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CHALLENGES FOR NEW GENERATION ENTREPRENEURS IN ADOPTION OF BLENDED LEARNING: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

In the past few decades, it's been seen that the model of blended learning becomes the firm alternate and also expands the traditional methods of teaching. Studies have been done for assessing the blended learning approach for education analytically. On the basis of in depth literature review and assessment of course integration of blended learning, the researchers counter several challenges as well as opportunities offered by the educational institutions. Thus, these studies encapsulate successful implementation of the model of blended learning through a mix of in person and online learning. In future, the outcome of these studies might open the way for researchers and authors for designing their researches for deeply investigating therein. The reason for using hybrid method was to improve the participation of students, preparation as well as understanding of the students and for encouraging an active and not passive approach for learning.

Keywords: Blended Learning, Hybrid Model of Learning, Higher Education, Challenges of Blended Learning

INTRODUCTION

Successive development of ICT (Information and Communications Technology) and a shift towards the knowledge global society have helped in uncovering a lot of challenges as well as opportunities in pedagogical approaches and the instructional designs model for the tertiary institutions. Information and Communication Technology developed quickly an easy mode of communication with a wide variety of the updated services and software therein for supporting teaching, learning and collecting the work to enhance and support the practices and strategies of learning and teaching. The innovative technical services and application offer opportunities to support and enhance the strategies as well as practices of learning and teaching. A lot of organisations began to move towards adapting the pedagogy of international teaching in education. The standards of international teaching meant for the students centre the requirements advanced modes of learning to be attained in education on the basis of the latest technologies and applications of E-education (Alam & Agarwal, 2020).

Due to the limitations in the modes of instructions with large size classrooms, more and more students had started coming less prepared to the class and were also not willing to contribute to the class. They were just sitting and absorbing information passively. When asked any questions, some of the students did participate and responded and usually these were the same students. The testing performance was less than average for most of the students. Comments used to come frequently from students regarding the evaluation of course. They had

a lot of material and too many classes to learn. That is why; the decision was taken to assess the alternate approaches to the instructional delivery which would help in promoting active involvement of students in the process of learning and effective learning of course material. The hybrid or the blended instruction method employs a mix of online and face to face educational activities. It's been seen that it helps in increasing interaction, understanding as well as involvement in process of learning. Blended method of instruction is growing the approach of teaching in different types of institutions of higher education. It's also been mentioned that blended learning is single biggest unrecognised trend that is happening today in the higher education institutions. According to researchers, once the decade will end, a wide range of courses of higher education would have the web components inculcated within the traditional methods of instructions. This blended approach might become predominant model of teaching in future. A lot of faculty members who do not support distance learning methods consider the benefits of blended learning approach which incorporates best of the both worlds (Castro, 2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theories regarding the way people learn on emphasising the significance of an active participation within the process of learning rather than the passive observations. The method of active learning requires the teachers and students to join the dynamic partnership wherein they share a responsibility of instructions (Perišić, Milovanović & Kazi, 2018).

By definition, blended learning is a combination of virtual as well as non-virtual communication between students and instructors during which benefits of instructional approaches are employed. Combination of learning offers an advance plat at each stage in the educational institutions. Its different components help to achieve the required improvements in educational system. The usage of technology in education plays an important role to bridge the gap between the social and economic realities and impacting the results of education system. It would be important for time of knowledge economy with improvements in the educational output and provisions of the new skills and knowledge of students as well as the trainees. It clearly impacts learning opportunities of the larger and diverse population beyond geographic and time boundations.

Active learning process helps in improving the retention and application of the course content. Also, listening to the peer group also exposes the students in different points of views and the way to interpret and apply the course material. The size of the class is a variable which can affect active participation as well as interaction of the students actively (Galvis, 2018). Some researchers also describe the way in the large classrooms, teachers are compelled into the lecture based method of teaching where the students do not have the right opportunity of participating making it easy for the students to stay anonymous. In the lecture based classrooms, instructors are considered to be the well of knowledge from where the students can withdraw information and not contribute. In most of the classrooms, the students often disengage from process of learning and might just appear to pay attention (Rasheed, Kamsin & Abdullah, 2020). Recently, a lot of faculty members of colleges have started exploring technology mediated methods of teaching. They have started promoting the process of student's engagement and learning. Blended or hybrid courses that combine the online methods of delivering education with traditional method of delivery could be well suitable to participation in the classroom than online lectures of methods of teaching. They could be used efficiently for improving learning in the big size classrooms (Al-Samarraie & Saeed, 2018).

