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REVIEW ARTICLE

ONLINE LEARNING DURING LOCKDOWN PERIOD OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has impinged on the people irrespective of their nationality, age, income, or gender. It has hit almost all the sectors of the economy and education is no exception. In response to lockdown norms, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and universities had to close their premises. However, HEIs were quick to replace traditional classrooms with online learning. In response to this researcher has made an attempt to assess the perspective of MBA students towards Online Learning (OL) compared to the traditional classroom learning (CL) in the Nagpur region of Maharashtra. The sample includes fourth semester & second semester MBA students for the academic year 2019-2020. The data was collected using a structured questionnaire constructed in Google form. A total number of 601 students from five different MBA colleges in the Nagpur region participated in the study. Data were recorded in excel and analyzed. The result indicates that students are comfortable with online learning but still would like to prefer traditional face-to-face learning as it provides experiential learning.

Keywords: Classroom learning, Online learning, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs).

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INTRODUCTION

At the end of November 2019 in Wuhan, China a unique virus had appeared that had killed a few thousand Chinese within the fifty days of spread, and thousands of other citizens were also suffered. The novel virus was nominated as COVID-19 novel coronavirus by the Chinese scientists.(1) In a while, this COVID-19 spread worldwide and affected several country's economies. Further, the outbreak also changed the operating conditions all over the globe within a month.(2) The Covid-19 pandemic has created an array of challenges not only to public health but also in many other aspects of public life, which includes education too. The need to contain the spread of the novel corona virus led many governments across the globe to put in place strict norms limiting physical closeness. These norms have unable the students & faculties of HEIs to meet in person as they would do pre-Covid. The pandemic necessitated HEIs to work in innovative ways, adapting to online teaching-learning styles to a new normal locked-down world. Most of the higher education is operating through E-learning.(3) E-Learning is "a system that uses internet technology to deliver information to students with interactions through computer interfaces." In short, it is learning that is enabled electronically.(4) As we know, MBA faculties are more engaged with information and communication technologies (ICT) than faculties belonging to other streams. It becomes more likely for them to adapt to the online mode of teaching. While faculties were relatively well prepared for the unexpected challenge of lockdown, the same cannot be said for students. On the other hand, we should not overlook that our youths are highly digital natives and use technology as an essential part of their everyday lives where they use technology widely for surfing, socializing, and communication. A special concern here relates to the HEIs students coming from underprivileged backgrounds or rural parts of India where they don't have easy access to a computer or internet and a quiet place at home to study. At this specific point in time, it is significant to find out students' perceptions regarding online teaching and learning. It will be an interesting point to view that whether the students are comfortable with the new teaching methodology, blended learning, and or rather would want to go back to conventional classroom learning.

In this context, an attempt has been made by the researcher to assess the perception of students on the effectiveness of online learning over face-to-face classroom learning. This research is intended to give insight into how MBA student perceives the implementation of online learning over traditional learning.

Objectives

The present research is aimed to achieve the following objectives: To disclose the various tools of online learning adopted by MBA institutions in the Nagpur region during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. To assess students' perceptions towards online learning compared to traditional classroom learning.
2. To identify the complexity faced by the students in adapting to the online learning.
3. To gather suggestions to make the online learning more popular and effective in future.

Sampling Methodology

The researcher tried to investigate the perception of MBA students of online learning in the Nagpur Region. The study was carried out from April to June 2020. A simple random sampling technique was adopted for the selection of the sample. Respondents consisted of second and fourth-semester students of the top five MBA institutions in the Nagpur Region. The online structured questionnaire was given at the end of the selected semester. The name and other personal details of the respondents were kept confidential. The sample size consisted of 501 students from five different MBA institutions in the Nagpur region. A five-point Likert scale was employed to collect the perception of students with respect to online learning where one indicates strongly disagree and five indicates strongly agree. To measure the internal consistency of the questionnaire Cronbach's Alpha was applied. A generally accepted rule is that α of 0.6-0.7 indicates an acceptable level of reliability, and 0.8 or greater a very good level. However, values higher than 0.95 are not necessarily good, since they might be an indication of redundance.[5]

The data were collected and coded in a systematic way. After which was analysed using excel. Collected data was bifurcated into 3 subparts – demographic profile of the students, perception of online learning, and tools used/preferred. The present research is de- limited to MBA students in Nagpur Region. Secondary data was also used for reviewing various findings by researchers in the past.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

This section of the research is divided into four subsections – statistical analysis of the questionnaire, demographic profile of the respondents, perception towards online learning & tools used/preferred in online learning.

