Technical Perspectives on Students' Views of Different E-learning Platforms

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic which has created a challenge for the World in all sectors, it has also affected education system all over the World. Face to face or class room teaching is a predominantly popular method or feature of education worldwide, but this pandemic has forced the world to look for an option which will maintain the social distancing yet will provide education. Various e-learning platforms with multiple features are suddenly the new normal of the teaching trend. Online education is not a new concept for the Western World, they had adopted the concept long back and many renowned Universities around the globe conduct online classes for their students for the purpose of education, though classroom teaching was the preferred option. However, in India online education is still a new concept, but has come up as a powerful option. Online education is a form of education where the student and teacher uses various e-learning tools from their own source of communication may be Android phone or laptop and get connected to each other through internet connection. UGC in their recent guidelines published in April 2020, has also recommended that every institute should develop a virtual classroom and video conferencing facility and all teaching staff should be trained to use the technology. Due to the lockdown announced from mid-March, when school and colleges were closed down for classroom teaching, online education has gained popularity in India. There are various e-learning platforms available for online or virtual teaching, which are providing facilities like conducting online lectures or submission of assignments or assisting in keeping the academic records online. This study is conducted to understand the perception of the students on these e-leaning platforms, and the challenges and problems faced by students who come from various demography where the availability of basic facilities like power and connectivity is poor. The researchers conducted an online

survey using Google form to get the responses from students about their perception on online teaching.

Key words: Online education, online platforms, internet, connectivity, classroom teaching.

Introduction

As the world was celebrating the welcome party of 2020 on 31st December 2019, World Health Organization (WHO) received a report of pneumonia of unknown cause which was detected in Wuhan province of China.On30[th] Jan 2020 it was declared as Public Health Emergency of International concern and on 11th Feb 2020 World Health Organization (WHO) announced the name of new corona virus disease as COVID-19.On 11th March2020 World Health Organization (WHO) declared the novel corona virus (Covid-19) as Global Pandemic, because the number of cases increased 13-fold and the number of countries with cases increased three-fold. India reported the first case of Covid-19 (2019-nCoV) on 30th Jan 2020 in the state of Kerala, which forced the authorities to strengthen the surveillance at the point of entry to India and the figure of infected started increasing. University Grants Commission on 5th March 2020 issued an Advisory to Universities and Colleges to take preventive measures to combat the threat of Novel corona virus (Covid-19) in campus and to take utmost care of students and staff working. On 22nd March 2020, Prime minister Shri. Modiji announced 'Janata Curfew' throughout India from 7.00 am to 9.00 pm followed by a complete lockdown from 24th March 2020 for 21 days till 14th April 2020. This was the Phase -1of Lockdown.

On 14th March 2020, Higher and Technical Education Department of Maharashtra State declared the closure of Institutes and Universities till 31st March 2020 and remain updated for further notifications and work from home for teaching faculty was advised. However, the lockdown continued for indefinite period and the whole country including industry and educational institutions were shut down at once and waiting for the government and university notifications. With this indefinite situation the E-learning platforms and modern teaching learning technologies bloomed and every nook and corner of the country started adopting these technologies and eventually the education became totally dependent on these technologies. These e learning platforms suddenly got popularity and came in to limelight and eventually became the need of the time as a part of teaching pedagogy. Many new e-

learning platforms were introduced and older once refined and updated themselves according to the need of the various level of education from KG to PG. With the improving situation of Covid -19 during the month of January 2021, government advised universities to open colleges with proper guidelines to all affiliated colleges. However, these guidelines mentioned and advised educational institutions to use both online as well as offline mode of teaching. Due to such guidelines e-learning platforms remained necessary in spite of reopening of schools and colleges. With the increasing number of cases again in the month of March 2021 II phase of lockdown was announced by the state government. However, it was not as strict as first lockdown but it still restricted the educational institutions to remain close till further notifications.

