully grasp whether Virtual reality helps in giving them concept clarity and whether it makes learning easier for them to learn and remember. Their study had revealed that Virtual learning environments has made life simpler and easy to understand for students and they have found it easy to recollect the concepts.

Mamattah (2016). [14] made a study on Students' Perceptions of E-Learning. The objective of this study is to discover students' opinions of e-learning, which is an alternative to traditional classroom teaching and learning. He found that majority of the students think e-learning is an innovative idea and must be encouraged; however, few concerns such as the fear of employers' discrimination against those who study through e-learning were discovered. It was also realized that hybrid learning, which is a combination of online learning and face-to-face learning, is the preferred mode of learning for the respondents.

Morrison (2015) explained that Emotional Presence is the outward expression of emotion, affect, and feeling by individuals and among individuals in a community of inquiry, as they relate to and interact with the learning technology, course content, students, and the instructor. She found that Synchronous discussions via chats or video conferences provide instructors opportunity to assess and read learners emotions that may impact their learning progress, such as uncertainty, confusion, even positive emotions, interest and enthusiasm.

Major findings of the reviewed study: The major findings of the reviewed studies may be summed up in the following way:-

- Students have positive perceptions to a flipped classroom setting in general.
- Students face a greater degree of anxiety, boredom and anger, although less diversion in online courses.
- Nevertheless of the learning environment, enjoyment is important for the worth that students attach to both, learning content and machinery.
- Emotional facilitation of thinking enhances spectator's engagement and execution.
- With the initiation of virtual learning environments students find it engrossing to take science as their subject.

- Majority of the students suppose e-learning is a revolutionary notion and should be encouraged; however, few issues such as the fear of employers' discrimination against those who study via e-learning were discovered.

From the above reviews it prevalent that students' perception on virtual Learning is both positive and negative and various studies have been conducted on E-Learning, students' perception on virtual Learning, students' achievement of emotions in online learning, Impact of Emotional Intelligence In eLearning etc. But there is no any study on students' perceptions on emotional aspects in virtual learning particularly. There is a research gap between the study of students' perception on virtual learning and students' psychological perceptions on virtual learning. As positive (joy, pleasure etc.) and negative (anger, boredom etc.) emotions influence in teaching learning process, so learner's perception involved in it must be appraised as a way to determine the effectiveness of this trending virtual learning method, as long as it is crucial in the academic particulars.

IV. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of present study is to study the perception of the secondary school learners with regard to Emotional aspects in virtual learning.

V. METHODOLOGY

An Exploratory research design was used by the researcher to carry out the present study and it has proceeded through the self-administered questionnaire.

5.1 Population and sample

The sampling technique has been adopted for this study was Snowball sampling technique. The sample is consisted of 200 respondents (100 male and 100 female) and their age is ranging from 11 to 18 years who are using virtual learning environment to achieve their education from secondary schools.

5.2 Tools Used

The researcher has used both secondary data and primary data to meet the estimated requirements. A self-structured questionnaire has been developed by the researcher. The questionnaire includes 14 questions. For each question, the researcher has used Likert scale for collecting answers from students. The data are collected by uploading on Google forms and distributed through sharing the hyper link through e-mail and WhatsApp medium to reach the respondents. Percentage analysis is done by using Microsoft excel. The reliability of the questionnaire has estimated conducting a pilot study on another 20 secondary school students studying through virtual platform.

VI. FINDINGS AND RESULTS:

In this study the data has been interpreted by following the Likert's scale for collecting responses from students. The findings and results with the scheduled questions are as follows:

Figure 1: Do you think Emotional well being in virtual learning method is as important as in traditional learning method?