Table 1 shows the result of the reliability test. It can be seen that the internal reliability of each item in the questionnaire is 0.8687 (1-Error df/ Row df) which is more than the standard alpha value of 0.6; therefore we can say that the opinions from the respondents are reliable and can be considered for further analysis.

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha

ANOVA						
Source of Variation	**SS**	**df**	**MS**	**F**	**P-value**	**F crit**
Rows	4098.614	600	6.831	7.617	0.000	1.101
Columns	622.163	12	51.847	57.809	0.000	1.754
Error	6457.376	7200	0.897			
Total	11178.15257	7812				

Table 2: Demographic profile of the respondents (N= 601)

Demographic variables		n	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	187	31.11
	Female	414	68.89
Semester	II	174	28.95
	IV	426	70.88
Place of Residence	Urban	262	43.49
	Rural	339	56.4
Taking Online Class	Yes	553	92.01
	No	48	7.98
Computer Knowledge	Excellent	110	18.30
	Good	373	68.27
	Average	117	19.47

Familiarizing students about various modes of e-learning, suggesting faculty to use suitable online education alternatives that will help to eliminate doubts and problems of the students; faculty to prepare their own video lectures for students was the feedback received from students regarding their experience about e-learning methods used by their faculty and institute with respect to higher education institution.[6]

Table 2 indicates the demographic profile of the sample respondents, which includes gender, semester, place of residence, computer proficiency & whether online classes are taken or not. It suggests that females are major in respondents, i.e 68.89% as compared to male (31.11). Majority of the respondents belong to rural background 339 (56.4%) whereas 262 (43.49%) were from urban areas.

Lack of proper approach, availability of reliable communication tools, high quality digital academic experience, technology-enabled learning environment act as a gap which creates hindrance in online education.[7]

For taking online classes, computer proficiency is vital. Therefore the researcher asked the respondents about the level of knowledge they possess of the computer. The factors identified as influencing student satisfaction in online learning is good instructor, technology interactivity. Lack of opportunities to participate in discussions in online learning adds to the dissatisfaction of the student.[8] The results showed that the majority of the respondents 373 (68.27%) had good computer knowledge.

Table 3 shows online teaching tools adopted by MBA institutions under the present study in the Nagpur region during the lockdown period. The resources required for online teaching-learning in education amid the COVID-19 pandemic and how available resources can be ultilised to overcome the persisting academic disturbance and consequently ensure the resumption of educational activities and discourses as a normal course of procedure in the education system. It was found that students viewed virtual teaming experiences as valuable because it helps them to prepare for the increasingly global business environment; at the same time, it also acts as a challenge in the students learning online environment.[9]

Google classroom (58.73%) ranked first as against Cisco Webex not preferred at all by any of the institutions under the study. The second position was taken by Google meet (34.77%), the third by Zoom (3.83%) & the least preferred were Skype (1.33%) & Youtube (1.33%).

Table 3: Online Teaching Tool Used by MBA institutions during Lockdown

Online teaching tool	Frequency	Percent (%)	Rank
Google Classroom	353	58.73	1
Google Meet	209	34.77	2
Zoom App	23	3.83	3
Skype	08	1.33	4
Youtube	08	1.33	4
Cisco Webex	00	00	NA

Table 4: Online Learning Tool Preferred by MBA students during Lockdown

Online teaching tool	Frequency	Percent (%)	Rank
Google Classroom	352	58.57	1
Google Meet	264	43.92	2
Zoom App	133	22.13	3
Cisco Webex	189	31.44	4
Skpye	119	19.80	5
Youtube	109	18.13	6
Others	62	10.32	7

Table 4 shows online learning tools preferred by MBA students during the lockdown. The majority of the students perceived that classroom teaching is the best teaching-learning method as online learning is less interactive and difficult to operate. The authors suggested providing adequate resources, proper schedule, technical support, etc. to make online study more effective.[10]

The majority of the respondents under study preferred Google classroom 352(58.57%) for online learning. It is because separate classrooms are created course wise which makes it convenient for the student to refer to the material post-class. It also enables the students to upload an assignment. Second most preferred learning tool is Google Meet 264 (43.92%) followed with Zoom 133 (22.13%), Cisco Webex 189 (31.44%), Skype 119 (19.80%), Youtube 109 (18.13%) & others 62 (10.32%).

