

Online Classroom Experience: A Study based on the National Institute of Co-operative Development during the period of Covid 19 Pandemic.

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ABSTRACT

The main objective of this research was to examine the online learning experience of students studying in the National Institute of Co-operative Development (NICD). Moreover, a descriptive type qualitative study was employed to achieve the above objective. The sample was 115 students who were selected using the convenience sampling method. Hereafter, a standard questionnaire was used for primary data collection. Additionally, Data analysis done through the descriptive analysis. Data presented by using the pie charts and tabular with percentages. Accordingly, the results signified that majority of respondents were satisfied about the online delivering method of national institute of co-operative development during the pandemic situation. Further, students implied that they were interested in the online learning and it was novel for them. Further, denoted that the cost they incurred in online classes were cheaper than the physical classes. Students cited equipment breakdowns, internet connection breaks, power cuts as the disruptions to online learning. In conclusion, as per the students view the NICD deliver satisfied online service to them with an affordable quality. It is recommended to enhance the quality of current online mode further and suggest to deliver future training programs in hybrid mode.

Key words: National Institute of Co-operative Development (NICD), online learning, Covid-19

1. INTRODUCTION

Globally, the education system is undergoing a significant transition due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Internet became the magical tool in connecting people during this situation. The traditional education platforms are now converting to the virtual platforms via internet. Due to the above reason an enormous technological boom was happen in Sri Lanka at present. However, the current pandemic situation in the country challenged the traditional face-to-face education system and forced to convert traditional systems to an online mode. Technology innovation affects students in their daily lives. In fact, technology not only affects them but also affects their well-being. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, using computers and internet for education has now become a trend in Sri Lanka. Further, reason to the closure of educational institutions, many students stayed at home. The COVID-19 pandemic has radically transformed the lives of people around the world including higher education students. (Aristovnik et al., 2020). The Internet is now playing a bigger role in conducting online course by providing easy and convenient access to students. Moreover, transfer physical education to distance education within a short while. The cyberspace made notable contribution to human life today by creating social networks. According to Mangis (2016) online learning come up with various ways like conference form, e-mails, chats, video recordings etc. In modern technological era users are more stimulating in remote learning due to the time saving, cost effectiveness and freedom.

Furthermore, online education allows learners to learn at a time with a convenience location. According to Arkorful and Abaidoo (2014) E-learning is important for higher education institutes to retain students during the crisis. Moreover, digital tools help learners to learn as they wish without compromising others. Students can learn anytime without considering the location. Web based learning is an alternative for the face-to-face learning. (Abou et al., 2014). Most of researchers mentioned that the critical factor for student success in remote learning is self-motivation. Moreover, students should have a good ICT knowledge to handle remote software. However, lecturer creativity is a dominant factor for the success remote learning. (Dissanayake & Nandasena, 2019). Online learning can be useful but moreover comes with risk. However, Vanderlind (2020) mentioned instructors should understood the level of the students and their motivation before starting the online lecture. The major benefit of remote learning is that students can transfer their ideas directly to the lecturer without any delay. As per Dhawan (2020) remote learning is the best option to maintain social distance during the Covid-19 pandemic. Moreover, the tragedy forced schools, universities and other education institutes to close. Due to this scenario educational institutes struggling to find an alternative to battle with this challenge and remote learning is the best option to them for the survival. Mental imbalance is a major challenge of online learning. (Vanderlind, 2020). Virtual technology has been blended with human life today. But it's vital to balance the technology without contradicting other day today activities. (Halupa, 2021).

As per the U.S. Department of Education (2012) educational institutions were looking in to reduce the cost and improve the quality of delivering. Online teaching is a fruitful to achieve that goal. Thus, the national institute of Co-operative development is the responsible body for Co-operative development in Sri Lanka. The institute offers numerical courses to domestic students with the purpose of developing human resource in the country. In this background the researcher is curious to find out what is the online learning experience of students studying in the National Institute of Co-operative Development (NICD) which became the main research problem of this study. The findings of the research are significance for decision making in educational institutions and establish a virtuous mechanism to evaluate the success of the current remote learning platforms. Furthermore, study beneficial to policy making in NICD. The directors, lecturers and students can use study outcome as a learning tool.

