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Teacher's Perception on Online Teaching Method during Covid-19: With Reference to School Level Teachers at Faculty of Education, The Open University of Sri Lanka

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Abstract
The world is facing one of the toughest conditions in the present, dealing with COVID-19. There have been several problems in the education sector during this pandemic season. COVID-19 has resulted in a countrywide lockdown in Sri Lanka. This research is an effort to understand the understanding of online education by respondents, which is the latest form of teaching embraced by schools since the pandemic. For undergraduate teachers in the special needs department, faculty of education, open university, Sri Lanka, the study was carried out using data collected through Google form. The SPSS recorded and analyzed data using factor analysis and descriptive statistics. The study shows that students are satisfied with online classes and get ample teacher help, but they do not assume that conventional classroom teaching would be replaced by online classes. It also finds that due to a lack of proper preparation and growth for doing online classes, teachers face difficulties in conducting online classes. The biggest challenge for online classes is technological and network challenges. To accomplish this aim, teachers and students must periodically take training and improvement programs from schools or government. There is a need to consider the barriers that come in the way of embracing online learning and taking corrective steps to address it.
Key words: Teacher, Perception, Online, Factors, COVID-19, Education

Introduction

Therefore, everything in this universe appears to be outdated with any new innovation or growth, and wisdom lies in the capacity to respond to change. Change is continual and irreversible. E learning is primarily referred to as the use of technology and network communication for teaching and learning. A technology-enabled transfer of skills and information to a wide number of recipients is often referred to as (Economic Times, 2020). One of the fastest growing trends in the application of technology in education is (Means et al., 2013). In order to create an accessible learning environment, the introduction of the Internet and the World Wide Web has prompted educational institutions to adapt their instructional practices to satisfy customer needs (Xu and Ebojoh, 2007). An online class is a framework where, with the aid of internet-oriented technology, students can learn subjects, discuss problems with fellow students, explain doubts with teachers, exchange content, and verify academic progress. Online classes are becoming so common today that they are likely to be expected in every formal curriculum for education. In addition, the worldwide rise in the COVID pandemic has also contributed to the value of online courses..

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed unprecedented challenges globally. Provision of formal education was significantly affected due to the closure of schools as a measure to curtail disease spread. The lockdown affected education on several fronts. Students had to stop their studies. There for globally, universities and schools moved into adopting online teaching programmes. In a resource-limited environment such as Sri Lanka, lack of internet connectivity and access to existing institutional online learning portals were some of the challenges faced. Sri Lankan government has decided to conduct online lectures for school students. The role played by teachers and students in this scenario is significant because their expectations and attitudes are crucial for motivation and learning (Koohang and Durante, 2003). At the end, it is the acceptance of learners and educators that continues to enjoy the advantages of online classes. With this regard, this study is an attempt to understand the perception of respondents towards the online teaching. Any unique targets have been designed to accomplish this key aim. Identify the positive and negative factors of online education and take into account the challenges and concerns that teachers face when offering online lectures.

Literature Review

In recent years, the growth of online classes has led to an increased number of schools and colleges offering online courses (Beatty and Ulasewicz, 2006; Li and Akins, 2005). In addition, technical innovation and student demand of online classes (Bennett and Lockyer, 2004; Britt, 2006) have influenced the introduction of online classes by colleges and universities along with the regular course classes. The notable argument here is that online courses are not required to be adopted by colleges, but are treated as a modern method during the learning process for coping with problems (Agustina and Cahyono, 2017). Most universities expect to invest in internet-based classrooms and in hiring and preparing faculty to teach online (Floyd, 2003; Koehler et al., 2004).

One of the surveys indicates that in future years, online teaching will continue to increase significantly in both educational and corporate organizations (Meyen et al., 2002).

Due to all these educational developments, online-based teaching is believed to be interactive (Johnston et al., 2005) and online teaching creates environments in which students actively engage with the material and learn through practical activity (Palloff and Pratt, 2013) and also refer to their understanding as new knowledge is developed. In addition, online classes have become so relevant all over the world in recent decades, and it changes the concept of colleges that "Online class is an Optional" to "Online class is necessary" (Larreamendy-Joems and Leinhardt, 2006).

