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The Role of New Media in Education: A Study on the Impact of Covid-19

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A B S T R A C T

The internet revolution and new media have changed the world. During the pandemic Covid – 19 educational institutions around the world faced challenges in continuing with the education of its students. The next generation is the future of the nation, and the future of the students studying in educational institutions was at stake. This loss could not be reversed, but an attempt was made to tackle the situation as much as possible, and the solution was online learning. Most of the educational institutions overnight upgraded their technological skills and reached out to the students through the online medium. This study aims to look at the impact of new media in education, during Covid 19. This study explore how it impacts the lives of both undergraduate and graduate university students. This research aims to analyse the advancements, and improvements when universities switched to new media during the pandemic through the quantitative research methodology. A survey was conducted in order to achieve the aims of the research. The data thus collected helps us to understand that new media played a positive role during the crisis and ascertains that online learning could be beneficial.

Keywords: Misinformation, Covid-19, Education, Online learning, New media

1. Introduction

The term new media is a unifying term that refers to 'a wide range of technological as well as textual, conventional and cultural changes in media production, distribution and use'. The term new media is all-inclusive; it refers to a range of phenomena, unlike the term digital media, electronic media or 'computer-mediated communication'. When we consider 'old media' which consist of mainly print, radio, and television/movies, we see that their presence in our lives and our societies was limited to a few places. For example, television and radio have long been key technology features in the home. Movies were primarily enjoyed in theatres until VCRs and DVD players brought them into our homes. The closest thing to a portable mass medium was reading a book or paper on a commute to and from work. New media, however, are more social than old media. Some of the advantages are – 1. new media offers students the flexibility to learn anywhere and it gives students the opportunity to save money on the commute and it offers access to areas where education was not feasible before; 2. the most important fact is that it offers the opportunity to customize your learning environment, which helps students develop self-introspection abilities by self-assessment, which in turn helps determine their own style and form of learning which works best for them; 3. new media also offers students the opportunities to express their curiosity and put forth their best work. The disadvantages are – 1. teaching online demands an initial learning curve and extra effort from the teacher to create a successful learning experience. Most teachers take an exorbitant amount of time to adapt to the changes new media brings; 2. since technology companies made fast changes to adapt to the new circumstances, technical issues come up on a daily basis when it comes to education in new media. The positive impact of new media trumps the negative impacts and issues. The change from new media to old media helps students to get access to education anywhere they want, offer them a chance to learn by themselves in their own learning environments using a style and pace that works best for them.

Educational technology indicates that the latest development in media definitely play a big role in learning instruction. The instructions in the field of education can be planned, projected, evaluated and revised way ahead of implementation on students. Research conducted in the field of educational technology suggests that the learning instructions should be treated as an entity which is only a set of procedures which can be applied on the students successfully (Winn,2002). Information and Communication Technology stimulates interaction and cooperation among learners and their mentors notwithstanding the physical distance). ICT galvanizes cooperation in the process of education and makes it more interactive (Raja, 2018). Research conducted in the past has validated that internet can be used as a tool for delivering education but only as a secondary source (Sukanya, 2012) and social media can be very helpful (Preeti, 2014) in achieving higher order thinking skills and meta-cognitive skills (Abraham, 2015).

2. Materials and Methods

This research is an attempt to examine the impact and change brought by new media in undergraduate and graduate university students. It is based on a survey of 69 undergraduate and graduate students, asking students questions on how they feel while using devices and new media for collaborative learning, interactivity with faculty and facilitators and its significant impact on their academic score. It is an attempt to analyse the given subject without any bias. The objectives are 1. to explore the impact new media has on the education of university students, 2. To explain the benefits, problems, pitfalls, and solutions. In order to achieve the objectives of the research, the quantitative research methodology was adopted. An online survey was carried out among the students. A questionnaire was created in Google Form and was distributed to the undergraduate and postgraduate students of Adamas University. The primary data thus collected were analysed to understand the results which emerged from the study.

3. Results and Analysis

Demographics

Most of the university students who responded to the survey are in the age group of 19 – 22 and the outlier ages are 16 and 28, with the least of people being in them. The above pie chart states that most people are enrolled in undergraduate courses and very few people are enrolled in graduate courses.