2. WHAT IS ONLINE LEARNING

With the advent of the Covid-19 virus, the world's attention has turned to online education, which is now one of the most successful forms of education in the world. Instead, online education has become a bridge between the teacher and the student without being infected with the virus. According to Aristovnik et. al. (2020) online learning is a novel paradigm for education. Moreover, Pedagogic modification for learning.

Specialists and researchers have suffered on a common definition and a wording for remote learning. There were multiple terms that gives the same meaning of remote learning which are online learning, e-learning, remote learning, etc. (Dhawan, 2020). Accordingly, Mangis (2016) quotes online learning transfers face-to learning to computer-based learning. Instead, online learning conveyed basically over the Web. Online learning is a non-traditional platform, but can be accessed by everyone. According to Arkorful and Abaidoo (2014) E-learning has impact on learning and teaching. Further, E-learning is a digital tool for learning and teaching. Further, remote learning is an extraction of computer-based learning. In the view of Abou et. al. (2014) remote learning is any kind of learning relate to internet.

The 21st century seen rapid growth in computer-based learning. According to Dhawan (2020) online learning refers to the learning through internet. Moreover, Online learning consists of various programs with lecture material where lecturers and students interact. Online learning come up with face-to-face interaction over internet. As per Nguyen (2015), online courses are the programs that deliver purely through internet. Fruitful use of digital technology not depends on the access to devices but reason to the user training as well. The ability of the teacher to operate the internet has a quantitative effect on the success of online learning. (ICF Consulting Services Ltd, 2015). The Mangis (2016) defines online learning as a distance learning mechanism.

Moreover, education through internet defines as online learning which gives synonyms to web-based learning, E-learning and digital education. (Matthew et al., 2018). Furthermore, remote learning is ideal for students who are unable to participate in physical classrooms. The main advantage is that students can study anywhere using internet access. According to Dissanayake (2020) distance learning system indicates computer-based services such as creating devices, multimedia servers, learning catalogs, e-mail and various computer program stages. As per the Dhawan (2020), online learning is the ability to use computer network and learn from anytime, anyplace with any rhythm. Instead, Availability, affordability, flexibility and cost effectiveness are some benefits of E-learning. The fatigue is one of the drawbacks in remote learning and lecturers can use following techniques to minimize the fatigue namely case studies, debates, discussions, games, drills, etc. the novel strategies smooth the remote learning experience in an effective way. Through online learning students can get instruction at any time from anyplace. (Gilbert, 2015).

As a result of online learning the softwares like Zoom, Google classroom, Microsoft teams came in to the world. This may be a positive influence for the future development of the remote learning. However, in remote learning the tutors must consider the learners mental health. Mental balance is necessary for the efficacy of the online learning. (Vanderlind, 2020). Technology users can adversely effects from mental, physical and social health result to pathological behavior.

Hence, Long-term remote learning causes for technology addiction. Sleep problems, depression, headache, mental imbalance were some negative symptoms of remote learning. (Halupa, 2021). In United States most of educational institutes used face-to-face interactions and the online method as a blended strategy. Moreover, through this blend institutes can double their students and income by removing geographical barriers. (U.S. Department of Education, 2012). On other hand, as per Xu and Jaggars (2013) long term usage of computers make a risk of mental and physical unbalance. As per Gilbert (2015) online learning has main three foams namely, totally web based, courses using web supplements and hybrid method.

Furthermore, Collaboration and communication become the main success factor of the online education today. Instead, online learning reduce poverty, location barriers and traveling time. According to Xu & Jaggars (2013) majority of education institutions are now turning to distance education because of cost and convenience. In pandemic situations online learning is the only option to conduct programs without compromising students. Rendering to Dhull and Sakshi (2017) remote learning is a tremendous choice for education today. In remote learning students can access teacher from different locations. Blended learning generates the best outcome of the online learning. Access to a computer is the minimum requirement to join the online classroom. Strength of the internet connection and student motivation succeed the learning outcome. (Yusnilita, 2020).