There are a lot of definitions of hybrid or blended learning. Researchers define hybrid learning system as a mix of online and face to face method of instructions. Some studies have also differentiated between the technology enhanced and web based methods of instructions. These incorporate the online components of supplementary within the conventional courses without actually reducing hybrid or face to face methods wherein the time of classes is replaced with online courses (Mohamed & Lamia, 2018).

It is also useful in studying the activities and the resources for increasing the flexibility and an access especially the ones with family, work and geographical difficulties. It has provision of reducing fee of offering lectures apart from optimising use of the virtual and physical resources. Increase in the competition level for building a new market of students because of innovation in implementing the study programs is another benefit.

Blended or hybrid learning has also been described as the method of instructing which combines face to face learning activities with online learning methods. They are integrated in a well-planned and pedagogically important way where few face to face times may be substituted with the online activities. Studies also describe hybrid or blended learning to be anywhere between about 35% to 80% online delivery of content with rest of the content delivered in the non-web based methods like the face to face instruction method. Just like there are so many definitions of hybrid learning, there're also reasons why hybrid learning has gained so much popularity (Xin, Lori & DeBoer, 2018). The higher education institutions are employing the blended methods of instructions for improving pedagogy, increasing the access to and flexibility of the environment of learning and improving cost efficiency. However, one of the most common reasons is to enhance the pedagogical practices. The most common reasons for adoption by the faculty members to adopt the blended method is increasing engagement of students and their involvement in process of learning and for improving level of students learning. The reported level of satisfaction amongst students with the blended method of instructions has usually been quite positive. That too with an ease and controlling the speed of learning are considered to be some of the biggest benefits of blended or hybrid learning approach (Norman et al., 2017).

On the basis of different models of the process of blended learning, there are certain opportunities which have been listed. It helps in enriching the academic practice as well as scholastic achievements of the students. It helps the students with their aspirations which maximum benefits that technology can offer and also helps in developing the innovative skills which enable them to may their way in the labour market. The facilitators may personalise their instructions with the use of powerful tools. It could also be used for changing the process of teaching and for improving the knowledge and skill level of faculty members. It helps in making strong connection between real life and the classroom teaching.

As the hybrid courses are becoming more and more popular, researches are accumulating on positive outcome from applying this approach. However, less material is available regarding the way faculty members design as well as teach the hybrid or the blended courses. According to researchers, what's known about efficient learning needs to be the point of starting to deign blended instructions methods? They stress the significance of choosing the tools of technology which make the activities of learning to be the point of starting to design the instructions. They stress on the significance of choosing the tools of technology which make the activities of learning authentic, help the students in becoming active in the learning methods. It expects students to communicate with their peers and engage in deep and critical thinking. Another study has analysed the way instructional approach of delivery should reflect 4 main conditions of the adult methods of learning (Majdi et al., 2020). All the conditions are learner centric and meet the interests and goals of learners. It is done with the help of relevant and active learning experience, assessment centeredness. It is also done by finding ways of efficiently measuring the methods of learning so that constructive and formative feedback maybe provided. The community centeredness or developing a sense of collaboration or connectedness amongst the learners is important. It has been seen that the hybrid method of instructions is capable of incorporating 7 principles of good practice amongst the undergraduate students. The 7 principles help in promoting interaction amongst the faculty members and the students. They also enhance reciprocity as well as cooperation amongst the students, promote active method of learning, provide a prompt feedback, increase the time for a task, set high expectations and recognise diversity into methods of learning. Finding the perfect mix of what would go online and what would be difficult to be taught in person is important part of the hybrid method of design (Martinetti, 2020).

