STUDENTS' PERCEPTION REGARDING ONLINE LEARNING IN THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A CASE STUDY OF UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU

Meghabat Singh
Akriti Sharma
Ravi Shukla

Mr. Meghabat Singh
MLIS Student, Department of Library and Information Science, University of Jammu, Jammu- 180 006 (India),
E-mail:
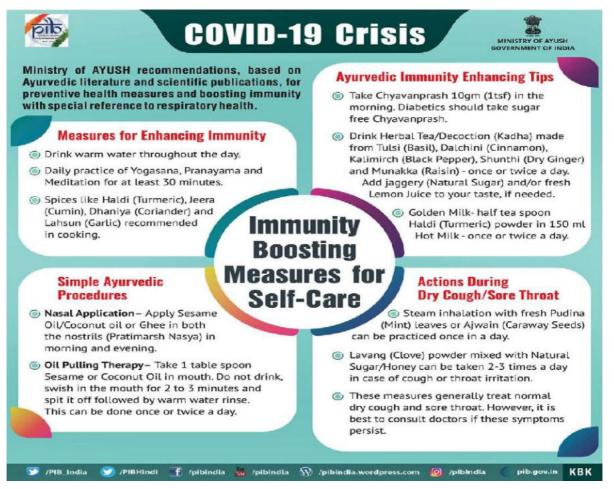meghavat135@gmail.com

Ms. Akriti Sharma
Assistant Librarian, Army Public School, Jammu Cantt, Jammu - 180 003 (India),
E-mail:
akriti.sharma912@gmail.com

Dr. Ravi Shukla
Assistant Librarian, Central Library, Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj University, Kanpur- 208024 (India), E-mail:
ravishukla_cl@csjmu.ac.in
(Corresponding Author)

This paper describes the students' perceptions regarding online learning in the Covid-19 pandemic at the University of Jammu. An online survey was conducted from the Google form which remained open for submission for 10 days from 11th Aug 2020 to 20th Aug 2020 through WhatsApp and E-mail. A total of 338 students provided complete information regarding the survey. The majority of (65.98%) of the respondents were female and most were between the 20-22 years, of age group. After the analysis of the study, it has been found that zoom and Google Meet are most preferred by (32.80%) and (24.54%) of respondents to attend their online classes during the lockdown period. Most (39.41%) of students face the slow speed of the internet as the major barrier while attending their online classes during the lockdown period.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, Online learning, lockdown, University of Jammu

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic initiated a digital revolution in higher education and academia. Current technology has provided us with all the tools that are needed for making higher education digital and online. The lockdown has generated uncertainty over the exam cycle. Maybe universities may face an impact in terms of a slowdown in student internships and placements. With the advancement in the field of technology and changes in the knowledge-based society, the education sector has changed completely. Over the period many different types of tools and techniques have been developed to solve the problems of students and provide them with the latest methods to cater to their information requirements or needs. Online learning or E-learning is one of those techniques which may be described as the concept of learning and teaching through the usage of electronic tools. It mainly refers to the application of the usage of digital devices and tools in the learning as well as teaching process which includes web-based learning, digital resources, virtual classroom, computer-

managed learning, etc. Online learning can be simply understood as learning with the help of electronic means. It is a type of learning which is done using electronic technologies and devices to access the educational curriculum. It is an effective tool in today's knowledge-based society for the development of skills among the students so that there could be an improvement in their academics. Online learning has played an important role in the field of education and has changed the overall process of teaching and learning in the current model of learning.