According to Al-Kumaim et. Al. (2021) found that women tend to adapt face-to-face learning to online learning better than men. Because they are more capable at communicating online, and more compelling in scheduling their learning. Race and age too play into how well an individual adjusts to this learning platform. As per Dhull and Sakshi, (2017), supporting devices like web cameras and the microphones smooth the online learning and create a conventional classroom. Moreover, according to Al-Kumaim et. al. (2021) lecturers in the university must inspire students to enhance self-confidence and creative thinking when deal with the remote learning platforms under the covid-19 period. According to Yusnilita (2020) traditional education system changed by the technology. Teachers should always be prepared to change technology. They need to focus on new methods of attracting students. Many students today turn to online education because of its convenience, affordability and freedom.

Remote learning cause sometimes adverse way of life. Spending more time on the remote devices causes major hazards to users' physical and mental wellbeing. (Mangis, 2016). Online courses are useful for numerous reasons. Every student can participate to the classroom in any place, improve technological awareness, and conduct multiple classes in same day were some advantages of the online learning. (Vanderlind, 2020). According to ICF Consulting Services Ltd (2015) tutors and academics were exceptionally interested with online learning process.

Online learning brings out considerable impact for learners and instructor life and also their families the community and the institution. Online learning may be a frame of separate learning or separate instruction, which has long been a part of the American instruction framework, and it has ended up the biggest division of remote learning in recent a long time. Online learning gotten to be most popular frame of separate instruction nowadays. (Matthew et al., 2018). According Xu and Jaggars (2013) there are few kinds of distance learning techniques. The main benefits of distance learning are convenience, enhanced learning, leveling of the playing field, interaction and imaginative instruction. (Halupa, 2021). Furthermore, e-learning is cost-effective than traditional education strategies as it does not require paper or pencil and can be done anytime and anywhere.

In other words, online learning has a negative impact on students. The main disadvantage of distance learning is that students have trouble attending traditional face-to-face classes due to time and location requirements and other work and family commitments. (Vanderlind, 2020). According to Dhull and Sakshi (2017) age is most vital factor for remote learning. Younger people more effective in online learning than the elders. This impact that age plays on the conquest effect on online studies. With the changes to technology and the resource availability, it is significant to remember that competent students score better grades in face-to-face or online learning environments.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

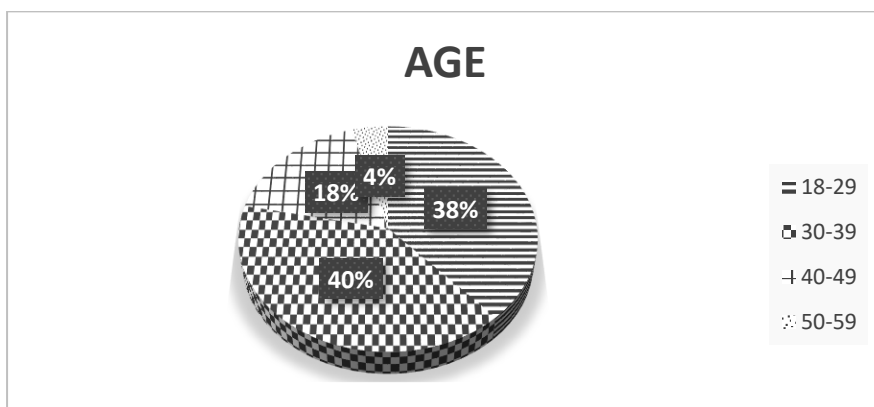
A descriptive qualitative design was employed to achieve the research objective. The total population of the study was 454 students in the period of last quarter of the year 2021 who were conducted their studies through online mode. The sample was 115 students which selected using convenience sampling method. Standard questionnaire of Yusnilita (2020) was used to collect the primary data collection. The questionnaire consists with ten questions with Likert formatted and one open ended question. Data analysis done through the descriptive analysis using SPSS 21. Data presented by using the pie charts and tabular with percentages.

