

A Study of Perspective of Students on Virtual Learning in Hospitality Sector

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Abstract

Web-based learning is also referred to as virtual learning, online learning or e-Learning. It basically comprises learning through the courses which are offered online on internet. Just like physical classes, it is possible for students to interact with the teachers through live instructional sessions, video-conferencing and live chat during online classes. Many universities offer online courses and the major benefit of such learning is the students need not be physically present at the college, institute or in university campus to attend the classes. On the contrary, in traditional learning, the students are required to be present on campus and attend classes and other instructional sessions. Online learning provides convenience to students of getting the knowledge through web based courses across the globe.

The institutes providing higher education and especially the hospitality institutes have a major responsibility of training the students for service industry. Also, the increasing competition within the country and on international level has laid a great responsibility on the institutes to provide quality education to the students. The education sector is also experiencing globalization. The domestic universities and institutes are tying up with foreign universities to offer global platform for education I hospitality education. The hospitality education sector is offering various courses in collaboration with foreign universities ranging from certificate courses to post-graduate courses.

The objective of the research paper is to identify the perception of students pursuing Hospitality management courses about virtual learning. A questionnaire was designed to collect responses from the students. An online survey was carried out to collect data. 110 students pursuing hotel management course (three year and four year degree course) responded to the survey.

The students feel that the online teaching is not very effective and suitable for technical and professional course like hotel management. The students agree to the fact that there are few advantages of virtual teaching as flexibility of attending classes, availability of notes and other reference material throughout the session and more interesting due to the use of audio-visual aids during teaching.

At the same time, there are some difficulties faced by students like internet connectivity issues, online courses being costlier than conventional courses.

It can be concluded that the virtual teaching-learning has some advantages as well as disadvantages. But with the courses which are more practical oriented, students feel the need to have the conventional method of teaching. Also, the students feel the necessity of face to face interaction in the teaching-learning process.

Keywords: *virtual learning, higher education, hospitality and service industry*

Introduction

Virtual Learning

Virtual learning is also referred to as online learning or e-Learning. It basically comprises learning through the courses which are offered online on internet. Just like physical classes, it is possible for students to interact with the teachers through live instructional sessions, video-conferencing and live chat during online classes. The students can even post their queries through emails. This helps the participants to have an interactive session, which enables the participants to share their opinion and understanding on the topic being discussed. Online learning has an added advantage of including static pages which may give access to course material and other relevant information. This can be used by the students as and when required.

Many universities offer online courses and the major benefit of such learning is the students need not be physically present at the college, institute or in university campus to attend the classes. On the contrary, in traditional learning, the students are required to be present on campus and attend classes and other instructional sessions. Online learning provides convenience to students of getting the knowledge through web based courses across the globe. These courses also offer flexibility of learning at the students' pace. Of course the universities have all the information about web based courses on their website, like detailed information about the course, schedule of different online courses, curriculum of all the courses and most importantly, the teaching material i.e. notes, handouts, PPT presentations etc.

The web based courses also provide ease to the tutor in-terms of tracking students' attendance, keeping a record of students' assessment and performance and provide extra study material to the students with the help of links to various websites. (Isabelle Clover 2017)

Virtual Learning - Scope in India

The growth of information technology in India has introduced the idea of online learning to Indian colleges and universities. Many students in India have the benefit of online learning. There are various courses offered by many universities through online learning. Even smaller institutes are implementing the new way of teaching and learning.

Challenges in Virtual Learning

The developing countries face many challenges in online or e-learning. The major problems are inadequate numbers of e-learning devices like computer systems, continuous electricity supply and computer literacy amongst users.

Especially in a country like India, where the teachers and students are used to traditional methods being used in education sector at all levels, the e-learning is not easily acceptable. This method of learning requires active

students and class participation during online sessions is needed from the students. This is a major lag where students are used to listen to the lectures and with minimal participation in class.

The challenges faced in online learning are elaborated as below:

1. Course content

The most commonly stated challenges related to online learning is the course content. Also the other apprehensions are about the activities carried out during the course, the support facilities provided, and the manner in which the course is delivered. The very basic issue i.e. the syllabus of the course will determine the content of the course and the methods used for conducting the course.