Methodology

Quantitative and qualitative research approaches (Mix method) were used in this study within a framework of a survey research design. The population of this study was the teachers who are following the Special need education Degree program (PGDE) in Open University, Sri Lanka. The target population of this study consists of teachers from various schools in the Colombo district. Teachers following SNE programme at the Colombo Regional Centre of the Open University of Sri Lanka, in 2018/2019 academic year were selected as a convenient sample for this study. Out of the SNE Graduate students 39 students are doing online sessions. So samples would be 39 undergraduate teachers. Primary data from this study was gathered through google form via a questionnaire. The five-point Likert scale was used to gather online class opinion teachers. The five-point Likert scale reveals that one is firmly disagreed with and five are strongly agreed upon. A pilot research completed and evaluated the questionnaire after designing a questionnaire to clarify the effectiveness of the questionnaire. Using Google form, questionnaires were circulated to participants and participants were told that all opinions offered by them were kept confidential. The data was routinely gathered and reported and then analyzed using version 20 of the Statistical Kit for Social Science (SPSS). Collected data were categorized into demographic and factors wisely. Correlations and factor analysis was used in analysis of the data. It is very common to use main component analysis as a preliminary extraction methodology, according to Tabachnick and Fidell

(2001), followed by other techniques with differing numbers of variables, population estimates, and rotational methods with each run. When the analyst agrees on the preferred alternatives, the study stops (Tabachnick & Fidel, 2001). The exploratory factor analysis was then first carried out with the key variable extraction and varimax rotation process. After doing factor analysis construct a composite index to be describe the descriptive details. Using Five point Lickert scales descriptive analysis was done.

Results

Demographic and background profile of the respondents

Following table shows that demographic factors and background details of the respondents. Age group, online softwares that used for teaching, Level of class and whether currently engaging online teaching.

Table 1: Descriptive Details

Variables	Categories	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
What is the most used software	Zoom	20	50	51.3	51.3
	Microsoft team	14	35	35.9	87.2
	Google class room	1	2.5	2.6	89.7
	Other	4	10	10.3	100
	Total	39	97.5	100	
Level of class you conduct online teaching	Primary	29	72.5	74.4	74.4
	Secondary	8	20	20.5	94.9
	Tertiary	2	5	5.1	100
	Total	39	97.5	100	
Age group of the respondents	20-29	14	35	35	35
	30-39	6	15	15	50
	40-49	19	47.5	47.5	97.5
	50-59	1	2.5	2.5	100
	Total	40	100	100	
Currently do you engage in online teaching?	Yes	34	85	87.2	87.2
	No	5	12.5	12.8	100
	Total	39	97.5	100	

Above table 1, shows that the demographic and background details about respondents. From the above table, can quickly identify that among the many popular online tools available in Sri Lankan schools “Zoom” is the most used (51%) and preferred tools for an online class in Colombo district. “Microsoft Team” is considered the second most popular (35.9%) and preferred tool for an online class. Even though Google Class room is the most popular online tool for communication, but here it is considered least using tools (2.5%). Most of the teachers (72.5%) are representing primary school and 20% are representing Secondary school. According to above data majority of the respondent’s age group is 40-49 years. 35% of the respondents are teenages.85% of the teachers are conducting an online class for the first time because, due to the COVID 19 pandemic, it made most of the teachers start to take online.

Factor Analysis

Factor analysis method and varimax rotation was used to summarise the variables into underlying sets of factors. According to De Vaus (2002) through factors analysis variables can be reduced into factors, each reflecting an underlying property which is commonly shared by a group of variables. In order to determine the number of factors to be extracted,

several rotation solutions were compared, taking into account the percentage of explained variance, the scree plot and the eigen value criterion. Finally, a five-factor solution was developed as the items were logically associated with the underlying factors. The five factors accounted for approximately 76.824% of the variance, with eigenvalues ranging from 6.891 to 1.081.Following Table 02 shows that variance and eigen values.

