STUDENTS PERCEPTION TOWARDS VIRTUAL LEARNING WITH REFERENCE TO B.COM PROGRAMME - A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT
Virtual learning has become a crucial part of all educational institutions around the globe due to the COVID-19. This pandemic of COVID-19 has changed the method of offline learning into online learning. It helps the student to continue with their studies during the lockdown. Virtual learning methods are used by schools, colleges, and other educational institutions even in the post-pandemic period. The main objective of the study is to find out the perception of students towards virtual learning. Primary data were collected from the students of the B.Com Programme of PrahladraiDalmia Lions College of Commerce & Economics at Malad in Mumbai. The study revealed thatthe majority of the students of PrahladraiDalmia Lions College of Commerce & Economics at Malad in Mumbai agree with the various factors of virtual learning methods adopted by the college. The researcher found positive opinions of respondents towards the several factors such as content clarity, development of self-learning skills, time and place flexibility, easy submission of assignments, and access to notes, enhancement of soft skills, making dull teaching learning environment interesting, cost-effective method of learning in respect of students, feeling of being motivated while learning virtually, feeling of being comfortable with virtual learning, and expression of opinion without any hesitation in virtual classes.
Keywords: virtual learning, students, COVID - 19, e-learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

The main motive of education is to mold a person into a good human being. It shows a proper direction to achieve the goal. It helps to develop social responsibilities among the learners. The basic essence of education is to learn. Learning is a continuous practice of acquiring skills and knowledge with help of study, experience, or being taught. Any type of unexpected accident or act has a great impact on education. And Covid-19 has done the same. The outbreak of such a dangerous virus affects the education system too. It forced colleges and universities to shut down to control the spread of the virus. Due to Covid-19, online education came into the picture as an alternative method of teaching-learning during the lockdown. And gradually, it helps to develop e-learning or web-based learning. Nowadays, digitalization in learning connects the students and teachers on virtual platforms. The E-learning system is very simple to implement and understand. It requires the use of electronic gadgets such as computers, laptops, smartphones, tablets, and the internet which is the major part of the e-learning method. Virtual learning brings rapid growth and development in the education sector, especially during Covid-19.

Virtual learning plays an important role during the pandemic and even in the post-pandemic. The main objective of e-learning is to assist the teachers, schools, colleges, and universities to provide education to the students during the pandemic. Before Covid-19, there was an offline learning system in India and teachers were not much familiar with the e-learning system. And therefore, at the time of adoption of virtual learning, students, as well as teachers, faced problems during the online classes. But as time passes, all are familiar with the system of e-learning.

At present, in the post-pandemic period, most of the schools and colleges opted for the hybrid system of learning, where the students have been given the option to attend the lectures either online

from home or offline in the classroom as per their convenience. But teachers are required to deliver the lectures from the college. There are several obstacles faced by students as well as teachers during online classes such as connectivity problems, problems of interaction between teacher and student, social isolation among the students, and so on. Hence, it is important to find out students' perceptions towards virtual learning, which will help to take necessary steps for further improvement.

The data were collected from the Degree college students of PrahladraiDalmia Lions College of Commerce & Economics. The college was formed by the Lions Club of Malad-Borivali, an international social organization, in the western suburb of Mumbai-Malad in the year 1972. The college endeavors for academic progress, promotion of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities, which helps to develop qualities of creativity, leadership, and resilience among the students. The college also emphasizes ethics, hard work, excellence, and commitment. It organizes sports and cultural events on college as well as intercollegiate levels. The college offers various degree courses such as B.Com, BMS, BAF, BBI, BAMMC, BFM, BSC-IT, and BIM. It also has post-graduate level courses i.e.M.com.

2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The entire world was agitated by the spread of coronavirus at the end of 2019 (Covid - 19). First of all the coronavirus appeared in Wuhan city of China. Thereafter, it spread worldwide and the entire globe was affected by the pandemic. It was spreading so quickly, therefore each country was taking necessary measures and action to break the chain of the spread of coronavirus. In India, the government has also made some policies to be implemented by the public to diminish the effect of coronavirus. All activities and movements were stopped causing crowds to avoid the spread of the virus, which resulted in all the activities such as work, worship, and study being started from home.

