

UNIVERSITY LEVEL EDUCATION AND COVID-19 PANDEMIC: REFLECTIONS, RECOVERY CHALLENGES AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES IN PERU

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ABSTRACT

The university level education is an important source for determining employability of the higher education students. Due to the covid-19 situation, arrest the flow of operating the teaching-learning process in the developing countries particularly in Peru. This kind of unpredictable pandemic condition due to the spread of viruses hit the normal living condition. On the contrary, it also allows the people to think wider and move ahead with new way of handling the situation and reach the ultimate goal. Though, the university campuses are closed, social distancing is in practice, transport were stopped and many challenges came in front of academicians and the students of higher learning. According to the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean advocated that before the pandemic, the social condition was started demining and after the pandemic negatively influenced on various human resource segments, very particularly on the university level education of LAC countries. On the positive side, the Peru innovation and invention on university education has improved through technological inclusion. Virtual classes filled the gap of learning loss of the students to equip them for employability even during the pandemic period. The role of digitalization and implementation technological advancement in university level education is quite significant in creating opportunities during the era of covid-19 pandemic. The present study aims to bring out the various obstacles happened due to pandemic and identify the unique opportunities created during this pandemic phase in the higher educational system for the promotion of student community. Universities in the country need to be strengthen the virtual mode of education among the teachers and the learners. Moreover, a mixed model of teaching and learning to be created to enhance the pedagogical movement. It is also quite significant that the institutions have to raise more funds for the virtual mode of teaching. The universities have to expand the expenditure for the adoption of new technology and innovation of teaching and learning process. The pandemic situation affected the student's communication skills and enhanced the quality of remote learning. The situation dramatically affected their financial stability as well. In this scenario, the present study is aimed to bring out the various impacts, issues, Challenges and opportunities due covid-19 pandemic on university level education in Peru.

Keywords: University, Education, Challenges, Opportunities, Covid-19, Impacts

INTRODUCTION

During 2019, there was good growth and implementation of educational technology, around 18.66 US dollar has been instead towards education across the world (Said, 2021). Access to the university level education has remarkable increased in Latin America, particularly in Peru. Simultaneously, the introduction and availability of new courses have been consistently increasing in a faster manner. The Peruvian higher educational system is operating under the ministry of education. The higher education is provided through universities, higher education institutions for technology and various eminent schools of higher learning. The major law related to higher learning at the university level is general law of education, which was constituted in 1982. The Peru's higher education system is broadly classified as university level and non-university level higher learning. The university level higher learning is consisting of under-graduate (bachelor), graduate studies (specialist) masters and doctorate. The non-university level consisting of vocational and technical learning, which are offered through higher educational institutions in Peru. In April 2020 have surveyed around 4800 higher learning students in the Latin American Countries especially in Peru, Mexico and Colombia to estimate and understand the various impacts of educational institution closures due to covid-19 pandemic. Before the covid-19 situation, many of the students in on-campus programmes have few exposures towards online education platforms. But, students mostly used these online platforms to submit their assignments and project works and few have also experienced in online courses. The pandemic situation affected the student's communication skills and enhanced the quality of remote learning. The situation dramatically affected their financial stability as well. In this scenario, the present study is aimed to bring out the various impacts, issues, Challenges and opportunities due covid-19 pandemic on university level education in Peru.

LITERATURE SURVEY

It is observed that 91.3 percent of the global population has closed their universities due to the pandemic situation. In this juncture, the disruptive condition led to the implementation of virtual class to support the students. This situation affected the face-to-face teaching and learning process (Chiparra et al., 2020).

The pandemic situation shows that the health-related impacts have happened and it created the economic and social inequality among the men and women. The pandemic related health impact the mental health of the people in Peru and the situation exposes the children and adolescents to become violence (ECLAC & UNICEF, 2020).

