A STUDY ON PERCEPTION OF ACADEMICIANS TOWARDS ONLINE EDUCATION COURSES

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ABSTRACT
The number of academicians enrolling for online courses has rapidly grown in last decade due to its merits. Besides having many merits, academicians are forming a pattern of perception and facing the problems which lead us in direction of research. The purpose of the study is to explore the factors which affect the perception and challenges of academicians towards online education courses. The study has been conducted in the time period of August 2018 to November 2018. A survey has been conducted and data has been collected through questionnaires from 100 academicians who are teaching at colleges & universities located in Jalandhar, Phagwara & kapurthala cities. Factor analysis has been applied to find out the factors which affect the perception and challenges of the academicians. From the analysis it has been interpreted that there are six factors which affect the perception of academicians i.e. Level of satisfaction, Performance with online mode, Abilities of instructor, learning from the course, Time period of course and Economical and in case of challenges, there are two factors which are becoming the barriers for the academicians i.e. Problem in accessing and Problem during performance.
Keywords: perception, online education courses, academicians, challenges

INTRODUCTION

Today online education courses are becoming a trend and so many people are taking initiative and getting enrolled for these courses. These courses are easily available and accessible, whosoever wants to do these courses can get enrolled for any institute or university in which it's going on. It will lead to enhance the knowledge, teaching skills, potential, learning, more concept clarity and helps in career growth and promotion. There are so many institutes and universities in India and in other countries who are providing such courses. For example, in India such courses are provided by eminent bodies and institutes like IIM's, IIT's, AICTE, IGNOU, SWAYAM, NPTEL etc. & so many other renowned institutes and universities in foreign countries for example Stanford university, Oxford university, Cambridge university etc. So enroller has a lot of choices, they can join any course anywhere in any university or institute. These courses are duly certified and economical also.

In other countries, blended learning is followed in which whole learning and teaching pedagogy involve both online and face to face interaction with the help of equipment's which leads to two way communication (Haron, 2012). But, in countries like America, Australia and Russia many cheating cases are found when there is only online mode of learning which devalue the education experience and misrepresentation in grades (Lupton, 2002). Serwatka (2000) revealed that by following only online mode, it become difficult to share and test information, so face to face interaction is necessary to understand the level of students. For the proper implementation, to avoid the plagiarism &to reduce the cheating cases , software's are required to be used and every candidate has to be provided with a login and password so, that the location of the source of information can be traced (Olt, 2010).

Evaluation of the online education courses is done through the satisfactions of the candidate and the quality of the course. Quality of the course is very important because it will result to the satisfaction of the candidate. Satisfaction of the student is the significant element because it leads to positive learning, attitude, experience and outcomes (Biner et al., 1997; Liao & Hsieh, 2011). There are few factors which contribute to student satisfaction i.e. interaction, internet self –efficacy, self- regulated learning, category of course, cost of course

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(Kuo et al., 2014). Interaction is very important factor it can be one way or two way. In traditional time period there is two way learning (Anderson, 2003) which is called as classroom, such learning explores the new horizons of knowledge and give birth to many ideas & creativity. Two way interaction have no limitations, it helps in making new meaning and exploration (Juwah, 2006). Internet self-efficacy is related to do the self-evaluation and arrange the internet activities in order and into a course of action (Eastin & LaRose, 2000). With the growth in online education, internet self-efficacy is also growing at large scale (Liang & Tsai, 2008; Tsai et al., 2011). Candidates who are less involved with internet self-efficacy have low academic results (Livingstone & Helsper, 2010; Shi et al., 2011) as compared to those who are more engaged with it, they are more confident. Self-regulated learning is very important factor because without this their no satisfaction. This concept totally student centered, it wholly dependent on the candidate how they plan their course & schedules, how to maintain it and keep themselves motivated during the duration of learning process (Moller & Huett, 2012). Next is category of the course also influenced the satisfaction that which area of study it belonged, level of course, areas and curriculum covered in the course (Kiriakidis, 2005 & Macon 2011).Last is price factor, before enrolling for any course candidate go for fee structure of the course and its other expenditures because if it is too costly than candidate would not prefer it (Beqiri et al., 2010).