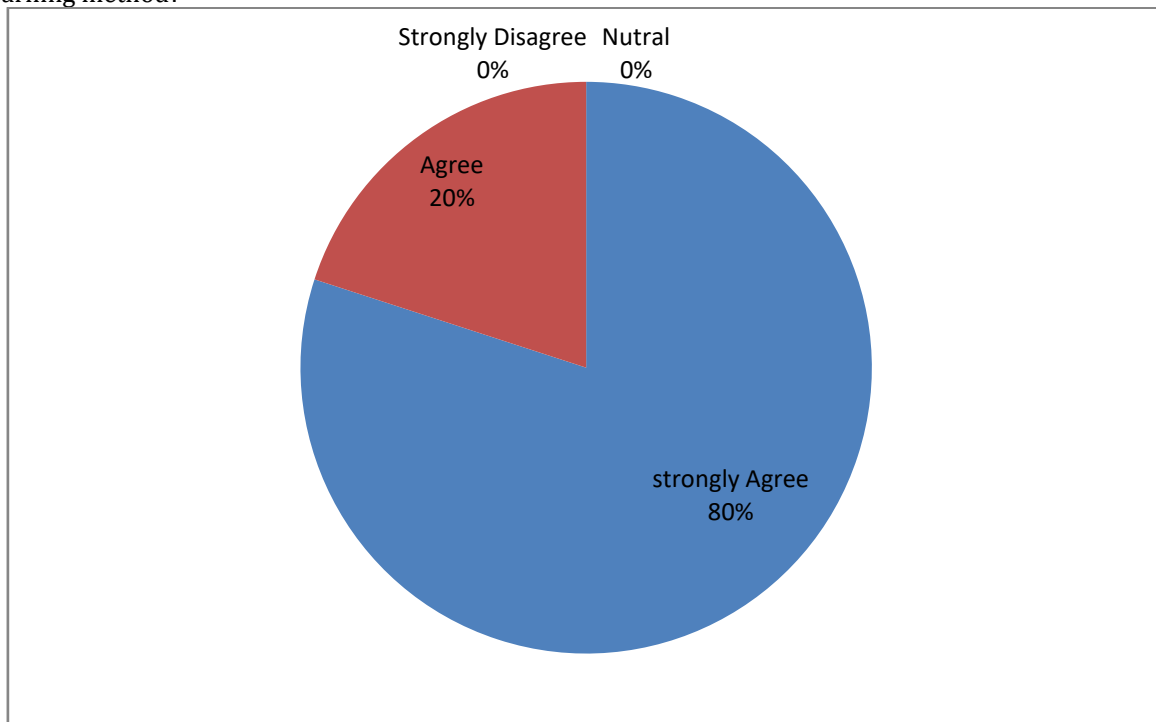


Figure-1 shows 80% students responded strongly agree and 20% students responded agree regarding importance of emotional well being in virtual learning and So, it is clear that maximum of students think that Emotional well being in virtual learning method is as important as in traditional learning method.

Figure 2: Do you think your performance has improved due to emotional support given by your teachers in virtual learning environment?

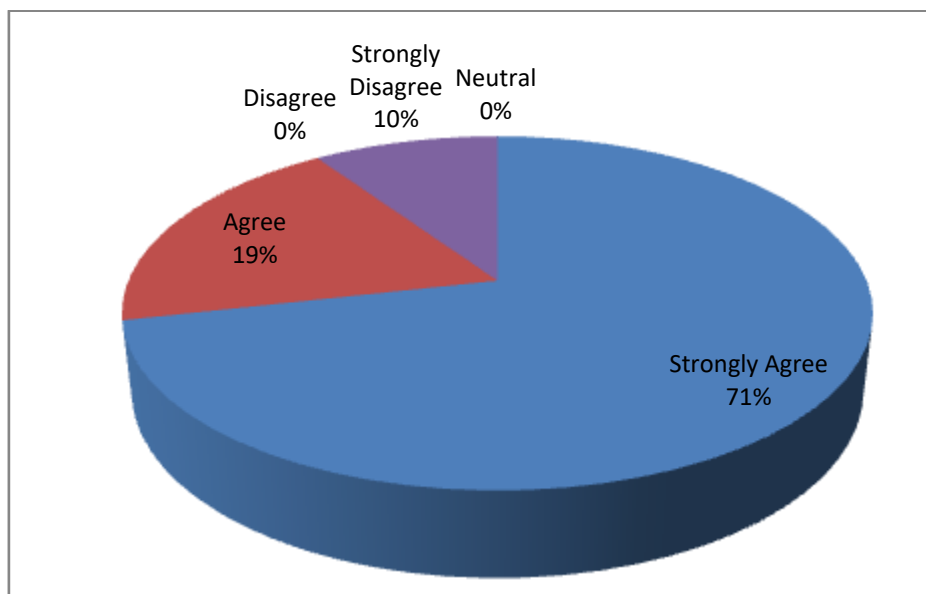
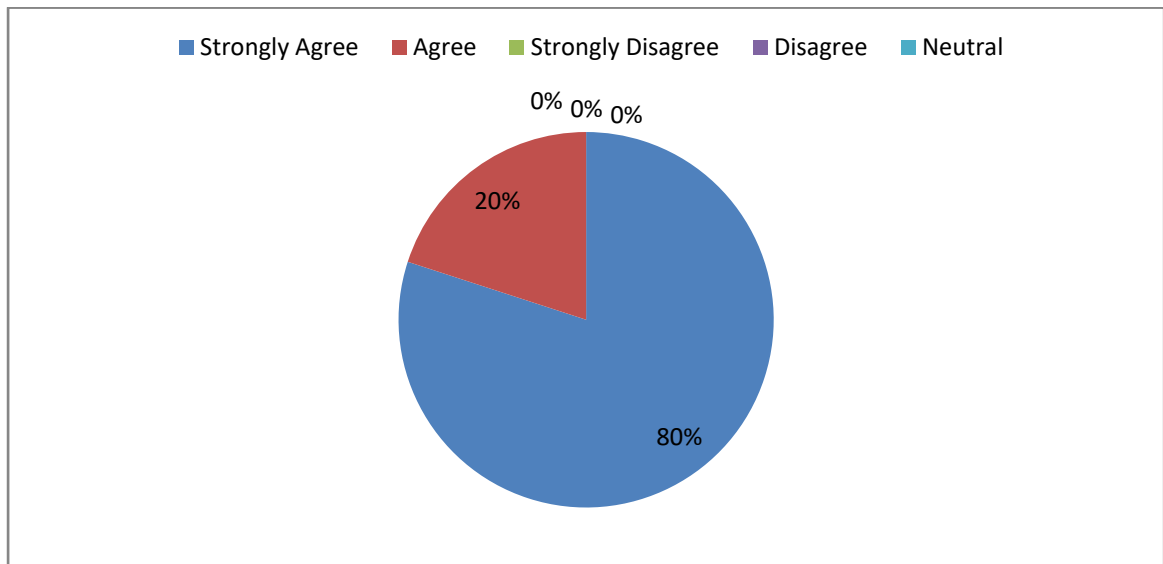