The covid-19 pandemic has changed the learning and teaching methodology and brought the virtual method of learning and teaching among the students and teachers in Peru. The paradigm of virtual learning method has been adopted in the higher educational institutions namely the universities (Quesada, 2017; Fuster et al., 2020). The pandemic has improved the areas such as cognitive neuroscience, electronic system, networks and computation (Abreu, 2020). The analytical study focused on the learning loss by the students due to pandemic and closure of universities (Hanushek, Eric & Woessmann, 2020). The gross enrolment in university education has hiked substantially in LAC countries especially in Peru for the last few decades (Avitabile, 2017). Though, such kind of rapid increase in the enrolment ratio persists in many other countries, the spread is more in Peru among the other region areas of LAC. The accessibility to higher education has evidently increased and to bridge the gap of increased demand, there has been a flow in the generation of unique programmes and new educational institutions. The country like Peru is a middle-income country, which does not have adequate policy framework for the regulation of

institutions. Because of the covid-19 pandemic the inequality has also increased (Sanchez et al., 2021).

Under the covid situations academic institutions must focus on offering advantageous teaching formats and technological ways to assist student's community who is lacking social networks. Similarly, they must consider developing means to support the learners structuring everyday life as well as emphasizing initiatives to build learner's self-confidence and belief (Koob et al., 2021; Ramírez et al., 2020).

Virtual Classes during Universities are Closed

In the scenario of compulsory closures of universities, diverse forms of virtual education and learning resources must be mobilized. The nations must use their existing virtual distance classes whenever it is possible; encourage learning technology companies to enhance their technological resources available abundantly, various modes of the content delivery irrespective of age and capacity to the collaboration of the teacher. The university education has been delivered through the online mode with lot of online study materials.

Application of Existing Virtual Platforms

The virtual platform would be already having the existing curriculum and resources in the various digital ways such as text, study materials and video lectures, normally with a bank of related activities. Traditionally, teachers could select lectures and practices their students must watch and solve the work and the course teacher has to assist online itself. The educational institutions could provide and facilitate the teachers with online class training tutorials on how to deliver the online content in virtual mode, but also with the virtual collaboration should allow the teachers to share their study materials and get the feedback from both peer and students. Study conducted on teachers and learners' satisfaction of the online classes in the universities (Alanezi & Alazwani, 2020; Altirise, 2020). The policy for 2030 agenda aims to promote poor people through better educational attainment with political decision-making process (Vargas, 2019; Yslado et al., 2021).

Objectives

To bring out the significance of off-line and virtual classes for the university level education.

To identify the various impact of covid-19 pandemic on university level education in Peru.

To emphasize the role and significance of virtual classes on university level education for continuation of learning.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Present work is conducted by applying the descriptive method of research study. It is purely based up on the various secondary data and literature reviewed from various published articles and reports from national and international level. The collected literature has been reviewed to bring out the significance of online classes and the impact of covid-19 on university level education in Peru. The secondary data collected is tabulated and interpreted.

DISCUSSION

A big concern of COVID-19 and ensuing educational activity during the lockdown, which is at affecting learning of millions of students worldwide. In the nonappearance of any medical action and inoculation, social estrangement arose as a strong mitigating influence. The community places across Peru have shut to avert the spread of the deadly disease; established education institutions are facing the biggest issues. Universities and higher education institutions across the globe have been shut, affecting the learning of more than 90 percent of world's student population (UNESCO, 2020). (Table 1)

Table 1		
SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDICATORS		
S. No	Indicators	Value
1	Population (in 000's)	32510
2	Population Growth	1.40%
3	Population (15-24 age)	5172
4	GDP Per Capita	13302
5	GDP Growth Rate	-11.1
6	GDP in billions	432

Source: UNESCO, Institute for Statistics, 2019

The major economic indicators of Peru have been depicted in the above table. The population is 32510 (in thousands). The population is growth is recorded as 1.4 percent. More importantly, the population between the age group of 15 to 24 is around 5172 people. The per capita gross domestic product is registered as 13302 and the growth of GDP was degrown by -11.1 percent in the year 2019-2020. It was declined due to the pandemic and economic crisis. (Table 2)