Online education courses are not restricted to learner only, the instructor also has a significant role. If the instructor is having the full knowledge, devotion, skills and proper guidance of topic only then the purpose of online education can be accomplished (Wu, 2004).Clark(2010) suggested that learner has bigger role than instructor, if the learner is active, self-motivated, focused, and hardworking only than he can learn.

There are so many challenges faced by instructors and learners while pursuing for online education courses. On the part of instructor sometimes, they feel difficulty in understanding& evaluating the work of learner, cheating cases, lack of concentration of students, not taking assignments seriously, absence of quick feedback & response and on other part of the student, hard to understand the concepts, lack of time, costly affair and lack of focus (Hew, 2014).

Besides so many challenges still academicians prefer these courses due to its attractiveness i.e. short duration courses, helpful in promotion, quality, accessibility, affordable, knowledgeable, give an edge to career (Bolliger, 2009).

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the present scenario, so many people are enrolling for online education courses to enhance their skills, knowledge and for faculty development programs. It has become mandatory in some institutes to do such courses. Due to the burden of job activities & responsibilities and home activities & responsibilities, it become difficult for academicians to pursue regular courses. So to understand the current scenario, the present study will focus on exploring the perception of academicians towards online education courses and challenges faced by them while pursuing it.

NEED OF STUDY

The present study has not been explored and touched much till yet in India from the academician's point of view .From the student's point of view, number of studies are there but perception of academicians are required to be explored as yet. They are becoming the major and active enroller to these online education courses. So, there is a high time to explore this area to know the perception of academicians towards online education courses and the challenges faced by them during the course.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

1 To study the perception of academicians towards online education courses
2 To study the challenges faced by academicians during these courses.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- **Research Design:** In the present study descriptive research design is used to describe the characteristics of a population or phenomenon being studied.
- **Sampling Design**

Universe of study: In the present study, due to paucity of time, Jalandhar, Phagwara and Kapurthala cities of Punjab state have been chosen as a universe for study. Data is collected from academicians who are teaching at different colleges and universities of Jalandhar, Phagwara and Kapurthala.
Population: Population consists of the academicians having the age group between21-50 and teaching at all levels in different colleges and universities of Jalandhar, Phagwara and Kapurthala.
Sampling Technique: In the present study convenience sampling has been used.

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Sample unit: The sample unit consists of the respondents who are in teaching field and working in universities and colleges of Jalandhar, Phagwara and Kapurthala and having the awareness regarding online education courses.

Sample size: In the present study, the size of sample is 100 academicians who are teaching in different colleges and universities of Jalandhar, Phagwara and Kapurthala.

- **Method of Data Collection**

In the present study data has been collected through primary & secondary method. For primary data, questionnaire is constructed and filled from academicians and secondary data is collected from journals, articles, research papers and websites.

- **Tools of presentation and analysis**

Different tools have been used for presentation of data. SPSS software is used for analysis of data. From SPSS factor analysis is used for extracting the factors and analyzing the variables. For demographics, frequency and percentages are used.

DATA ANALYSIS

Reliability of Data: Reliability of data has been checked to see whether data is authentic or reliable for research. For that purpose, Cranach's Alpha is used. Its value lies between 0 < alpha <1. If the value of greater than 0.6 than it has more valid result and can be used for further analysis. So, the reliability of the present study is 0.807 which is above 0.6 and it shows that the data is reliable and it can be used for further analysis.

Table 1. Analysis based on Reliability of Data

Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items
.807	39

Source: Author's calculations based on primary data

Analysis of demographics: In present study age group, gender and profession is taken as demographics and frequencies and percentages are used for analysis of demographics.