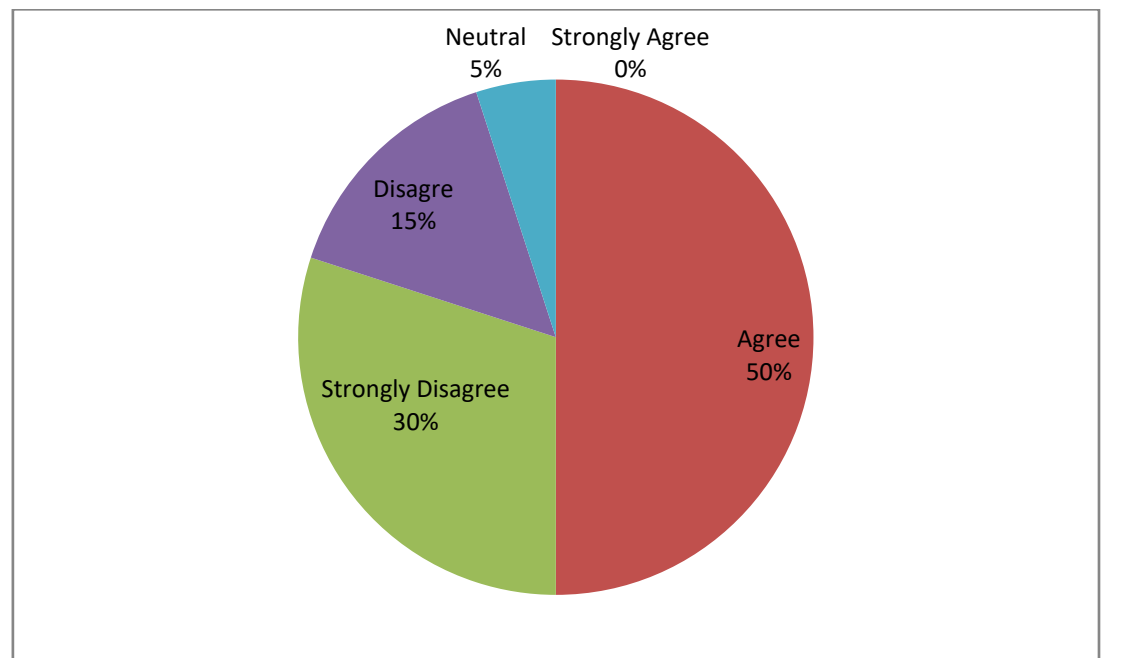
Figure-2 shows that 71% of students responded strongly agree, 19% students responded agree and 10% students responded strongly disagree in regard to their performance improvement due to emotional support given by teachers in virtual learning. It is observed that maximum of the students strongly agree that their performance has improved due to emotional support given by their teachers in virtual learning environments. So it proves that emotional support in virtual learning environment has helped in improving the performance of the students.

Figure 3: Do you think enjoyment, pleasure, hope and pride are important for developing your motivation in virtual learning environment?



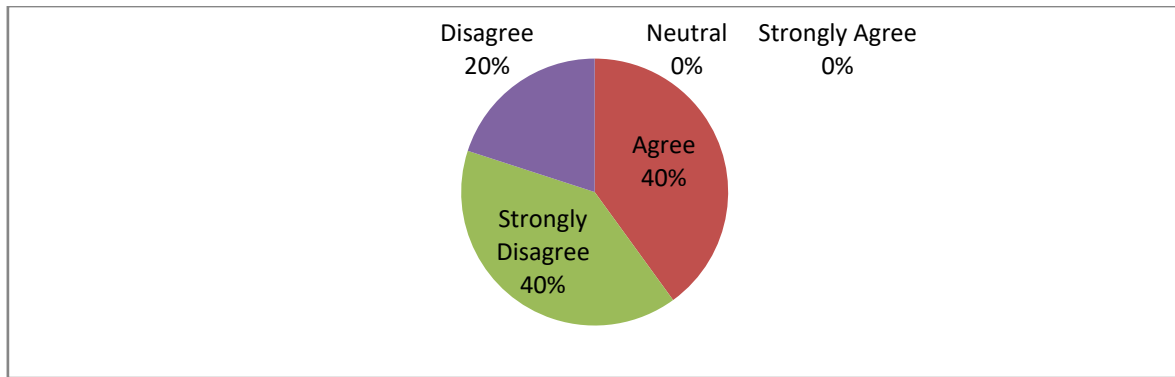
It is inferred that 80% of students responded strongly agree and 20% of students responded agree in regard to enjoyment, pleasure, hope and pride are important for developing your motivation in virtual learning environment

Figure 4: Do you think Teachers are able to guide students when their students need them for academic and other purpose through virtual learning environment.



