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Perception of Student's Towards Online Learning During COVID-19 Pandemic

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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 including education. In response to lockdown norms issued by the government, Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and universities had to close their premises and switch to online mode of teaching. However, HEIs were quick to replace traditional classroom with online learning. The analysis represents the perception of undergraduate and postgraduate students towards online learning during Covid 19 pandemic on the basis of three factors "Teacher's Support & Comfort", "Learning Satisfaction" and "Effectiveness". Research findings indicated that the majority of students preferred online learning as it saves time, provides an opportunity to create one's own learning environment thereby creating positive impact on the studies. However, some of the students feel that they are not getting full attention from teacher in online class compared to traditional classroom environment.

Keywords--classroom learning, COVID-19, higher education institutions (HEIs), online learning, pandemic.

Introduction

COVID-19 has affected educational institutions not only in Wuhan, China where this novel corona virus originated but all other educational institutions across the globe in 2020¹. In March 2020, India witnessed COVID-19 and as a result all schools and colleges were declared closed in the country. This outbreak has raised significant challenges for the education community but at the same time presented both opportunities and challenges on them. A particular challenge has been the urgent and unexpected need of switching from traditional classroom teaching and learning methodologies into online teaching & learning. The pandemic has forced colleges and universities to shut down their premises to follow social distancing norms. This eventually gave birth to virtual learning and kept aside traditional face-to-face classroom learning. 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 electronically². Initially, both teachers and the students were quite tangled and didn't know how to tackle technology for online teaching and learning. But with time they somehow got acquainted with the technology. Teachers are putting their efforts into the adoption of new technologies useful for effective teaching and better learning (1,3).

While teachers are now relatively well prepared for the unexpected challenge of extended 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. Online learning platforms are manageable, easy to understand, and implement in which educators and students are virtually connected but a special concern here relates to the students coming from underprivileged backgrounds or rural parts of India where they don't have easy access to a computer or internet and quiet place at home to study. At this specific point in time, it is significant to find out students' perception regarding online learning during COVID-19 pandemic.¹ It will be an interesting point to view that whether the students are comfortable with the new teaching methodology, do they find online learning effective, and how well they receive support from their teachers or rather would they want to go back to conventional classroom learning. In this context, an attempt has been made by the researcher to assess the perception of undergraduate and postgraduate students on the effectiveness of online learning over face-to-face classroom learning. This research is intended to give insight into how undergraduate and postgraduate students perceive the implementation of online learning over traditional classroom learning.

Literature review

The outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic has badly affected the education sector across the globe. Initially, teachers and students went through panic and stressful situations in terms of adopting to digital way of teaching & learning. Gradually within a year online learning has become a replacement to the traditional education system. Though there is not much literature available on student's perception towards online learning during COVID-19 pandemic still the

researcher has made an attempt to give a background to the present study on the basis of little previous literature available on technology-based education & learning (4-6). Brooks (2003) mentioned to attitudes of teachers as a main problem affecting teaching online courses. Vaishali rahate et. al. (2020) stated major issues as instructor and student support, course development, course structure, and how the institution evaluates online learning (9).

Objectives

The main objective of this study is to analyse the perception of undergraduate and postgraduate students towards online learning. This research tries to explain the students view on “Teacher’s Support & Comfort”, “Learning Satisfaction” and “Effectiveness”.

Research Methodology

The researcher tried to study the perception of graduates and postgraduates towards online learning during the lockdown period of COVID-19 pandemic. The study was carried out from January 2021 to March 2021. Respondents include graduate and postgraduate students selected using simple random sampling technique. An online questionnaire having 24 questions was prepared and distributed to 350 graduate and postgraduate students through online and out of 350 only 315 respondents were analysed. Five-point Likert scale was employed to collect the perception of graduate and postgraduate students with respect to online learning where one indicates strongly disagree and five indicates strongly agree. The data was collected and coded in a systematic way after which was analysed using SPSS 23. Questionnaire consisted of total 24 questions. Collected data was bifurcated into two sub parts: demographic profile of the students consists of 6 questions and perception of graduate and postgraduate students about online learning during the lockdown period of COVID-19 pandemic consists of 18 questions. Secondary data was also used for reviewing various findings by the researchers in the past.

To gauge the internal consistency of the questionnaire Cronbach’s Alpha in SPSS 23 was applied. A universal accepted rule is that an alpha between 0.6-0.7 is considered as an acceptable level of reliability, and an alpha greater than or equal to 0.8 indicates as a very good level. On the other hand, any value greater which is than 0.95 is not always considered as good, because they might be an indication of redundance [10-12]. Table 1 shows the value of Cronbach’s alpha which is greater than 0.6 i.e 0.879 and therefore acceptable.

