RESILIENCE OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH BANGALORE DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to find the resilience of education sector during covid 19 pandemic in Bangalore city. Delivery of classes through online medium has been a recent modification brought out by the education system in India in the wake of the current pandemic situation. Thus, this survey describes college and university teachers and students' perceptions and concerns with regard to taking online classes that have been made mandatory in the wake of COVID-19. The sample study consists of teachers and students from colleges and universities in Bangalore city. Online survey method was used for the purpose of data collection. The findings show that the following areas are important for teacher and student satisfaction with online classes, these areas are quality and timely interaction between student and professor, technical support availability, structured online class modules, and modifications to accommodate conduction of practical classes.

Keywords: Online classes, COVID-19, Survey, Teachers' Perspective, Students' Perspective

INTRODUCTION

Online learning and classes are increasingly becoming part of the education system worldwide. Online channel has made education convenient and easily accessible by one and all. Education sector in India has been an ever-growing entity. India has been one of the largest sectors in the world when it comes to higher education. Though online and distance courses have been there from a long time, introduction of the online mode of taking classes in comparison to the traditional face to face classroom approach in universities and colleges have been considered only in the last few years in India. When it comes to the Indian educational system, face to face classroom approach has always been the most prominently used. Familiarity and ease of using offline methods and lack of requirement for online channels of teaching has been the major barriers for adoption of online channels of education. However, in the wake of current COVID-19 pandemic situation conduction of online classes at college and university level has been made mandatory by the educational boards. Covid-19 has brought out a drastic change in the educational system not only in India but rather the entire world. Universities across India as well as around the globe have moved to the virtual classes suspending physical classrooms. Online education in India is at an early stage of development. In India, while this transition has been a mixture of both positives and negatives for most private universities, the government colleges and universities are still adapting [9,10,11]. While technology makes things accessible

and easier, it can also be limiting, especially in India, where many students face a challenge in terms of access to the internet. This in turn leads to issues with attendance and participation in online sessions, thereby making the adaptation of online channels of education a challenge. When it comes to the Indian educational setup, online classes are a newly introduced mode of teaching and not something that has been a part of regular classes. Investigating and analysing how online classes are being perceived and experienced by students and faculties across different colleges and universities in India will help educational experts to understand and make modifications to suit the needs of both, teachers and students. Consequently, educational institutions and management who would be the future deliverers of online learning need more understanding of how students as well as teachers perceive and react to online classes as a learning mode to apply these approaches most effectively. Another important thing noticed in the review of previous studies was that when evaluating online mode of education, student's perspective has been given importance and taken into consideration over teacher's perspective. Teacher's perspective is equally important because if they as provider of education are not satisfied and find the online mode unsatisfactory then the educational base itself becomes weaker. This new introduction of online classes has been equally challenging for teachers, who are also struggling to learn this new way or methodology of teaching.

Therefore, the significance of this research lies on exploring the Teachers and students' perception toward online classes in comparison to face-to-face classes. The survey focused on teachers and students from colleges and universities in Bangalore city. Bangalore being the technology hub could shed light on how the online classes are perceived. Thus, the following article describes the results of the survey which was done to understand how well this new method is being taken by both teachers and students, what are the general problems faced by them while taking online classes so as to help educational instructors and facilitators and college and university managements to understand the modifications that can be brought to make online teaching more effective so that in future it can be integrated along with classroom teaching. The responses from this survey will help to improve or enhance online mode of classes in order to provide a better learning experience for students and a better teaching experience for the teachers.

METHODOLOGY

For this study, the author formed two short survey's: one for the teachers and the other one for the students. The survey questions assessed the general perception and experience of both students and teachers about online classes [1]. The teacher survey had a cross-section of 6 demographic questions and 26 questions regarding teacher's perception about taking online classes. Out of the 26 questions 3 items were open ended wherein the teachers were asked to tell what according to them were the positive and negative aspects of online teaching and what were the applications usually used by them to take online classes. The students survey consisted of 6 demographic questions and 19 questions regarding student's perception about online classes. Two open ended questions regarding the positive and negative aspects about online classes were kept. Response choices consisted of pre-defined options of agree, disagree and neutral. The purpose of the survey was not to collect psychometric data and thus the survey did not make use of validated psychometric tools. Due to the current COVID-19 situation, the survey was conducted online using google forms [1,2,3]. The form was made available online on 2nd May'20 for 2 weeks. Teachers and students from Bangalore colleges and universities which were conducting online classes were approached and asked to complete the survey. A total of 76 teachers and 412 students participated in the survey. For the teacher's survey 70 teachers completed the entire survey i.e. 92.1% of the total sample, whereas for the students 407 of them completed the entire survey i.e. 98.7% of the total sample. Hence the data of only 70 teachers and 407 students were considered for the analysis. No incentives were offered for responding to the survey. The details about the survey was shared with the respondents. Completion of the survey was taken as a form of consent to participate.
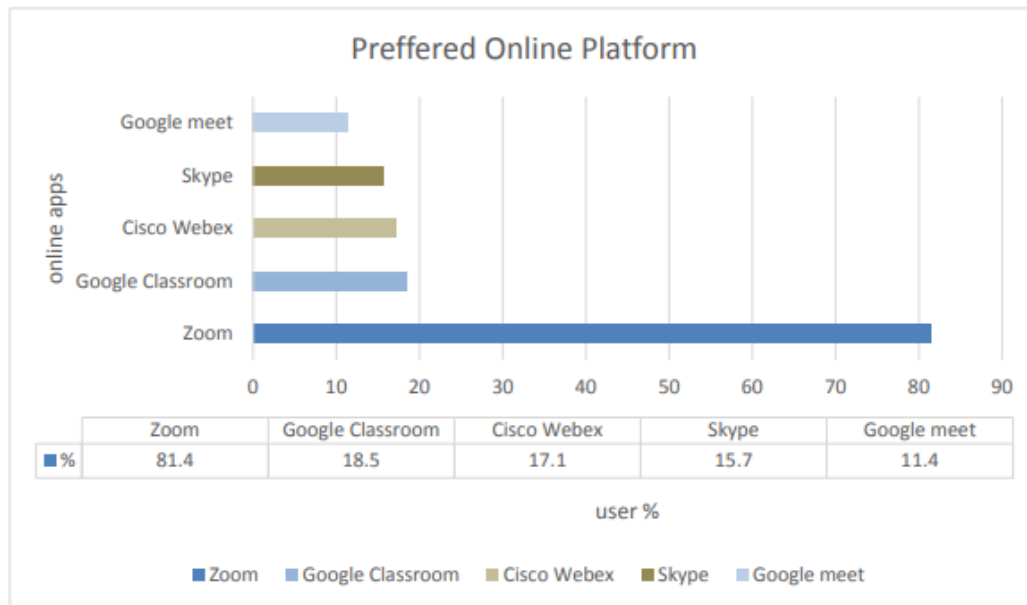
Data analysis