Online Education

The online education concept is not new, western countries were using this concept effectively in their school and universities. The Indian education system is based on very little practical and more on theoretical base as compared to the western countries it is research and practical based. The basic requirement for online learning or teaching is that students and teacher should have a stable Internet connection, a laptop/computer, Android mobile, etc. Online education is form of education where in the student and teacher uses their own source of communication may be Android phone or laptop and get connected to each other through internet connection. The teacher can get connected to any number of students at a given time and conducts his/her class. In India, also online teaching was used but was not very popular in school and universities, but was restricted to distance education learning. The online or distance learning education in India did not gain the momentum for regular studies and used by working professional to upgrade their qualification or by students who could not afford the higher fees of colleges. The second reason is that the online/distance education degrees are not recognized by many educational bodies and also by some of the top brands to recruit such students who have completed their education through online mode.

Now the time has changed, due to lock down the mode of teaching the students has changed from classroom teaching to online teaching, may be for certain period but this will be gradually taken seriously by everyone. UGC in the guide lines published in April 2020 has also recommended that every institute should develop a virtual classroom and video

conferencing facility and all teaching staff should be trained to use the technology. It also states that to overcome such challenges in future, the faculties should use ICT and online teaching tools, so that 25percent of syllabus is completed and remaining 75percent is completed in actual classroom. Also Finance Minister on 17 March has also declared that online education mode will be used further with 'one channel for one class', for students who don't have access to internet. SWAYAM PRABHA DTH channels will support the online mode. DIKSHA, one-nation, one-digital platform for school education, one earmarked TV channel for each class will be the part of this announcement. Also top 100 universities will be to start online courses by 30th May 2020. As per a report released by KPMG India and Google, Online Education in India: 2021, the market for online education in India is expected to witness a magnificent growth of eight times in three years, i.e., from USD 247million in 2016 to USD 1.96 billion in 2021. Such high growth in online education market is projected to be the outcome of increased number of paid online education users from 1.57 million in 2016 to 9.5 million in2021. Government of INDIA also has various free e-Learning plat forms that facilitate the learners to enroll themselves for free and pay for the exam certifications. These platforms are very popular amounts the staff and students. As staff also get huge platform for self-learning as well as to be a facilitator by creating own courses. To name a few Swayam, Diskha, e-shodhsindhu, e-PG Pathshala, Swayam Prabha, NPTEL etc. Apart from this few more learning platforms are also available at certain fees or cost e.g., BYJU, White hat, Merit nation, Edukart, Educomp Solution, Dexler Education, National Repository of Open Education Resources etc.

Various Popular Online Teaching Learning Platforms

There are various online platforms which are available to be used for online or virtual teaching, which are providing facilities for conducting online lectures or submission of assignments or assisting in keeping the academic records online, some of the popular online apps are mentioned here:

Google Classroom: It is a free service provided by Google for schools, non-profit organizations and anyone having a personal Google account. It is easy for everyone to connect with anyone. It helps in saving time and helps in keeping paperless records, and makes it easy to create classes, distribute assignments, communicate and stay organized.

Zoom: It is the app which provides video communications, cloud platform for video and audio conferencing, chat, and webinars. There are various plans which zoom provides to its customer, the Basic plan is the free plan with almost all features and unlimited meetings with a time limit of 40 minutes per meeting.

Cisco WebEx: This is an American company that develops and sells web conferencing and video conferencing applications. Free WebEx Meetings plan gives you meetings with 100 participants, HD video, screen sharing, and a personal room. Meetings can be stretched till 24 hrs.

Go To Webinar: The free Go To Webinar with a trial of free to cost for 7 days, it lets you not only see and hear webinars, but take part in them as well. You can ask questions; take part in polls and more. Participate in polls, raise your hand and ask the event speaker a question.

Google Meet: It is a premium video calling provided by Google and is now free for everyone. You can hold meetings, virtual training classes, remote interviews, etc. Recently Google meet has been added to Gmail account.

Microsoft Teams: This service is provided by Microsoft where team collaboration is done in Microsoft 365 that integrates the people, content, and tools your team needs to be more engaged. Free services are provided by teams with features which can be used for webinars.