Table 1
Reliability statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.879	24

Data analysis

Table 2 shows that majority of the students were female (51.11%), pursuing post-graduation (55.87%), studying in semester four (48.25%), majority of the students residing in urban area (50.79%), having good knowledge of computer (57.46%). Out of the total number of respondents majority of them are attending online classes (95.56%) and only handful of the students are not attending online classes (4.44%). Majority of the students are using Google classroom for online learning (65.08%), Google meet is used by (28.57%), Zoom by (5.71%) and only (0.63%) of the students use Cisco Webex for online learning.

Table 2
Demographic profile of the respondents (N=315)

Profile	f	%
Gender		
Male	154	48.89
Female	161	51.11
Studying In Program		
Undergraduate	139	44.13
Postgraduate	176	55.87
Studying in Semester		
I	136	43.17
II	03	0.95
III	16	5.08
IV	152	48.25
V	01	0.32
VI	07	2.22
Attending Online Class		
Yes	301	95.56
No	14	4.44
Area of Residence		
Urban	160	50.79
Rural	155	49.21
Computer Knowledge		
Excellent	48	15.24
Good	181	57.46
Average	75	23.81
Below Average	11	3.49
Tool used for Online Classes		
Cisco Webex	02	0.63
Google Classroom	205	65.08
Google Meet	90	28.57
Whatsapp	01	0.32
Zoom	18	5.71

Teachers' perception on online teaching

The present study was analysed to know the perception of students for online learning during the lockdown period of Covid 19 pandemic. The survey asked students with regard to support received from teachers, extent of learning satisfaction among student, and effectiveness of learning online. Exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was done to evaluate the questionnaire with respect to perception of students towards online learning. Factors were identified using Eigen values more significant than one as the criterion [13-14]. After EFA the researcher removed all the items with factor loading below 0.50. For confirming the adequacy and sphericity of the data set, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test values were obtained for confirming the adequacy and sphericity of the data set obtained. The value of Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test obtained is 0.901 and since it is above 0.5 it is considered as acceptable. Therefore, factor analysis was implemented.

Table 3
KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.901
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3885.57
	df	3
	Sig.	.000

Table 4 explains the communality value. Six statements were asked related to "Teacher's Support & Comfort", eight statements related to "Learning Satisfaction" and four statements related to "Effectiveness". EFA was done to reduce the number of factors that less explains the respective factors. In case of "Teacher's Support & Comfort" & "Effectiveness" all the statements were retained, in "Learning Satisfaction" out of eight statements only one item was removed on the basis of communality as it was less than 0.5. All the retained statements are as shown in Table 4.

Table 4
Exploratory factor analysis

Factor	Statements Retained	Initial	Communality
Teacher's Support & Comfort	I am happy with the time allocated (routine) for online class.	1	.606
	Online class saves time so I can do lots of my other works	1	.604
	I am happy that I can involve in online class as well as take care of my family at the same time	1	.689
	My teachers encourages discussion in an online class	1	.858
	I receive enough support and resources from my teacher	1	.836
	My teacher sets guidelines for effective	1	.814

	communication and interaction in an online class.		
Learning Satisfaction	I like Online learning than classroom learning	1	.854
	I prefer Online learning courses to traditional courses.	1	.849
	I can clarify my queries through question/answer session of online class	1	.566
	I understand the full course (content) provided by teacher during online class without	1	.683
	I believe that I can learn the same amount in an Online Learning as in a traditional classroom learning	1	.697
	Online learning provides an opportunity to create student's own learning environment.	1	.576
	I have a positive impact on my studies due to online learning	1	.691
Effectiveness	I feel like I am not getting full attention from teacher in online class	1	.796
	I cannot concentrate longer time on online classes	1	.719
	I feel puzzled & frustrated with the content delivered in online classes	1	.875
	I find it hard to stick to a study schedule of the online class	1	.816

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis

Discussion and Conclusion

Adapting to the new normal online learning due to Covid 19 lockdown has fetched exciting new ways to learn about almost anything. It has brought a negative as well as positive impact on the lives of both the students and the teachers. Initially students were not adaptive towards online learning but with time they have become comfortable and now prefer online learning (6,15,16). The reason identified for preference towards online learning is time saving so that care can be taken of the family members. Students believe that online learning provides an opportunity to create one's own learning environment thereby creating positive impact on the studies. It was also revealed that teachers have sets guidelines for effective communication and interaction in an online class and this encourages discussion in an online class. It was found that students receive enough support and resources from their teachers while online learning. In contrast, some students feel that online learning result in lack of concentrate, difficulty in sticking to a study schedule, feeling of puzzled & frustration and some students feel that they are not getting full attention from teacher in online class.

However, some of the students feel that they are not getting full attention from teacher in online class compared to traditional classroom environment (20). Although online learning has a significant role to play in India in near future, but

it is at its very nascent stage & requires more efforts from teachers & HEIs to make it more effective & comfortable to students. In conclusion it cannot be a replacement to traditional face to face classroom learning (21). To address 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 (22).

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