2. Individuals' Characteristics

Every participant who is part of the online teaching-learning process is a different individual with different characteristics. Motivation is the most important quality needed for such method from both, teacher and students. Highly motivated teachers will be able to make the online teaching sessions more interesting and interactive than the non-motivated ones. Same is applied to the students. Highly motivated students complete the course and gain knowledge but less motivated students generally tend to drop-out or do not pass the final test.

The other quality is that the students should be able to prioritize and commitment. The students must devote required time for the sessions and the assignments to be completed.

Another important factor is knowledge and skills of the teachers which can make them more confident and promising while conducting the sessions.

3. Other Factors

It majorly includes the society in which e-learning is taking place. Society plays an important role in education sector. It is applicable to the societies which value traditional methods of education that the modern or new methods.

In countries like India, where class-room room is the only way of gaining knowledge, it is difficult for the teachers and students to adapt to the new technology in education

(Dr. Ramjit Singh 2014)

Virtual learning in Hospitality Education:

Revolution in Information and Technology has brought about many changes in hospitality industry and the hospitality education sector. The use of technology is the significant factor of the success of the business in today's scenario. Many researchers have tried to identify the role of technology in the hospitality education sector. They have tried to visualize the classrooms in near future.

Hospitality sector is facing challenges of globalization in business as well as education sector. There are many institutes which have started recently in India and abroad. Simultaneously, the student market is also changing at a fast pace. The students expect the universities or institutes to provide technically sound environment for studies. The millennial generation depends mostly upon the use and help of internet.

The institutes providing higher education and especially the hospitality institutes have a major responsibility of training the students for service industry. Also, the increasing competition within the country and on international level has laid a great responsibility on the institutes to provide quality education to the students.

The education sector is also experiencing globalization. The domestic universities and institutes are tying up with foreign universities to offer global platform for education in hospitality education. The hospitality education sector is offering various courses in collaboration with foreign universities ranging from certificate courses to post-graduate courses.

Several researchers have identified the benefits of online learning which can be stated as

- Flexible learning opportunity
- Better access
- No physical restrictions of attending classroom sessions
- Cost effective for universities as well as students
- Increased number of trained potential employees
- Enhanced team work and communication skills
- Flexible & competent employees who can adjust to change in business strategies leading to less turnover of workforce.

Few researches also reveal that the students of hospitality management courses prefer traditional face-to-face teaching. They feel comfortable when the instructor is in-front of them during the teaching session. (Hurix Higher Education 2020)

The objective of this research paper is to understand the perception of students pursuing hospitality management course about e-learning. (Sung Mi Song, Iowa State University 2010)

Disadvantages of Virtual Learning

As the virtual learning has some advantages, on the other side it also has few disadvantages. The same has been summarised as following.

- Limited feedback provided to students during and after the sessions.
 - Due to lack of face to face interaction the students may face social separation.
 - As e-learning is self paced, it requires self discipline and motivation.
 - There is no control over the students during assessments, which can create a possibility of cheating during assessments.
 - Difficult to conduct practical session through virtual learning.
 - Out of reach of population who is not familiar with use of computer and technology.
- (Sander Tamm 2019)

Literature Review:

Johan @ Eddy Luaran, Nur Nazleen Samsuri, Fazyudi Ahmad Nadzri, Kamarol Baharen Mohamad Rom (2014) in the research paper 'A study on the student's perspective on the effectiveness of using e-learning' explore the helpfulness of using e-learning among students of secondary school.

Data was collected from students of three schools in Shah Alam, Selangor. Total 45 students were the respondents. Analysis was done using SPSS version 19.0.

The results exhibited that most of the students were aware of e-learning. One of the main reasons that they favored e-learning over traditional learning was that e-learning gave them more flexibility of selecting courses which were either instructor-led or self-study. E-learning also allowed them to learn at flexible time and place. The respondents agreed that there were disadvantages of using e-Learning. One of the disadvantages was that it would decrease the interaction with their friends, which generally happens in the campus.

While concluding, the authors emphasize on the importance and role of teachers in the education system. Even if the technology is incorporated in teaching-learning process, the significance of the educator remains as it was.

J Coldwell, A Craig, A Goold (2006) in the research paper ‘Student perspectives of online learning’ investigates the perception of students on e-learning environment in higher education. The authors observe that the students are interacting with the universities through online mode. The study is about the perception of students studying at Deakin University in 2005.