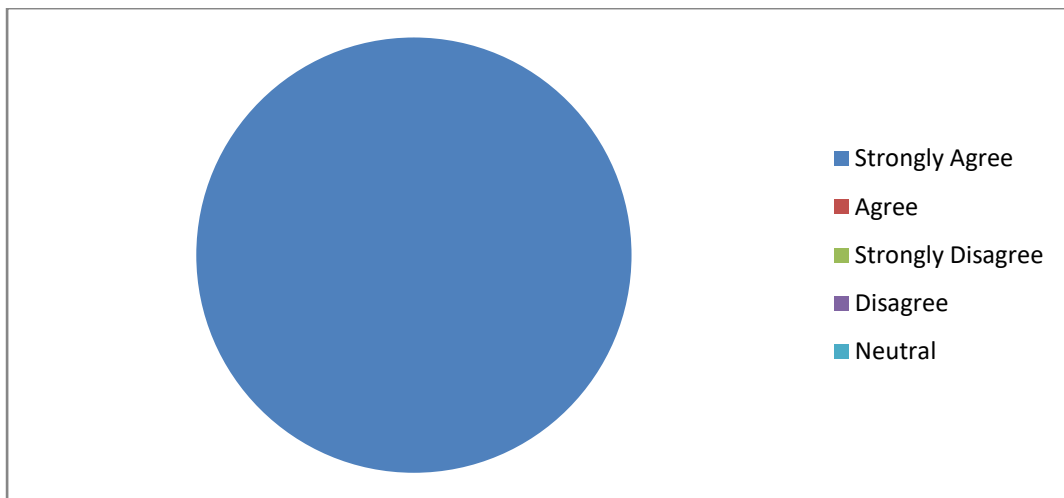
Above figure-4 shows that 50% of the students responded agree, 30% students responded strongly disagree, 15% students responded disagree and 5% students responded neutral in regard to teachers are able to guide them when they need for academic and other purpose through virtual learning environment. So it shows that in virtual learning environment teachers should guide their students when they need.

Figure 5: Is it possible to develop social emotional learning in virtual learning environment?



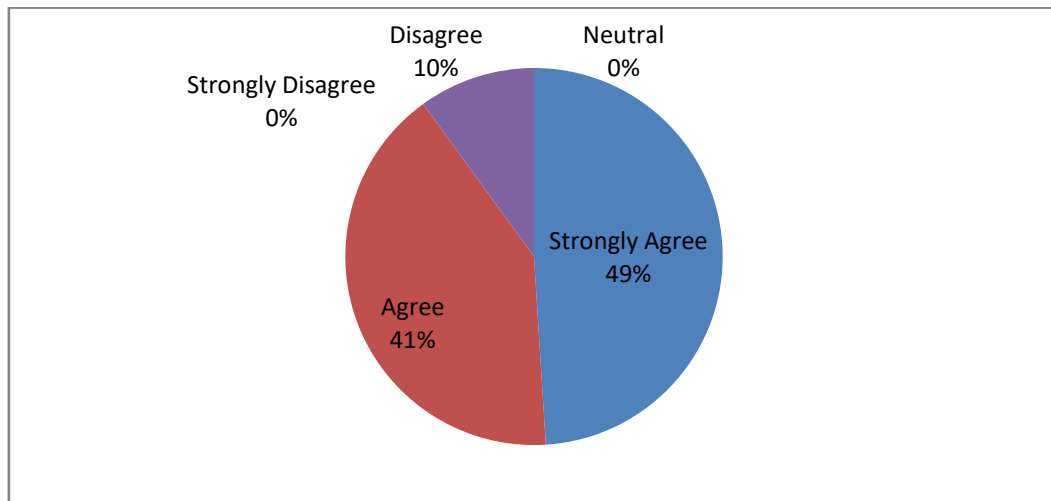
Above figure5 shows that students' perception in regard to social emotional development in virtual platform, only 40% students responded agree as well as 40% students responded strongly disagree and 20% students responded disagree. Thus it shows that social emotional development in virtual platform is possible in some cases and in some cases not.

Figure 6: Do you think teachers should inspire you to express yourself in virtual learning environment?



