

FROM REAL TO VIRTUAL EDUCATION – A LECTURER’S PERCEPTION AND EXPERIENCE

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Abstract: *In a blaze, we shifted from real to virtual world, from teaching in a class room to teaching on the online Apps. The famous quote by Tim Berners-Lee, the inventor of World Wide Web, “The Web as I envisaged it, we have not seen it yet. The future is still so much bigger than the past” signifies the revolutions to be witnessed. As COVID-19 pandemic has taken the entire world by tornado, Technology is now the highest human hour time consumer. Online teaching and learning platforms have made learning unlimited. Stay home, work from home and learn at home are some of the new buss words. Traditional methods of teaching are being replaced and reformed and lecturers have to come up with innovative pedagogies to redefine learning in a virtual space.*

The purpose of the study was to conduct an online survey of the lecturer's experience with online classes. The education system in India has modified its delivery methods in the wake of the current swine flu situation. College and university lecturers are concerned about taking online classes that have been made mandatory in the wake of COVID19, according to this survey. The sample consisted of 65 lecturers. The online survey method was used to collect data. The areas that are important for academicians satisfaction with online classes are shown in the findings. Quality and timely interaction between student and professor, technical support availability, structured online class modules, and modifications to accommodate practical classes are some of the things that quality and timely interaction between student and professor.

Keywords: *COVID-19, Lecturers’ experience, Perception, University, Virtual classes.*

Introduction

Online learning is becoming part of the education system. Online channels have made education easy to access. The education sector in India has grown. India is one of the largest sectors of higher education in the world. The online mode of taking classes in universities and colleges in India has only been considered in the last few years. The face to face classroom approach has always been used the most in the Indian educational system. Adoption of online channels of education has been hampered by familiarity and ease of using offline methods. The educational boards have made online classes mandatory in the wake of the current COVID-19 situation. Covid-19 has changed the educational system in India and the entire world. Virtual classes are being used in universities across India and around the globe. Online education in India is still in its infancy. The government colleges and universities in India are still adapting despite the mixed results of the transition. In India, where many students face a challenge in terms of access to the internet, technology can be limiting. This in turn leads to issues with attendance and participation in online sessions, thereby making the adaptation of online channels of education a challenge. Meanwhile, face-to-face classroom setting can provide immediate feedback to faculty members and students about the quality of lesson, delivery, and experience. A teacher can observe a student's body language in a classroom and make adjustments to their teaching approach to best suit the needs of the students. When

compared to online channels, additional questioning and individualized attention in the classroom to gain a more detailed idea about the student's clarity with concepts being taught is a major advantage. In an online class, it's necessary to be more attentive and probing in order to get a good idea of what's going on in the classroom. Investigating and analyzing how online classes should be designed and arranged by taking into consideration the students' and lecturers' perspective should be an integral part of building online teaching methodology as well as learning. Student satisfaction and perception of online and face-to-face learning have been investigated in previous research studies.

Literature Review:

A study carried by Fortune, Spielman, and Pangelinan (2011) on 156 students who took the Recreation and Tourism course at a multicultural university in Northern California, there was no statistically significant difference in learning preference between those in the two different learning modes. Another study by Tratnik (2017) there were significant differences in student satisfaction when online classes were compared to face-to-face learning of English as a foreign language. The face-to-face course was found to be more satisfying for students than the online course. Online classes are a new mode of teaching that has not been part of regular classes.

Educational experts will be able to understand and make modifications to online classes to suit the needs of both, lecturers and students by investigating and analyzing how online classes are being perceived and experienced by students and faculties across different colleges and universities in India. Educational institutions and management who would be the future deliverers of online learning need more understanding of how students perceive and react to online classes as a learning mode to apply these approaches most effectively. When evaluating online mode of education, the student's perspective has been taken into account over the teacher's perspective, according to a review of previous studies. The educational base becomes weaker if the provider of education is not satisfied with the online mode. The introduction of online classes has been challenging for both lecturers and students.

Scope of the Study

The significance of this research is that it explores the Lecturers perception of online classes in comparison to face-to-face classes. The survey was about lecturers from colleges and universities. The online classes are perceived differently in Bangalore. The results of the survey that was done to understand how well this new method is being taken by lecturers, what are the general problems faced by them while taking online classes are described in the following article. In the future, online teaching can be integrated with classroom teaching if modifications are brought to make it more effective. 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 lecturers.

Research Methodology

For this study, the author created a short survey for the lecturers. The general perception of online classes was assessed by the survey questions. There were 26 questions regarding the lecturer's perception of taking online classes in the lecturer survey. The lecturers were asked to tell what they thought about the positives and negatives of online teaching and what

applications they use to take online classes. The purpose of the survey was not to collect psychometric data, but to find out what people think. The survey was conducted online due to the current situation. A number of lecturers participated in the survey. The entire survey was completed by 65 lecturers. The total sample was 92.1%. There were no incentives for responding to the survey. The details of the survey were given to the respondents.

Data Analysis & Findings

Demographic profile of the respondents:

A total of 65 respondents were successfully responded & their demographic characteristics are depicted in Table 1.