Covid-19 Crisis (Source: https://www.ayush.gov.in/img/m1.jpeg)

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Online learning has played an important role in the current situation of the Covid-19 pandemic as it has given education a new direction and dimension, but it has some bad effects such as the online learning reduced the quality of the lectures, increased stress, and anxiety among the students, etc. (Sawahney & Sharma, 2022). Online classes cannot replace the traditional classes in the medical field especially as the medical field is more concerned with physical practice but can be improved by providing upgraded infrastructure

and technology. (Dehiya, et al., 2021). The studies of the students were affected during the covid and the major barrier to the online teaching is the technical hindrance and insufficiency of the resources among the students. (Gupta, et al., 2021). E-learning has gained popularity among the students with time due to the ease of use, usefulness, etc. and necessary measures should be adopted for improving the quality of E-learning to help with better learning of students during the phase of the Covid-19 pandemic. (Khan, et al., 2021). The online classes can be improved by adopting the latest techniques, tools, and training methods for teachers and students so that the teaching process can be more effective and organized. (Khan, Kamal, Illiyan, & Asif, 2021). The education system should be developed in the future in collaboration with both the traditional and online methods. More research should be conducted in the process of making online education accessible and affordable among learners. (Pokhrel & Chettri, 2021).

The education sector has been affected mostly by the Covid-19, but it has connected technology with studies by giving rise to virtual apps such as Zoom, Google, etc. Teaching through MOOCs also increased among the students such as E-Gyankosh, Swayam, etc. (Tari & Amonkar, 2021). The Majority of the respondents showed a positive attitude towards e-learning and with this e-learning can become part of traditional teaching. (Thapa, Bhandari, & Pathak, 2021). The students are more comfortable with the physical/classroom learning as compared to online learning so a stable approach or strategy should be constructed to implement the online learning in the curriculum.

(Abbasi, Ayoob, Malik, & Memon, 2020). COVID-19 has severely affected the lives of students, in this scenario online learning has helped them to motivate themselves and shift their mindset from the ongoing pandemic and concentrate on their work. (Agarwal & Kaushik, 2020). Mobile learning is considered an important tool for educational purposes in this pandemic situation, and it helped the students to fill the study gap created due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (Biswas, Roy, & Roy, 2020). The online classes should be constructed in a progressive, interesting, practical, and interactive manner so that students do not miss classroom learning and can adapt to the new form of learning. (Dhawan, 2020). The online method of teaching will be more effective and successful in this pandemic if there is a proper academic plan designed by the authorities for the universities and colleges. (Kapasia et al., 2020).

The Covid-19 has affected mostly the education sector and in the current situation online learning is mostly conducted in the school, colleges, and universities. Various studies are conducted regarding the online studies in the current covid times dealing with respondents of universities and colleges. The current study students' perception regarding online learning in the covid-19 pandemic: A case study of University of Jammu includes the UG, PG and research scholar respondents. No such study is earlier conducted in the University of Jammu, and it includes the more sample size as compared to the other studies conducted on the current topic.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to know the students' perceptions regarding online learning in the Covid-19 pandemic, however the further objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To analyze the characteristics of the respondents.
2. To find out the various online methods used by the teachers during the lockdown period.
3. To analyze the various platforms accessed to attend the online classes in the lockdown period.
4. To examine the major benefits of online resources in the lockdown period.
5. To identify the opinion about the webinar in the lockdown period.

METHODOLOGY

This study used a purposive online survey of the students at the University of Jammu. The primary data was collected using Google Form that was sent to the respondents through WhatsApp and E-mail and this form was kept quite simple and precise consisting of questions fulfilling the objective of the survey. The scope of the study is limited only to the students at the University of Jammu. In total, the questionnaire was filed by 338 students, which is a very encouraging response. Further, the Google form remained open for submission for 10 days from 11th Aug 2020 to 20th Aug 2020. The survey data are presented in the form of charts, diagrams, and tables.