The main purpose of the study was to gather evaluative feedback from university students and faculty on their experience about online mode of teaching. A descriptive approach for data analysis was considered. Responses to the open-ended questions were transcribed, coded, and categorized within each question to determine similar answers. Repetitive content of responses was identified. Finally, frequency counts of frequently occurring responses were tabulated and converted to percentages for reporting purposes. The section below describes the detailed findings of the survey.

RESULTS

The survey was done to get an understanding of the experience and perception of teachers and students about the recently introduced online mode of teaching. The survey results are divided into two sections, namely, perception of teachers and perception of students about online classes. The results for both are discussed separately.

Teacher's perception about online classes

The teachers survey had items assessing three dimensions: online v/s classroom mode, personal factors and students' factor during online classes. The results of the survey showed that 86.9% of the teachers reported that they preferred classroom teaching method more than online teaching mode. 11.8% preferred online classes [4,5]. Teachers felt that even though online classes were convenient, could be taken from the comfort of their homes, saving travel time, it did not seem to be effective when compared to classroom method. Teacher- student disconnect, lack of interaction, inability to engage the group, technical issues were found to be the main issues. 39% of the sample felt that online classes were not very safe and secure as a medium. However, teachers did agree to the fact t this new opportunity of conducting classes through online channel have increased their confidence and helped them to explore and use innovative teaching methods. Lack of work satisfaction while taking online classes was also reported. Some of them even felt that their lack of computer skill came in the way of using the online teaching platform effectively. Lack of student interest and involvement was reported by a majority of teachers. They reported that during online classes the main issue they faced were that students made a lot of excuses about not being able to attend classes, for e.g., network issue, dysconnectivity, poor audio and video quality, etc. and it is difficult for them to know if they are giving genuine reasons or just escaping from attending the classes. With classes and assignments using online channels, education technology apps are gaining popularity amid COVID-19 pandemic. The survey also explored what were the online platforms preferred by teachers for taking classes and assigning work online.

Graph 1: shows the applications frequently used by teachers for online teaching

Preffered Online Platform

	Zoom	Google Classroom	Cisco Webex	Skype	Google meet
■ %	81.4	18.5	17.1	15.7	11.4

user %

■ Zoom   ■ Google Classroom   ■ Cisco Webex   ■ Skype   ■ Google meet

Student's perception about online classes:

The students survey had items assessing two dimensions: online v/s classroom mode and personal factors during online classes. The results of the survey showed that 87.1% of the students reported that they preferred classroom teaching method more than online teaching mode. 12.9% preferred online classes.

When it came to the positive aspect of online classes majority found it to be time saving, as it could be done from the comfort of the home which save time to travel and commute, don't have to rush to reach college.[6.7,8] Other positive things reported were: faster completion of syllabus, recording of classes helped in referring to it later. The recorded classes could be watched again and again until the concept is clear. Classes can be attended anywhere, anytime thus, giving flexibility. Lesser disturbance from classmates, less anxiety in asking doubts and queries were also added among the others.

CONCLUSION

Higher education in India is currently restricted by lack of clarity when it comes to regulating online channels of education. Teachers and students' comfort with online class design, structure, level of interaction between students and faculty, the quality and amount of class content, technical support, and overall experience with online class delivery impact the overall teaching and learning experience and determines the ultimate success or failure of online mode of education [14,15,16]. Thus, awareness needs to be increased focusing on the convenience and accessibility aspect in order to increase the adoption of online channels by students and teachers. Frustration with class structure and design may translate into a poor learning outcome for students. Improving the quality of online classes with the help of various service providers, along with support from different colleges and universities can help in making online mode of education more effective and easily acceptable all over India. The concerns suggested by teachers and students point towards the fact that more research and stu [12,13]dy should be conducted to provide more detailed information for changes to occur within design and methodology of online classes. Establishing a structured and user-friendly environment for online mode of education, one that is accessible for all without putting financial burden on students and teachers should be the main criteria in the minds of college and university management while promoting online education. Also, the need for providing adequate technological training to teachers about method of conducting online classes should be prioritized as it is found to be a pre-requisite for successful online class implementation. Although the sample size is small to generalize to the larger online higher education population, the information can throw light on the general issues faced by teachers and students during online classes. Online mode of

higher education is still in the early stage of development in India, therefore having clarity about the problems experienced and the expectations of students and teachers will help to plan out effective and structured strategies for taking online classes. It is important to note that the survey showed agreement between faculty and student perceptions of online mode of teaching.

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