Responses were collected with the help of questionnaire and a survey was carried out to record the responses. The results revealed that the students were keen to use the online learning mode. It was found that students were comfortable to use the online learning mode as it gave them flexibility of attending sessions as per their convenience. On the other hand, the online learning had some disadvantages like technical issues; students had to be regular for the sessions.

In conclusion, the authors state that despite having some disadvantages in online learning, students still prefer the same above classroom learning.

However, it is necessary to educate students to use technology in education process.

Christina Keller, Lars Cernerud (2002) in the research paper ‘Students’ Perceptions of E-learning in University Education’ studies perceptions of students about e-learning. The students at Jönköping University, Sweden were considered as respondents.

A questionnaire with open ended and closed ended questions was developed for the survey. 150 students filled the questionnaire and the responses were recorded. Multiple regression analysis was used to analyse the data.

The results showed that there were advantages of using online learning as flexibility of time & place. It also gives access to increased amount of information related to study.

The paper was concluded by stating that the students were not very enthusiastic with the idea of using online learning.

Loretta W. L. Pang, Simon C. K. Wong, Nicole C. M. Wong (2011) in the research paper ‘Blended Learning: Uncover the Perfect Learning Components from Students’ Perspectives for a Tourism and Hotel Management Program’ explore the effectiveness of blended learning in Hotel Management program. The authors discuss the possibility of integrating the web based learning with traditional learning method. It is known that the Virtual platform is well accepted by the young generation.

The authors suggest that the virtual learning can be used for pre-preparation of the lectures, where students will have to refer to the material available online and prepare themselves for the theory sessions being conducted face-to-face. The students were shown videos of actual processes being carried out in hotels to have better understanding of the topics. At the end of the theory sessions, tutorials were given to the students where they can implement the knowledge gained through theory sessions. The Guest Lectures can be arranged for the students where the speakers can be the industry experts. This can help the students to get the insight of the industry.

To assess the satisfaction level of the students, a questionnaire was designed. Collected data was analysed using SPSS 16.

The results showed that the students were highly satisfied with interactive tutorials. But the students were not very happy about the pre-class preparation as they did not get enough technical support.

The study concludes with few recommendations. It states that the students should be prepared to accept the change in learning methods. The teachers should provide timely feedback to the students. It is recommended that the web based learning should be supporting the traditional learning method.

Dr. Ramjit Singh (2014) in the review research paper 'E-Learning: a virtual boon and the challenges in Tourism Higher Education' studied the challenges and opportunities of e-learning in hospitality education. The review of literature focuses particularly on the developing countries. The author has reviewed 124 research papers.

The author finds out that there are some advantages as well as disadvantages of e-learning, especially in hospitality education. The advantages can be listed as; it is fairly priced as compared to the regular courses. The students can undertake learning at their own pace. It is easy to update the contents of the course. It is easy to manage as many students can attend the sessions at one time.

The disadvantages observed by the author are that of designing the course content which will be easier to cover through online sessions. Also, the students' individual characteristics like motivation and self-discipline are major factors in the success of such courses. Other factors like technological hurdles can also pose problems in the learning process.

Anchalee Ngampornchai, Jonathan Adams (2016) in the research article 'Students' acceptance and readiness for E-learning in Northeastern Thailand' study the inclination of students towards e-learning in Thailand. It is observed that students are well versed with mobile technology. They are very comfortable in using social media. The authors explored the acceptance of technology by students in the education system.

A questionnaire was developed to collect responses from the undergraduate students. 84 students responded to the survey. Cronbach's alpha and Factor analysis were used to check the validity and reliability of the construct. Pearson correlation test was used to discover correlations between variables and constructs.

The results reveal that the students used devices like smartphones, i-pads, notebook and personal computers. They were using internet to be connected with digital platforms.

The acceptance of e-learning was high amongst the students who were self-regulated and preferred e-learning over traditional methods.

The study suggests that the students must be exposed to the technology. For this, the educational institutes must improve their technological infrastructure.

Long Pham, Yam B. Limbu, Trung K. Bui, Hien T. Nguyen and Huong T. Pham (2019) in the research article 'Does e-learning service quality influence learning student satisfaction and loyalty? Evidence from Vietnam' studies the service quality of e-learning programs on satisfaction level of students pursuing various courses using e-learning mode.