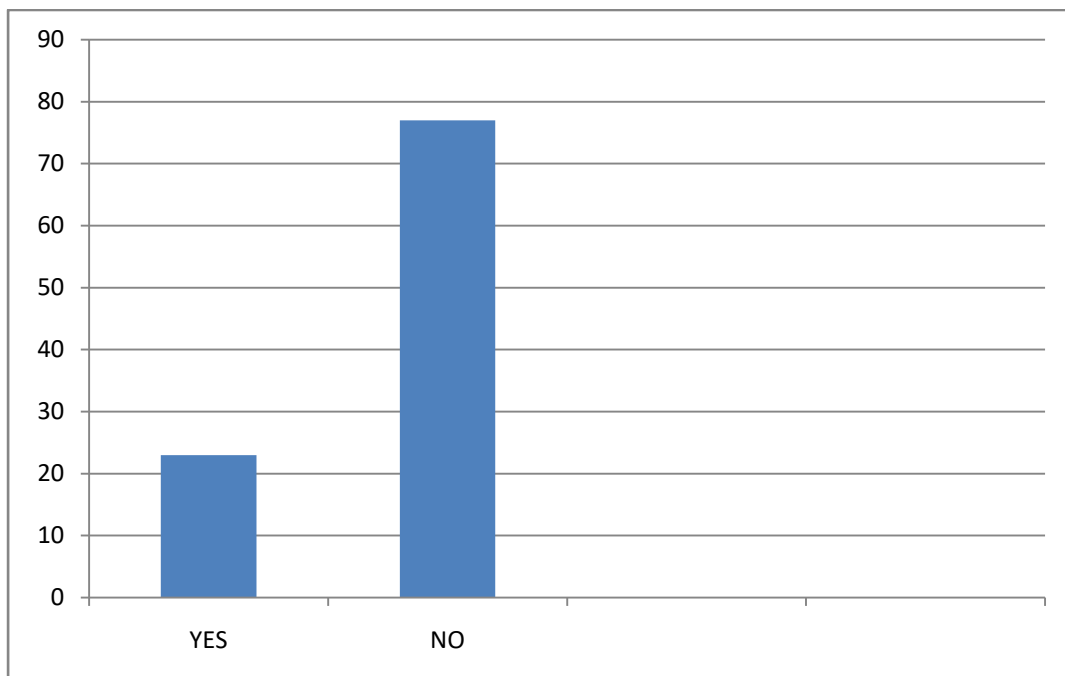
Above figure 6 shows that 100% Students responded strongly agree that teachers should inspire them to express themselves in virtual learning environment. So we can say that teachers should give chance to students to express their thoughts for emotional engagement in the virtual learning environment.

Figure 7: Do you think anger; shame, fear, anxiety and boredom make hindrances in improving your learning outcomes in virtual learning?



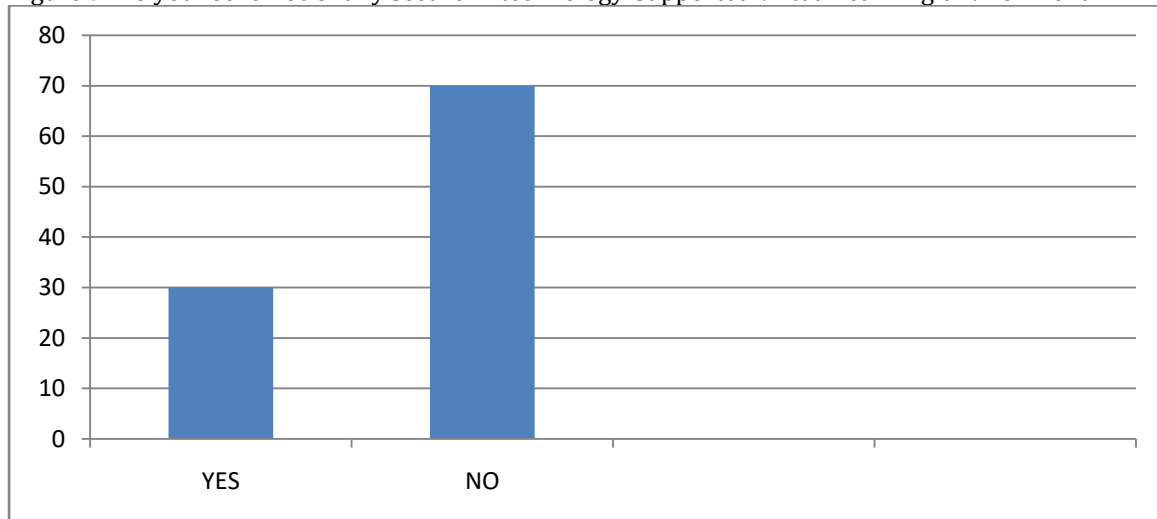
Above figure 7 shows that 49% of the students responded strongly agree, 41% of the students responded agree and 10% students responded disagree with the fact that anger; shame, fear, anxiety and boredom make hindrances in improving your learning outcomes in virtual learning.

Figure 8: Can you address your emotions in virtual classroom?