Table 2: Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.891	40.534	40.534	3.671	21.591	21.591
2	2.382	14.009	54.543	2.932	17.248	38.839
3	1.458	8.577	63.120	2.796	16.449	55.289
4	1.249	7.345	70.465	1.914	11.258	66.547
5	1.081	6.359	76.824	1.747	10.277	76.824
6	.863	5.079	81.903			
7	.817	4.809	86.711			
8	.621	3.653	90.365			
9	.504	2.965	93.330			
10	.281	1.655	94.985			
11	.238	1.399	96.384			
12	.221	1.299	97.683			
13	.127	.749	98.433			
14	.117	.689	99.122			
15	.089	.523	99.644			
16	.060	.356	100.000			
17	-4.432E-16	-2.607E-15	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 3: Factor Analysis

Rotated Component Matrix[a]					
	Component				
	1	2	3	4	5
I like to have a proper guidance/training on how to conduct online teaching sessions	-.244	.699	.279	-.189	.107
I am lack of ICT knowledge	.408	.694	-.073	-.025	.027
Online tools are easy to use for teaching	.808	.174	.014	.214	.296
I am flexible with online teaching hours	.670	.123	.311	.550	.035
feel online teaching is better than traditional teaching	.041	.146	.102	.459	.796
Students are happily engage in online learning	.787	.050	.262	.154	.199
lack of direct contact with students is better way of teaching	.277	-.043	.022	.917	.179
I motivate my students during online lessons	.749	.283	.374	.044	-.043
I am happy about the student teacher interaction during sessions	.444	.108	.494	.523	.275
Students asks questions during session to clear their doubts	.659	.031	.444	.185	-.001
Difficult with conducting Practical Lessons	.341	.545	.086	.081	.281

I face difficulties while teaching some subjects	-.137	.649	.393	.317	-.408
Difficulty get quick feedback from the students	.137	.569	.155	.157	.029
Conduct short sessions as series of lessons	.310	.127	.894	.073	.159
Online sessions take more time than face to face sessions	.310	.127	.894	.073	.159
My home environment is suitable to conduct online sessions	.306	.211	.409	-.013	.738
I am distracted from my family members while online sessions	.121	.824	-.068	-.052	.147
Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. **Rotation Method:** Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.					
a. Rotation converged in 8 iterations.					

According to above table five factors are formulated. Those factors are labelled as follows. Factor one was labelled "Feasibility of online teaching" which relates to closely flexibility of teaching in online method. This factor explained 21.59% of the variance and comprised five variables. This factor represent these statements. "Online tools are easy to use for teaching", "I am flexible with online teaching hours", "Students are happily engage in online learning", "I motivate my students during online lessons", "Students asks questions during session to clear their doubts".

Factor two was labelled "Constraints for online teaching" which relates to closely challengers for teaching in online method. This factor explained 17.24% of the variance and comprised five variables. This factor represent these statements. "I like to have a proper guidance/training on how to conduct online teaching sessions", "I am lack of ICT knowledge Difficult with conducting Practical Lessons", "I face difficulties while teaching some subjects, Difficulty get quick feedback from the students", "I am distracted from my family members while online sessions".

Three was labelled as "Disadvantages of online teaching". This factor explained 16.44% of the variance and comprised five variables lack of direct contact with students is better way of teaching. This factor represent these two statements: "conduct short sessions as series of lessons", "online sessions take more time than face-to-face sessions".

Factor four was labelled as "Contact with students". This factor explained 16.44% of the variance and comprised five variables. This factor represent these two statements: "conduct short sessions as series of lessons", "online sessions take more time than face-to-face sessions".

Factor five was labelled as "Availability for online teachers". This factor explained 10.27% of the variance and comprised five variables. This factor represent these two statements. "conduct short sessions as series of lessons", "online sessions take more time than face-to-face sessions".

