



ONLINE TEACHING – AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF ITS ACCEPTABILITY AMONG STUDENT COMMUNITY DURING COVID-19

(With special reference to NCR region)

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Abstract

The recent pandemic of Corona virus posed a challenge to many sectors of the economy with regard to continuity of their operations. Sudden lockdown brought all activities to rest and gradually alternatives of operations were conceived. All the sectors found there ways of continuing their operations through one way or the other. The role of technology needs to be applauded for playing a vital role in keeping all sectors functional. It is all due to technology that most of the sectors survived and were able to keep them active to a large extent. The silver lining or the positive part of corona virus crisis was that it led to invention of many new techniques and alternative mode of functioning. Among the various sector, one of the sector which connects large segment of society is 'Education'. Emergence of Online education system and ability of teachers as well as students to respond to the new system really need to be appreciated. It is against this background the study has been conducted to identify and highlight the perception of the students particularly in NCR region of Delhi comprising of Noida, Ghaziabad and Faridabad. Responses of various issues relating to online teaching were sought through questionnaire and subsequently analyses using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to draw meaningful interpretations. The study is exploratory in nature and therefore does not give any conclusive evidence.

Key words: Online teaching, Covid -19, exploratory study, NCR region, Likert scale, Cumulative frequency, valid frequency.



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Introduction

Online education system has been in existent for last many years but its extensive use was made over last few months ever since after the outbreak of corona virus pandemic. The revolution in technology has led to increase in penetration level of internet in India over last one decade and use of smart phones further accelerated the process of converting large segment of population tech savvy. The survival of most of the sectors of economy was ensured only on account of technology during corona virus pandemic and lockdown period.

Research Methodology

The study has been conducted to examine the perception of students of different academic standards towards online education system. A questionnaire (having ten questions) was circulated among students from school, Undergraduate courses and Post graduate course and their opinion were sought mainly on the following issues:

- i) Connectivity problem
- ii) Course which can be suitably taught through online mode
- iii) Assessment and Evaluation through online mode
- iv) Major advantages of the online teaching system
- v) Major disadvantages of the online teaching system

The study being exploratory in nature aims to highlight various issues associated with the online teaching and experience of its users (student's community) as a substitute for traditional classroom teaching.

Analysis and Interpretations of the data

A copy of questionnaire containing ten different questions with binary options and Likert scale (depending upon the nature of questions) was circulated among students using convenience sampling method on random basis. Subsequent to receipt of their responses, the demographic profile of the respondents was examined, as shown below in table 1:

Level of Education	No. of Respondents	Percentage
School	18	36
Undergraduate	18	36
Post Graduate	14	28

Table 1: Demographic profile of Respondents

As can be observed from table 1, the proportion of various categories of respondents is well diversified among school level, Undergraduate level and Post graduate level. Opinion of the respondents were sought on various issues with the help of questionnaire. Specific issues alongwith their summary and analysis of the result obtained using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) is summarized below :

Issue 1 : Overall rating of online teaching on a scale of (0 to 10) with 0 as minimum and 10 as maximum. The result of the survey is summarized below in table 2

	Rating points	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	3.00	10	20.0	20.0	20.0
	6.00	17	34.0	34.0	54.0
	8.00	23	46.0	46.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Overall rating of online teaching on a scale of (0 to 1)

It can be observed that majority of the respondents have rated the online teaching method above average with nearly 46% rating it very satisfactory by assigning rating of 8 on the given scale 0 to 10. The responses collected from the applicants clearly reflects that online teaching was widely accepted among all levels of students.

Issue2 : Network Connectivity problems faced during online teaching
The result of the survey is summarized below in table 3

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Most of the times	14	28.0	28.0	28.0
	Sometimes	27	54.0	54.0	82.0
	Never	9	18.0	18.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 3: Summarized result of Connectivity issue

As can be observed from the above table, 82% of the respondents stated that they faced connectivity issues while attending classes whereas 18% did not report any connectivity issues. The problem of connectivity was prevalent as most of the online platforms were witnessing excessive load and usage of internet increased manifolds ever since the outbreak of Covid pandemic

Issue 3: Subject which can be properly taught using online methods

The opinion of respondents regarding suitability of online teaching for different kind of papers was sought. The result has been summarized below in table 4

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Practical	3	6.0	6.0	6.0
	Theory	29	58.0	58.0	64.0
	Both	18	36.0	36.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 4: Subjects suitable for teaching through online method

It can be observed that the suitability of online teaching methods is considered more appropriate for theoretical papers and least for practical papers involving Laboratory practical as demonstration of experiments on screen does not give adequate understanding of the

methodology. However, there were certain students, constituting 36% of the respondents, who have expressed their satisfaction for both theoretical as well as papers involving practicals.

