

Transformation Effectiveness: Mode of learning at select B-Schools during COVID

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Abstract

This paper aims to examine the effectiveness of leadership transformation through different modes of learning, particularly in the context of management education. The mode of learning plays a crucial role in any educational setting, and this is especially relevant for B-School programs where leadership development, including the cultivation of leadership and interpersonal skills, holds significance. During the pandemic, students have been exposed to both online and offline modes of learning. In this context, the paper seeks to investigate which mode of learning, whether online or offline, proves to be more efficient for B-School students in fostering leadership transformation, including the development of essential skills.

Design/methodology/approach – The authors adopted a quantitative research technique. The data collected using a well-structured Questionnaire. The cluster sampling method is used to collect data from the students who pursued their MBA during COVID 19 in the south Indian states of Tamilnadu, Karnataka, and Kerala. Overall, 457 respondents are responded for this study, which is otherwise known as sample size of the study. Finally, the leadership transformation effectiveness in the mode of learning was analyzed using pair t-test.

Findings – By analyzing the pre- and post-test results, the t-test confirmed that the students found that students are more interested in attending physical classes than online classes. Physical learning is more suitable than online learning in facilitating mastering managerial skills. In terms of Imparting Core Values students can learn core values effectively through physical classes than online classes. Finally, 'Environment at home (in the case of ON-LINE mode) and Campus (in the case of PHYSICAL mode) differ substantially.

Originality/value – To the best of my knowledge no study had a methodology that clearly shows the difference in the mode of learning and transformational effectiveness before and after COVID 19.

Keywords transformational effectiveness, mode of learning in COVID-19, blended learning, learning during a pandemic.
Paper type Research Paper

1. Introduction

The researchers wanted to acknowledge the objectives of business education and see to what extent the online mode is helping you in achieving the 'Transformation' expected through a good MBA education. In this connection, let us quote a senior Dean from a leading B-School of the West. Several studies have indicated that the three learning attributes of 'Knowing', 'Doing', and 'Being' are critical aspects of transformative learning. "The MBA Program, the flagship of business schools, was the greatest educational innovation of the twentieth century. We base this claim on at least three characteristics of the program: the case method, the transformational experience, and internationalization. Although business schools did not pioneer the case method – law schools did so – they made the case discussion into a dynamic experience that brought a slice of real life into the classroom. In addition, the MBA was not just an educational experience but a transformational one. Both in the classroom and through the increasingly important extracurricular activities, students found their capabilities stretched not just technically but in terms of personal development. Graduates of good business schools found themselves transformed as people" -George. S. Yip, from the Foreword to the Book 'Disrupt or Be Disrupted'.

Research Gap

It is inevitable to adapt to online learning and teaching methodologies. COVID 19 accelerated the growth of online learning management systems. There is a need to match the learning experiences and learning outcomes when we obsolete face-to-face learning. The authors wanted to study the difference between Pre and Post COVID modes of learning and transformation effectiveness with the same set of respondents. The following dimensions were taken from the previous research on similar topics such as transfer of knowledge, imparting managerial skills, imparting core values, leadership effectiveness, the role of the environment in maximizing the learning effectiveness, developing holistic perspective, sense of self-efficacy, applying concepts and motivation in engaging co-curricular and extracurricular activities, faculty members' communication effectiveness, and mentorship effectiveness. No study had a methodology that clearly shows the difference in the mode of learning and transformational effectiveness before and after COVID 19. Hence there is a need to research this research problem.

Research objectives

The purpose of this study is to investigate the modality of learning that influences transformation effectiveness. To begin, the author examines the effectiveness of online vs. online methods and how it affects MBA education in India using several characteristics, including transformation of knowledge, imparting managerial skills, imparting core values, and environmental compatibility. Second, to provide some insight into what methods are required for successful learning.