As we can see in the above graph below, Microsoft teams is the most used learning platform across universities, with google Meet being the second best used. Our data suggests that the mean time spent in front of the computers is 5 hours. As we can see in the above pie chart that people are satisfied with the technology and software, while very few people are extremely dissatisfied and extreme satisfied, so new media in education has evolved to the point where it satisfies people, but not to the point where majority of the population are extremely satisfied with it, which ultimately means that new media is in its early stages and has a lot of room for improvement
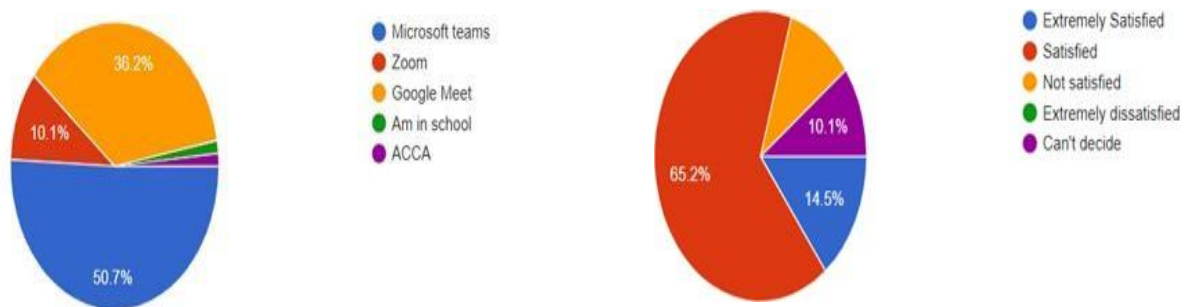

Figure 1: (a) Most preferred online education platform by users; (b) level of satisfaction of online education during Covid-19.

Concentration issues with online learning

Most people opined that they had trouble staying focused, this gives the insight that learning in the age of new media does offer many advantages but it also comes with its disadvantages. One of these disadvantages is that it is very difficult to stay focused. People faced a variety of issues, with network and tech issues being the most common.

As we can see in figure 2 (a) which is linearly scaled, on a scale of 1 to 5, The above graph also states that teachers were extremely helpful with most responses of 'very helpful' (39.1%) and 'extremely helpful' (30.4%). As we can see in figure 2 (b), most teachers were highly adaptable to the sudden shift caused due to the pandemic, with most of the people responding as 'very adaptable', with 44.9%
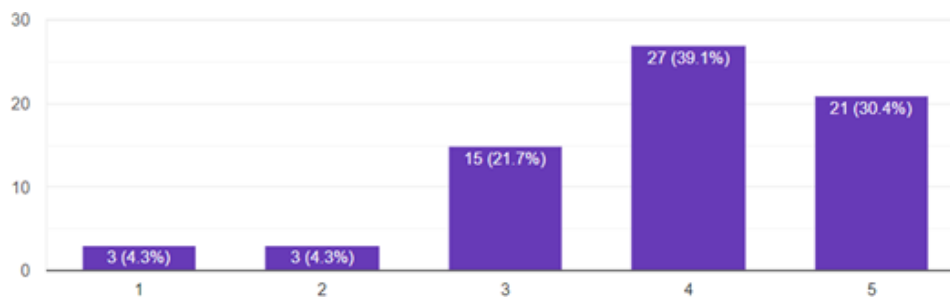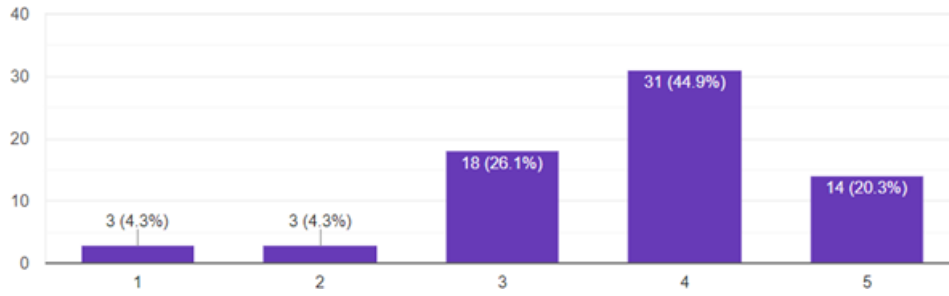
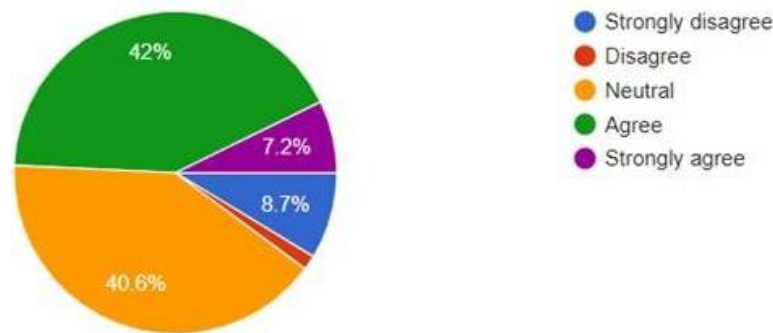Figure 2: (a) Coordination with mentors; (b) adaptability of mentors with (online) educational technology