In the case of educational institutions, offline lectures were stopped to avoid crowds and from that moment, virtual learning came into the picture in India. As per the government policy, the lectures were started from home. There was no direct interaction between students and teachers. All teaching-learning activities were carried out from home. During the pandemic and even in the post-pandemic of covid-19, educational activities are carried on through virtual learning. But, students have problems in online education, and therefore, it is necessary to find out their perception towards virtual learning, so that effective measures can be taken for further improvement.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Amritesh PS and Jeayaram Subramanian (2019), in their study titled "A study on student's perception towards virtual learning environment, Palakkad", analyzed that virtual learning makes the study simple and easy for students. The various concepts and the difficult theories become easy to understand in the online era. The student's score in the practical exam has been improved to a great extent. It becomes easy for the students to recollect the concepts and theories. Virtual learning made practical subjects easy for the students. They are taking interest in subjects like maths and science. Overall, the virtual learning environment brought clarity and enthusiasm among students for their studies.
- R.Radha, K.Mahalakshmi, Dr.V.Sathish Kumar, and Dr.AR.Saravanakumar (2020), in their paper titled "E-Learning during Lockdown of Covid-19 Pandemic: A Global Perspective" determined that nowadays e-learning has become the necessity and trend of the era. It is accepted universally. E-learning is a suitable method for everyone. It offers time and places flexibility and therefore people choose it as per their convenience. It also provides easy access to notes and submission of assignments for the students. Further, the study explained the impact of E-learning, adoption of e-learning resources by students, and their performance in studies.

- DwiSulisworo, YosiWulandari, MuhSaeful Effendi, and Mazni Alias (2021), in their paper titled "Exploring the online learning response to predict students' satisfaction", stated that e-learning is the best alternative during the pandemic. But the students are not satisfied with the accessibility of the internet. The study further explained the other important factors such as improvisation in the interaction between students and teachers, time flexibility in the submission of assignments, learner's feedback, and clarity of instructions to students. Students emphasize attractive layout management of the LMS screen. E-learning has been proved a crucial method of learning in respect of course content, flexible study timing, submission of assignments, access to notes.

- SurakshaSubedi, SuvashNayaju, SwetaSubedi, Sanjeev Kumar Shah, and Jennifer Mathias Shah (2020), in their paper titled "Impact of E-learning during COVID-19 Pandemic among Nursing Students and Teachers of Nepal", explained that students are not happy with the online classes due to the lack of internet connectivity and electricity problems. Online learning gets disturbed due to these obstacles. Further, students use their data pack for online classes, which increases their costs. Even if the course can complete the objectives of the students, it will be fully achieved, when the problems of students have been solved.

- Nor Azwahanum Nor Shaid, FathiyahMohdKamruzaman&NurAinilSulaiman (2021), in their study titled "Online Learning During Ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic: A Survey of Students' Satisfaction", determined that students prefer online learning, as it helps to connect them with teachers and they can refer to the online notes as per their convenience. Further study revealed that there is a need for improvement in respect of interaction and instructions to students during the online classes. The respondent had online education for the first time due to the pandemic. The study helps the course designer for further improvement of online learning which will lead to student's satisfaction.

- Taufik and Fiptar Abdi Alam (2022), in their paper titled "The Survey on Students' Satisfaction Degree towards Online Learning during Covid-19 Pandemic Condition", stated that the students are highly satisfied with the lecturer during online classes especially, due to their good communication skills, interaction during the class with teachers as well as classmates. On the other hand, students feel dissatisfied due to independent assignments assigned by the teachers.

4. OBJECTIVE

The main objective of this research paper is to find out the perception of students towards virtual learning.

5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The current study will be crucial to find out students' perceptions towards virtual learning. It helps to study the opinion of students towards online learning and it will help the college to solve the problems faced by students during online learning and similarly, to take necessary steps for further improvement in virtual learning.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The study is based on descriptive research and qualitative data were collected.