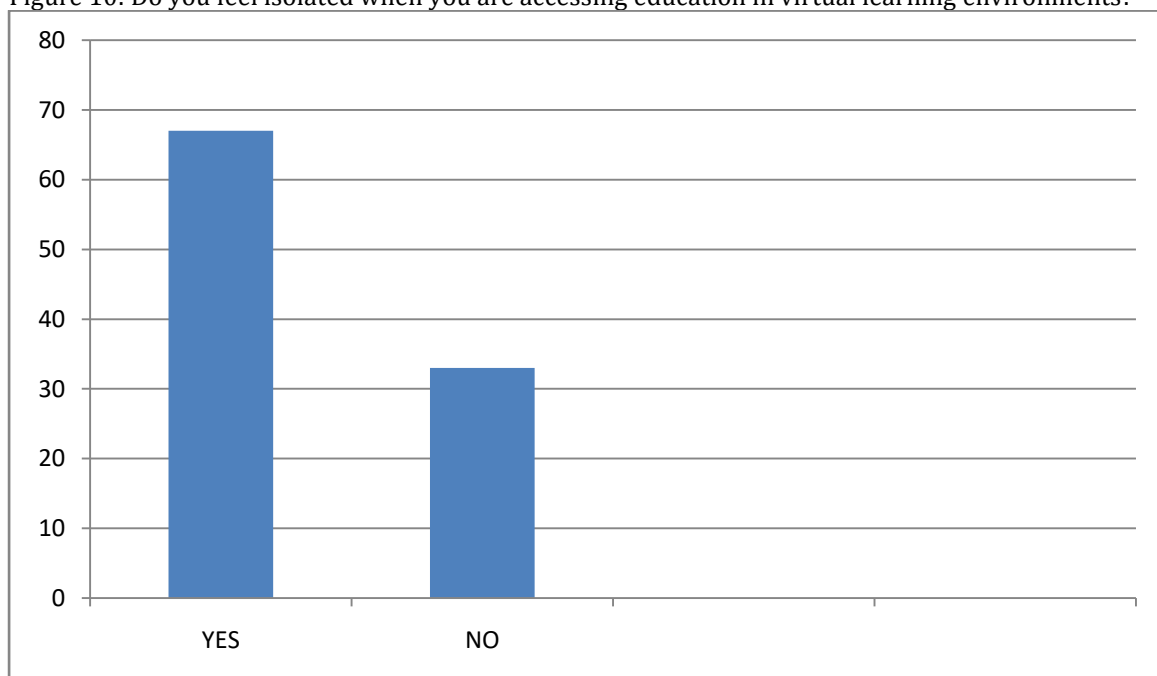
From the above figure 8 it can be said that maximum of students cannot address their emotions in virtual classroom.

Figure 9: Do you feel emotionally secure in technology-supported virtual learning environment?



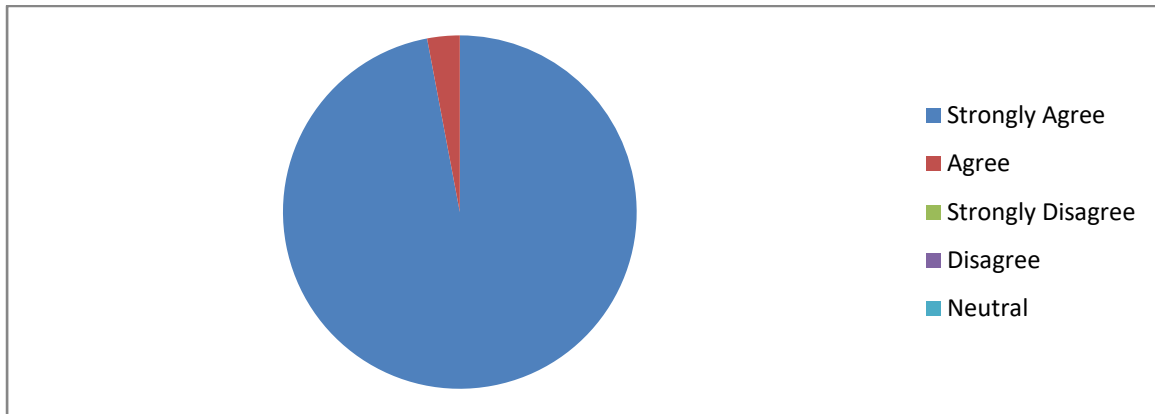
Above interpretation shows that maximum of students (70%) does not feel emotionally secure in technology-supported virtual learning environment where only 30% students feel emotionally secure in technology-supported virtual learning environment.

Figure 10: Do you feel isolated when you are accessing education in virtual learning environments?



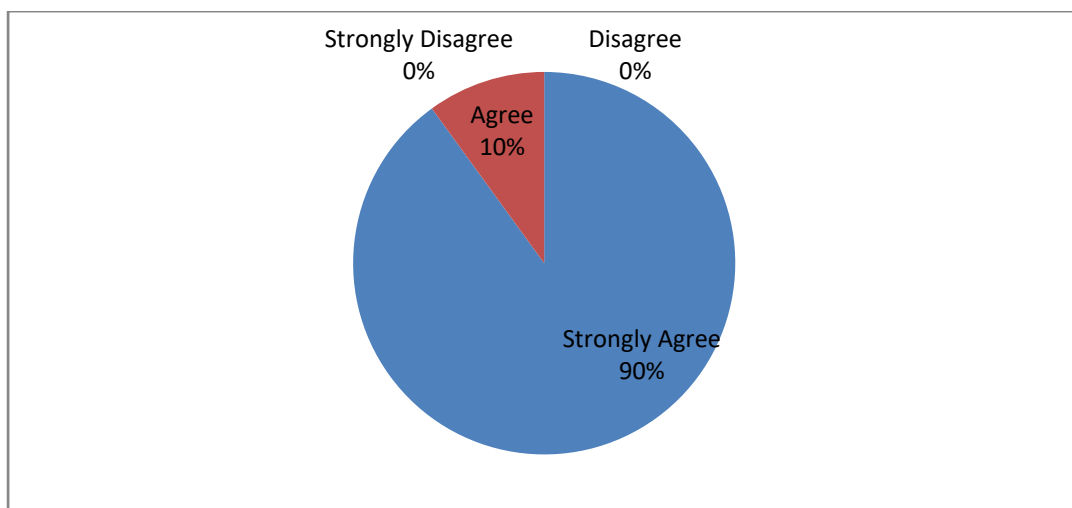
The above figure 10 shows that maximum of students fell isolated when accessing education through virtual learning environment. So, emotional connectivity is important between teachers and students in virtual education as physical interaction is missing in it.