Table 2. Table of Demographic analysis

Age group	Frequency	Percentage of respondents
21-30	74	74%
31-40	17	17%
41-50	9	9%
Total	**100**	**100%**
Gender	**Frequency**	**Percentage of respondents**
Male	40	40%
Female	60	60%
Total	**100**	**100%**
Profession	**Frequency**	**Percentage of respondents**
Director/ Principal	2	2%
Head of department	5	5%
Professor	6	6%
Associate professor	2	2%
Assistant professor	85	85%
Total	**100**	**100%**

Source: Author's calculations based on primary data

Interpretation: It is interpreted from the table that in case of age group, maximum respondents lie in the age group of 21-30 that is 74. In 31-40 age group 17 respondents are lying and in 41-50 age group 9 respondents are lying. It can be interpreted from the gender demographics that maximum respondents are females which is 60 and rest are males that is 40.It is interpreted from the profession demographics that basically five designations are taken for choices that is director/ principal, head of department, professor, associate professor and assistant professor. From the table it is depicted that maximum respondents i.e. 85 are assistant professors, 6 respondents are professors, 5 respondents are HOD, 2 are associate professor and 2 are director.

Factor analysis

Objective 1 To study the perception of academicians towards online education courses.

Factors guiding perception of academicians towards online education courses.

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Factor Analysis is a commonly used data/ variable reduction technique. This multivariate statistical technique is used for three primary reasons:

- Reduce the number of variables, from large to small

Establish underlying dimensions between measured variables

- Provide construct validity evidence

KMO and Bartlett's Test

To study the factors that help in analyzing the perception of academicians towards online education courses for this twenty three factors were tested on five point likert scale and factor analysis technique was applied using SPSS 24 version to reduce the inefficient factor and to know the key factors responsible for affecting the perception of academicians in Jalandhar, Phagwara and Kapurthala city. Following is the result interpreted for the applied test.

Table 3. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.812
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	1093.174
	df	253
	Sig.	.000

Source: Author's calculations based on primary data

A value of KMO greater than .5 is desirable. The value of the KMO statistic (.812) is also large (>.5) thus, factor analysis may be considered appropriate technique for analyzing the correlation matrix.

The initial components are the numbers of the variables used in the Factor Analysis. However, not all the 23 variables will be retained. In the present research only the 6 factors will be extracted by combining the relevant variables. In the present research the first 6 factors explain 66.241% of variance. The rotation sums of the squared loading represent the distribution of the variance after the varimax rotation with Kaiser Normalization. The varimax rotation tries to maximize the variance of each of the factor. On the basis of varimax Rotation with Kaiser Normalization, six factors have been extracted. Each factor is constituted of all those variables that have factor loadings greater than 0.5. 23 variables were clubbed into six factors. These six factors were extracted from the 23 variables used in the study.

Table 4. Table of Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigen values			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.824	34.019	34.019	7.824	34.019	34.019
2	2.148	9.341	43.360	2.148	9.341	43.360
3	1.523	6.622	49.982	1.523	6.622	49.982
4	1.334	5.799	55.780	1.334	5.799	55.780
5	1.309	5.690	61.470	1.309	5.690	61.470
6	1.097	4.771	66.241	1.097	4.771	66.241
7	.981	4.266	70.508			
8	.831	3.611	74.119			
9	.793	3.448	77.567			
10	.693	3.012	80.579			
11	.602	2.619	83.198			
12	.525	2.281	85.479			
13	.496	2.155	87.634			
14	.453	1.968	89.602			
15	.421	1.831	91.433			
16	.393	1.710	93.143			
17	.342	1.485	94.627			
18	.276	1.200	95.827			
19	.248	1.078	96.905			
20	.217	.944	97.849			
21	.186	.808	98.658			
22	.177	.767	99.425			
23	.132	.575	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

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Source: Author's calculations based on primary data

Identification of the Core Factors

The Rotated Factor Matrix represents the rotated factor loadings, which are the correlations between the variables and the factors. The values have been highlighted in each of the rows to group the 23 variables into 6 core factors. Thus, after rotation, Factor 1 accounts for 34.019% of the variance; Factor 2 accounts for 9.341% of the variance; Factor 3 accounts for 6.622% of the variance; Factor 4 accounts for 5.799% of the variance; Factor 5 accounts for 5.690% of the variance; Factor 6 accounts for of the 4.771% variance respectively. All the 6 factors together explain for 66.241% of the variances.

