A STUDY ON STUDENTS PREFERENCE FOR MODE OF EXAMINATION DURING PANDEMIC

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Abstract: Educational institutes across the world have closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic jeopardizing the academic calendars. Most educational institutes have shifted to online learning platforms to keep the academic activities going. However, the questions about the preparedness, designing and effectiveness of e-learning is still not clearly understood, particularly for a developing country like India, where the technical constraints like suitability of devices and bandwidth availability poses a serious challenge. We also explored the student's preferences for various attributes of online classes, which will be helpful to design effective online learning environment. The results indicated that majority of the respondentsare ready to opt for online classes to manage the curriculum during this pandemic. Majority of the students preferred to use smart phone for online learning. Using content analysis, we found that students prefer recorded classes with quiz at the end of each class to improve the effectiveness of learning. The students opined that flexibility and convenience of online classes makes it attractive option, whereas broadband connectivity issues in rural areas makes it a challenge for students to make use of online learning initiatives.

KEYWORDS: Online learning, Perception, Readiness, Preferences, Content analysis

INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus was discovered in December 2019 and since then the virus has spread quickly across the globe. Coronavirus has claimed millions of deaths and has turned once the hectic metropolitan cities into phantom cities. In the light of public health, most countries have resorted to nationwide lockdown, thereby halting economic activities, closing offices, public institutes, educational institutes, etc. The pandemic has caused a drastic reduction in economic activities coupled with invisible costs, such as loss of lives, starvation, indebtedness, and extreme stress.

Coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19) has hit the economy hard and the education sector is no exception. The virus has forced education institutes to redesign curriculum, reinvent the teaching–learning process, and restructure students' performance evaluation system. Universities worldwide have encouraged e-learning and online examination, and Indian universities have also resorted to the same. Scholars have criticized online teaching methods for being discriminatory to the marginalized students, due to inaccessibility of the internet, computer illiteracy, etc. However, it has been praised for its flexibility, affordability, etc. During these tough times, e-learning is no longer an option, but a necessity.

Similarly, the online mode of examination is the panacea for this crisis. In India's case, many private universities were unaffected by the crises as they already had a sound digital infrastructure for conducting an online mode of examination. However, underfunded public universities found it difficult to adapt themselves to new situations. Education plays a crucial role

in developing a progressive society. Therefore, the education sector should be resilient. However, this pandemic has questioned the education sector's preparedness to deal with such a crisis-like situation.As per an estimate by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (Table 1), about 34 million learners are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic at the tertiary level of education. However, at the pre-primary, primary, and secondary levels about 10, 143, and 133 million learners are affected, respectively.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The world as we know it has changed in the blink of an eye. Assessment is a vital part of the learning process. It is carried out for obtaining information about the learning outcomes of each student. The application of reliable assessment methods shall help to amend the effectiveness of the educational practices, and enable the students to distinguish whether they have met the required academic goals or not.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study provides the overview of student's perception and satisfaction on online education. After a few days, an unplanned and rapid move to online teaching and learning with no training to teachers, insufficient bandwidth and little preparation got initiated by all educational institutions. Online mode of teaching, undoubtedly facing lot of challenges and opportunities, is a good stopgap arrangement with no other option. Keeping in view the present scenario an online survey was conducted to study the challenges faced by students during online class.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- ➤ To study the socio-economic characteristics of the respondents.
- ➤ To identify the student's preferred mode of exams during Covid-19 lockdown phase.
- ➤ To study the challenges faced by students during exams in COVID-19 pandemic period.
- ➤ To assess the effectiveness of online exams during Covid-19 lockdown phase.
- ➤ To study the benefits of online exams from the perspective of students

RESEARCH METHODOLGY

- ➤ Descriptive research design is used in this study.
- ➤ Primary data is collected through Questionnaire.
- ➤ The sample size is 150 respondents.
- ➤ Sampling is done using Simple Random Sampling Method

STATISTICAL TOOLS USED

The statistical tools used for analysis are

- ➤ Simple Percentage
- ➤ Chi-Square
- ➤ Ranking analysis
- ➤ Weighted average method

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Gaba K. Ashok, S.S.Sethy, (2021) Indira Gandhi National Open University is one of the premier university of India which offers many of its courses through technologies enabled platform and also adopts various technologies in different learning content of its learner‟s. The main objective of this study is to: Ascertain the awareness of online/distance learning program, find out which teaching delivery model is preferred by the learners most, study learners level of skills for study through online and to know the learners preference for the support services through ICT‟s The methodology adopted for this study was the survey method. The findings of the study reveal that learners could be successful in online courses in terms of their learning

outcomes, besides they have a rich experience in online platforms. The study found that ICT help IGNOU learners in various ways: It helps them to use their present ideas and understanding of audience, it helps them to communicate with known and unknown peer groups, it supports the knowledge building among peer groups, it helps to locate information from a wide range of on line and multimedia resources to support their learning. After analysing the findings it can be concluded that the steps taken by IGNOU to offer its various courses through ICT are in the right track.

