

Online Education: Perception of College Students

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ABSTRACT

Virtual learning the newest method in the field of education. Since the pandemic started all the universities have moved towards the virtual platforms so that the education is not hampered in these tough times. The main objective for this study was to know about the impact of online education on students. The research is based on the quantitative analysis from respondents. The close ended questionnaire was used as a method for collection for responses of respondents. The quantitative responses figured out that the students are willing to move to traditional learning method as soon as they can. They found themselves more motivated, involved and creative in traditional learning method than in the virtual learning method. The study concludes that traditional learning is better than virtual learning. Though virtual learning has some positive impact on students and their education.

Keywords: *Virtual learning, traditional learning, online education, students.*

1.0 Introduction

Learning virtually has become an integrated part of our lives. With this pandemic colleges and universities have been shut down. Leading for everyone to move towards virtual platform to learn in any field. Education has been an area which is growing with a rapid speed in means of everything starting from lower level to higher level of education. Distance learning had been in culture from a long time. For students wanting and willing to learn something new with a great enthusiasm and energy to do something different.

Moving from traditional method to a modern method had been a great challenge eventually for teachers and students, educators and learners. Where traditional method refers to face to face communication among teachers and students. Teachers delivering lessons orally in the classroom with number of students with both of their physical presence in a classroom. And modern method refers to virtual platforms being used by all, through help of various applications made and used to provide notes, assignments, projects, tests, and deliver a lesson over internet.

With the advancement in technology and every individual using various applications over internet, irrespective of a person's qualification had made virtual learning a possible means to continue education. Many applications like WhatsApp, Twitter, Facebook and many other applications help learners connect from different parts of world, from different countries and different culture. These virtual learning platforms introduce learners to large variety of learning in different fields. Virtual learning had made it more flexible for educators and learners to teach and learn with no boundation of time and mode of education is it formal or informal.

Virtual programs create an overwhelming response for learners to learn what they desire to learn which would have to be persuaded in traditional method of learning. With easy to access resource materials for the learning that may not be available physically. Virtual learning had made it more of self-directed, self-disciplined, creative and dynamic learning approach.

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Virtual learning also opens the doors for the weaker socio-economic students or learners who have limited number of resources to be accessed. They are easily accessible to resource materials and large number of students leading them to be not limited to a particular number of students in a blended learning environment. Through virtual learning the students are exposed to large number of opportunities and career options which helps them in further growth and development in them. Also, virtual learning helps students become more independent than they were exposed to before. Though it requires a proper mentorship and guidance from teachers and parents to what kind of educational content are learners exposed to.

A blended learning environment consists of traditional method of learning with virtual assistance. This makes it interactive with teachers delivering the lessons with students being interactive and attentive. Virtual learning means that learners have variety of chances to enhance their knowledge and convert them to opportunities.

2.0 Research Objective

The main objective to conduct this research is to study the perception of college students towards online education.

3.0 Literature Review

A good literature review doesn't just summarize sources – it analyses, synthesizes, and critically evaluates to give a clear picture of the state of knowledge on the subject. Muhammad Adnan and Kainat Anwar (2020) described how this pandemic had affected the students with the education on a virtual platform. They stated how virtual learning has not been providing with the desired result compared to the traditional learning. Though this step was taken in consideration of health and safety of teachers and students. Their study also revealed how students face difficulty with the online education mode of learning. Whereas, Lubna Salamat, Dr. Gulzar Ahmad, Mohammad Iftikhar Bakht and Imran Latif Safi (2018) says that virtual learning provides flexibility of time, source and opportunity for students and teachers. Virtual learning though has been tough to access in initial stage but had significantly shown a great impact in a positive view light for students and teachers to develop new skills in themselves with a great exposure to new technological developments and easy to share material for their study with access to different social media.

In addition, Nguyen VIET Anh (2017) states that in a blended learning the students to student interactions leave a great impact on the learnings of students. The blended learning includes traditional learning with virtual assistance for students to have a better clear idea about the content they study. It showed diversified and creative self-actualization skills in learners. Though according to John M. Krieg and Steven E. Henson (2016) it reveals that the students who were enrolled for the online courses in pre pandemic situation tend to drop their courses more than the students enrolled in traditional courses. It also revealed that students who enroll themselves in face to face course in a traditional learning method tend to perform better than the students doing virtual learning for the same course.

4.0 Research Methodology

This research is exploratory in nature. In order to fulfill the objective of the research, a questionnaire was framed and distributed among college students. The data had been analyzed using excel tools.