Population & Sample

The population of the study is undergraduate students of B.Com Programme of the college. It includes students of FYBCOM, SYBCOM, and TYBCOM who are using a virtual learning environment. Primary

data was collected from 156 students through questionnaire methods. The online survey was conducted using Google Form. It was distributed among the students of the B.Com Programme of the College. The questionnaire includes 10 questions to find out students' perceptions towards virtual learning. Each question was rated by the student on 5 points Likert Scale. (1) Strongly Agree (2) Agree (3) Neutral (4) Disagree (5) Strongly Disagree.

Types of Data
Primary as well as secondary data were collected for the study. The primary data was collected through responses from students of the B.Com Programme of the college. Whereas, secondary data were collected through published research papers and other published documents.
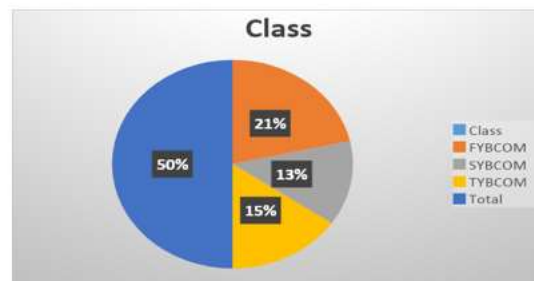
Analysis Tools Used: The collected data were analyzed with the help of percentage analysis using Excel.
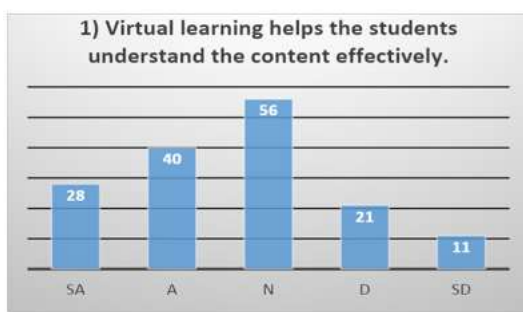
7. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 7.1			
Gender	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**
	62	94	156
%	39.74	60.26	100
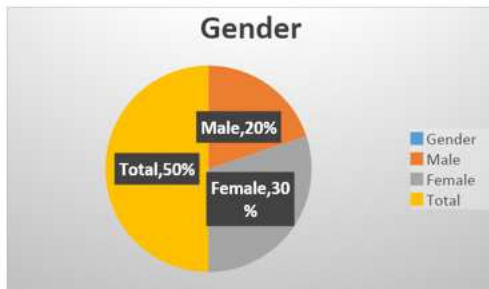
Table 7.2				
CLASS	**FYBCOM**	**SYBCOM**	**TYBCOM**	**TOTAL**
	67	41	48	156
%	42.95	26.28	30.77	100

Table 7.3					
SA	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**	**Total**
28	40	56	21	11	156
17.95	25.64	35.90	13.46	7.05	100

Table 7.4					
SA	**A**	**N**	**D**	**SD**	**Total**
25	51	36	27	17	156
16.03	32.69	23.08	17.31	10.90	100

1) Virtual learning helps the students understand the content effectively.

2) Virtual learning helps the students to acquire the skill of self learning.
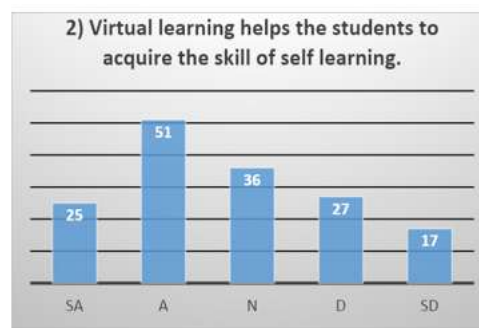
Table 7.5					
SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
52	41	30	17	16	156
33.33	26.28	19.23	10.90	10.26	100

Table 7.6					
SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
41	50	30	16	19	156
26.28	32.05	19.23	10.26	12.18	100

3) Virtual learning provides time and place flexibility.