DATA ANALYSIS

Characteristics of the respondents

Table 1 shows the characteristics of participants in which gender, age group, and course-wise classification have been shown. In gender-wise classification, out of the total 338 respondents, the maximum (65.98%) of

Table 1: Characteristics of the respondents

Gender-wise classification of the respondents		
Gender	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Male	115	34.02%
Female	223	65.98%
Total	**338**	**100%**
Age group-wise classification of the respondents		
Age Group	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
20-22 years	179	52.96%
23-25 years	133	39.35%
26-28 years	17	5.03%
Above 29 years	9	2.66%
Total	**338**	**100%**
Course-wise classification of the respondents		
Courses	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
UG	77	22.78%
PG	261	77.22%
Total	**338**	**100%**

respondents were female while the rest (34.02%) of the respondents were male with a large number (52.96%) of respondents were between 20-22 years' age group, followed by (39.35%) of respondents were between 23-25 years' age group, (5.03%) of respondents were between 26-28 years' age group and the rest (2.66%) of the respondents are in the category of above 29 years. However, most (77.22%) of the respondents were from the PG category while the rest (22.78%) of the respondents were from the UG course. It was also found that the maximum number of respondents were female, and a large number of respondents were between the 20 to 22 years of age group in which the highest number of respondents were doing Post graduation at the University of Jammu.

Sources consulted by the respondents to find out the Information

Table 2 depicts the various sources consulted by the respondents to find the relevant Information during this lockdown period. In this current situation, the respondents are mostly dependent on the Information/online sources for their studies such as Internet Websites, Databases, Subject gateways, etc. Out of the total 338

respondents, the maximum (42.75%) of the respondents consulted the Internet websites for finding the relevant information on the current situation, followed by (32.96%) of participants, which preferred the YouTube links, while under ten percent of respondents i.e. (7.34%), (5.46%), (4.71%) and (3.77%) consulted the Online library services, Databases, Institutional Repositories, and Subject gateways respectively for finding their required information, while (3.01%) of respondents consulted their friends, teachers, and other study applications to find the required information. It was also found that the maximum number of respondents consulted Internet Websites as it is an easy and fast source of finding the required information.

Perception of the respondents regarding the online classes in the lockdown period

With the lockdown across the country, the schools and colleges have been closed and due to this, the education system has changed over in the last six months, with a considerable rise in e-learning, whereby teaching is executed remotely and on digital platforms. Table 3 illustrates the perception of the respondents regarding the online classes they have attended in the lockdown

Table 2: Sources consulted by the respondents to find out the information

Information Sources	Frequency	Percentage
Internet Websites	227	42.75%
Databases	29	5.46%
Subject Gateways	20	3.77%
Institutional Repositories	25	4.71%
Online Library Services	39	7.34%
YouTube Links	175	32.96%
Any Other	16	3.01%
Total	**531**	**100%**

period. Out of the total 338 respondents, a large number (76.63%) of respondents confirm that they have attended the online classes during the lockdown period while the rest (23.37%) of the respondents were not able to attend the online classes. Out of the study participants who attended the online classes the maximum (39.77%) of respondents did not find the online classes interesting, followed by (32.82%) of respondents find the online classes moderate, while (21.62%) of respondents find the online classes interesting and remaining very less percentage (5.79%) of respondents finds the online classes highly interesting in the current situation. It was also found that the maximum number of respondents did not find the online classes interesting as it is a new form of learning with which the respondents are not much comfortable.

Table 3: Perception of the respondents regarding the online classes in the lockdown period

Online classes provided by the teachers in the lockdown period		
Options	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Yes	259	76.63%
No	79	23.37%
Total	**338**	**100%**
Perception of the respondents regarding the online classes in the lockdown period		
Perception	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Highly Interesting	15	5.79%
Interesting	56	21.62%
Moderate	85	32.82%
Not at all Interesting	103	39.77%
Total	**259**	**100%**

Different online methods used by the teachers during the lockdown period

Table 4 defines the different online methods used by the teachers to provide the information/ study material to the students during the lockdown period. Out of the total 338 respondents, the majority (42.62%) of respondents say that their teachers send them the information/study material in the form of PDF/PPT/Word files during the lockdown period, followed by (16.79%) of respondents saying that their teachers prefer the YouTube links for the information/study material, while the (15.50%), (13.47%) and (7.01%) of respondents say that their teachers send them the information/study material in the form of video lectures, websites links and education platforms (MOOC, e-PG Pathshala, Swayam) respectively in the lockdown period and the rest (4.61%) of respondents say that their teachers apply different methods to provide them with the study material in the lockdown period. It was also found that the maximum number of respondents say that their teachers provide them with the PDF/PPT/word file as the information/study material for their studies in the lockdown period.