Data was collected with the help of a questionnaire. 1232 students responded to the survey. The data was analysed using exploratory factor analysis, confirmatory factor analysis, and structural equation modeling using SPSS 25 and SmartPLS 3.0.

The results show that the service quality of e-learning programs depend upon three major factors, i.e. system used for e-learning, the instructor who is conducting the session and course material designed for the course and support services given throughout the course.

It was also found that the quality of service had direct influence over the satisfaction level of students. It also has an influence over their loyalty towards the course.

Robert A. Ellis, Paul Ginns & Leanne Piggott (2009) in the research paper 'E-learning in higher education: some key aspects and their relationship to approaches to study' explore the important aspects of e-learning and what is the approach of the students towards e-learning.

Semi-exploratory method was used for the research. A questionnaire was designed for data collection. The responses were collected from 207 students.

The data was analysed using cluster analysis. The results show that students have different approaches towards e-learning. The students must be provided with a proper infrastructure and support for e-learning.

Interactivity is a major aspect, which students feel, is lacking in e-learning method.

The study suggests that the course design also should be carried out carefully so that learning can be effective even through e-learning mode.

Seuk Yen Phoong, Seuk Wai Phoong, Sedigheh Moghavvemi, and Ainin Sulaiman (2019) in the research article 'Effect of Smart Classroom on Student Achievement at Higher Education' investigate the effect of e-learning on students. The study was conducted in Malaysian university, the undergraduates pursuing Mathematics. The study was carried out on two groups of students. One group was imparted the knowledge by using technology and other aids. At the same time the other group of students was taught with conventional mode of teaching.

Data was collected from 72 respondents. The analysis of data was done using *t test*.

A quantitative analysis was used in this study to determine the effectiveness of technology in teaching and learning.

The study suggests that the using technology in teaching – learning process has many aspects. The success of such programs depends upon comfort level of students and teachers in using the technology, appropriate course structure, sharing of knowledge between teachers and students throughout the session etc.

The students state that using technology while learning could help them in focusing on the topic. The concepts were clearer than classroom teaching. Also, it was mentioned that use of technology lead the students to explore and gain extra knowledge about the topic.

The study concludes by stating that the use of technology in education will have more impact on students and their performance can improve compared to classroom learning. Also it is more flexible.

David Mc. Arthur Baker, Ramaprasad Unni (2018) in the research paper 'USA and Asia Hospitality & Tourism Students' Perceptions and Satisfaction with Online Learning versus Traditional Face-to-Face Instruction' compares the inclination of students on learning methods. The study compares the online learning and traditional method.

This study was carried out with the students pursuing 'hospitality and tourism' courses at universities in Midwestern USA and the Asian universities. The perspectives of both university students were compared.

Respondents for the study were the undergraduate student. The sample consisted of 356 students where 234 students were from USA 122 students were from Asia.

Data was collected with the help of survey. Standard deviation and Kruskal-Wallis test were used to check if there are any differences in perception of students from different regions. The test was also used to check the level of satisfaction amongst the students about e-learning.

The means between two regions were compared by using One-way ANOVA. Two-factor ANOVAs was used to check the differences among face-to-face and online learning methods.

The results show that there is no significant difference in the perception of students based in two different regions. Also, it was seen that the students preferred online learning over classroom teaching.

The study suggests that the educators must shift to the new trend of online teaching and use innovative teaching techniques while making use of online teaching mode.

Sung Mi Song (2010) in the dissertations 'E-learning: Investigating students' acceptance of online learning in hospitality programs.' Try to understand readiness of hospitality students towards e-learning.

The study was carried out in the states of Iowa, Nevada, Virginia, Florida, and Texas. A questionnaire was developed and an online survey was conducted. Data was collected from 250 students pursuing hospitality programs.

One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and t-test was used to analyse the data.

The results of the study show that students are satisfied with the online learning only if the sessions are interactive. The information provided and the technology used is not very important for the students.

Here, the educators play an important role in increasing loyalty of students towards e-learning programs.

Dorota Górka(2016) in the research article 'E-learning in Higher Education' studies the perception of Polish education sector towards e-learning. The higher education, all over the world wants to reach as many as possible. Offering them different courses through technology based learning.