Table 5. Table of Rotated Component Matrix

		1	2	3	4	5	6
VAR00015	Course is up to date with developments in the field	.640					
VAR00016	Course provides a personal experience similar to the classroom	.796					
VAR00017	Feel comfortable in conversing through online medium of course	.771					
VAR00018	Instructor explained how to use the website	.690					
VAR00022	Always get the answers of your queries easily	.607					
VAR00023	Satisfied with the online course	.701					
VAR00008	Easy to perform in online education courses		.620				
VAR00009	Helpful in your promotion and career growth		.548				
VAR00012	Website contained useful features		.725				
VAR00013	Website give timely feedback		.678				
VAR00019	Course material is easy to understand		.686				
VAR00020	Education course help in improving your teaching skills		.418				
VAR00004	Instructor having full knowledge of course			.594			
VAR00005	Language of instructor is understandable			.756			
VAR00006	Instructor handled web technology effectively			.603			
VAR00011	Information is well structure			.523			
VAR00001	Course is easy to understand				.594		
VAR00007	Instructor invited to ask questions and receive answers				.554		
VAR00014	Course is helpful in personalized learning				.820		
VAR00003	Instructor style of presentation held by interest					.781	
VAR00021	Given time is sufficient to complete the course					.579	
VAR00002	Course is economical						.845
VAR00010	Easy to access the website						.670

Source: Author's calculations based on primary data

All the factors have been given appropriate names according to the variables that have been loaded on each factor. Table 6 identifies six factors responsible for perception of academicians towards online education course.

Table 6. Factors Responsible for perception of academicians towards online education course

Factors	Statements	Factor Loading
Factor 1- Level of satisfaction	• Course is up to date with developments in the field	.640
	• Course provides a personal experience similar to the classroom	.796
	• Feel comfortable in conversing through online medium of course	.771
	• Instructor explained how to use the website	.690
	• Always get the answers of your queries easily	.607
	• Satisfied with the online course	.701
Factor 2- Performance with online mode	• Easy to perform in online education courses	.620
	• Helpful in your promotion and career growth	.548
	• Website contained useful features	.725
	• Website give timely feedback	.678
	• Course material is easy to understand	.686
	• Education course help in improving your teaching skills	.418
Factor 3- Abilities	• Instructor having full knowledge of course	.594

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of instructor	• Language of instructor is understandable • Instructor handled web technology effectively • Information is well structured	.756 .603 .523
Factor 4- Learning from the course	• Course is easy to understand • Instructor invited to ask questions and receive answers • Course is helpful in personalized learning	.594 .554 .820
Factor 5- Time period of course	• Instructor style of presentation held by interest • Given time is sufficient to complete the course	.781 .579
Factor 6- Economical	• Course is economical • Easy to access the website	.845 .670

Source: Author's calculations based on primary data

Based on the results of Factor Analysis, 'Level of satisfaction', 'Performance with online mode', 'Abilities of instructor', 'learning from the course', 'Time period of course', 'Economical' emerged as the perception of academicians towards online education courses. These are the factors found to be responsible for perception of academicians towards online education courses.

Objective 2 To study the challenges faced by academicians during course.
Factors guiding the challenges faced by academicians during course. Again factor analysis is used for interpretation of data.

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Table 7. KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.884
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	643.109
	Df	55
	Sig.	.000

Source: Author's calculations based on primary data

The value of the KMO statistic (.884) is also large (>.5) thus, factor analysis can be considered appropriate technique for analyzing the correlation matrix.

