Overview of Teachers Feedback to Improve Online Education System during Covid-19

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ABSTRACT

The outburst of COVID-19 disease all over the globe has led to an enormous migration from traditional classroom learning to online virtual platforms, which directly affects both the students and teachers. Incorporating teacher's approval on online learning platforms in India as the objective, this paper practices an e-questionnaire based survey generated using the Google Forms, to estimate teacher's contentment and to draw useful conclusion from their combined opinion.

The results of investigation carried out in this work show that although online learning is attracting more teachers to provide better learning experience to their students, yet many of them face challenges in conducting a smooth learning environment. The benefits are getting suppressed by the challenges faced while conducting an online class. In view of that, some of the challenges faced by the teachers along with their possible solutions/recommendations on enhancing the online virtual platform are provided to improve the learning process and to endorse the reform of online education during the COVID-19 pandemic.

KEYWORDS: COVID-19, Online Learning Platform, Teachers Feedback, Survey, E-learning, Pandemic, Virtual Teaching Challenges

INTRODUCTION

The corona virus (COVID-19) disease has significantly affected the human and education life of people around the globe, particularly in March 2020 following the declaration of a global pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) [1].

Consequently, since the early 2020, the academic institutions all over the country have been going through an unprecedented huge shift to online learning platforms. In a short span of time, thousands of teachers started teaching in an online platform such as Google meet, zoom, cisco webex meet etc, and students by staying at their home started attending the classes through the internet. Appreciably, many educational institutions, teachers and students have adapted to online learning in just a small span of time and while teachers are gradually getting used to it, they are trying their best to overcome some of the shortcomings of online learning.

Luckily, the growth of the internet and its availability has led to an increase in the acceptability for online learning across the world. The management committees in nearly all academic institutions are organising webinars and conducting online sessions to train their faculty members to provide the best online experience to their learners. It is therefore crucial to collect the feedback by the faculty on their online teaching experience in order to incorporate the actions that need to be taken to ensure the educational process sustainability especially in COVID-19 pandemic.

OBSERVATIONS AND DISCUSSIONS

An e-questionnaire based survey was generated using the Google Form, and the link was shared widely among faculties of different colleges and universities through WhatsApp, Email, Facebook etc. For this work the total sample size is 90 teachers. The teachers filled the e-form containing questions related to their previous semester online teaching experience and

submitted. The views of all faculty members were then analysed to form meaningful conclusions and to draw suggestion/solutions for the next academic session.

1. **At times shared screen is not visible to some students and most of the time students forget to mute themselves resulting in sound echo/unwanted noise**

Eventually, one of the major reasons behind the bumping of virtual learning is technical compatibility (with operating systems, mobile devices or web browsers) issue. There are several instances when the screen shared by the presenter is not visible to the audience, but they could hear the presenter speaking [2]. Some participants also complain that the video shared by the presenter is not visible though they can hear them in spite of having a decent internet connection on both the ends. Sometimes the presenter himself faces problems and sees a blank white screen while they try to share their screen [3].The courses in a way becomes difficult to get rolling for the educators as the learning gets disrupted usually. All this might lead to learners losing interest, switching off or even abandoning the course.

In Table 1, it is illustrated that 62% teachers agree with the fact that there are times when shared screen is not visible to students and sometimes students forget to mute themselves. While only 2% teachers strongly disagreed for having any technical or sound issues.

Table 1: Shared screen is not visible and students forget to mute themselves resulting in sound echo

S. No.	Rating scale	Respondents Percentage
1.	Strongly disagree	2 %
2.	Disagree	15%
3.	Neutral / Undecided	21%
4.	Agree	47 %
5.	Strongly agree	15%
	Total	100%

Possible solutions/ suggestions

1. In Google Meet, the invisible screen issue can be resolved sometimes by pinning the presenter and using spotlight or sidebar view where the preference would be given to the active speaker or presenter. In some case turning off the Grid View Extension can resolve the issue. In some other cases the issues might be resolved by turning off the ad blocker.

2. To avoid the background noise, teacher should make sure that all participants remain muted during the online session. Being a host, the

teacher also has the facility to mute all attendees. If the students forget to mute themselves, or they are too young to do so, the teacher can mute them all from settings or mute individual participants by hovering on the audio option over their names.

3. The teacher should start the meeting a few minutes earlier and make sure that the audio (speakers or microphone) and video is working properly by testing them beforehand. The teacher can sign in even a bit earlier in case there is some unexpected update or network issue. Likewise, learners should also join a bit earlier to solve any technical issues.

2. **Resolving queries and managing students in digital classroom is more difficult than in traditional classroom.**

In traditional class rooms, learners get the opportunity to interact in real time with their teachers and openly ask questions and clear doubts. It basically provides a dynamic learning environment where students interact with their peer's face to face in real time. The flow of dialogues among the classmates enhance their learning capability and provides opportunity to share their experiences as well.

However, in e-learning real-time interaction is not there and students are confined to their own places. Thus they ought to be motivated enough in order to learn and produce related outcomes. Since there is less interaction among the peers it is quite possible that in order to solve a query, the students will put their effort to find the solution by themselves resulting in self learning.