2. Literature Review

Online learning methodology brought out some educational problems such as technological adaptability, and digital resources. [1] According to the U.A. Chaeruman, blended learning is understood as a combination of face-to-face learning and online learning. [2]

A study conducted by Deka P.K clarified that the characteristics of faculty members and students, course design and content, and the environment are the factors that affect the engagement of students in online learning. Instructor characteristics are the most influential among all the characteristics. [3] A study was conducted to compare the learning effectiveness between online and offline during the COVID-19 outbreak in a School of Dentistry, at National Taiwan University in 2021. The study revealed that the learning effectiveness of online classes was better than that of physical classroom learning experiences. At the same time, the students mentioned that the fairness and convenience of physical classroom examinations were better than that of online examinations. Dental students were ready to take online courses. The combination of physical and online classes is the future trend of dental education in blended learning courses. Dental schools should be ready to implement online courses to respond to the needs of future dental education. [4]

A study was conducted to evaluate the impact of changing traditional learning to online learning for undergraduate students during COVID-19. Survey questionnaire covered students' satisfaction, positive and negative elements of online classes. The study proposed various suggestions to improve online learning experiences. The results showed some issues related to online learning such as time management, balance between life and education, and mental health. Two third of the students were dissatisfied with online learning experiences. The factors such as a distraction and reduced focus, psychological issues, and management issues cause dissatisfaction. [5]

The unavoidable disruptions caused by the COVID-19 outbreak have made online learning experiences a necessity rather than an option. A study employs the user experience questionnaire (UEQ) to examine students' online learning experiences specifically in the context of COVID-19. Data collection involved a convenience sample of 216 tourism and hospitality students in Macau. Overall, results point to positive appraisal of online attributes, but satisfaction is marginal. Factor analysis generated three factors of online learning: Perspicuity and dependability; Stimulation and attractiveness; and Usability and innovation. Regression analysis reveals that Stimulation and attractiveness is the strongest predictor of the students' satisfaction regarding online learning during the COVID-19 disruptions. The finding points to the need for hospitality and tourism education institutions to develop an attractive and motivating visual environment for online course delivery since a stimulating online learning atmosphere is crucial in the context of the pedagogical disruptions caused by

COVID-19. The findings are specific to Chinese students and reflect their learning satisfaction which may differ in other contexts. [6]

A study was conducted to determine the perception of online learning experiences of allied health science students. Most of the students had a positive perception towards online learning. They believe that Online learning is an efficient learning methodology when students can access the online facilities. Though the students faced several challenges, they demonstrated their versatility and acceptance of the online learning strategy during the COVID-19 pandemic. They have concluded that a well-structured online learning programme can be beneficial during any crisis. [7]

The research shows that in the process of online teaching in universities, the characteristics of faculty members such as gender, category of the university have no influence on the effectiveness of the teaching effect, the number of learning sessions is positively correlated with the teaching effect, which means the more sessions such as pre-class preparation, in-class discussion and quizzes, and after-class test in the teaching design, the better teaching effect can be expected; Surprisingly, the teaching methods are negatively correlated with teaching effect, and compared with other teaching methods such as live broadcast and recorded broadcast, teachers only provide teaching material can predict the lower teaching effect; the problems encountered in online teaching are negatively correlated with teaching effect. The more questions faculty members encounter, the greater possibility that teaching effect decreases. The teaching effect is positively correlated with support attitude, the better the teaching effect, and the higher possibility that teachers support online teaching. The above are consistent with the general rules of teaching. [8]

A study was conducted to formulate a learning communication model to replace or modify the type of learning communication from the face-to-face system to blended learning during the covid-19 pandemic and in the new normal period. This study focuses on learning communication in tertiary institutions on the grounds that students are expected to be independent in learning so that they no longer expect parental guidance in taking online classes, as happened at the primary and secondary education levels. A model of blended learning is an alternative to a model of e-learning Maturity Model (eMM) as a strategy to face the changes in education during COVID-19. [9]

Though many researchers have explored student perceptions of online and distance learning, none has had a social laboratory to study the effects of an enforced transition on student perceptions of online learning. A survey was conducted with students about their perceptions of online learning before and after the transition to online learning. As student perceptions are influenced by a range of contextual and institutional factors beyond the classroom, students would be overall sanguine to the project given that access, technology integration, and family and government support during the pandemic shutdown would mitigate the negative consequences. Students overall reported positive academic outcomes. However, students reported increased stress and anxiety and difficulties concentrating, suggesting that the obstacles to fully online learning were not only technological and instructional challenges but also social and affective challenges of isolation and social distancing. The analysis showed that the specific context of the pandemic disrupted more than normal teaching and learning activities. Whereas students generally responded positively to the transition, their reluctance to continue learning online and the added stress and workload show the limits of this large-scale social experiment. In addition to the technical and pedagogical dimensions, successfully supporting students in online learning environments will require that teachers and educational technologists attend to the social and affective dimensions of online learning as well. [10] Two characteristics of students are investigated in the research. i) Gender, ii) Initial reading proficiency. A pandemic would have an impact on reading proficiency. Proficient students had a better position to learn outside than their peers. [11]