The new generation is also tech savvy and is quite comfortable using the latest technology. The higher education sector is making use of the same by providing the students with education through innovative teaching methods and making the use of latest technology.

The students are attracted towards e-learning as it is contemporary form of learning. E-learning enhances efficiency of the teaching-learning process. The students are supplemented with extra knowledge due to e-learning.

The study mentions that e-learning is a significant tool and can be supportive to the classroom teaching. It can even replace the traditional methods of teaching.

Parikshat Singh Manhas & Parvinder Kour (2014) in the research paper 'E-Learning: An Emerging Trend to Strengthen Hospitality and Tourism Teaching-Learning Process' study the role of e-learning in hospitality education sector.

Indian tourism industry is still at a growing stage as far as global competition is considered. The authors feel that one of the causes of slow paced growth of the industry is the hospitality education sector. Most of the educational institutes are relying upon traditional methods of teaching, whereas the students are looking for some innovative techniques for learning.

With the advanced technology, e-learning is gaining popularity amongst youngsters. It is interactive and opens new doors to information. It also helps in giving immediate feedback to students.

E-learning is complimenting the Hospitality & Tourism education. It is a motivation for the students to participate in the sessions as they find it interesting. E-learning is a user friendly method of teaching.

A self-structured questionnaire was formed for collecting data. Data was collected from various hospitality institutes in Jammu & Kashmir. There were 232 responses from the students pursuing graduation level courses in the hospitality institutes.

Data was analysed by using SPSS 16.0. Mean, standard deviation and factor analysis were used for the same.

The results show that use of e-learning method increases participation and confidence of the students. The paper concludes by stating that e-learning is an effective tool for a successful teaching-learning process.

Dr. G. Suresh Babu, Dr. K. Sridevi (2018) in the research paper 'Importance of E-Learning in Higher Education: A Study' investigates the role of e-learning in higher education. The paper also elaborates on the advantages and disadvantages of e-learning in higher education.

The study records few advantages of e-learning. E-learning is an inexpensive option for students. It saves them time as well as money. This makes higher education easily available than earlier days. E-learning gives open learning and flexibility to students. This allows the students to spend spare time in attending other things like part-

time job or pursuing their hobbies. It is easy for smaller institutes to reach larger number of students across the globe which creates a bigger geographical marketplace for them. It is convenient to monitor the e-learning programs compared to traditional classroom based teaching courses. Additionally, e-learners get better opportunity to interact with instructors, faculty members and other students through emails. E-learning is very beneficial for 'Slow Learners'. It gives them enough time to spend participating online and reading through the material which is available online. This facility is not available in classroom teaching.

The authors have noted some disadvantages of e-learning. E-learning platforms require more involvement of faculty members. It is observed that the student dropout rate is higher in comparison with traditional teaching system. To adopt of e-learning platform for education, requires huge investments in money, time and training the faculty members.

The study concludes with the findings that E-learning has abundant potential in tertiary education. It is the fastest growing market in education sector. It is also stated that the students' performance is enhanced who are using e-learning than the students following traditional method of learning.

Omar Al-Hujran, Anas Aloudat, Hanin Al-Hennawi, Hanaa Nabeel Ismail (2013) in the research paper 'Challenges to E-learning Success: The Student Perspective' investigate the students' views on e-learning in higher education.

A qualitative approach was adopted for research. A focus group was used for collection of data. The research paper has recorded comprehensive findings which are the outcome of the students' views during the discussion. The questions discussed were pertaining to the change in education system i.e. from traditional method to using new technology.

Nine students participated in a focus group interviews, which was used as data collection tool.

Findings show that there are many challenges to the success of e-learning which include creating awareness and acceptance about e-learning among students, handling resistance towards new learning approaches, assuring continuous accessibility of the e-learning systems, concentrating on the role of teacher to motivate students to accept and use e-learning, framing of policies while using e-learning etc.

The study concludes by stating that if these issues are addressed and tackled appropriately, the students will adopt the e-learning method.

Dr. Goldi Puri (2012) in the research paper 'Critical Success Factors in E-Learning – An Empirical Study' investigates the factors responsible for success of e-learning program.

Data was collected with survey method. A questionnaire was prepared to collect responses from undergraduate and postgraduate students pursuing various e-learning courses at Amity University, Noida. There were 214 respondents who completed the survey.