Analysis and Interpretation

| Sr. No. | Statements | Percentage |
|---------|---|------------|
| 1 | Want continuation of online classes even after situation comes back to normal? | |
| | Yes | 83.30% |
| | No | 16.70% |
| 2 | Online classes help with proper schedule? | |
| | Yes | 40% |
| | No | 60% |
| 3 | Is virtual learning more effective than traditional learning? | |
| | Yes | 13.30% |
| | No | 86.70% |
| 4 | Have you found yourself participating less in virtual classes than traditional classes? | |
| | Yes | 76.70% |
| | No | 23.30% |
| 5 | Virtual learning enhances creativity? | |
| | Yes | 26.70% |
| | No | 73.30% |

**Note: The percentage is based on number of responses from the data collected.*

A study of 30 respondents shows the following analysis of impact of online education on students. The data shows that majority of students 73% belong to age group of 18 years – 25 years group and 27% belong to below 18 years age group. This includes that 53% of students are female and 47% of students are male. The study also indicates that 63.3% of the students find it difficult to attend virtual lessons as there is lack of interactions with teachers, whereas, 56.7% of the students find it difficult to attend virtual lessons due to bad internet connection and 26.7% of the students face problem with their laptops or PC's and only 3.3% of respondents haven't faced any of the problem while attending virtual lessons.

The study also revealed that 83.3% of respondents does not find virtual learning effective and would not like to continue with the virtual learning if the situation comes back to normal, whereas, 16.7% of respondents would like to continue with the virtual learning even after the situation comes back to normal and find virtual learning effective. The majority of 70% of respondents were having all means to attend the online classes when the pandemic started and 30% of respondents were not having all the means to attend the online classes when pandemic started.

On an average the majority of 36.7% of respondents spend 1 – 3 hours on online education daily, with 30% of students spending 3 – 6 hours on an average daily on online education, and 26.7% of respondents spending 6 – 9 hours daily on an average on online education and only 6.7% of respondents spending more than 9 hours on online education. The majority of 43.3% of respondents find online education moderately effective way of learning, whereas, 36.7% of respondents find online education slightly effective way of learning and 20% of respondents do not find online education an effective way of learning whereas none finds online education an extremely effective way of learning.

The study revealed that majority of 60% respondents believe that virtual learning does not help with their proper schedule and only 40% of respondents believe that virtual learning has been helpful in their proper schedule. The majority of 53.3% respondents prefer once in a while one on one conversation with their teachers, whereas, 26.7% of respondents does not prefer one on one conversation with their teachers, and 16.7% of respondents prefer more often of one on one

conversation with their teachers and only 3.3% of respondents always prefer one on one conversation with their teachers.

The study indicated that majority of 63.3% of respondents sometimes enjoy virtual learning, whereas, 30% respondents do not enjoy virtual learning at all and only 6.7% of respondents enjoy virtual learning. The study reveals that 43.3% of respondents say that they get sufficient time to complete their projects and assignments virtually, whereas, 30% of respondents say that they sometimes get sufficient time to complete their projects and assignments virtually and only 26.7% of respondents says that they do not get sufficient time to complete their projects and assignments virtually.

The study also indicated that majority of 86.7% of respondents do not find virtual learning more effective and useful than traditional learning and 13.3% of respondents find virtual learning more effective and useful than traditional learning. The majority of 56.7% of respondents find it extremely important to have a face to face communication while learning, whereas, 23.3% of respondents find it moderately important to have a face to face communication while learning and 20% of respondents find it slightly important to have face to face communication while learning and none of the respondents does not find it important to have face to face communication.

The majority of 73.3% of respondents think virtual learning provides time flexibility and 26.7% of respondents think that virtual learning does not provide time flexibility. The majority of 76.7% of respondents find themselves participating less in virtual classes than in traditional classes and 23.3% of respondents does not find themselves participating less in virtual classes than in traditional classes.

The majority of 73.3% of respondents does not think that virtual learning enhances creativity and 26.7% of respondents think that virtual learning enhances creativity. The majority of 73.3% of respondents feel comfortable over internet, whereas, 20% of respondents are not at all comfortable over internet and only 6.7% of respondents are extremely comfortable over internet.

The study reveals that 76.7% of respondents find that virtual learning does not helps to clear doubts faster than traditional learning and 23.3% of respondents find that virtual learning is helpful in getting their doubts cleared faster than traditional learning. The study also indicated that 43.3% of respondents are slightly satisfies with virtual learning, whereas, 33.3% of respondents are moderately satisfied with virtual learning and 23.3% of respondents are not at all satisfied with virtual learning and none of the respondents are extremely satisfied with virtual learning.

5.0 Implications

The virtual learning simply means study over internet on various platforms available for the same. The study also revealed that the virtual learning had somehow declined in the creativity of the students, also not being helpful in their schedule. The major limitation for this study is the sample size of respondents. The suggestion for future studies can be that they are framed upon the better sample ratio of respondents along with being on qualitative aspect. Though this study advocates for the traditional learning method being brought back for students. Despite the virtual learning method had open doors for many other opportunities for students but still lacking for building the creativity, innovation and involvement of students on a virtual platform.

6.0 Conclusion

The study concludes that though due to current pandemic situation students have to attend the virtual learning sessions but they are more willing to attend the traditional learning sessions as soon as they could. As the majority of students agrees with the statement that virtual learning does not helps

with proper schedule and enhancement of creativity in them. Though universities and educators have been taking measures to communicate and make it easier for learners to find the relevant content and material easily still learners remain unsatisfied due to several prevailing factors that stop them for learning something new virtually. The study also revealed that learners found themselves less effective in the virtual learning sessions than traditional learning sessions. The study concluded that students find traditional learning method more comfortable than virtual learning method.

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