In India, 27 million children were absent from school due to school closures during COVID-19. The main effort is not only to measure the impact of the reaction on the continuity of knowledge acquisition and to confirm that there is a reaction to similar confusion but also to devise innovative and powerful tactics for acquiring knowledge. It was a way to support the school network. tactics. This revealed UNICEF's findings focusing on mothers, fathers, and adolescents in six Indian states, and identified instructions for addressing inequality of knowledge in the process of future faculty closures. Three important variables-approvals received their use and acquisition of perceived knowledge by the child. When college students began to acquire knowledge from home, the era of family fee enrollment began with determining the most predicted achievements of various distances and learning. We represent the consequences of government technology and regulation to ensure that

technology is used better in families and that the fairness gap in the acquisition of opportunity knowledge is overcome. [12]

Perseverance of online learning environments usage during COVID-19 in schools was investigated. 3 Lakh online students were engaged in an online learning environment. The results show that the proportion of students engaged decreased during this time. Survival analysis was used to get valuable insights related to the dropout rate increase and students' engagement in learning online over time. The findings of the study will be useful for future learning environments and student engagement practices. [13]

A study was conducted to review the most common technologies to enhance digital learning experiences. Saudi Arabia was considered to check the effectiveness of distance learning during COVID-19 with 300 undergraduate students. The responses revealed that distance learning was effective during the outbreak of COVID-19. Poor network connections and lack of interaction with faculty members were affecting learning online. Two-thirds of the students understood that easy-to-use learning management system. Three-fourths of the students found it easy to understand the materials. The study encouraged educational institutions to create digital versions of learning resources for future courses. [14]

A study was conducted by Leili Yekefallah, et al., to examine the factors associated with satisfaction of students through e-learning in the pandemic. The results revealed that desirable satisfaction was higher than students with undesirable satisfaction. Factors that influence satisfaction of the students are workload among students, teaching and learning, feedback and evaluation, flexibility and appropriateness. Based on the results of the study, the following conclusion is declared. The quality of e-learning should be improved through conscious effort and the challenges associated. Lack of attention to these cases can reduce the quality of education and student's level of knowledge. [15]

3. Research Methodology

The research is conducted during the COVID 19 in business schools of south Indian states. The respondents had completed their first year when the COVID 19 lockdowns started. They had gone through an MBA / PGDM program in both offline and online modes. The objective of the Research is to look at the avowed objectives of business education and see to what extent the online mode is helping you in achieving the 'Transformation' expected through a good MBA education. A quasi-experimental research design is used for the study. Quantitative research is used and the data collected using a well-structured Questionnaire is designed. The cluster sampling method is used to collect data from the students who pursued their MBA during COVID 19 in the south Indian states of Tamilnadu, Karnataka, and Kerala. 243 male students and 216 female students participated in the survey. The Independent Sample T-test is used for data analysis.

4.Result and Discussion

Transformation of Knowledge

The hypothesis that describes knowledge transformation is "The physical mode is more effective than learning online in facilitating the transfer of the necessary knowledge". We evaluated the data with a Paired Sample T-test because we needed to compare the means of the same respondents. Statistically, the mean for knowledge transfer online (3.16) vs. physical (4.04), t-statistic is -13.72, with a p-value of 2.04E-36 (very significant). The predicted difference in means is roughly 0.9. The discrepancy revealed that students prefer to attend physical classes over online classes. Students are convinced that face-to-face classroom lectures can better transform knowledge. There is strong evidence ($t = -13.72$) that online learning does not improve knowledge transformation.