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. Descriptive Analysis

I. Age

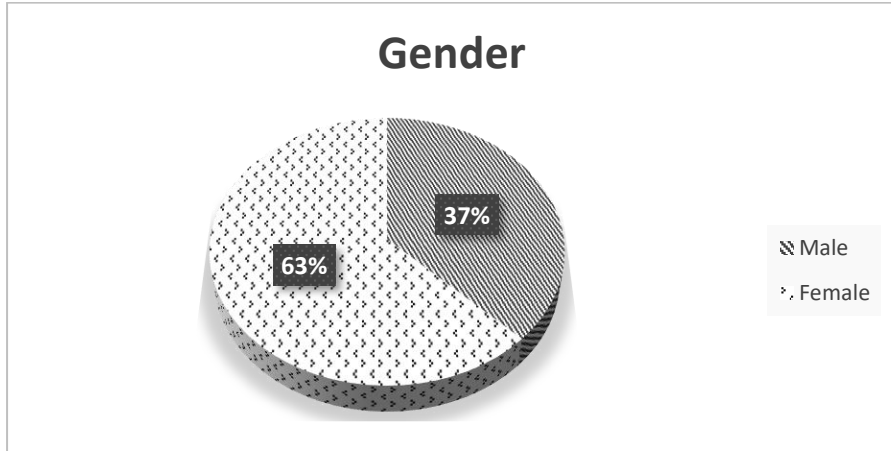
The total respondents of the study were 115 respondents and majority of them are in the age of 30-39 which demonstrates 40% in the total sample.



Source: Analyzed Data, 2021

II. Gender

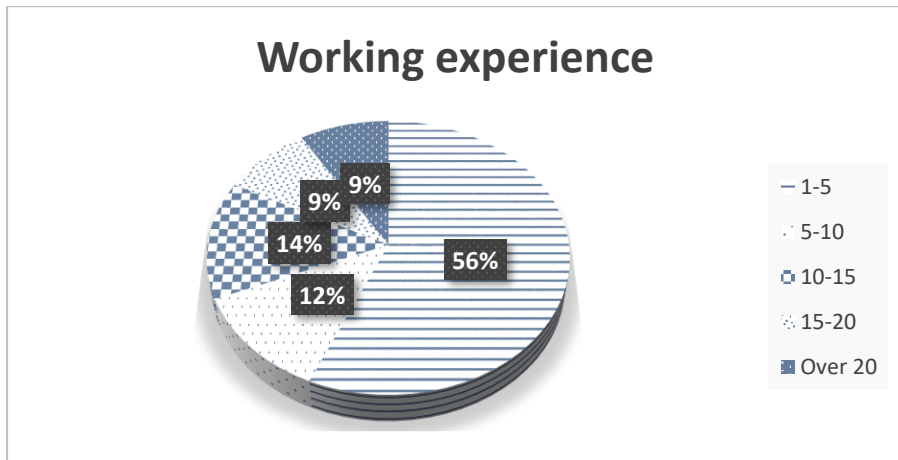
Most of students in the online classrooms were females which represented the 63 of the total sample rest of them are males. (37%)



Source: Analyzed Data, 2021

III. Working experience

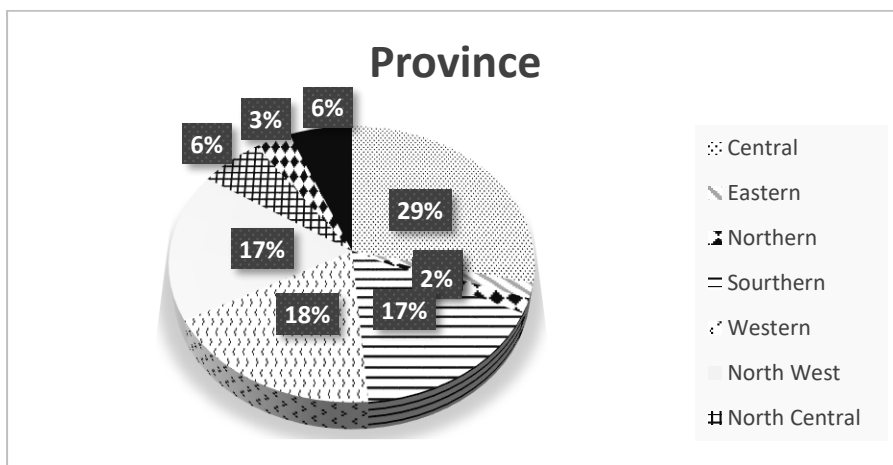
Most of them are having 1-5 years' experience represented the 56% of the sample. Then 14% having 5-10 years' experience and others representative the rest of the percentage.