Table 4: Different online methods used by the teachers during the lockdown period

Methods	Frequency	Percentage
YouTube Links	91	16.79%
PPT/PDF/Word file	231	42.62%
Video lectures	84	15.50%
Websites Links	73	13.47%
Information through online education platforms like MOOC, e-PG Pathshala, Swayam	38	7.01%
Any Other	25	4.61%
Total	**542**	**100%**

(Frequency is exceeded because respondents tick more than one option)

Frequency of getting the online classes/study material from the teachers

Table 5 depicts the frequency of getting online classes/study material from the teachers. Due to the lockdown, the classroom/physical learning has been shifted towards online learning and the teachers are providing the students with the classes/study material regularly. Out of the 259 respondents *(as per the data in Table 3)*, the maximum (32.82%) of respondents is getting the online classes on the alternate days, followed by (26.25%) of respondents are getting the online classes on the weekly basis, while (21.24%), (13.90%) and (5.79%) of respondents are getting the online classes on the monthly, daily, and fortnightly basis respectively from their teachers in the current situation. It was also found that the maximum number of respondents are getting the online classes from their teachers on alternate days.

Table 5: Frequency of getting the online classes/study material from the teachers

Frequency	Frequency	Percentage
Daily	36	13.90%
Alternate Days	85	32.82%
Weekly	68	26.25%
Fortnightly	15	5.79%
Monthly	55	21.24%
Total	**259**	**100%**

The extent of the syllabus covered in the lockdown

Table 6 illustrates the extent of the syllabus covered by the teachers in this lockdown period. Out of the 259 respondents *(as per the data in Table 3)*, the most (35.52%) respondents say that in the lockdown period only 0-20% of the syllabus is covered, followed by (26.64%) of respondents say that in the lockdown period their only 20-40% of the syllabus is covered, while the (23.55%), (10.81%), (3.47%) of respondents say that in the lockdown period their 40-60%, 60-80% and 80-100% of the syllabus is covered respectively. It was also found that the maximum

number of respondents say that only 0-20% of the syllabus is covered in the lockdown period by their teachers.

Table 6: Extent of syllabus covered in the lockdown

Syllabus	Frequency	Percentage
0-20	92	35.52%
20-40	69	26.64%
40-60	61	23.55%
60-80	28	10.81%
80-100	9	3.47%
Total	**259**	**100%**

The various platforms used to attend the online classes during the lockdown period

Table 7 represents the various platforms used by the students for online learning and attending online classes. The students are using different applications for this, such as Zoom, Google Meet, Google Classroom, GoToWebinar, Cisco Webex, etc. The maximum (32.80%) of respondents were using the Zoom app for attending their online classes, followed by (24.54%) and (24.08%) of respondents prefer Google Meet and Google Classroom for their online learning, whereas a little percentage of respondents show very less interest in the Cisco Webex (7.80%) and GoToWebinar (5.05%) apps for attending the classes while the rest (5.73%) of respondents were using WhatsApp, Google Duo, Skype, etc. for their online learning. It was also found that the maximum number of respondents were using the Zoom platform for attending their online classes as it is easy to use and operate according to them.