Table 2			
EDUCATIONAL EXPENDITURE BY GOVERNMENT OF PERU			
S. No	Year	Percentage to GDP	Percentage of Total Expenditure
1	2011	2.7	13.6
2	2012	2.9	14.4
3	2013	3.3	15.2
4	2014	3.7	16.2
5	2015	4	17.6
6	2016	3.8	17.9
7	2017	3.9	18.2
8	2018	3.7	17.1
9	2019	3.8	17.8
10	2020	4.2	16

Source: UNESCO, Institute for Statistics

Educational expenditure of the Peru government is depicted in the above table 2, the educational expenditure percentage to gross domestic product was consistently increasing and the percentage of educational expenditure on total expenditure also increased over a period of time from 2011 to 2020. (Figure 1)

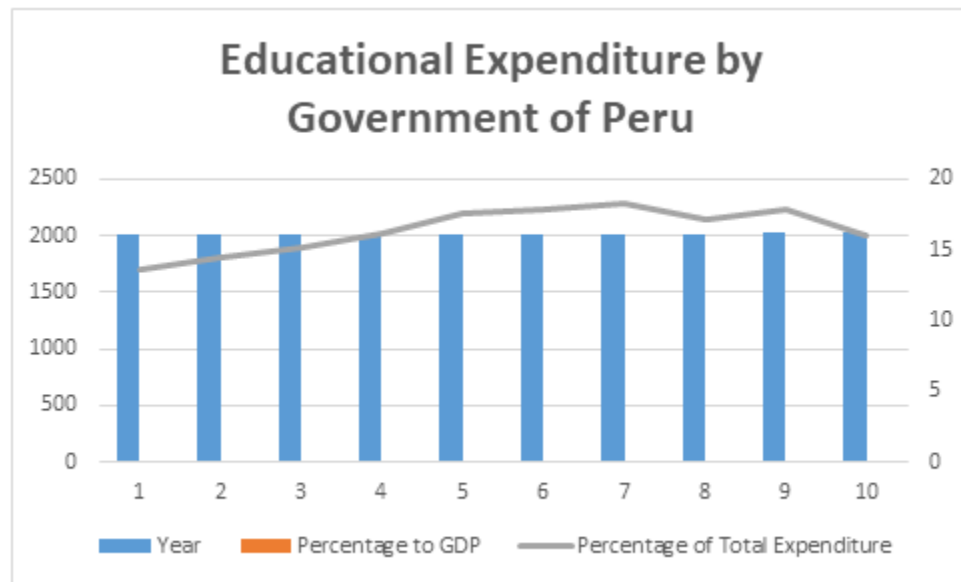


FIGURE 1
EDUCATIONAL EXPENDITURE BY GOVERNMENT OF PERU

Long-term Opportunities

The wave of the pandemic led to closure of universities which enables the opportunities to experiment and evolve new methods and models for the learning mechanism and innovative way to apply for the face-to-face classes.

Challenges

Synchronized or the blended e-learning was the quite important at the moment of pandemic. However, it is impacted negatively to the learner's learning outcomes and academic performance. The study found that the learners faced many issues in accessing the blackboard modes. It is estimated that 30 percent of the students missed their off-line classes and other tasks using blackboard and have shifted to various other applications during the virtual learning (Mahyoob, 2020). In this present situation, the main issue in the adoption of virtual teaching is the confrontation in redesigning the structure of course by the present teaching staff. This is happened mainly due to many people have not familiar with the online class technology and they found that the technological use in teaching is difficult. They have to be given appropriate time after the coaching for online teaching methods and application of learning management system in teaching-learning methods. All people have to come front for the improvement of higher education of the nation. The education would not be the same status in the future days to come. The teachers and the learners have to move forward to the blended method of education at the university level. Universities in the country need to be strengthen the virtual mode of education among the teachers and the learners. Moreover, a mixed model of teaching and learning to be created to enhance the pedagogical movement. It is also quite significant that the institutions have to raise more funds for the virtual mode of teaching. The universities have to expand the expenditure for the adoption of new technology and innovation of teaching and learning process.