Objectives of the Study

1. To find the reasons for challenges in adoption of blended learning in higher education
2. To ascertain the significance of the reasons for challenges in adoption of blended learning in higher education

Research Methodology

The present study is descriptive in nature in which the reasons for selection preferences of students for choice in the mode of learning has been studied.

The sample size of the study is 150. The data were collected with the help of a structured questionnaire on a five-point scale and analysed with the help of the mean values and t test (Table 1).

Variables	Number of respondents	% age
Gender		
Male	87	58%
Female	63	42%
Total	150	100%
Mode of teaching		
Online	63	42%
Offline	87	58%
Total	150	100%
Stream		
Science	43	29%
Commerce	58	39%
Arts	24	15%
Others	25	17%
Total	150	100%

Table 1 presents demographic profile of the respondents. There are 58% males and 42% females in the study. Among the respondents 42% teaches online and 58% teaches offline. The percentage of respondents who teaches science is 29%, who teaches commerce is 39%, who teaches arts is 15% and who teaches others is 17%.

Sr. No.	Challenges in adoption of blended learning in higher education	Mean Score
1.	Is blended learning an effective alternate to learning	4.23
2.	Blended learning offers a number of opportunities to students	4.34
3.	Online learning methods are easy to be adopted	4.12
4.	Offline teaching methods are better	4.41
5.	The education system should be go online completely	3.84
6.	ICT has helped the growth and development of the education system	4.25
7.	ICT makes communication easy and fast	4.39
8.	ICT supports the method of teaching and learning	4.40
9.	Blended learning helps in increasing understanding and interaction	4.38
10.	Blended learning is helpful more for the smaller institutions as compared to the bigger ones	4.31

Table 2 shows the opinions of the respondents. It is observed that Offline teaching methods are better is the most important reason for the challenges in adoption of blended

learning in higher education with the mean value of 4.41. It is followed by ICT supports the method of teaching and learning (4.40), ICT makes communication easy and fast (4.39) and Blended learning helps in increasing understanding and interaction (4.38). Further, Blended learning offers a number of opportunities to students (4.34), Blended learning is helpful more for the smaller institutions as compared to the bigger ones (4.31), ICT has helped the growth and development of the education system (4.25), and Is blended learning an effective alternate to learning (4.23) were also considered important. Reasons like online learning methods are easy to be adopted (3.84) were also viewed as important.

Table 3
CHALLENGES IN ADOPTION OF BLENDED LEARNING IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Sr. No.	Challenges in adoption of blended learning in higher education	Mean Score	t-Value	Sig
1.	Is blended learning an effective alternate to learning	4.23	9.037	0.000
2.	Blended learning offers a number of opportunities to students	4.34	9.780	0.000
3.	Online learning methods are easy to be adopted	4.12	7.040	0.000
4.	Offline teaching methods are better	4.41	8.825	0.000
5.	The education system should go online completely	3.84	3.460	0.000
6.	ICT has helped the growth and development of the education system	4.25	8.608	0.000
7.	ICT makes communication easy and fast	4.39	10.614	0.000
8.	ICT supports the method of teaching and learning	4.40	11.871	0.000
9.	Blended learning helps in increasing understanding and interaction	4.38	10.549	0.000
10.	Blended learning is helpful more for the smaller institutions as compared to the bigger ones	4.31	9.772	0.000

Table 3 shows the results of t-test. It is found from the table that the significance value for all the statements is below 0.05, hence all the statements regarding the challenges in adoption of blended learning in higher education are significant.

CONCLUSION

Researches define blended learning to be an extremely successful model for integration of education. The conventional method of teaching needs to be well adjusted as per the needs of the new digitally equipped students. Therefore, successive outcomes of the bent learning method justify that teachers acquire the technological benefits with as minimum effects as possible for achieving the principles of collaborative method of teaching in the pedagogical work. Incorporating the non-virtual methods of teaching with the blended technology may help in unwrapping new advancements in process of the system of learning by simply suspecting some unknown facts regarding methods of hybrid learning. The in person method of instructions with hybrid learning may be provided with a better collaborative experience of learning.

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