Figure 11: Do you think positive emotions can facilitate self-regulated learning in virtual learning environment?



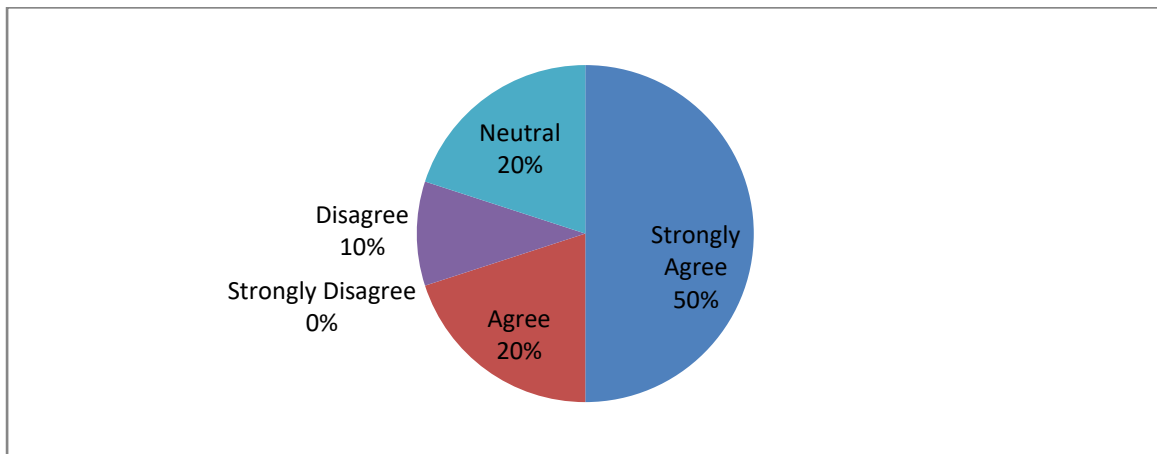
From the above figure 11 it is seen that 98% students responded strongly agree and 3% students responded agree with the fact that positive emotions can facilitate self-regulated learning in virtual learning environment. So, the teachers should try to develop positive emotions such as joy, pleasure etc. among the students for effective teaching-learning process in virtual environment.

Figure 12: Do you think positive emotions during exam preparation can develop your achievement performance in virtual learning environment?



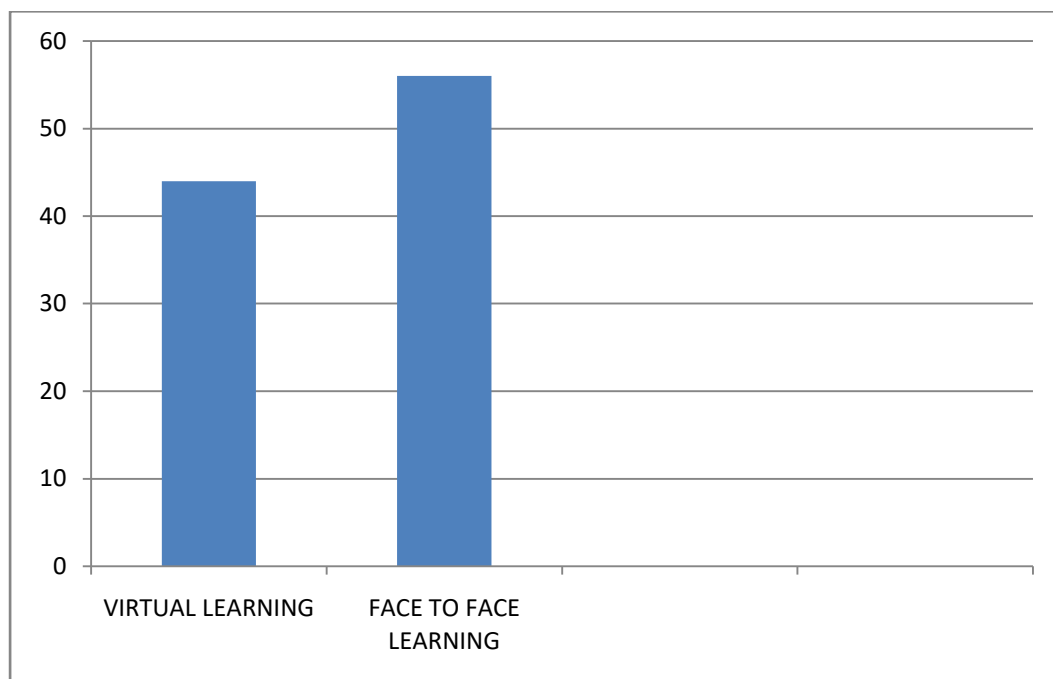
From the figure 12 it is found that 90% of students responded strongly agree and 10 % of students responded agree that positive emotions during exam preparation can develop their achievement performance in virtual learning environment. Thus, emotional experience is crucial condition for quality learning outcome in virtual learning environment.

