

Learners' Perspective on Online Classes in 'Vocational Courses' in Specific to 'Hotel Management'

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Abstract

As we are stepping into 'new normal' world, taking online sessions is becoming a part of lecturers' life. Knowing the fact that the classroom teaching and online teaching are far apart from each other, we should also consider the student absorption and degree of their acceptance. This research is aimed to learn the students view point on online learning specifically in hotel management which is a vocational course. I choose quantitative research methodology as my sample size is going to be comparatively large. My sample consists of students pursuing hotel & hospitality related courses offered by various institutes / universities across India. The data has been collected through online questionnaire. The results show a scattered opinion of students on online learning. After analyzing the result, I can conclude that the learners of hospitality courses are not completely ready for online learning, though they are positively welcoming the change.

Keywords: Online Learning, Hotel Management Studies, Vocational/Skill Courses, Student View Point

INTRODUCTION

The world is changing with advancement of technology in every sector. Even the most manual and human intervened education sector is not immune to this change. The new age education demands digital and technology aided teaching methods. The consistent adoption rate has jumped up with recent COVID-19 phenomenon. In fact the COVID-19 situation has left the institutes and students with no other option but to go online. Even the Government has made some guidelines on how to conduct

classes in future. Stumbled but determinant institutes have started with online sessions and lectures.

As I see, the trend change has not fully considered problems that may be faced by students and their point of view. As we know that conducting online sessions may be somewhat suitable for general studies (arts, science and management) where more of theoretical curriculum is followed. But there has been no study conducted to find out the adoptability of such teaching in vocational courses. The problem I see here is that the vocational courses have skill oriented practical based curriculum. From a student angle how helpful are these online teaching methods when it comes to understanding practical based concepts. This is an attempt to address and fill this research gap. Talking about the specific case of hotel management studies, the course offers 50% of curriculum as practical/hands on training. I strongly feel the need for taking students opinion on how they perceive online learning before we make guidelines on online teaching methodologies. Ultimately the institutes' objective is to see the maximum absorption of inputs given by their faculty, in a way that they are helpful for their students' future career.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the acceptance level of students for online classes.
- To know the technical readiness of students for on-line classes.
- To analyze the present situation to plan the future teaching methodologies.
- To estimate the conversion of teaching inputs into student learning.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

Traditional Courses v/s Vocational Courses

The traditional courses like the engineering and bachelor degrees have a classroom teaching model wherein most of the subject knowledge is imparted to students in class in the form of theories and case studies.

While on the other hand, vocational courses are focused on making students industry-ready with practical skills. In Vocational Courses, teaching methodology includes more of practical on-site experience and less of classroom lectures.

Game Changer - COVID-19

Sometime in the second week of March, state governments across the country began shutting down schools and colleges temporarily as a measure to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus. This is usually most crucial time for the education sector. The board examinations, admissions and entrance tests of various universities are all held during this period. As the situation across India worsens and with no immediate solution to stop the outbreak of COVID-19, school and universities will not only have a short-term impact on the continuity of learning but also poured with numerous challenges related to future education methods. The structure of teaching and learning was the first to be affected by these unexpected closures. Only a handful of private schools could adopt online teaching methods.

The pandemic has transformed the conventional, chalk–talk teaching model to a technology dependent contemporary model. A multi-dimensional strategy is necessary to manage the crunch and build a resilient Indian education system in the long term. Immediate measures are essential to ensure continuity of learning in

government schools and universities. Open-source digital learning solutions and Learning Management Software should be adopted so teachers can conduct teaching online. It is also essential at this point to reconsider the current delivery and pedagogical methods in school and higher education by integrating classroom learning with e-learning modes to build a unified learning system. To add on to this, it is also important to establish quality control and assurance mechanisms for online learning methodologies.

India's online students perceive convenience, flexibility with Commencement dates, as key attractive aspects of online learning. They indicate quality of course content as the top reason for choosing a particular course and seem to prefer laptops over mobile for accessing the course material Variety of study materials are other key motivational factors to adopt online channel.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The best suited methodology for this research is Quantitative research methodology as the sample size is comparatively large representing considered population. The study also needs statistical analysis to determine result that needs to be interpreted. The data would be collected through closed questions.