Eigen values (Select those components with Eigen Values >= 1)
The Eigen values are the variances of the factors. In the present research the first 2 factors explain 65.188% of variance. On the basis of varimax Rotation with Kaiser Normalization, 2 factors have been extracted. Each factor is constituted of all those variables that have factor loadings greater than 0.5. Two factors are extracted from the 11 variables used in the study

Table 8. Table of Total Variance Explained

	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings		
Component	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	6.075	55.229	55.229	6.075	55.229	55.229
2	1.096	9.959	65.188	1.096	9.959	65.188
3	.863	7.849	73.037			
4	.600	5.455	78.491			
5	.548	4.983	83.475			
6	.461	4.192	87.666			
7	.347	3.154	90.821			
8	.312	2.837	93.658			
9	.278	2.531	96.189			
10	.252	2.288	98.477			
11	.168	1.523	100.000			

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Source: Author's calculations based on primary data

Identification of the Core Factors
The values have been highlighted in each of the rows to group the 11 variables into 2 core factors. Thus, after rotation, Factor 1 accounts for 55.229% of the variance; Factor 2 accounts for 9.959% of the variance respectively. All the two factors together explain for 65.188% of the variances.

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Table 9. Table of Rotated Component Matrix

		1	2
VAR00001	Face problem while accessing the website	.696	
VAR00002	Face problem while using the features contained by website	.794	
VAR00003	Face problem while browsing	.670	
VAR00004	Face problem with the updating of course as the development in the field of course	.767	
VAR00005	Challenging to converse through online medium of course	.694	
VAR00006	Face problem in accessing the information of course	.827	
VAR00007	Face time management problem	.653	
VAR00008	Face technical issues	.700	
VAR00009	Face problem in doing assignments related to course	.804	
VAR00010	Face problem while performing	.881	
VAR00011	Challenging to understand the way of teaching of instructor	.568	

Source: Author's calculations based on primary data

All the factors have been given appropriate names according to the variables that have been loaded on each factor. Table 10. Identifies two factors considered to be the challenges for academicians towards online education courses.

Table 10. Factors Responsible for Challenges faced by academicians during course

FACTORS	STATEMENTS	FACTOR LOADING
Factor 1- Problem in accessing	• Face problem while accessing the website	.696
	• Face problem while using the features contained by website	.794
	• Face problem while browsing	.670
	• Face problem with the updating of course as the development in the field of course	.767
	• Challenging to converse through online medium of course	.694
	• Face problem in accessing the information of course	.827
Factor 2-Problem during performance	• Face time management problem	.653
	• Face technical issues	.700
	• Face problem in doing assignments related to course	.804
	• Face problem while performing	.881
	• Challenging to understand the way of teaching of instructor	.568

Source: Author's calculations based on primary data

Based on the results of Factor Analysis, 'Problem in accessing' and 'Problem during performance' emerged as the challenge for academicians during online education courses. These are the factors found to be responsible for being a challenge to the academicians during online education courses.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The sample size was limited.
- The sample was taken from the population residing in Jalandhar, Phagwara and Kapurthala only, so results are not applicable to whole of India.
- Non co-operation of some respondents has also affected the research results.

CONCLUSION

The online courses become a big platform for advancement and exploring. There are number of institutions and universities in all over world who are providing such courses and candidates can apply anywhere. The study is conducted on the perception of academicians towards online education courses which help us to know the mind

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set up of academicians for such courses also to know how much academicians are enrolling for it. The present study has been explored with the two objectives based on perception of academicians and the challenges faced by academicians. For achieving these objectives, factor analysis has been used. From that, it is found that there are few factors which have significant impact on the perception and challenges.

RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

As the present study focus on the perception and the challenges of academicians towards online education courses. In future, researchers can explore the attitude of academicians towards online education courses and they can also throw the light on the part of instructor as, they have a significant role in online courses.

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