Analysis of the data was done with exploratory factor analysis and Cronbach's alpha was used to test the validity and reliability of the factors of the research.

The results show that the factors which are important for the success of e-learning program are; effectiveness of a teacher in conducting the online courses, administrative support from the institute, college or university, issues related to internet and other systems being used for e-learning. Various evaluation methods used for assessment of students, timely feedback, availability of resources like study or reading material and design of the e-learning system which makes it easily accessible to the students and teachers.

Objectives of study:

- To understand the effectiveness of virtual learning in hotel management course.
- To study the scope of virtual learning as perceived by students of hotel management.
- To understand the limitations of virtual learning in hotel management course.

Hypothesis:

H₀ – Virtual learning is not effective in hotel management course.

H₁ - Virtual learning is effective in hotel management course.

H₀ – As per the perception of students, there is no scope for virtual learning in hotel management course.

H₂ - As per the perception of students, there is a scope for virtual learning in hotel management course.

H₀ – There are no limitations of virtual learning in hotel management course.

H₃ - There are limitations of virtual learning in hotel management course.

Research Methodology:

The research tries to understand the students' perception about virtual learning. A structured questionnaire was designed to collect responses from students pursuing hospitality courses. The study is undertaken to understand the effectiveness of online learning, if there is any possibility of teaching in online mode for technical and professional courses like hospitality/ hotel management. The research is an attempt to understand the advantages and disadvantages of virtual learning.

The questionnaire comprises of two sections. The first section has questions related to the demographic information of the respondents. It also includes questions related to the awareness of online learning and if the students have already completed such courses and the level of courses completed. The second section includes 19 statements which the respondents had to rate on a scale of Threeranging from (1) "Strongly Disagree" to (3) "Strongly Agree."

1 – Strongly Disagree

2 – Neither Agree nor disagree

3 – Strongly Agree

The statements were related to advantages and disadvantages of virtual learning as perceived by the students pursuing the hospitality management courses.

The questionnaire was floated through the students of hotel management colleges to obtain their views on various aspects related to virtual learning. There were 137 responses received from the students.

Primary Data collection: primary data was collected from students pursuing Hotel Management course from various institutes and colleges from Pune region. The data was in the form of responses collected from the students with the help of questionnaire. The questionnaire included basic demographic information of the respondent and the statements related to various aspects of online learning. The students had to record their experience on the scale 1 to 3.

Secondary Data collection: secondary data was collected through research articles, research papers, online articles published in research journals and various websites. Data was also collected from magazines, newspaper articles etc.

Data Analysis and Interpretation:

The questionnaire includes demographic information of the students to understand the age and gender of the respondents. Further, the questionnaire includes questions related to awareness of online teaching as to if the students have already enrolled and or completed any online courses earlier. The questionnaire has included statements where the responses are to be recorded on the Likert Scale of three points. The statements are divided into accessibility in online courses, accessibility to the study material, clearing of doubts & getting timely feedback from the teachers and the disadvantages of virtual learning.

Hypothesis:

H0 – Virtual learning is not effective in hotel management course.

H1 - Virtual learning is effective in hotel management course.

H0 – As per the perception of students, there is no scope for virtual learning in hotel management course.

H2 - As per the perception of students, there is a scope for virtual learning in hotel management course.

H0 – There are no limitations of virtual learning in hotel management course.

H3 - There are limitations of virtual learning in hotel management course.

The hypotheses were tested by applying chi square test to the cross-tabulations. To test the hypothesis the following statement were asked to the students to assess their level of agreement about the advantages and disadvantages of online course especially for hotel management. Cross-tabulation is done to see the association between the students' perception of the efficacy and usefulness of the online lectures and its scope in the hotel management course and their level of agreement about the advantages and disadvantages of the virtual learning.

To see the combined effect, an index is computed by adding the scores or values of the level of agreement reported by the students. Total four indices were computed separately combining the statements. The statements were related to ease of access to virtual learning, about the accessibility of study material, about clearing of doubts and feedback given by the teachers during the sessions and disadvantages of the virtual learning. There are 5 statements under ease of access to the virtual learning i.e. online classes, 4 statements included about the access to study material, 5 statements related to clearing of doubts and giving feedback to the students during the session and 5 statements related to disadvantages are listed.