Imparting Managerial Skills

The hypothesis on facilitating the managerial skills of the students during online and face-to-face learning is "Physical learning is more suitable than online learning in facilitating in mastering managerial skills". The vast difference in the mean values confirmed that students can acquire managerial skills more effectively through physical classes than online classes. They strongly believe that transformation of knowledge can be more effective through face-to-face classroom lectures. We analyzed the test by using a Paired sample T-test since we need to compare the means of the same respondents. The same

variation in the mean values we can see in the dimensions of transformation effectiveness such as Analytical skills (0.73), Negotiation (0.77), Time management (0.44), Decision making (0.50), Communication (0.84), Managing Change (0.3), Conflict (0.72), Interpersonal skills (0.92), Planning (0.44), Organizing (0.48), Visioning (0.55). We found the mean difference between imparting managerial skills online and face-to-face learning is 0.56. While the analysis was done for experienced and freshers, we could observe the mean differences of 0.64 and 0.55 respectively. Since $p < .001$ is less than our chosen significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, we can reject the null hypothesis, and conclude that "A Good MBA Programme is expected to give you certain key Managerial Skills".

Imparting Core Values

The null hypothesis is "There is no difference in imparting core values to the students between online learning and face to face learning". We analyzed the test by using a Paired sample T test since we need to compare the means of the same respondents. When we check the mean difference for the dimensions of managerial skills such as Ethical concern (0.68), Societal concern (0.61), Employee concern (0.57), Stakeholder fairness (0.67), Commitment (0.57), we could find the meaningful difference in the learning effectiveness between the online and physical classes. We found the difference in the mean values 0.62 between online and physical classes for imparting core values is concerning. While analysis was done for experienced and freshers, we could observe the mean differences of 0.66 and 0.54 respectively. The difference in the mean values confirmed that students can learn core values effectively through physical classes than online classes. Since $p < .001$ is less than our chosen significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, we can reject the null hypothesis, and conclude that "There is no difference in imparting core values to the students between online learning and face to face learning".

Environmental suitability

The null hypothesis is that 'Environment at home (in the case of ON-LINE mode) and Campus (in the case of PHYSICAL mode) do not differ substantially. The ecosystem is playing a major role in transforming students as effective and efficient managers. When we analyzed we found a considerable difference in the mean values of the dimensions contributing to ecosystem of home and college such as Interaction with peer groups (1.06), Developing a Holistic Perspective (0.87), Developing a sense of Self-efficacy (0.59), Motivation to engage in curricular activities (0.91), Motivation to engage in co-curricular activities (0.95), Applying Management concepts and skills in curricular activities (Eg. Course Projects) (0.68), Applying Management concepts and skills in co-curricular activities (Eg. Club Activities) (0.83), Faculty Communication effectiveness (0.86), and Faculty Mentorship effectiveness (0.89). We found the mean difference in the effectiveness of learning based on environmental suitability is 0.85. Since $p < .001$ is less than our chosen significance level $\alpha = 0.05$, we can reject the null hypothesis, and conclude that 'Environment at home (in the case of ON-LINE mode) and Campus (in the case of PHYSICAL mode) differ substantially.

Other Aspect

The mean difference between online and physical classroom learning for Leadership skills development is 0.88. The difference in the mean values for the acceptance level to continue Online classes instead of physical classes post COVID is 0.61. The difference in the mean values for the Interaction with Peer group is 1.06. The difference in the mean values for the Developing holistic perspective is 0.87. The difference in the mean values for the Developing sense of self-efficacy is 0.59. The difference in the mean values for the Motivation to engage in curricular activities is 0.91. The difference in the mean values for the Motivation to engage in co-curricular activities is 0.95. The difference in the mean values for Applying Management concepts and skills in curricular activities (Eg. Course Projects) is 0.68. The difference in the mean values for Applying Management concepts and skills in co-curricular activities (Eg. Course Projects) – is 0.83. The difference in the mean values for Faculty communication effectiveness is 0.86. The difference in the mean values for Faculty Mentorship Effectiveness is 0.89. The difference in the mean values for the Library usage is (minus) – 0.24. The difference in the mean values for Sports - minus 0.08. The difference in the mean values for Gym is (minus) – 0.07. The difference in the mean values for Lab is (minus) – 0.26.