Figure 13: Do you think the importance of technology acceptance to experience positive emotions in virtual learning?



Above figure13 shows that 50% of students responded strongly agree, 20% of students responded agree, 10% of students responded disagree and 20% students said neutral in regard to importance of technology acceptance to experience positive emotions in virtual learning. So, it shows that maximum of students are strongly agree with that fact. Thus, it can be said that without the knowledge and acceptance of technology which is going to use for virtual learning, experiencing positive emotions is not possible.

Figure 14: At which platform you feel better emotionally secure, face to face or virtual?



From the above interpretation it is inferred that 56% of students feel better emotionally secure in face to face learning where 44% of students feel emotionally secure in virtual learning.

VII. DISCUSSION

The results of the study has a great significance in regard to development of an idea on students' perception on emotional aspects in virtual learning such as what they feel, what they need, what they prefer, what is their choice etc. while assessing learning through virtual mode. The result of this study has signified that vital consideration of emotional support system and developing positive emotion is very essential for successive virtual learning. From the results it has been observed that students' perception

on emotional aspects of virtual learning is obligation in many cases. Maximum of students feel importance of emotional well being in virtual learning like traditional learning that means they have experienced effective learning by developing emotional well being among them. The maximum of the students also strongly agree that their performance has improved due to emotional support given by their teachers in virtual learning environments. They believe that emotional support of teachers to them in virtual learning environment has helped in the improvement of their performance. Same like maximum of students agree that enjoyment, pleasure, hope and pride are important for developing their motivation in virtual learning environment. Maximum of students think that teachers should guide the students when they need them for academic and other purpose in virtual platform. But in one question's answer against the question of whether social emotional development is possible in virtual platform, only 40% students agree with this fact and others disagree. That means maximum of students do not perceive that social emotional development in virtual platform is possible. They strongly believe that teachers should inspire them to express them self in virtual learning environment for effective interaction. It is also observed that anger; shame, fear, anxiety and boredom make hindrances in improving students' learning outcomes in virtual learning as maximum of students are agreed with this statement. On the other hand teachers should create an interactive environment in such a way that all the students in virtual platform can address their emotions. Teachers should take initiative to make students to feel emotionally secure in technology-supported virtual learning environment and for not to feel isolated when they are accessing education in virtual such environments because maximum of students agreed that they feel emotionally unsecure and isolated when accessing learning through virtual mode. Maximum of students strongly believed that positive emotions during exam preparation can develop their achievement performance and can facilitate self-regulated learning in virtual learning environment. It is also observed that maximum of students are strongly agree with that fact that without the knowledge and acceptance of technology which is going to use for virtual learning, experiencing positive emotions is not possible. It has been also observed that maximum of students feel better emotionally secure in face to face learning than virtual learning.

VIII. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations in case of future research in the area can include- students' perception in regard to emotional aspects in particular subjects such as in science, math, social science, economics etc. in virtual learning because as every subjects' nature is different from each other, their functional accessibility in virtual platform is also different. Another recommended area on the area is studying on the role of emotions of teachers in forming and developing students' perception in assessing learning through virtual mode, because development of teachers' positive emotional aspects is very important in the formation of students' positive beliefs, thoughts, perceptions etc. on virtual learning. However, for motivating the learners to engage fully in the virtual learning environment and to make them feel as they are in a face to face learning situation, the virtual teachers should develop their skill competency in using virtual tools. The teachers should able to make the learners feel that all their benefaction and interplays are valued so that they realize they are not unidentified and their involvement in the learning situation matters. It can develop positivity among them and they incline to put up even more. This is one way to give rise to productive emotions in a virtual learning environment. The instructor should able to make the learners mentally feel safe and foster an environment in which learners feel safe about expressing views, making interactions and querying doubts. The instructors should try for creating pleasurable environment, making positive reinforcement, enhancing the importance of content, building community feeling, acknowledging emotions etc. in virtual learning environment. Educationally suitable emotional images, pictures of facial expressions and fairy gestures are important to induce emotional retorts, interest, procure attention and grab the learners in learning environment.

IX. CONCLUSION

From the above discussion, we can conclude by saying that emotional component is a very important aspect in virtual learning. Moreover this study is only based on one psychological aspect i.e. emotional aspects of virtual learning studied on secondary school students only. For succeeding virtual learning effectively, emotional connectivity should be taken into account. Emotionally driven virtual learning should consider various factors such as adaptation to e-learning goal, contents, strategy, learning outcome by teacher and learner, engagement in the online learning environment, applicability of the virtual learning environment etc. However, certain problems exist on the online learning including the emotional problems which can be resolved by adopting different principles by the facilitator.

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