Issue 4: Can online teaching be a good substitute for traditional classroom teaching?

The respondents were asked to express their opinion regarding the fact if online teaching a good substitute of traditional classroom teaching. The result of the survey, summarized in table 5, shows that the opinion of the respondents is almost mixed as 56% found online teaching methodology as good as class room teaching whereas 44% of the respondents do not consider it as a perfect substitute of traditional classroom teaching.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	28	56.0	56.0	56.0
	No	22	44.0	44.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 5: Opinion regarding Online teaching being substitute of traditional classroom

One of the obvious reason for such a mixed opinion could be infrastructural constraints faced by many students in attending online classes due to lack of space, appropriate gadget, etc.

Issue 5: Type of Course which can be justified to be taught through online mode of teaching

The respondents were required to express their opinion regarding utility of online teaching in different type of courses i.e. Regular, Part time and tutorials (in case of regular courses). As can be observed from the summary of the result shown in table 6, the utility of online teaching methodology is considered more appropriate for Part Time courses and Tutorials than Regular Courses.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Regular	6	12.0	12.0	12.0
	Part Time	24	48.0	48.0	60.0
	Tutorials	20	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 6: Opinion regarding courses suitable for online teaching methodology

As Part time courses are meant for specific group of students and studied by the students in addition to the Regular courses, online methodology offers them flexibility of timing and location as well as scope for interacting with subject experts/faculty of any geographical location.

Issue 6: Did you found online method appropriate for submitting assignment /routine class projects, etc.?

The respondents supported methodology of submitting assignments and other routine project works through online method . It can be observed from the table 7, 86% of the responded supported the idea of submitting assignments/routine class projects ,etc through online methods.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	43	86.0	86.0	86.0
	No	7	14.0	14.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 7: Opinion regarding submission of assignments through online method

The reason which can be attributed to this fact could be interaction with the gadget for limited time and submission through online mode also automatically generates receipt acknowledgement. Further, it does not require presence of teacher and students at the same time and same place, students have more flexibility of submitting the assignment. The chances of loss of assignment also get nullified.

Issue 7: Did you found online method appropriate for conducting examinations ?

In response to the issue of conducting examination through online mode, majority of the students expressed their dissatisfaction and opted to appear for examination through off line mode. It can be observed from the summary of the result , shown in table 8 , 92% of the respondents have preferred offline method of examination .

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	4	8.0	8.0	8.0
	No	46	92.0	92.0	100.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 8: Opinion regarding conducting examinations through online mode

This could be due to the reason faced by students in uploading their answer sheets, within stipulated time, subsequent to completion of examination.

In addition to the above, the respondents were also required to enlist one advantage and disadvantage of online teaching through which undergone during the covid situation. Most of the respondents mentioned following advantages and disadvantages:

Advantages of online mode of teaching:

- 1) It helped in saving time of transportation
- 2) No transportation cost incurred
- 3) Routine expenditures of students are minimized to a large extent.

- 4) Found convenient to attend the class
- 5) Specific questions and issues related to topics are discussed.

Disadvantages of online mode of teaching

- 1) Restricts physical movement
- 2) Eye sight problem may occur due to interaction with mobile/laptop for long time.
- 3) Personal Interaction with peer groups gets restricted which is not good for personality development.

Conclusion

The above analysis of the responses sought from different respondents highlights the opinion of students' from diverse categories in terms of their economic position, location of their accommodation, varying level of technology literacy, courses in which they are enrolled, etc. The process of online teaching was considered as good mechanism to keep the education sector in active mode during covid situation. Despite of connectivity issues and other minor limitations, the method was widely accepted as large segment of respondents assigned above average rating to this method. However, from the opinion of the students, it appears that it cannot be treated as perfect substitute for routine class room teaching but could be an alternative for short term basis only. The usage of laptops/mobile phones, etc for long duration can lead to health problems particularly vision problems, lethargy, etc. It is therefore concluded that Online teaching though offers several benefit in terms of flexibility and cost effectiveness but could not be considered as desirable replacement of traditional classroom teaching.

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