For this study, students pursuing vocational course are defined as populations. The sample is the student groups from hotel management colleges under various universities across India. The Random Sampling technique is chosen for this study as it is best suitable. The students, part of this sample are pursuing various courses like BHM, BSc, and Craft etc.

The close-ended questions are shared to these groups online via 'google forms.' Then the data is collected, correlated and analyzed to draw conclusion.

Data Charts

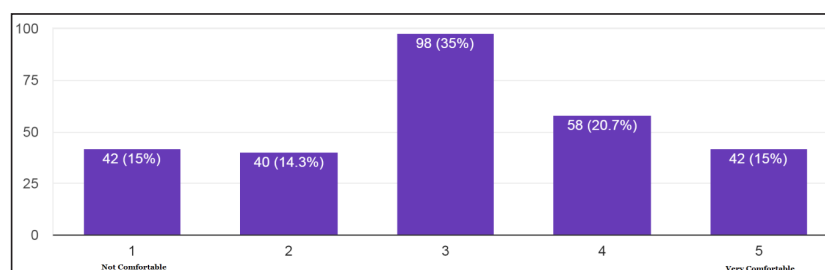


Chart 1

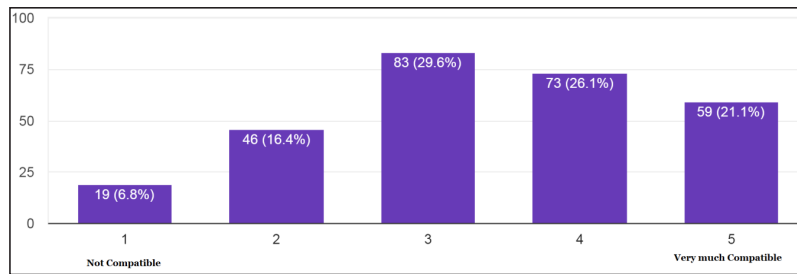


Chart 2

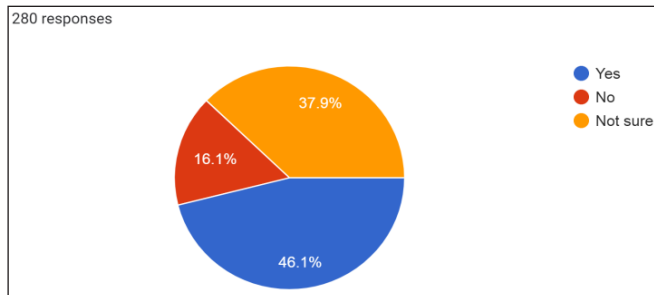


Chart 3

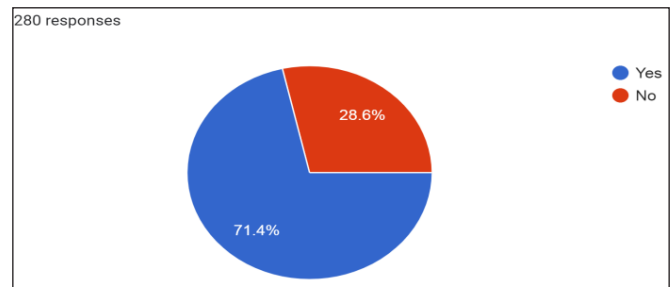


Chart 4

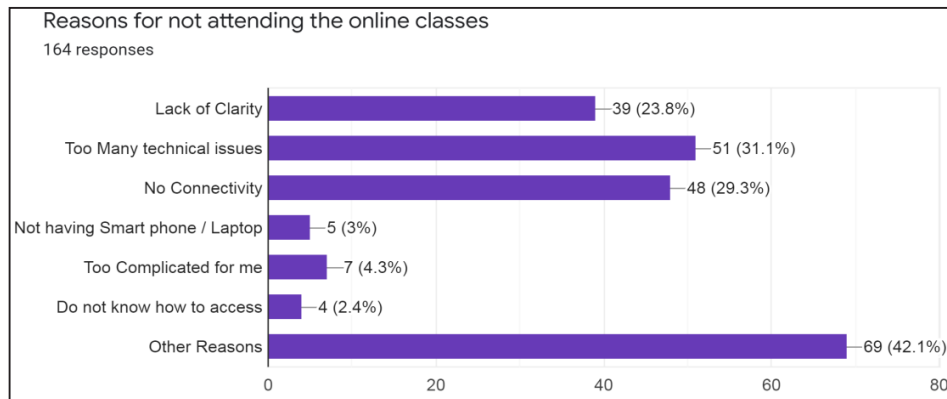


Chart 5

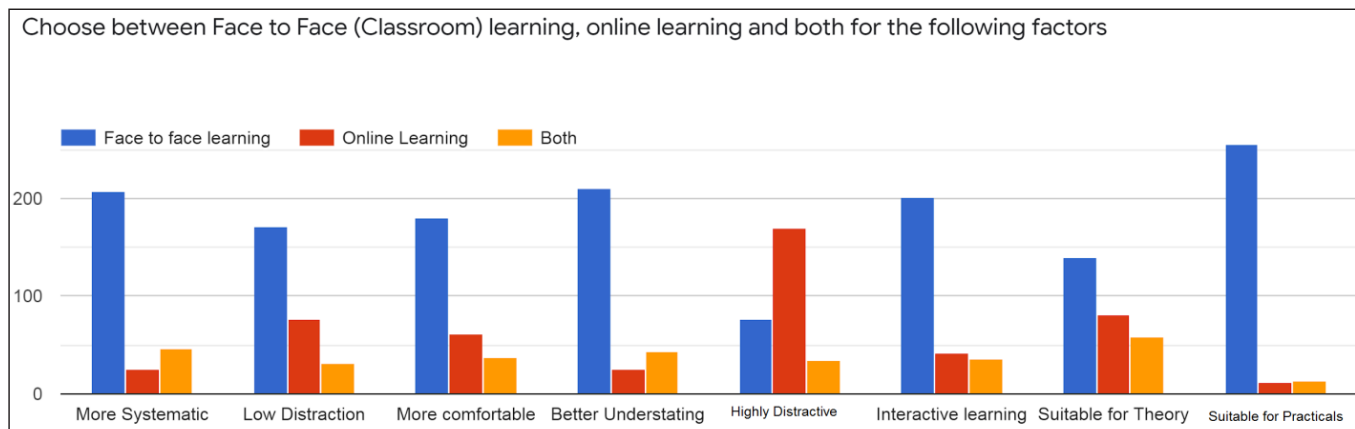


Chart 6

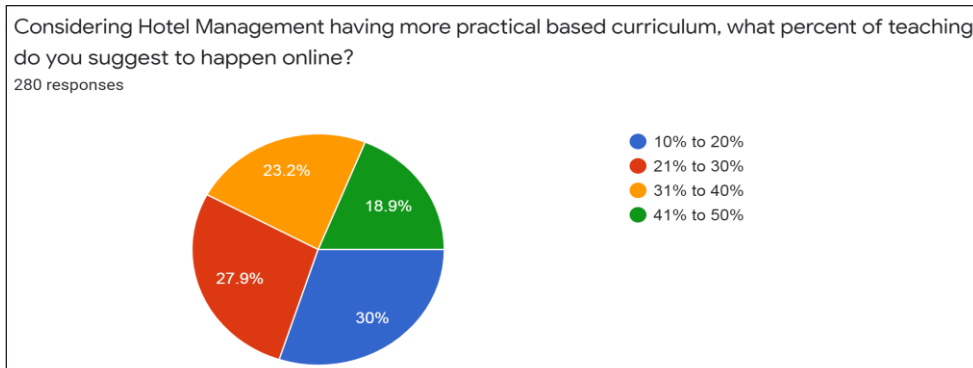


Chart 7

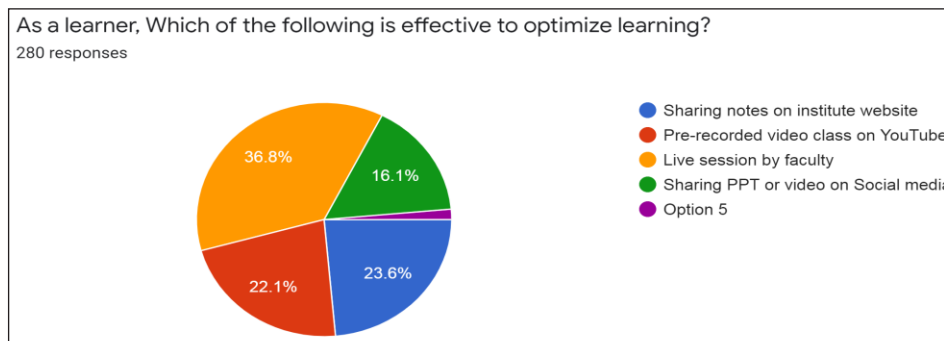


Chart 8

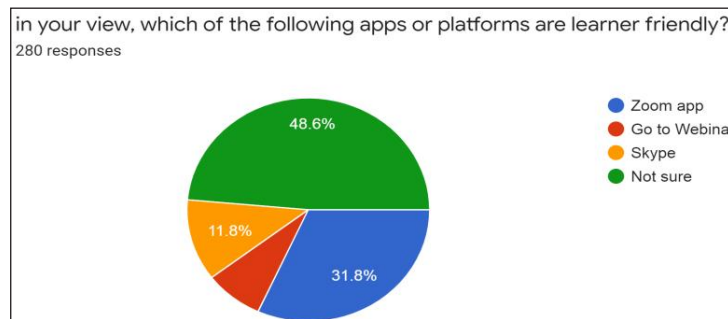


Chart 9

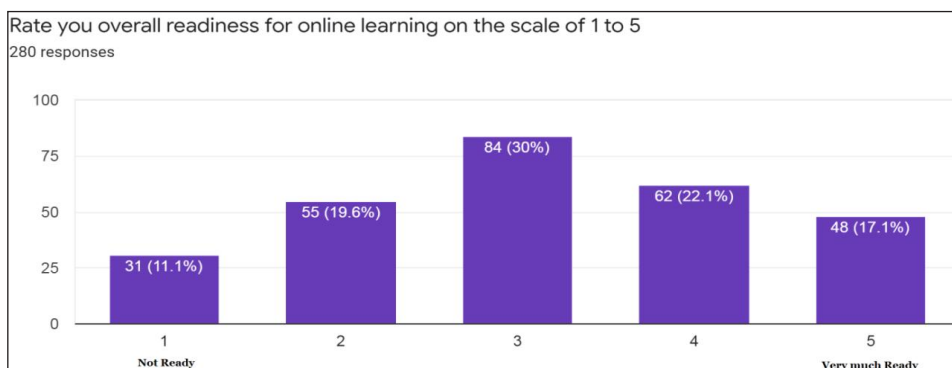


Chart 10

DATA INTERPRETATION