Table 7: The various platforms accessed to attend the online classes in the lockdown period

Platforms	Frequency	Percentage
Zoom	143	32.80%
Google Meet	107	24.54%
Cisco Webex	34	7.80%
GoToWebinar	22	5.05%
Google Classroom	105	24.08%
Any Other	25	5.73%
Total	**436**	**100%**

(Frequency is exceeded because respondents tick more than one option)

The appropriate time for the online classes

Table 8 shows a suitable time for an online class according to the respondents. The online classes have taken place of the physical/classroom classes due to the pandemic situation. The online classes should be designed carefully keeping in mind the current situation and requirements of the students. Every student is coming from different areas and backgrounds so these conditions should be kept in mind while designing the online classes. More than half of the respondents (56.80%) think that the online classes should be between 30-45 minutes, followed by (28.11%) of respondents who prefer the online classes should be less than 30 minutes, while (11.54%) of respondents prefer the online classes should be between 45-60 minutes and the remaining (3.55%) of respondents thinks online classes should be above 60 minutes for the better understanding. It was also found that the maximum number of respondents think that the online classes should be between 30-45 minutes because if the classes are for a longer duration the students will be difficult for them to concentrate and they may lose interest in the topic.

Table 8 : Appropriate time for the online classes

Time-period	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 30 minutes	95	28.11%
30-45 minutes	192	56.80%
45-60 minutes	39	11.54%
Above 60 minutes	12	3.55%
Total	**338**	**100%**

The opinion of the respondents regarding the webinars

Table 9 reveals the attitude of students regarding the webinars and their usefulness in the current situation. Webinars are working as seminars/conferences because it is not possible to conduct the seminar/conference in the current situation. Earlier very fewer webinars used to happen but due to the lockdown, the number of webinars has also increased. Various universities, colleges, and associations are organizing webinars that are beneficial for the students. Out of the total 338 respondents, the maximum (60.95%) of respondents have attended the various webinars during the lockdown period and most of the study participants i.e. (44.17%) 'Agree' that the webinars were beneficial during this lockdown period, followed by (34.96%) of respondents were 'neutral' with the benefits of the webinars, whereas (10.19%) of respondents 'disagree' as they feel webinars were not beneficial, while very fewer (6.31%) of respondents 'strongly agree' that webinars were quite beneficial to them and the remaining (4.37%) of respondents 'strongly disagree' as they do not consider the webinars as much beneficial in the current situation. It was also found that the maximum number of respondents have attended the webinars during the lockdown period and most of them feel that the webinars were beneficial to them.

Various challenges faced by the respondents in attending the online classes

Table 10 discussed the various challenges faced by the respondents during their online classes. COVID-19 has severely affected the lives of the people, and everyone is facing problems in their respective lives. Most of the respondents in the study i.e. (39.41%) feel the low speed of the

Table 9: The opinion of the respondents regarding the webinars

Webinars attended by the respondents in the lockdown period		
Option	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Yes	206	60.95%
No	132	39.05%
Total	**338**	**100%**
The opinion of the respondents regarding the webinars		
Opinion	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Strongly Agree	13	6.31%
Agree	91	44.17%
Neutral	72	34.96%
Disagree	21	10.19%
Strongly Disagree	9	4.37%
Total	**206**	**100%**

internet is the major barrier, they face during their online classes, followed by (28.44%) of respondents who state that the lack of proper internet access in the UT is the major barrier faced by them, while (12.64%), (12.26%) and (5.95%) of respondents state that the lack of comfort with digital technology, lack of resources and technology and lack of training and awareness respectively were the major problems they faced in attending the online classes and the remaining (1.30%) of respondents state other challenges such as stressful environment, bad effect on eyesight, etc. It was also found that the maximum number of respondents were affected by the slow speed of the Internet, which is the major barrier to their studies and attending their online classes in the lockdown period.

Major benefits of the online resources in the lockdown period

Table 11 displays the major benefits of online resources in the lockdown period. With the lockdown, every person is at home and the students have to consult the online resources to get the required information. Out of the total study respondents, the most (41.19%) respondents preferred to use the online resources because it is easy to access information, followed by (23.50%) of respondents use the online resources. After all, this provides the information in a faster manner, while (16.19%) and (12.64%) of respondents benefit from the attractive learning environment and effective and efficient way of learning online resources respectively, and the rest (5.76%) of respondents name the other benefits of the learning from the online resources. It was also found that the maximum number of respondents preferred the use of online resources because it is easy to access the information.

