

Online and Distance Learning During the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The predominant physical classrooms in the primary/traditional times were effective as they were the foundational blocks of education and due to lack of resources it was the only way for an individual to get a formal path of learning. However, today's times have completely changed the shape of education. Before the novel Covid-19, people were very much aware of online/distance learning and education and were also using it as per their needs, requirements, and circumstances.

Since the inception of Covid-19, every sector throughout the world had gone into a virtual mode. The education sector made the most out of it. All the courses offered by the institutions had inadvertently turned into online learning and offered everyone a new structure of education. The Covid era that lasted for two years made everyone so dependent on virtual education that most of the institutions have readily adopted the concept of hybrid learning where one can attend the physical classes for a few days and attend classes online for rest of the days. Distance learning is something which the modern generation can highly benefit from and which may increase their productivity.

KEYWORDS

Online Learning, Pandemic, Distance Education, Environmental Studies, Social Impact.

Introduction

India has around 35-40 million students taking admission into higher education and contributing to a very small gross enrolment ratio of around 26%; however, China with a larger population has a much larger gross enrolment ratio of 51.6%. If we really have to achieve the target of 50% by the new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, we have to give preference to online learning. Besides, the NEP studies suggest that multi point entry-exits and credit banks will only be workable if they are sufficiently facilitated for adoption in an online education environment.

The concept of traditional education has changed a lot over the last couple of years. Being physically present in a classroom is not the only learning option anymore. Online education has various benefits (Özüdoğru, G. (2021)). One of the most convenient reasons is that online education is flexible. Online education enables the teacher and the student to set their own learning pace, and there is an added flexibility of setting a schedule that fits everyone's agenda. The pandemic caused further shocks to the conventional education system with schools forced to shut down during the lockdown period, and therefore there was transition of students and teachers to online teaching-learning.

Data says that in India around 250-300 million students were affected due to school closure at the onset of lockdowns due to Covid-19. Pandemic has disrupted education in more than 150 countries and affected around 1.6 billion students. Many countries implemented some or the other form of remote education.

In recent years, E-Learning and Ed-Tech companies are the new beginnings. This revolution affected the entire education process. Online learning made it easier and convenient to learn advances in science and technology. In this changing world, online education has become more accessible.

Another important aspect is budget. Students who enroll in online classes typically save money and do not suffer as much debt as traditional students (Sari, T., & Nayır, F. (2020)).

Cost saving also has the biggest effect on online education than conventional school education. In conventional mode of education, you need to pay for infrastructure costs, transportation, and time. In case of online education, all the other miscellaneous expenses get reduced (Huang, R., Tlili, A., Chang, T. W., Zhang, X., Nascimbeni, F., & Burgos, D. (2020)).

One more important aspect in this study is safety. Online study is a safe alternative in case of any threats. During lockdown, it was dangerous to step out of house. We all were well aware that during lockdown students were not supposed to come in physical proximity with each other, thereby reducing the possibility of disease spread.

Furthermore, there is considerable concern from the academic community about the quality of online learning. Pre-pandemic, some faculty and students were already sceptical about the value of online learning. The longer the pandemic lasts, the more they may question the value of online education. The obvious question is s , asking; can online education during the pandemic produce learning some outcomes that are similar to face-to-face learning before the pandemic?

Despite the documented benefits of online education before the pandemic, the actual impact of online education during Covid-19 students' academic performance is still unknown due to reasons outlined below.

On the one hand, several factors beyond the technology used could influence the effectiveness of online education, one of which is the teaching context.

In addition to these mixed results, little attention has been given to factors affecting students' acceptance of online education during the pandemic. With the likelihood that online education will persist post pandemic research in this area is warranted to inform online course design. In particular, prior research has demonstrated that one of the most important factors that influence student's performance in any learning environment is a sense of belonging, the feeling of being connected with and supported by the instructor and classmates.

The COVID-19 pandemic lockdown has ranged on now for more than a year and there is still too much uncertainty on its prognosis. This is especially given the contemporary underlying factors worldwide like globalization that eased its spread from one border to another through air, land and sea, hence escalating the health, social and economic situation with immeasurable damages on the human cost and the economies of the world. (Yilmaz Ince, E., Kabul, A., & Diler, İ. (2020)).

Many educational institutions have discontinued physical classes as a precaution to prevent the spread of the disease and the 2020 academic year has already been lost with 2021 was also unpredictable and that time alternative education systems with more convenient and reliable assessment strategies need to be created and innovated. Digital education has been introduced with online learning platforms trending all over the world. This was however as a matter of crisis management.

Objectives of The Study

- To get better understanding of the concept of online education.
- To get better understanding of the importance of online education during and after coronavirus lockdown period.
- To ascertain the online education as a best possible solution to resolve the existing issues and upcoming challenges like Covid-19.
- To evaluate online Education System as a best tool to challenge uncertainties.
- To suggest the measures to uplift the standards of higher education to meet global challenge during such an accidental time.
- One more major part of distance learning or distance education, a form of education in which the main elements include physical separation of teachers and students during instruction and the use of various way to facilitate student-teacher communication.
- Distance learning traditionally has focused on non-traditional students, such as full-time workers, military personnel, and non-residents or individuals in remote regions who are unable to attend classroom lectures. However, distance education has become

an established part of the educational world, with trends pointing to ongoing growth (El Firdoussi, S., Lachgar, M., Kabaili, H., Rochdi, A., Goujdami, D., & El Firdoussi, L. (2020)).