Objectives

1. To study various online platforms available in India.
2. To study the perception of the hospitality students on online education.

Research Methodology

Both primary and secondary data has been considered for this research paper. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire. A random sampling method issued for collection of the responses from the respondents. Secondary data was collected from various websites, published journals, private publications, reports, etc.

Population and Sample size: Considering the lockdown, questionnaire was prepared on Google form and circulated amongst the students through WhatsApp and email. A sample
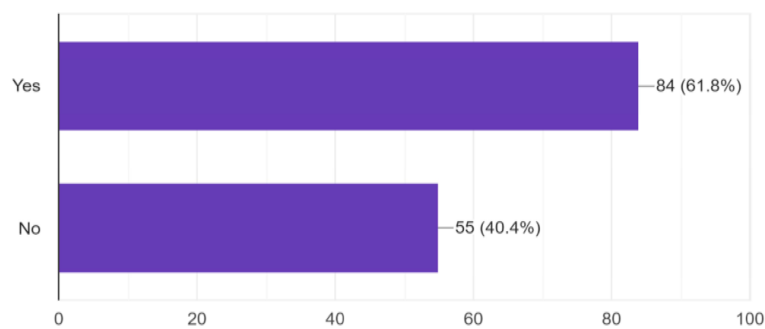
size of 136 filled questionnaires was considered for the study.

Limitations: Considering the lockdown phase and the fact that you were not allowed to move freely, only online filled questionnaires were considered for the study.

Data Interpretation and Analysis

Q1. Were you aware of any E-learning mode/ platforms before Pandemic?
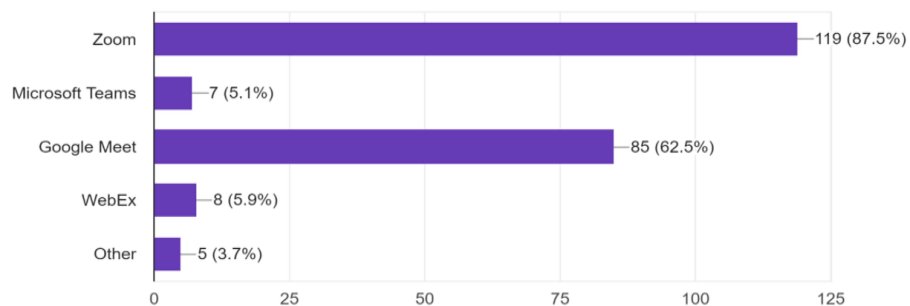136 responses

Yes — 84 (61.8%)
No — 55 (40.4%)

Figure 1

The respondents were asked about the awareness of E-Learning platforms which are available for teaching –learning process, 61.8 percent respondent were totally aware while

Q2. Which online modes of E-learning do you use?
136 responses

Zoom — 119 (87.5%)
Microsoft Teams — 7 (5.1%)
Google Meet — 85 (62.5%)
WebEx — 8 (5.9%)
Other — 5 (3.7%)

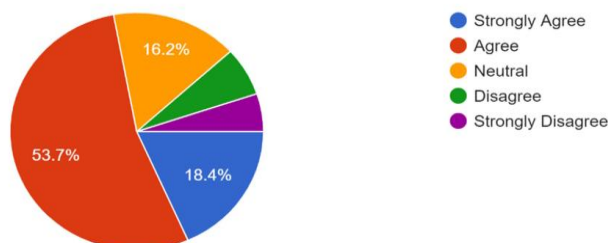40.4 percent respondents were unaware of the E-Learning platforms.

Figure 2

The use of E-Learning platform which the respondents commonly use, 87.5 percent responded for Zoom platform followed by 62.5 percent said that Google Meet was the second most e-platform which was used by the respondent. The other e-platforms like

WebEx, Microsoft Teams, and other platforms were very rarely used.