Table II. Results of online vs offline assessment that influences transformation effectiveness:

| Sl No. | | Online | | | Physical |
|--------|--|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------|-------------|
| | | Mean | t-stat | t Critical one-tail | Mean |
| 1 | Transfer of Knowledge: Online Vs Physical Mode of Learning | 3.15754 9234 | - 13.72198 46 | 1.648202066 | 4.037199125 |
| | Imparting Managerial Skills | | | | |
| 2 | Analytical Skill | 3.03282 2757 | - 11.41208 2 | 1.648202066 | 3.768052516 |
| 3 | Negotiation Skill | 3.00656 4551 | - 12.84155 307 | 1.965179935 | 3.831509847 |
| 4 | Time Management | 3.42231 9475 | - 5.425585 042 | 1.965179935 | 3.827133479 |
| 5 | Decision-Making Skill | 3.38730 8534 | - 7.515727 22 | 1.965179935 | 3.884026258 |
| 6 | Communication Skill | 3.25601 7505 | - 12.14532 033 | 1.965179935 | 4.098468271 |
| 7 | Managing Change | 3.48796 4989 | - 4.332063 898 | 1.965179935 | 3.787746171 |
| 8 | Managing Conflicts | 3.11597 3742 | - 10.54226 544 | 1.965179935 | 3.838074398 |
| 9 | Interpersonal Skills | 3.08971 5536 | - 13.01073 063 | 1.965179935 | 4.006564551 |
| 10 | Planning | 3.41137 8556 | - 6.804146 089 | 1.965179935 | 3.857768053 |
| 11 | Organizing | 3.40043 7637 | - 7.033146 898 | 1.965179935 | 3.886214442 |
| 12 | Visioning | 3.30415 7549 | - 8.162536 018 | 1.965179935 | 3.855579869 |

| Impating Core values: | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|-----------------|----------------------|-------------|-------------|
| 13 | Societal Concern | 3.10503 2823 | - 9.886332 875 | 1.965179935 | 3.715536105 |
| 14 | Employee Concern | 3.14660 8315 | - 9.213924 9 | 1.965179935 | 3.711159737 |
| 15 | Fairness in Handling Stakeholders | 3.09409 1904 | - 11.29146 176 | 1.965179935 | 3.768052516 |
| 17 | Commitment | 3.20568 9278 | - 9.265740 759 | 1.965179935 | 3.778993435 |
| 18 | Leadership | 2.97155 3611 | - 13.46644 954 | 1.965179935 | 3.853391685 |
| Environmental sustainability | | | | | |
| 19 | Applying Management concepts and skills in curricular activities (Eg. Course Projects) | 3.18818 3807 | - 10.12103 618 | 1.965179935 | 3.864332604 |
| 20 | Applying Management concepts and skills in co-curricular activities (Eg. Club activities) | 2.97374 1794 | - 12.42804 727 | 1.965179935 | 3.809628009 |
| 21 | Faculty communication effectiveness | 3.08533 9168 | - 13.08325 441 | 1.965179935 | 3.943107221 |
| 22 | Faculty Mentorship Effectiveness | 3.01750 547 | - 13.32765 212 | 1.965179935 | 3.90809628 |
| 23 | Library | 3.56986 8996 | 4.386140 759 | 1.965168491 | 3.325327511 |
| 24 | Sports | 3.19650 655 | 1.423618 489 | 1.965168491 | 3.115720524 |
| 25 | Gymnasium | 2.99126 6376 | 1.145822 35 | 1.965168491 | 2.927947598 |
| 26 | Computer Lab | 2.75545 8515 | 4.406286 506 | 1.965168491 | 2.497816594 |

5. Conclusion and future task

Online learning at COVID-19 provided an alternative for getting an MBA, it may have been less effective than the physical method in supporting the "Transformation" expected from a strong MBA program and fostering the development of strong analytical skills, which are regarded as critical for "Transformation" in business education.

According to the findings of this study, both online and offline factors must be considered. Offline alone will not solve students' education problems because life is unpredictable; for example, Covid 19 has suddenly affected offline learning, and a large number of students are unable to take advantage of offline course study due to financial constraints, a lack of accessibility, and other issues. Second, learning cannot be enhanced solely through online means. For example, the findings of these studies revealed that physical learning is more successful than online learning in supporting the transfer of necessary knowledge, and physical learning is more appropriate than online learning in aiding the mastery of knowledge. Thus, policymakers, governments, and other stakeholders must evaluate all of the elements that influence knowledge transformation. More research is needed to investigate the particular reasons influencing the difference and discover potential improvements for online delivery techniques.

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