Kakoty Sangeeta, Lal Manohar, Sarma Kr. Shikhar ,(2019) "E-Learning As A Research Area: An Analytical Approach" The objective of this paper is to establish the line between and type of research work in E-learning environment that people are working on. It also focuses on the prospective areas of research in this domain. Flexibility, cost efficiency and accessibility are the main benefits of E-learning. After analysing the study the authors stated that content packaging and content managing has got the highest priority in e-learning research where a lot of developments are yet to be made. So from this study it has been seen that globalization of education, cross-culture aspects and culturally complex student support system in distance education as well as in e-learning environment is a prospective research area. We can improve these areas by integrating new technologies and ICT tools.The study concludes by stating that the security of services, the encryption of messages and the common taxonomies to describe services and service access points in e-learning systems environments are all considered as the challenges of implementation in the technological changes and development in e-learning.

Nicholas Vanderschantz (2018), According to the findings of this research the major research trends in e-learning are: Among researchers of the department of Mass communication, information and technology, education and distance learning, e-learning is a popular subject. User friendly tools and platforms, less complexity and better and faster connectivity can make the e-learning more useful and effective. The researchers not only focus on the technological aspects of e-learning but also on the other components like age, gender etc which influence the acceptance of e-learning. And also they are treating e-learning as a potential solution for many education related problems of developing countries.

RESUULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The analysis and interpretation of the study on sample size of 500 respondents' and the data collected are classified and tabulated below. Further the following Statistical measures are employed in fulfilling the objective of the study.

- ➢ Simple percentage
- ➢ Weighted average method
- ➢ Ranking analysis
- ➢ Chi-square

SIMPLE PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

The various factors are analyzed on the basis of the percentage of statistical among the sample size 150 from these samples the percentage of satisfied level is found to give a conclusion. It refers to a special kind of rates, percentages are used in making comparison between two or more series of data. A percentage is used to determine relationship between the series.

FORMULA

$$\text{Percentage of Respondents'} = \frac{\text{Number of Respondents'}}{\text{Total Number of People Answered}} \times 100$$

TABLE SHOWING OPINION OF RESPONDENTS FOR ONLINE EXAMINATION CONDUCTED BY COLLEGE

S.No	College conducted an online examination	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)
1	Semester Examinations	88	59
2	Entrance Examinations	32	21

3	Certificate programs	18	12
4	Distance learning courses	12	8
	Total	**150**	**100**

Interpretation

From the above table we found that 59% of the respondents attended Semester Examinations in online, 21% of the respondents attended Entrance Examinations in online, 12% of the respondents attended Certificate programs in online and 8% of the respondents attended Distance learning courses in online

CHI-SQUARE TEST

Chi-square is an important non-parametric test and as such no rigid assumptions are necessary in respect of the type of population. Both the frequencies must be grouped and the theoretical distribution must be adjusted to give the same told frequencies.

CHI-SQUARE TEST FOR STUDENT'S YEAR OF STUDYING AND SATISFACTION WITH THE TECHNOLOGY AND SOFTWARE USED FOR ONLINE EXAM

NULL HYPOTHESIS

There is no significant difference among the students year of studying and satisfaction with the technology and software used for online exam.

ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS

There is a significant difference among the students year of studying and satisfaction with the technology and software used for online exam

Students studying years* satisfaction Crosstabulation

		Satisfaction with the technology					
		Not at all satisfied	Slightly satisfied	Moderately satisfied	Very satisfied	Extremely satisfied	Total
Students studying years	First Year	4	12	11	0	11	38
	Second Year	3	12	33	31	18	97
	Third Year	0	0	12	0	0	12
	Others	0	0	3	0	0	3
Total		7	24	59	31	29	150

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	50.432[a]	12	.000
Likelihood Ratio	60.286	12	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.319	1	.573
N of Valid Cases	150		

a. 12 cells (60.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .14.