Q3. Do you think E-learning mode has opened multiple learning options?
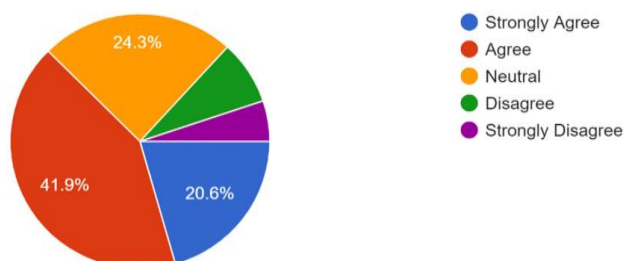136 responses

Figure 3

The question was asked about whether e-learning mode has opened multiple learning options to which 18.4percent strongly agreed while 53.7 percent also agreed to the multiple learning options. 16.2 per cent kept them refrained from answering the question by answering neutral,

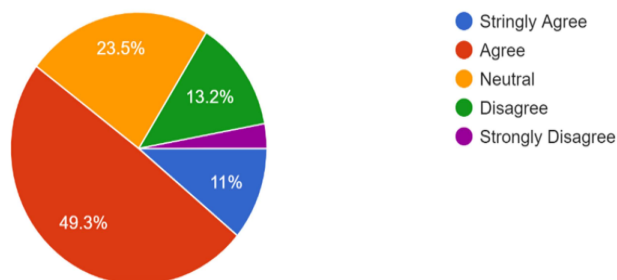Q4. Online Teaching - Learning modes are easy to use.
136 responses

while 6.6 And 5.1 respondents either disagreed or strongly disagree from the above.

Figure 4

24.3 percent responded remained neutral for answering the question about its easy to use, while 41.9 and 20.6percent strongly agreed and agreed for the ease of use. 8.1 And 5.1 percent of total respondent dis-agreed the ease of use.

Q5. Does E-learning mode/ Modes have made remarkable change in the Teaching-Learning process?

136 responses

- Stringly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
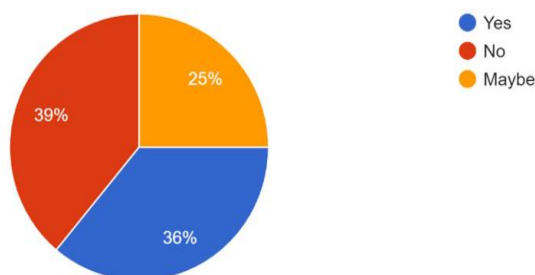- Strongly Disagree

23.5%
13.2%
11%
49.3%

Figure 5

Almost 60.3% respondents agreed to that e-learning mode has made remarkable change in the teaching –learning process, while 23.5% respondents remained neutral on this question and 16.2% disagreed on the question.

Figure 6

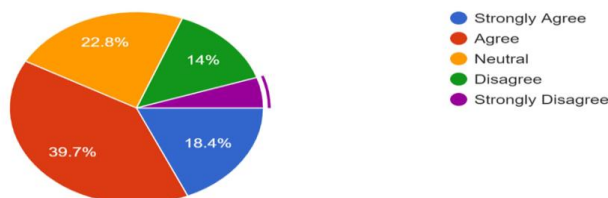Q6. Would you wish to continue to Learn through online mode?

136 responses

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

25%
39%
36%

As the pandemic is at its lowest peak in India, the question to respondent was asked whether they wish to continue to learn through online mode or offline mode, 39 percent respondents refused to online learning mode while 36 percent respondents wanted to continue to study online mode and 25 percent refrained from answering the question remaining neutral.

Q7. Online Teaching – Learning modes are easy to adopt/user friendly.
136 responses

Figure 7

Above figure indicates that the e-learning mode are found easier by 58.1 % respondents while 22.8% are neutral and rest do not agree to the statement.

Conclusion

Through the above data researcher would like to conclude that a large number of respondent were aware of e-learning Teaching-Learning Platforms before pandemic. During the pandemic, use of online modes became more popular where zoom being highly used platform followed by Meet. A large number of respondent feel that the e-learning mode has opened large Learning Avenue during the hard times of pandemic. They also find it easy to use and brought remarkable change in learning. In spite of all the positive responses the respondents feel that they would still prefer off line mode of learning.

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