Advantages

Efficiency: The virtual learning provides teachers an efficient way to teach the lesson content to the learners. The virtual learning has a numerous instrument such as video lectures, PDF study materials, and podcasts. By expanding the lesson plan beyond the old textbooks to include the virtual study resources, instructors are able to develop more effective educators. **Accessibility of place & time:** Another benefit of the virtual education is that it could allow the learners to attend classes any place according to their flexibility. It too allows the schools to attain out to a good and extensive links of the learners, instead of being a restrictive by geographical areas. Moreover, the virtual lectures could also be recorded, saved and to be shared for further and future references. This would also allow the students to access the study material. **Affordability:** Another beneficial aspect of the virtual learning is compact financial costs. The virtual mode of learning is far more cost effective as compared to the direct physical classes. This is due to the virtual learning estimates the effective cost points of the learner's transportation, student food and most significantly, the real estate. Moreover, all the programmes and course or study instruments are available online, thus making a paperless learning situation which is more convenient and affordable cost, while also be more advantageous to the environment. **Improved learners' attendance:** Hence, online classes could be taken from house or any other location based on their own choice, there are lesser chances of the learners missing out of the content.

Disadvantages

Lesser focus: many students could not able to focus to the online classes as like the traditional style off-line classes. With the online classes, there would be a good chance for the students to be very easily distracted by social media. **Technological barriers:** another important issue of virtual class is the availability of internet connection. While, the internet penetration has been developed in a very high manner and bounds over the past few years. The online classes are not possible without the steady internet connectivity. **Sens of isolation,** teacher training and the health issues of the children will also be the disadvantageous part. Before the covid-19 situation, many of the students in on-campus programmes have little exposure towards online education platforms. But, students mostly used these online platforms to submit their assignments and project works and few have also experienced in online courses. The pandemic situation affected the student's communication skills and enhanced the quality of remote learning. The situation dramatically affected their financial stability as well. In this scenario, the present study is aimed to bring out the various impacts, issues, Challenges and opportunities due covid-19 pandemic on university level education in Peru.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The outbreak of covid-19 virus has become a prominent disruption to the higher educational institutions such as colleges and universities in Peru, with many higher educational institutions were called-off the face-to-face classes and started moving towards the virtual mode of instructions. The pandemic condition also affected the all aspects of college and university activities significantly from admission to athletics. These uneven situations extended and weaken the financial stability of the universities and increased costs. With respect to Peru, as the condition continues to grow, the policy makers are taking a crucial role in addressing the immediate issues and long-term policy changes related to the pandemic. As many higher educational institutions were closed, student hostels were also closed. But the government initiated the financial support to the students. As the covid-19 situation ravages the whole world, it is becoming crucial to attend to the

learning needs of the students especially the university level students during this critical time. The pandemic is the first and significant for public health and impacting on various other macroeconomic variables (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020). Numerous studies, pre-pandemic, compared directly with online virtual courses in terms of higher educational university learner activity, as well as numerous other educational and demographic concerns of learners. It has been investigated very effective method of offering the virtual instruction in an online course that is then taught using old method of teaching (Nyer, 2019; Ramirez-Asis et al., 2021). The outbreak of the pandemic has hit all sectors and the people have to define and adopt the new norms for the next level of progress for present and future. The higher educational sector, especially the university level students have impacted mostly. The quality of virtual learning method has become an integral part of life. Though, such kind of rapid increase in the enrolment ratio persists in many other countries, the spread is more in Peru among the other region areas of LAC. The accessibility to higher education has evidently increased and to bridge the gap of increased demand, there has been a flow in the generation of unique programmes and new educational institutions. The country like Peru is a middle-income country, which does not have adequate policy framework for the regulation of institutions. Because of the covid-19 pandemic the inequality has also increased. In this present situation, the main issue in the adoption of virtual teaching is the confrontation in redesigning the structure of course by the present teaching staff. This is happened mainly due to many people have not familiar with the online class technology and they found that the technological use in teaching is difficult. They have to be given appropriate time after the coaching for online teaching methods and application of learning management system in teaching-learning methods. All people has to come front for the improvement of higher education of the nation. The education would not be the same status in the future days to come.

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