After calculating the index score for each of the section the total score was categorized into three types such as low, medium and high level of agreement. Separate index was calculated for each of the parameter and a total indices of all advantages and disadvantages were also been calculated. The index categories for each parameter were cross tabulated with the perception of the students about the usefulness of the virtual learning to see the association. Chi square test was used to see the level of significance of the association.

In the following table the statements are listed and also the categorization of the statements is also explained as per the index category.

Hypothesis testing

Association between the level of agreement of the students on the advantages and usefulness of virtual learning

	Low Level of Agreement	Medium Level of Agreement	High Level of Agreement	Total
Yes	6	17	27	50
	12.0%	34.0%	54.0%	100.0%
No	17	47	23	87
	19.5%	54.0%	26.4%	100.0%
Total	23	64	50	137
	16.8%	46.7%	36.5%	100.0%

Chi square- 19.330 df-2 *P value*-0.000

The above table shows the Association between the level of agreement of the students on the advantages and usefulness of virtual learning. The level of significance was calculated at 0.05. In the above table the *p value* is less than 0.05 and also has high the chi square value, hence it can be inferred that a significant variation can be seen in the level of agreement of the students about the advantages of the virtual learning. Therefore it can be concluded that virtual learning is effective and always there is a scope for virtual learning in the hotel management course.

Association between the level of agreement of the students on the disadvantages and usefulness of virtual learning

	Low Level of Agreement	Medium Level of Agreement	High Level of Agreement	Total
Yes	13	18	19	50
	26.0%	36.0%	38.0%	100.0%
No	21	45	21	87
	24.1%	51.7%	24.1%	100.0%
Total	34	63	40	137
	24.8%	46.0%	29.2%	100.0%

Chi square- 3.841 df-2 *P value*-0.147

In case of the association between the level of agreement of the students on the disadvantages and usefulness of virtual learning no significant association is seen. In the above table the *p value* is more than 0.05 and also has a low the chi square value, hence it can be inferred that there is no significant association is seen in the level of agreement of the students about the disadvantages of the virtual learning.

Findings and Conclusion:

Virtual learning has proved to be a boon in the current scenario. It is always found that everything has some pros as well as cons. This study attempts to identify the advantages and disadvantages of virtual learning. The same is from the perspective of the students pursuing hospitality management courses.

From the analysis it can be stated that there are more advantages than the disadvantages recorded. The statements were divided into four main categories. The first category included the statements related to the ease of access to online courses. The virtual learning offers flexibility of attending the sessions. It gives access to the students despite their geographical location. Students from different parts of the world can attend the sessions at one time. The students also feel that virtual learning is economical compared to traditional learning method.

According to perception of students, virtual learning gives easy access to the study material and notes. The students don't have to refer to the text books or use the library books for reference. There is lot of information available on the internet which the students can use along with the study material which they can access anytime. There is a facility of recording the online sessions so that the students can refer to the same as and when required. These sessions also include periodic assessment to test the knowledge gained by students. The students can understand their progress and areas they need to improve.

Since these are the interactive sessions, it is easier for the students to clear their doubts and queries during the sessions. This helps in giving timely feedback to the students. Also they can interact with other students from diverse cultures.

From the above findings, it is evident that there are certain advantages of virtual learning. Since we have to depend upon the technology for the same, there are some disadvantages related to the technological aspect.

The disadvantages recorded in the responses are connectivity issues, availability of devices and other similar problems. The students may not be technologically sound and may face difficulties in accessing the session or study material from the site. There can be internet connectivity problems, especially in suburban and interior areas. Electricity cut and power failure is another difficulty faced by the students. Also there can be concerns related to availability of devices like computers, laptops or smartphones.

Hence it can be concluded that there are certain advantages and disadvantages of virtual learning. It should be understood that virtual learning can be beneficial to a certain extent. Especially in the scenario of pandemic due COVID 19, it was essential to conduct classes in virtual mode. The main benefit was that the students could continue learning without having a break in their academic schedule. Also, for technical courses like hospitality management, the students were quite satisfied with the academic session.

The only problem faced by the students was with the practical component. The students are expected to have hands on practice during practical sessions. It was not possible to provide the same to the students during virtual learning.

Therefore it can be concluded that virtual learning can be practiced to some extent in teaching-learning process. It is always beneficial to have a blend of virtual learning and traditional method in the process of education.

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