Figure 3: Usefulness of study materials

Almost 50 percent of people agree that study materials were helpful for them, but a very few agree that it was extremely helpful for them. The above graph states that study materials were mostly distributed in the form of PDF.
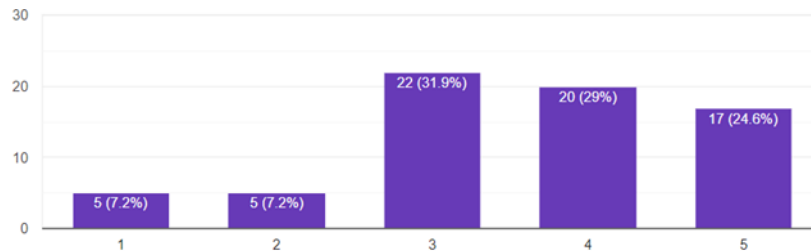

Figure 4: Overall experience of online education

The data thus collected states that new media has a more positive impact on education. As is seen in the above graph that most people have stated that they are comfortable and have a pleasant experience with this form of imparting education. However, most people have a satisfactory experience.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

As is observed by studying the data, there are some recurring problems which become barriers to education in the New Media age. These problems are - issues with network and technology, issues with adaptability and self-discipline. These two are the main barriers. In order to solve those problems focus should be placed on designing better and simpler software that has low bandwidth issues so as to prevent network issues. A researcher noted that the government should build such policies for its country which attempts to solve issues of power cuts and unavailability of machinery and internet connected, so as to develop the nation in order to improve the educational sector (Zhou et al., 2023). To solve the adaptability issue, where students have a hard time focusing in class, the power of New Media to gamify the learning process, using games and multimedia teaching so as to transform a monotonous class into a full-fledged learning experience. New Media has some disadvantages and issues, it does good than harm to university students where its benefits

outweigh the disadvantages. Another researcher argues that as the number of new media users worldwide is amplifying, there is a very big opportunity for the educational institutions to harness the scope and reach out to people in places where quality education is not available (Crompton, Burke, 2018). Education is one of those elements which can develop a nation, as it can create a skilled workforce which is very necessary for the development of the nation (Iyyappan, 2022). There has been a perpetual advancement in the working age of the populace which denotes more opportunities and growth for the country which demands a huge workforce which is skilled, laborious and can contribute to the development of the society (Pal et al., 2022). The young population has better prospects of building up a better future, and new media can have a big role here. New media can provide access to education in remote places where it was not accessible before. Nowadays one needs an internet connection, a laptop, or a mobile phone and they can get access to a world-class education at a fraction of the real cost which saves us both time and money. However, while some educators are embracing new media, many educational institutions are still teaching in the same old ways. This study has explored the impact of new media on education. If educationists can overcome the learning curve and adaptability demands required to adapt and accumulate New Media, the possibilities could be endless.

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