From the above charts, we can read that most students are just comfortable with online learning in practical based curriculum, though a small percentage of students are not comfortable at all with this kind of learning. The encouraging fact is another 35% of them are inclined towards very comfortable with online learning. Most of them i.e. 77% of them are technically ready in terms of gadgets and internet connection.

If conducted, a good number of students have made attempts to attend online classes. A few students have reported 'technical issues' as major reason for not being able to attend online lectures. Though majority of the students felt that the classroom learning is better in all aspects like, systematic learning, less distraction, better understanding and high interaction. For practical inputs, students preferred only face to face learning as their primary opinion.

Among all online teaching styles the 'Live online sessions by faculty' has scored high. Pre-recorded video class, sharing content on media are the other styles. In practical oriented curriculum like hotel management, the percentage of online teaching opted by students has slightly inclined towards minimum online inputs. That translates to, majority of students have felt only 10-20% should be online and rest 90-80% class room teaching.

Most students have unexplored to the various options available for online learning, though few have noted 'Zoom meeting app' being the convenient one in the little explored. Only a 17% of the students are very much ready for online learning at present scenario, where as 30% are positive to adopt and another 11% found it difficult.

CONCLUSION

From the research we can learn that the students view point on the online learning. Majority of the students are well

reciprocated to the idea of online learning though a small percentage of the students are not comfortable. According to majority of the students, present practical curriculum may not well support the online learning pattern.

Though most students are well connected with internet and have equipped with the gadgets required for attending online sessions, they prefer 'face to face' teaching methodology for vocational courses.

SUGGESTION

The institutes need to communicate and train students on online teaching methodologies before taking classes. It is utmost important to take students into confidence for smooth transition from Classroom to Online learning. The universities or affiliated bodies need to re-design the curriculum to suit the changing trends.

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