Table 4: Descriptive Analysis of Factors

Factors	Mean	Minimum	Maximum
Feasibility of online teaching	54.80	0	100.00
Constraints for online teaching	70.64	0	100.00
Disadvantages of online teaching	72.00	0	100.00
Contact with students	30.00	0	100.00
Availability for online teachers	72.00	0	100.00

Table 4 indicates that the Descriptive analysis of the factors. Descriptive data were derived using Composite index. According above figures Feasibility of online teaching factor is moderate. Factor mean value is 54.8. When considering Constraints for online teaching mean value is 70.64. Majority of the opinion are same. Disadvantages of online teaching and availability for online teaching are the same opinion mean value is 72.4. Contact with the students mean value is 30.00.

Teachers perception regarding online teaching basically categorize into two group. Following Table 5 indicate two groups.

Table 5: Teachers Perception in Online Teaching

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Positive Perception	19	48.71	48.71	78.71.
	Negative Perception	20	51.29	51.29	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

According to above data can be shown 48.71 percent of teachers respondent their positive feedback and 51.29 percent their negative feedback. These opinions can describe in following table.

Table 6: Descriptive Variable Analysis

Variables	Percentage (%)	
	Yes	No
I like to have a proper guidance/training on how to conduct online teaching sessions	83%	17%
I am lack of ICT knowledge	22.50%	77.50%
Online tools are easy to use for teaching	32.50%	67.50%
I am flexible with online teaching hours	25.00%	75.00%
feel online teaching is better than traditional teaching	22.50%	77.50%
Students are happily engage in online learning	42.50%	57.50%
lack of direct contact with students is better way of teaching	20%	80%
I motivate my students during online lessons	50%	50%
I am happy about the student teacher interaction during sessions	35%	65%
Students asks questions during session to clear their doubts	45%	55%
Difficult with conducting Practical Lessons	82%	12%
I face difficulties while teaching some subjects	53%	47%
Difficulty get quick feedback from the students	37.50%	42.50%
conduct short sessions as series of lessons	35%	65%
Online sessions take more time than face to face sessions	37.50%	62.50%
My home environment is suitable to conduct online sessions	37.50%	67.50%
I am distracted from my family members while online sessions	37.50%	67.50%

The percentage analysis of the above coded statements is indicated in table 6. More than 50% of the responded teachers have negative perception regarding online teaching method.

Because of they do not have proper guidance of how to conduct online sessions (83%). But respondent teachers 77.50% have ICT knowledge. 67.50% are responded as online tools are not easy to teach online. Majority of the teachers are like to teach in tradition school method.77.5% are dislike for online classes. 57.50% students are happily engaging the online class. 80% teachers are disagree to lack of direct contact for the students. 50% teachers are motivate the students for online learning. 65% teachers are happy about the student and teachers interaction with the sessions. Majority of the teachers have (82%) difficult with practical sessions and 53% teachers complained about difficult to teach some subjects. 65% teachers conduct short sessions instated of series of lessons. 62.5% teachers have less time for teaching in online method. 67.5% are dissatisfied their home environment when online teaching.

Discussion

The important pillar of online teaching is teacher. Their interest in managing online courses and skills are important components. How did teachers view online classes, if teachers are willing to manage online classes, these are the problems that occur before introducing it because certain members of the faculty will not always have the capacity to teach online classes (Sims et al., 2002). (Buddhini and Charlotte, 2016). Therefore, gathering only teachers'

views is not unjust. In addition to demographic details, the survey questioned teachers about their understanding of their teaching preparation, their general teaching and technology self-motivation (ICT level) and the required winning environment. The items like "Feasibility of online teaching", "Constraints for online teaching" "Disadvantages of online Teaching" "Contact with Students", "Availability for online teachers" are collected through five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 is strongly disagree and 4 is strongly agree.

Such items were analyzed via SPSS with factor. "Feasibility of online teaching"Feasibility of online teaching"Constraints for online teaching"Online teaching constraints. Two items for "Disadvantages of online Teaching" Two items for variables, and elements of each variable showed Cronbach's value more than 0.6. It represent the data are reliable. Table 6 shows the results of the descriptive analysis. It seemed to us from the findings of the descriptive figures that teachers agree with online teaching (32.5 percent) and they also felt they had a lot of faith in ICT information (77.50 percent). But they do not provide training/guidance on online session conduct. This outcome illustrates that teachers have completed online courses without preparation or less training and are pleased with their results.