4) The students find the submission of assignments and access of notes easy in case of virtual learning.
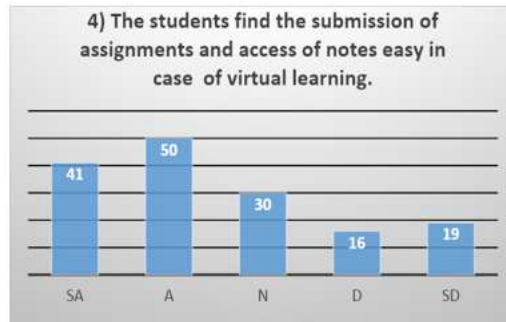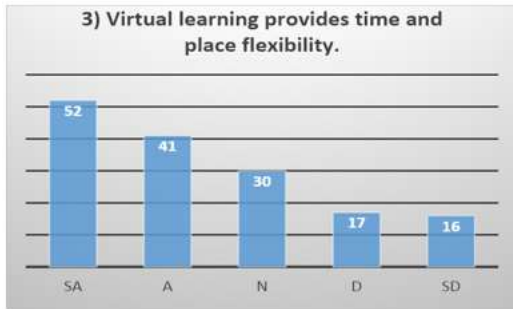
Table 7.7					
SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
30	30	53	23	20	156
19.23	19.23	33.97	14.74	12.82	100

Table 7.8					
SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
23	29	56	26	22	156
14.74	18.59	35.90	16.67	14.10	100

5) Virtual learning enhances the soft skills of the learners. (e.g. written, communication and analytical skills)

6) Virtual learning makes a dull teaching learning environment interesting.
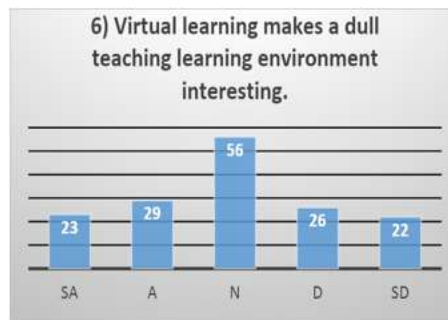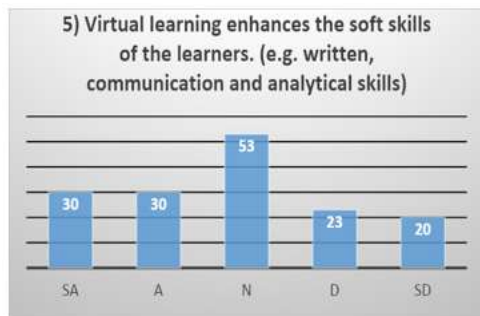
Table 7.9					
SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
32	34	45	31	14	156
20.51	21.79	28.85	19.87	8.97	100

Table 7.10					
SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
26	34	46	26	24	156
16.67	21.79	29.49	16.67	15.38	100

8) Students feel motivated, while learning virtually.

7) Virtual learning is cost effective in respect of students.
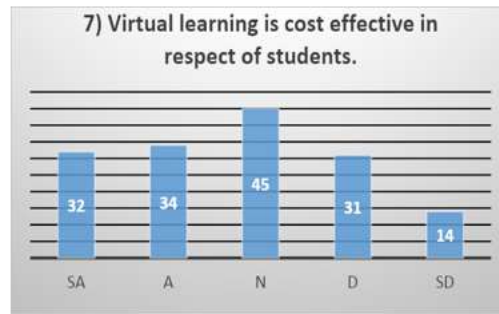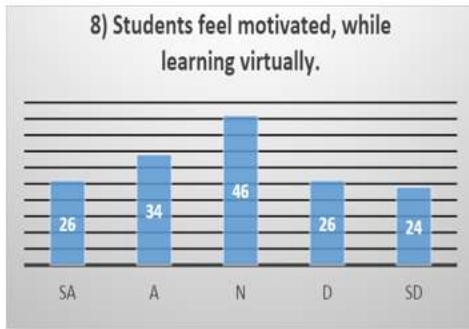
Table 7.11					
SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
34	36	51	20	15	156
21.79	23.08	32.69	12.82	9.62	100

Table 7.12					
SA	A	N	D	SD	Total
37	36	49	13	21	156
23.72	23.08	31.41	8.33	13.46	100

9) Students feel comfortable with virtual learning.