Table 5 shows the correlation between every 13 items of the preference scale. The sub-scale of the items ranged from 0.014-0.710 indicating the multidimensionality of the questionnaire. Statistically, no significant difference was found in learning preference among those enrolled in the two separate learning modes i.e online group and the face-to-face group.[11]

Online interactions with the teacher enable students to learn whereas lack of feedback caused hindrance in learning.[12] Course design, learner motivation, time management, and comfortableness with online technologies have a positive impact on the online learning experience. Technical problems, lack of sense of community, time constraints, and inability in understanding the objectives of the online courses acts as challenges.[13]

Correlations were all significant at the $p<0.05$ level. Effective online instruction is reliant on well-designed course content, motivated interaction between the instructor and learners, creation of a sense of online learning community; and rapid advancement of technolog.[14]

A strong correlation (0.710) can be seen between assessment suitable compared to the traditional method and preferring online learning to conventional traditional learning. Correlation of (0.624) can be seen between online class saves lots of time and it enables to do other work & spend time with family. Correlation also exists between understanding the full course (content) provided by the teacher during online class and the same amount of learning in an online class as in traditional classroom learning. It was found that students are comfortable with online classes but they do not believe that online classes will replace traditional classroom teaching. The technical issue is the chief hitch for the effectiveness of online classes.[15]

Singh et. al. compared the performance of medical graduates following competency-based learning and conventional learning in Indian medical colleges.[23] Few interesting studies regarding Teaching methods were reported.[24-27] Gade et. al. reported Use of Mini-CEX as a Teaching-Learning Method.[28] Jagzape et. al. recommended a patient-Based Integrated Teaching Program.[29] Studies on Covid and Education system during the pandemic were reviewed.[30]

Table 5: Association (Spearman's correlation) between 13 items

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1	1												
2	**0.710**	1											
3	0.263	0.341	1										
4	0.372	0.449	0.222	1									
5	0.532	0.529	0.103	0.442	1								
6	0.417	0.500	0.114	0.390	0.470	1							
7	0.119	0.077	0.260	0.214	0.133	0.161	1						
8	0.448	0.569	0.110	0.539	0.409	0.691	0.250	1					
9	0.296	0.404	0.266	0.506	0.406	0.454	0.212	0.624	1				
10	0.035	0.118	0.256	0.375	0.087	0.216	0.263	0.190	0.241	1			
11	0.519	0.559	0.098	0.488	0.697	0.512	0.100	0.428	0.407	0.034	1		
12	0.503	0.649	0.148	0.579	0.602	0.501	0.117	0.657	0.544	0.068	0.660	1	
13	0.007	0.248	0.322	0.364	0.014	0.140	0.259	0.268	0.107	0.559	0.100	0.217	1

Where, 1-Suitable Assessment, 2- Preference, 3- Motivation, 4-Clarification, 5-Understandable, 6-Sufficient Time, 7-Attention, 8-Time Saving, 9-Satisfaction, 10-Concentration, 11-Knowledge, 12- Learning Environment, 13-Frustrationss

CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

We all agree that online learning is a new normal way to learn almost anything. Initially, students were not adaptive towards online learning but with time they have become comfortable and now prefer online learning. The reason identified for preference towards online learning is suitable assessment, time-saving which enables students to do additional work and provides an environment for self-learning. However, some of the students feel that they are not getting full attention from the teacher in online class compared to the traditional classroom environment. Some of them also feel puzzled &

frustrated with the content delivered in an online class. Although online learning has a significant role to play in India in near future, it is at its very nascent stage & requires more efforts from teachers & HEIs to make it more effective & comfortable for students. In conclusion, it cannot be a replacement for traditional face-to-face classroom learning. To addresses the challenges faced by the students it is recommended that HEIs should develop more creative course content which can be easily understood by the students.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Nil

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ETHICAL CLEARANCE

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