Sl.No	Descriptions		No. of Respondents	Percentage
1.	Gender	Male	44	67%
		Female	21	33%
2.	Age (in years)	25 – 34	15	23%
		35 – 44	18	27%
		45 - 59	27	43%
		More than 60	05	7%
3.	Education	Post- Graduation	52	80%
		Ph.D.	13	20%
4.	Type of educational institution	Private institution	61	95%
		Government institutions	04	5%

Lecturer's Experience & Perception about Virtual classes:

There were items assessing three dimensions in the lecturer's survey. Personal factors and students factor during online classes. According to the results of the survey, 60.1% of the teachers preferred classroom teaching over online teaching. 39.9% preferred online classes.

Table 2: Survey items on lecturer's experience & perception of online classes

Online Vs Traditional classroom teaching mode
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Factors	Agree	Disagree
Online classes are more effective than classroom mode	35.5%	64.5%
Online classes are more convenient than classroom method	46%	54%
There is lack of teacher- student interaction in online classes	78%	22%
It is difficult to engage students in online classes	56.5%	43.5%
Online classes are fun and interactive than classroom method	26%	74%
Teacher- students disconnect is felt low in online classes compared to classroom method	34.5%	65.5%
Online classes are not safe and secure method	54%	46%
Difficult to keep classes for longer duration during online classes	82%	18%
It is difficult to control group interaction during online classes	78%	22%
Online classes help me to use innovative teaching methods	63.5%	36.5%
Technical issues effect the flow and pace of online classes	91%	9%

Personal factors in online teaching		
Factors	Agree	Disagree
Lack of computer skills makes it difficult for me to use the online teaching method effectively	32.5%	67.5%
There is lack of work satisfaction while taking online classes	73.5%	26.5%
Online classes make me conscious about my teaching skills	69.5%	30.5%
I feel lack of motivation to take online classes	56%	44%
I get easily distracted during online classes	45.5%	54.5%
Online classes trigger anxiety in me	84%	16%
I feel my skills as a teacher has improved through online teaching method	79%	21%
I am finding it difficult to adapt to the online teaching mode	67%	33%

Online teaching has boosted my confidence as a teacher	64.5%	35.5%
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Student factors in online classes		
Factors	Agree	Disagree
Students do not take online classes seriously	76.5%	23.5%
Students make lot more excuse for not attending online classes and the reliability of it cannot be assessed	82.5%	17.5%
Students show lack of interest and involvement during online classes	86.5%	13.5%

Even though online classes were convenient, could be taken from the comfort of their homes, saving travel time, they did not seem to be effective compared to the classroom method. Teacher- student disconnect, lack of interaction, inability to engage the group, technical issues were found to be the main issues. The majority of the sample felt that online classes were not very safe. The teachers agree that the new opportunity of conducting classes through online channel has increased their confidence and helped them to explore and use innovative teaching methods. Work satisfaction was reported as a problem while taking online classes. They felt that their lack of computer skills made it difficult to use the online teaching platform effectively. A majority of teachers reported lack of student interest. The main issue they faced was that students made a lot of excuses about not being able to attend classes, for example, network issue, poor audio and video quality, etc. It's difficult to know if they're giving genuine reasons or just escaping from the classes. With online classes and assignments, education technology apps are gaining popularity.

The positive aspects of online teaching were reported by the teachers. The majority felt that online classes were convenient, easy to access, and made it easier to evaluate and grade. Few Lecturers said that online teaching has helped them to upgrade their skills as a teacher, that they have become technically more skilled, that they have learned innovative teaching methods, and that they have boosted their confidence. Few respondents felt that online teaching could be taken from the comfort of their homes, which in turn saved travel time. Positive aspects were reported. Innovative tools like screen share can be used to promote online classes, they seem more structured in approach and it makes teaching more systematic if the classes can be recorded and preserved for future reference, rather than having students take the class again for missed classes.

Majority of them (64.2% of the sample) reported Poor audio and video quality, power cuts, and broadband issues are some of the technical issues that most of them reported when asked about the problems they faced while taking classes online. 37.1% of the teachers reported lack of student involvement and engagement in the classes as a problem. They reported that students during online classes made a lot of excuses and showed lack of seriousness.

This makes the teachers feel demotivated. Lack of motivation from students to attend classes was one of the issues faced by 15.7%. Some of the negative aspects of online teaching were reported by teachers. The online mode seemed too formal and lacked personal touch, as some of them found online teaching more time consuming as it required them to prepare power

point slides and extra materials for the classes. It was difficult to assess concept clarity by students and to know if they understand what is being taught. The other issues were inability to monitor and control student behaviour, lack of school satisfaction, background distractions, time constraints in using online apps, delay in starting the class due to students taking a lot of time to join, having inability to assess if students are aware of the class or have just logged in. The problem of taking practical subjects online was reported as a major issue. Practical subjects like design, accounts, math, and others were hard to take because the theoretical subjects were easier to take.

Conclusion & implications:

Lack of clarity when it comes to regulating online channels of education restricts higher education in India. The 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. Awareness needs to be increased in order to increase the adoption of online channels by students and teachers. A poor learning outcome may be caused by class structure and design. 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.

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