

EFFECTIVENESS OF ONLINE CLASSES DURING A PANDEMIC – A TEACHERS AND THE STUDENTS PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

Educational Institutions have been closed across the country from March, due to the pandemic situation. The lockdown during the pandemic have made online classrooms the primary source of teaching the students of all ages. The method of teaching by a teacher has changed dramatically during this pandemic. The teachers are using various virtual classroom platforms to upload assignments, study material, conduct quizzes, multimedia resources and also for the assessments. With the rapid growth of digital technology and rise in virtual learning centres offering online courses and degrees to students, learning about the effectiveness of online classes are vital. The primary objective of the study is to find out the effectiveness of online classes from the teachers and the students perspective. Descriptive research is used to describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied. Stratified Random sampling technique has been selected to use in the study. The sample size taken for the study is 350 students and 150 Teachers. ANOVA is used because the technique involves first finding out the total variation among the observations in the collected data, then assigning causes or components of variation to various factors and finally drawing conclusions about the equality of means. The findings of the study was given. This pandemic situation is far from ideal and presents a strenuous opportunity to change the student's experiences in learning and also the teachers ability to teach effectively through the various digital tools.

Keywords: Pandemic, Virtual Classroom, Video Conferencing, Technology.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Educational Institutions have been closed across the country from March, due to the pandemic situation. Meanwhile, classes are being conducted for the students through online. While online courses had existence since long before the pandemic, they served a difference purpose, making students to access various modules and subjects and supplementing what students were being

taught in physical classroom. The lockdown during the pandemic have made online classrooms the primary source of teaching the students of all ages. The method of teaching by a teachers has changed dramatically during this pandemic. The teachers are using various virtual classroom platforms to upload assignments, study material, conduct quizzes, multimedia resources and also for the assessments. The students are very excited to learn their syllabus through digital medium. The online mode of instruction also allows each students to work at their own pace.

Education is one of the key determinants of a country's economic growth, which can neither be stopped nor ignored. The countrywide lockdown led to the closure of schools, colleges, and universities for an undefined period of time. This sudden lockdown has blocked all academic activities and caused to immediate loss in learning. As a result of the closure of universities and schools, teachers and students had to rapidly adapt to remote teaching. Teacher education is no exception. The need to create learning environments for student teachers doing their teacher education preparation implied decisions, choices and adaptations in order to meet not only the expectations of students but also the requirements of teacher education as well as the conditions in which both universities and schools had to operate. Fortunately, current technology enabled electronic learning (E – Learning) or online learning to be the core method of teaching the curriculum during the COVID – 19 Pandemic.

An online class is a course conducted over the Internet. They are generally conducted through a learning management system, in which students can view their course syllabus and academic progress, as well as communicate with fellow students and their course instructor.

Online Learning introduces first-time distance learners to the realities of Web-based education and serves as the most comprehensive, practical guide to achieving success when facing online-specific barriers as well as common academic hurdles. Written by an experienced instructor, this invaluable aid shows students how to overcome challenges related to e-mail communication, technological catastrophes, staying organized on a daily basis, and more. Students learn to take advantage of the unique resources available for those enrolled in internet-based programs and to make the most of their Web-based educational experience by tailoring it to their personal strengths, needs, and learning styles.

An online educator compensates the lack of physical presence in the virtual classroom by creating a supportive environment where all students feel comfortable to participate in online class. It plays a significant role in transforming our lives to digital world by providing flexible places, class timings and quality contents. It provides a way to the development of humanity at the time physical isolation due to pandemic. Online learning is beneficial because it is instantly accessible and offers flexible scheduling. In this system, learners use Internet technology to communicate virtually with their teachers and fellow learners through E-mail, WhatsApp, and Videoconferencing, Instant messaging or using other tools. However Videoconferencing may be effectively used in online learning to enhance group collaboration with sense of community between learners which may replace face to face class room learning to some extent. In the past, students of rural areas were missing many of the opportunities that their urban and suburban peers had taken for granted. Connecting these rural students for online learning via video conferencing can dramatically improve the quality of their learning experience. This enables the rural/disadvantaged learners to both attend school/college from home and gives them access to the experts.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Mohammad Alim S. M. Khaled Hossain, Tania Ahmed (2018), states that the aim of current study is to analyse the effectiveness of e- learning for the students at university level. Data have been collected through questionnaire and it was given to 700 students. Eight variables have

been used to measure the effectiveness of e-learning. Cronbach's alpha test is used to measure the reliability and internal consistency of the associated factors. The exploratory factor analysis is used to extract the variables and to measure the factors loading in the study. One sample t-test has been performed to test the hypotheses. The outcome of the study supports that e-learning is faster, time and cost friendly, appropriate to work independently, add value to the learning of the students, usable for the purpose of active learning, faster, quick response, applicable outside the class room and quality of e-learning is satisfactory which indicates e-learning is effective.

Shobitha. S (2018), depicts that E-Learning is referred to like teaching and learning by using electronic media. This methodology supports this use of networking and communication technology in teaching and learning. E-learning is generally meant for remote learning or distance learning, but can also be studied in face to face mode. New trends in education have also come about, and new challenges have been thrown up to reckon, at the same time, there is an indisputable need to maintain continuity, change, and growth, all at once. However the benefits of these technologies have to reach the rural masses of India. Otherwise, they will be one of the causes of the Digital Divide.

3. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Learning online is different from learning in face-to-face setting. The pandemic has shown that online learning is going to be part of our reality. With the rapid growth of digital technology and rise in virtual learning centres offering online courses and degrees to students, learning about the effectiveness of online classes are vital.

4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

4.1 Primary Objective

The primary objective of the study is to find out the effectiveness of online classes from the teachers and the students perspective.

4.2 Secondary Objective

4.2.1 Teachers Perspective

- To study the difficulties faced by the teachers while adapting to the virtual classroom platform.
- To understand the strategies followed by the teachers to maintain discipline in the classroom.
- To know the teachers level of satisfaction with the online classes.

4.2.2 Students Perspective

1. To study the difficulties faced by the students while attending the online classes.
2. To study the students opinion about the formative assessments.
3. To analyse the satisfaction level of the students with the online classes.

5. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

The research design used for the study is descriptive in a nature. Descriptive research is used to describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied. Stratified Random sampling technique has been selected to use in the study. The sample size taken for the study is

350 students and 150 Teachers. The respondents would be chosen randomly from the Arts and Science College around Tiruchirappalli city.

5.1 Data and Sample

Primary Data have been collected from the teaching professionals and the aspiring undergraduates from various arts and science colleges in Tiruchirappalli city through the structured Questionnaire. Secondary data have been collected from Books, Magazines and various Journal Publications.

5.2 Research hypothesis

- H1 : The Virtual classroom platform is very effective than the physical classroom environment.
- H2 : The sharing of information and formative assessments through online classroom is very helpful.

5.3 Measurements

Primary and Secondary data collected from respondents will be divided into independent variables and dependent variables. These independent variables are conceptualised by using a set of 5-point Likert scale statements to measure the students and Teachers effectiveness. Both the variables are supported by students effectiveness in E-learning. The researcher has made accurate use of concepts and precisely described as per the objectives framed for research activity.

5.4 Statistical tools – Analysis of Variance

The Analysis of Variance, popularly known as ANOVA, is a very useful tool for testing the equality of more than two means of populations. ANOVA is used because the technique involves first finding out the total variation among the observations in the collected data, then assigning causes or components of variation to various factors and finally drawing conclusions about the equality of means. It is also used to test the significance of a regression equation are all equal to 0.

5.5 Analysis and Interpretation

Table 1 Mean and Standard Deviation Effectiveness of online classes from Teachers Perspective Based on Age

Variables	Below 25 years		25 years – 35 years		35 years – 45 years		45 years – 55 years		Above 55 years	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Technology Adoption	1.607	0.639	1.533	0.638	1.481	0.620	1.793	0.412	2.017	0.859
Effective Communication	1.333	0.500	1.875	0.804	1.950	0.793	1.961	0.751	1.483	0.575
Conducting Assessments	1.861	0.775	1.806	0.826	1.688	0.654	1.517	0.575	1.556	0.527
Maintaining discipline	1.798	0.731	1.878	0.876	1.818	0.790	1.483	0.575	1.222	0.441
Network Issues	1.222	0.41	1.552	0.686	1.935	0.833	1.967	0.776	2.017	0.859

The measures of dispersion indicates that there exist differences in the mean score computed between different types of age groups and their opinion on the effectiveness of online classes

during pandemic. Similarly, Teachers of below 25 years feels that conducting assessments through online is difficult, teachers of 25 – 35 years feels that maintaining discipline, 35 – 45 years and 45 – 55 years feels that Network issue is major problem to them and the teachers above 55 years are of the opinion that all the factors are difficult to them.

Table 2 Mean and Standard Deviation Effectiveness of online classes from Students Perspective Based on Class

Variables	I UG		II UG		III UG	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Concentration on classes	1.853	0.551	1.883	0.609	1.939	0.527
Easy to understand	1.878	0.876	1.965	0.842	1.908	0.805
Interactions in class	1.861	0.775	1.807	0.775	1.688	0.654
Technology Adoption	1.706	0.711	2.000	0.829	1.818	0.790
Assessments	1.923	0.777	1.557	0.646	1.554	0.587

The mean score has been computed between the students studying in I UG, II UG and III UG and their opinion about the effectiveness of online classes. It has been found that III UG students can able to concentrate on the classes and II UG students feel easy to understand the classes and I UG students have more interactions and II UG students feels that they can easily adopt the technology and the assessments are easy to I UG students.

6. FINDINGS

- Majority of the teachers are facing many difficulties while adapting to the virtual classroom platform like adopting the new technology, preparing classes in digital mode and using various tools for handling the classes.
- Majority of the teachers felt that maintaining discipline in the virtual classroom is another challenging factor. Most of them are conducting mock tests, pop quizzes and interaction to make the students engage in the virtual classes.
- Majority of the teachers are of the opinion that Physical Classrooms are better than virtual classroom, but some teachers depicted that using videos and other tools are very easy for the students to understand the concept.
- Network issues are the major problem to both the students and teachers in the online classes.
- Majority of the students are happy with the online classes and they are able to understand the lessons very easily.
- Majority of the students expects only the physical classroom to interact more with the teachers and also with their friends.
- The Quizzes conducted and the online assignments provided are very helpful to enhance their subject knowledge.

7. CONCLUSION

The Physical classroom environment is changed due to this pandemic to the virtual classroom environment. This pandemic situation is far from ideal and presents a strenuous opportunity to change the student's experiences in learning and also the teachers ability to teach effectively through the various digital tools. The educational technology has the potential to effectively enhance the learning experience for students and the experience of a teacher now can define the future classroom which is seen as a new normal.

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