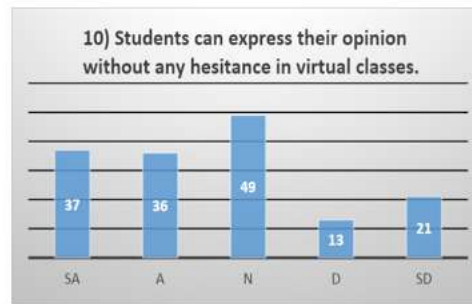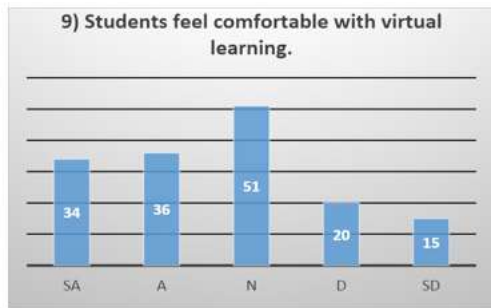10) Students can express their opinion without any hesitance in virtual classes.

Table 7.1 shows that data were collected from 156 respondents. Out of the total respondents, 39.74% were male students and 60.26% were female students. As per table 7.2, data were collected from the students of the Commerce Programme. Out of the total respondents, the majority of the respondents were from the class of FYBCOM i.e. 42.95%, followed by TYBCOM i.e. 30.77%, and SYBCOM i.e. 26.28%. Table 7.3 shows that 17.95% of students strongly agree and 25.64% of students agree, whereas 35.90% of students are neutral. So, it is clear that a virtual learning environment helps the students to understand the content effectively. Table 7.4 shows that 32.69% of students agree and 16.03% of students strongly agree that a virtual learning environment helps the students to acquire self-learning skills. Table 7.5 inferred that the majority i.e. 33.33% students strongly agree and 26.28% of students agree that a virtual learning environment offers time as well as place flexibility. Table 7.6 shows that the majority i.e., 32.05% students agree and 26.28% of students strongly agree. So, it is clear that students find the submission of assignments and access to notes easy in the case of virtual learning. The figures in table 7.7 show that 19.23% of students strongly agree and 19.23% agree and 33.97% of students are neutral. They do not have any idea about the statement. So, we can say that virtual learning helps the students to enhance their soft skills. Table 7.8 stated that 35.90% of students are neutral. They are not clear with this statement. Whereas, 18.59% of students agree and 14.74% of students strongly agree that virtual learning makes a dull teaching-learning environment interesting. Table 7.9 shows that 28.85% of students are neutral. They neither agree nor disagree with the statement. Whereas 20.51% of students strongly agree and 21.79% of students agree. It means, majority of the respondents agree that virtual learning is cost-effective in respect to students. Table 7.10 shows that 29.49% of students are neutral. Whereas 16.67% of students strongly agree and 21.79% of students agree. Therefore, the majority of

respondents stated that they feel motivated while learning virtually. Table 7.11 shows that 32.69% of students are neutral. Whereas, 23.08% of students agree and 21.79% of students strongly agree. So, it represents that the students feel comfortable with virtual learning. Table 7.12 represents that 31.41% of students are neutral. On the other hand, 23.72% of students strongly agree and 23.08% of students agree. It represents that the students can express their opinion without any hesitation in virtual classes.

8. CONCLUSION

The present study investigates the perception of undergraduate students towards virtual learning in the post-pandemic period. The researcher concluded that the majority of the students of PrahladraiDalmia Lions College of Commerce & Economics at Malad in Mumbai agree with the various factors of virtual learning methods adopted by the college. The researcher found positive opinions of respondents towards the several factors such as content clarity, development of self-learning skills, time and place flexibility, easy submission of assignments, and access to notes, enhancement of soft skills, making dull teaching learning environment interesting, cost-effective method of learning in respect of students, feeling of being motivated while learning virtually, feeling of being comfortable with virtual learning, and expression of opinion without any hesitation in virtual classes.

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