Research Approach

This is qualitative research and the key source of the information in this research is the secondary data. As already mentioned, many schools and teachers were not prepared to run virtual classes, especially at the primary and secondary school levels. Therefore, at the beginning of the pandemic, those secondary teachers were in a privileged position. They had a large range of ICT tools at their disposal and fresh knowledge on how to use them, Organizing the educational process online, they could freely choose the form of inclusion of the experiment in to their lessons.

The described study was based on monitoring of teachers participating in some XYZ sector during academic projects in the pandemic situations. Some major consequences to have occurred during Covid-19 crisis have meant limited or n education, or falling further behind their peers for many who already experienced barriers in accessing education-children with disabilities. A decrease in the share of international students may, in turn, have severe repercussions on the funding model of some higher education institutes where international students pay higher education tuition fees than domestic ones.

Challenges confronting effective online learning

Online education is having so many problems such as internet connectivity, data shortage, network problems, lack of awareness, lack of awareness of the main challenges for online or distance learning do not realize the impact of this of learning. They may feel that online education is not as effective training within training centres and that trainee will miss the opportunity.

In other way if we can see solutions online earning can be an effective way to start and enhancement e-learning promotions. Develop communicating and develop effective communicating the public can be another approach towards creative awareness.

Second point is boring online education people around you sleeping and you alone attending classes/Learning, There types of courses make the learner bored with online learning. Get-out of these problems search for dynamic, fun and interactive online learning. Technical difficulties faced by students, the study are not in high quality, and many students does not know how to proceed. With this new technologies. Some of lacking in motivation, students not get motivation in online learning. Infrastructure problem, many students feel that if we were in school than they play, they roam meet with the friend.(Utomo, M. N. Y., Sudayanto, M., & Saddhono, K. (2020).)

Course structure and quality not good sometimes. Abundant distractions, lacking of discipline. All these kind of problems occur when online classes started. And how the educators adopt to the all challenges of on line education.

There are some common technical problems in online education. Covid-19 pandemic has disturbed teaching in a variety of institutions. It has tested the readiness of academic institutions to deal with such abrupt crisis. The analysis showed that the common online platforms in world in ZOOM, Microsoft teams offering online interactive classes, and WhatsApp in communication with students outside the class.

Online education comes with challenges irrespective of the status of development. This means that even the most developed countries also have their own share of the challenge. Course challenges related to content, design and delivery, characteristics of the individual student or the teacher, technological challenges, contextual challenges related to organizational, culture and societal (Anderson, A., & Grönlund, A. (2009))

Online learning during COVID-19 revealed that students indicated distraction of online classes as some of the challenges they faced.

Online intention among students as compared to traditional face to face study. Paechter and Maier (2010) in their study found that Austrian students still preferred face-to-face study for better communication.

Apprehension

Really thanks to technology advancement, the method that education is given has been Permanently altered. Online learning has developed into a versatile teaching method that allow students to conveniently access study material from the comfort of their homes. one side we can see that teaching is art and teachers have to become an actor and performer, teachers need to learn new ways of performing on a digital platform, to connect with their students, to create curiosity among them, to understand their requirements and help overcome anxiety and ambiguities perplexing their minds.

One of the major points to address the increasingly well-documented problem of teacher stress and attrition focusing upon the need for critical conversations about this problem.

While a variety of approaches can help students with communication apprehension, among the most common is the development of skills, such as through a basic communication course.

For our study, the basic course serves as an ideal environment to compare the level of apprehension and self-efficacy of students in blended and face-to-face modalities.

The history of education is as old as human civilization. Primitive people had to learn from nature. Now days like online shopping, online interview, online official work, online conference, etc. online education is a buzzword now a days, basically it is a learning system where student receive education through internet using their personal phones and other technology.

In the pre-pandemic world, online learning was viewed with apprehension quarters. Alongside the clear benefits of studying online-such as enhanced flexibility, greater convenience, and access to

new learning techniques and smart technologies-there were fears that employers might not take online qualifications seriously.

But in the post-pandemic world, employers see online study in a renewed light, said Andrew Vincent. It has become clear that there are benefits to this mode of learning that are immediately applicable in real-life employment situations.

We all know that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused a dramatic transformation in education systems in which face-to-face education was cancelled to protect public health in many countries. (Katz, V. S., Jordan, A. B., & Ognyanova, K. (2021))

Never in the history of academic were online learning channels used so extensively at a global scale. Now, more students, parents, and teachers have learned how to use online tools for education and we believe that the blended learning approach will be the way to go forward for the industry. Education to date followed a system that had been in use for decades, but people started adopting new learning methods with Pandemic.

There are multiple reasons to believe that virtual education is the future of education. A some of the reasons pointed that students undertake, and institutes offer online classes. Altogether it provide a better experience to learners. Each and every students must process their unique situation and decide according to their needs and goals.

Although making education fun. That is what gamification is all about. Online education has become interesting and exciting and will continue to do so. Game based strategies, such as giving badges, leader boards, and activities that involve play, are gaining prominence. Play-based learning also improves cognitive and behavioural abilities. Hence, gamification will increasingly be an integral feature of education, development of skills, testing, assessment, and more.

Virtual reality and augmented reality will both be a reality when it comes to e-learning. Technology and education will fuse in a way unimaginable. Since every individual is unique and different, their cognitive abilities and understanding levels also differ.

Last but not the least, learning will be more video-based than ever in the future. In fact, this is perhaps the most important trend in online education.

There is an all-world out there when it comes to online education. In future, learning will also become flexible, where students will be able to access course content from anywhere, besides, students will have access to learning modules by expert tutors.

Most importantly virtual reality and education will play a big role in imparting knowledge (Nenko, Y., Kybalna, N., & Snisarenko, Y. (2020))

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