Source: Analyzed Data, 2021

IV. Province

29% of the sample is in the central province. Then, 18% represented the western province and 17% demonstrating the North West and southern Provinces. Rest of them signified for other provinces.



Source: Analyzed Data, 2021

B. Summary of the answers received

Table 1: Summary of the answers received (n=115)

Question	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Moderate	Agree	Strongly agree
Q1- Online learning is interesting for me.	0.9%	5.2%	24.3%	47%	22.6%
Q2- Taking class online easier than a regular class.	1.8%	7.8%	25.2%	45.2%	20%
Q3- I always prepare myself before learning with making notes or record along online learning process.	0.9%	3.5%	24.3%	54.8%	16.5%
Q4- Online learning is practical for me.	1.7%	10.4%	31.3%	35.7%	20.9%
Q5- The time of online learning is disturbing me.	13.9%	53.9%	20.9%	9.6%	0.9%

Q6- The cost that I should pay in online learning cheaper than the physical classes.	0.9%	6.1%	22.6%	50.4%	20%
Q7- I always join discussions and activities in the online classroom.	0.9%	3.5%	18.3%	61.6%	15.7%
Q8- I felt active and confidence with online learning.	1.7%	7%	29.6%	49.5%	12.2%
Q9- I think high quality learning can take place without interacting with teacher and student face to face.	0.9%	13%	33.9%	41.8%	10.4%
Q10- Lecturer accommodate in online learning.	0%	5.2%	29.6%	52.2%	13%

Source: Analyzed Data, 2021

As per the results 69.6% of respondents were confirmed that online learning is interesting for them. Then, 65.2% mentioned taking a online class is easier than a regular class. Moreover, 71.3% Prepared and participate for the online classes. The percentage of 56.6% implied online learning was practical for them. Thus, 67.8% intended that time of online learning was not interrupt to them. Hence, 70.4% respondents signified that the cost incurred in online course was cheaper than the physical classes. Thus, 77.3% of respondents quoted that they were actively participated in the online classroom. Furthermore, 61.7% felt active and confidence with online learning.

Moreover, 52.2% confirmed that high quality learning can take place without interacting with teacher and student face to face. At last, 65.2% signified that Lecturer accommodate in online learning.

Answers to the open-ended question

Researcher asked *what are your suggestions for improving NICD's online education?* as an open-ended question. The respondents gave following common ideas to improve the online education of National institute of Co-operative Development.

Provide lecture notes prior to the lecture, use quality technological tools for delivering a lecture, Moreover, respondents quoted staring at an electronic device for hours can cause a number of complications, at least for the eyes. Further suggested to occupy appropriate video footage (video, photo, animation, etc.) on the screen and follow the appropriate steps to improve the quality of the lecture. Some are stated that it is difficult to sit 8 hrs. in online classroom. Subsequently, some respondents were requested for the lecture recordings when the time of power cut.

5. CONCLUSION

The Internet became a magical tool for connecting people during the pandemic situation. The main objective of this research was to examine the online learning experience of students at NICD.

The majority of students in the online class rooms were in their 30s and 40s of age. Thus, out of them, the majority were female. Consequently, male participants in online classroom were less numerous compared to females. Most of the respondents have 1–5 years' experience, and they are aware of online education technology. According to the results, the majority of the respondents were satisfied with the online lecture system of the National institute of co-operative development. Furthermore, students indicated that they are interested in online learning and that it is practical for them. Moreover, online learning has been shown to be more cost-effective than physical classes. Hence, most of them felt active and confident with online learning during the COVID-19 period. Besides, the majority of students confirmed that high-quality learning can take place without interacting with teachers and students face-to-face. In overall conclusion, throughout the crisis situation, the National institute of co-operative development gave satisfied online learning methods to students with affordable quality.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher recommends providing proper technical equipment to the lecturers. Also, online lecture schedules had better be systematic and should not be changed suddenly. It is recommended to enhance the quality of the current online mode and suggest delivering future training programs in hybrid mode blended with the physical and online modes.

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