INTERPRETATION

The calculated value is less than tabulated value, hence we accept alternate hypothesis and there is a significant difference among the students year of studying and satisfaction with the technology and software used for online exam.

WEIGHTED AVERAGE METHOD

PROBLEM FACED DURING ONLINE EXAM

Factors	Highly Satisfied	Satisfied	Neutral	Dissatisfied	Highly Dissatisfied	Total
Price	21	55	13	31	30	150
Quality	32	48	29	11	30	150
Credit Facility	44	21	8	28	49	150
Offers and discount	33	10	12	55	40	150
Customer care facility	24	28	47	15	36	150

Factors	H.S	S	N	D.S	H.D.S	Mean score	Mean	Rank
Price	105	220	39	62	30	456	28.40	2
Quality	160	192	87	22	30	491	30.73	1
Credit Facility	220	84	24	56	49	433	26.87	4
Offers and discount	165	40	36	110	40	391	24.07	5
Customer care facility	120	112	141	30	36	439	27.27	3

INTERPRETATION

The above table result it is found that Quality ranks 1, Price ranks 2, Customer care facility ranks 3, Credit Facility ranks 4 and Offers and discount ranks 5.

Majority ranks that Quality ranks as 1.

RANKING METHOD

RANKING OF CHALLENGES FACED DURING ONLINE EXAM

Challenges	5	4	3	2	1	TOTAL	RANK
Time bound	77	23	16	4	30	563	1
	385	92	48	8	30		
Network Issue	24	55	24	17	30	476	3
	120	220	72	34	30		
Electricity Problem	32	44	17	22	35	466	4
	160	176	51	44	35		
Affordable data pack	42	14	55	9	30	479	2
	210	56	165	18	30		
Affordable device	16	51	32	21	30	452	5
	80	204	96	42	30		

INTERPRETATION

The above table result it is found that time bound ranks 1, Affordable data pack ranks 2, Network Issue ranks 3, Electricity Problem ranks 4 and Affordable device ranks 5.

Majority ranks that Time bound as 1.

FINDINGS FOR SIMPLE PERCENTAGE METHOD:

- Majority 59% of the respondents attended Semester Examinations in online.

- Majority 76% of the respondents preferred Online Exam.

- Mostly 42% of the respondents using mobile broadband service.

- Majority 59% of the respondents have access on device for online exam.

- Mostly 49% of the respondents used device for online exam is Laptop.

FINDINGS FOR CHI-SQUARE

- There is a significant difference in the hours spend on online exam and problem faced during online exams.

FINDINGS FOR WEIGHTED AVERAGE METHOD

- From the ranking analysis, it is found that Quality ranks 1, Price ranks 2, Customer care facility ranks 3, Credit Facility ranks 4 and Offers and discount ranks 5.

FINDINGS FOR RANKING ANALYSIS:

- From the ranking analysis, it is found that Time bound ranks 1, Affordable data pack ranks 2, Network Issue ranks 3, Electricity Problem ranks 4 and Affordable device ranks 5.

SUGGESTIONS

- In addition, students were less likely to feel angry, which reduces the negative attitude towards the exam session, the subject and the teacher in general. In general, students evaluated the online examination session positively.

- Students note that the online exam session was difficult, which may be due to the novelty of the procedure. But at the same time, students note that the work with the examination materials was clearly explained. Thanks to clear instructions, the speed of passing the exams was well rated by the students.

- Thus, among students, general satisfaction with the online exam session can be noted. However, the teachers have a different opinion.

- Teachers faced more difficulties than students. This can be explained by the age of the teachers (the average age of the interviewed teachers is 42 years).

- Some students needed to seek help and advice due to the lack of technical knowledge on the use of electronic resources.

- But the main problem identified in the process of interviews with teachers is the question of the reliability of the results of the examination session. Teachers note that it is impossible to control whether the student will complete the assignments on his own or use additional materials and the help of third parties.

CONCLUSION

The majority of the students had ranged from a strongly agree to an agree level of satisfaction to all items of the satisfaction regarding online exams. A significant difference between the different universities was found according to overall satisfaction

scores regarding online exams. It is imperative for students to receive regular, periodic in-service computer skills courses. There is an obvious need for designed online exams information quality, enjoyment, and environment preparation. Further studies are needed to study the factors that influence university students' embracing and use of e-learning exams

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