Results regarding managing and resolving students queries in online learning depicts that a large percentage of 60% teachers are agreeable towards the difficulty faced while managing and answering students doubts during online sessions while relatively less percentage of 28% teachers are comfortable with dealing learners in digital classroom. Moreover, 12% teachers showed neutral reaction towards the same as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Resolving queries and managing students in digital classroom is more difficult than in traditional classroom

S. No.	Rating scale	Respondents percentage
1.	Strongly disagree	2 %
2.	Disagree	26 %
3.	Neutral / Undecided	12 %
4.	Agree	45 %
5.	Strongly agree	15 %
	Total	100%

Possible solutions/recommendations

1. Students procure novel information and skills by seeing others' activities and attitude, and associated outcomes. In online learning, we need to create copious possibilities of social interaction among learners by forming student groups, conducting webinars, question answer & discussion forums, friendly competition where students get vast possibility to work with their peers and educators and learn from each other.

2. Students start losing interest when the knowledge imparted in virtual classroom becomes too abstract and they are unable to understand its practical usage. In order to make online learning profitable, we should include appropriate real-life cases, incorporate convincing practical examples, and assign practical assignments to directly apply gained knowledge to practical scenarios.

3. The courses if designed based on students preferred style of learning and common personality traits, will help educators to engage learners more in learning and curriculum [4].

3. Due to lack of face to face engagement or eye to eye contact with the students and varying internet connectivity at various students' places, same thing needs to be repeated multiple times.

It has been observed that 59% teachers agreed with the statement that online teaching requires repetition of material multiple times by the teacher because of different reasons such as varying internet connectivity, lack of face to face interaction and eye contact. 24% teachers revealed an unclear opinion, while only 17% teachers didn't agree to the foresaid proclamation.

Table 3: Online learning requires repetition of material multiple times by the teacher

S. No.	Rating scale	Respondents percentage
1.	Strongly disagree	0 %
2.	Disagree	17 %
3.	Neutral / Undecided	24 %
4.	Agree	38 %
5.	Strongly agree	21 %
	Total	100%

Possible solutions/recommendations

1. The teachers can make a recording of their lecture including an assignment with a deadline at the end and make it available on the web for download. The attached assignment would help the teacher know whether students understood the uploaded lecture or not.

2. The teacher can also provide the students with a time slot for doubt clearing session and consultation in which he/she shall be available to answer the student's queries and doubts. Students then might not face issues regarding missed lecture and unstable internet connectivity.

3. Some reputed academic institutions have provided the students to choose between attending the semester online or to get a semester break. This might create a digital divide among the students where a section of students will be deprived of getting education in such difficult times. Alternatively, it would be better if the students shall be given the option to choose between a thesis, certain courses or a project all carrying the same workload and having the same course credits.

4. Which learning platform Cisco WebEx Meet, Google Meet, Zoom, Jitsi you liked the most and was most efficient to use?

With academic institutions exploring for tools that can assist educators in teaching and facilitate them in keeping contact with their students, the market for real-time conferencing and associated applications has warmed up appreciably.

Cisco Webex Meet, Google Meet, Zoom and Jitsi are among the most widely competing online services striving for users in the past few months. Each provider has stood a vigilant watch on their counterparts and continue releasing updates, with the view of providing users an upper hand over their competitors. The competitive advantage for the users is that the platform providers continuously enhance their features, improve security and provide some services free for everyone.

Table 4 shows the choice of four online platform for which the survey was conducted. A 13% teachers have chosen Cisco Webex Meet, 28% teachers have chosen Zoom, 58% teachers have chosen Google Meet while only 1% teachers have chosen Jitsi as the most efficient and preferred online learning platform.

Table 4: Choice of online learning platform: Cisco WebexMeet, Google Meet, Zoom, Jitsi

S. No.	Online platform	Respondents percentage
1.	Cisco Webex Meet	13 %
2.	Google Meet	58 %
3.	Zoom	28 %
4.	Jitsi	1 %
	Total	100%

Possible solutions/recommendations

Following points should be considered while choosing an online virtual platform for learning:

1. Select the platform that provides strong security controls. Preference should be given for the platform providing locked meeting rooms, meeting passwords, encrypted chats and the host having the control to permit and deny specific participants.

2. The platform should be able to support the required number of participants you want. Some free application provides a lower limit to the number of active participants in a meeting.

3. Look for the platform that enables you to record the meeting and store them in clouds. This would help the students to access the recorded videos later also.

4. Choose an online conferencing platform that allows host as well as participants to share files and screen, enable screen annotation and send emoticons to show participants reaction on the shared content.

A comparative study of four popular platforms based on certain parameters chosen by the authors, as shown in Table 5 [5][6].

Table 5: Comparison of four online platforms based on certain parameters

	Cisco Webex Meet	Google Meet	Zoom	Jitsi
Free version available	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Meeting participants (default)	200	100	100	75
Screen-sharing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Whiteboard	Yes	No	Yes	No
Meeting recording	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
E2E encryption	Yes (Optional)	No	No	No
Plans from (p/m)	$13.50	$6.00	$14.99	NA
Mobile App	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

CONCLUSIONS

Although online learning possesses plenty of advantages, but it also has its limitations. Learners might occasionally become irritated owing to the absence of face-to-face interaction, the invisibility of a teacher and a helplessness because of their inability to communicate with the fellow mates. Every so often, the online world, no matter how elevating it looks like, it can become too small for the student who need a physical space where they can resolve their questions and practice with real tools.

The teacher can occasionally conduct webinars, group work or forums where students can interact and resolve their queries. At times it becomes a necessity that students have a teacher they can contact with in person (for example, tutoring via Skype). The teachers can also encourage the use of social media during the course work, hence providing an added opening for social interaction and humanizing the learning process.

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