Table 10: Various challenges faced by the respondents in attending the online classes

Challenges	Frequency	Percentage
Lack of Internet access	153	28.44%
Lack of resources and technology	66	12.26%
Lack of comfort with digital technology	68	12.64%
The slow speed of the Internet	212	39.41%
Lack of training and awareness	32	5.95%
Any Other	7	1.30%
Total	**538**	**100%**

(Frequency is exceeded because respondents tick more than one option)

Table 11: Major benefits of the online resources in the lockdown period

Benefits	Frequency	Percentage
Easy Access to Information	189	41.91%
The attractive learning environment	73	16.19%
Effective and Efficient way of learning	57	12.64%
Faster access to required information	106	23.50%
Any Other	26	5.76%
Total	**451**	**100%**

(Frequency is exceeded because respondents tick more than one option)

Learning mode and opinion about the mode of examination in the lockdown period by the respondents

Table 12 illustrates the opinions of the students regarding the mode of learning and examination in the pandemic period. The COVID-19 has changed the mode of learning completely due to the lockdown the physical/classroom education is shifted towards online education. But it will take time for the teachers as well as the students to manage online education. Most (60.06%) of respondents are more comfortable with the classroom/physical learning, while (31.07%) of respondents feel there should be a combination of the physical and online learning, and only (8.88%) of respondents prefer the online learning. UGC is planning for the proper conduct of examination for the final year students but the majority (65.68%) of respondents are in the favor of the evaluation based on the previous semester's results, followed by (14.50%) feel that the examination should be conducted in the online format, while (11.24%) are in the favor of the offline examination and the rest (8.58%) of respondents put forward other methods for the evaluation of the students such as projects, assignments, seminars, practical works, etc. It was also found that the maximum number of respondents was more comfortable with the classroom learning as compared to the online learning and in the current situation, most of the students wanted there should be no exams and they should be evaluated on the results of their previous semesters.

Table 12: Learning mode and opinion about the mode of examination in the lockdown period by the respondents

Preferred mode of learning by the respondents		
Mode of Learning	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Classroom/Physical Learning	203	60.06%
Online Learning	30	8.88%
Both	105	31.07%
Total	**338**	**100%**
The opinion of the respondents about the mode of examination in the lockdown period		
Mode of Examination	**Frequency**	**Percentage**
Online Examination	49	14.50%
Offline Examination	38	11.24%
Evaluation based on the previous semester's results	222	65.68%
Any Other	29	8.58%
Total	**338**	**100%**

CONCLUSION

This pandemic has affected not only the health of millions of people but also the economy of the education societies and the world. Humans must fight through this disease for a long time, and this makes it particularly important for everyone to unite against this pandemic. Hence there is a need to take urgent steps that can further help the government in m01inimizing the impact. The government has taken certain measures too to make an online study effective and efficient and has provided

MOOCs on various platforms which are well recognized. A uniform academic plan should be designed by the UGC for the proper conduct of the online classes during this pandemic. The syllabus should be reduced, and teaching should be more focused on the practical aspect as compared to the theoretical aspect in this pandemic period. There should be a short training program designed by the UGC for the teaching staff as this would help them to conduct the online classes in a better manner. 4G internet should be restored as soon as possible in the UT. Students should be evaluated based on seminars/ assignments/ practical work/ projects, etc. Online classes should be conducted regularly. There is no doubt that COVID-19 has done more worse than good but mental health and patience are also essential in these difficult times. Students came with positive effects as they found much time to develop new hobbies and additional skills. Economy, health, and education are falling by significant numbers and all the citizens must take some precautionary measures.

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