Teachers motivate students regularly to engage them (50%) and teachers contact with students. Most teachers set standards for contact and engagement (35 percent) for the productivity of an online class, ensuring that no student misuses the online platform. It was found that it can be separated into positive perceptions and negative perceptions when evaluating both comments for study. The combined mean effect of positive perception and negative perception as seen in Table 5. It indicates that when assessing the collective opinions of teachers on online classes, teachers have mixed opinions. The negative perception percentage (51.29) is higher than the combined positive perception process (48.71). While the distinction between the two is not substantial, there are explanations for teachers to hate online classes.

Some of the respondents expressed their opinion in the open-ended question, "No proper internet access" Online class failed to fill the emotional attachment between teacher and student,"Online class failed to fill the emotional attachment between teacher and student,"Without providing proper infrastructure facility it is challenging to conduct online class"It is difficult to conduct online class without providing sufficient infrastructure facility,"It is challenging to conduct an online class for practical subjects."It is difficult to conduct an online class for practical subjects. Conclusively teachers are not supporting for implementing online classes without proper training and proper infrastructure facilities like network and computers.

Reasons for Failing to Conduct / Prefer Online Classes

Online courses, though, are value-added techniques for the new school system and provide a prospectus for the future. Many teachers do not believe in this aspect or not Comfortable in an online class. Therefore, the survey asked reasons to teachers (N 39) and Who were not conducting or preferring online classes. Table 6 shows that "lack of training/guidance" is the main reasons for teachers not conducting online classes and "Teacher claimed that the conventional teaching approach is a safer method for successful teaching. In addition, some teachers have feel that during online sessions they do not have an adequate atmosphere for teaching online. and distracted from family members. They still agree that it is difficult to have an emotional commitment to students in an online class and vice versa. Teachers can't do online practical sessions, and certain topics are hard to teach. Some teachers agree that the school system is profoundly changed by an online class, and they choose it because of its versatility in time and place and wide knowledge base. But some more teachers believe that online class cannot reach them, and they also stated reasons for rejection of online class. It observed open-ended questions "lack of infrastructure for an online class like availability of smartphone or laptop and network issues" are the major problem or reasons for the insignificance of online class among respondents.

Conclusion

An interesting new way of learning about everything is online learning. It has had a profound

influence on the lives of students and teachers alike. The standard of education has been increased by the growing use of technology in the field of learning. Teachers have positive thoughts about lessons online. However, as far as online learning goes, there is still a lot of space for growth.

It is apparent that online learning has more essential advantages, such as filling the literacy rate gap and targeting rural areas (Ritimoni, 2018). Nevertheless, some aspects need to be taken care of in order to be successfully introduced in a country like Sri Lanka. This involves upgrading the infrastructure, enhancing Internet access, expanding rural areas, transforming teachers' attitudes, etc. Schools and other educational institutions are required to provide exemplary teaching and guidance from both students and teachers for the use of online classes, which aims to enhance their convenience. One of the biggest challenges of rural students is 'No Smartphones or Notebook' and network difficulties often contribute to the dilemma for rural teachers.

Teachers need to observe the change in their roles, i.e. from merely being a conduit of information to the planner of the instructional method, one of the major problems facing teachers in rural areas. Students are often said to be spoon-fed in conventional classroom schooling, but online courses need a learner-centered atmosphere that allows students to be self-motivated and self-motivated. Teachers ought to invest every effort into improving student mindsets. Schools or government must periodically carry on training and learning projects for teachers as well as students to accomplish this aim. The study also revealed that e-learning has a more important role to play in the future, but it will not replace conventional face-to-face education in the classroom. It is very tricky to make a full transition to online learning. The advantages resulting from e-learning, however, should not be overlooked. As such, it is important to consider and take corrective steps to resolve the barriers that fall in the way of embracing online learning.

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