



Nepalese Students' Perception Towards the Online Learning During Covid-19 Lockdown Phase

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Abstract

The research study "Nepalese Students' Perception towards the online learning during Covid-19 lockdown phase" has conducted during the period of Covid-19, in 2021 to examine the Nepalese students' perception and satisfaction towards on line classes. Also, it has assessed the impact and relationship between perception statements of students on their satisfaction with online classes. Total 205 students of different programs (MBS, MBA, BBA, BIM BSC-CSIT) of five constituent's campuses of Kathmandu Valley of Tribhuvan University of Nepal is taken for sample. This study has used descriptive research design. Random sampling method has used to get the responses of respondents. Well-structured questionnaire with five likert scale (1= strongly disagree to 5= strongly agree) is used to get respondents' responses. Cronbach's Alpha of perception and satisfaction of are found 0.63 and 0.74 respectively. In aggregate, students' perception toward the online classes are fond "moderate and agree", However, their perception found strongly disagree and disagree for practical subject and also found "disagree and moderate" regarding the interaction between faculties and students. Regarding the students' satisfaction, they are satisfied towards online classes during the Covid-19. The regression model has revealed that statement x9 (Online Faculty provide good quality Feedback) has given highest impact on students' satisfaction with online classes and found significant relationship at both 95% and 99% confidence level.

Keywords: COVID-19, Online learning, Students Perception, Students Satisfaction, Academic Program

Introduction

World Health Organization (2020) stated that coronavirus disease (COVID-19) originated from Wuhan, China in 2019. The World Health Organization (WHO) therefore announced the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic on 11 March, 2020 (WHO 2020).

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Since the outbreak of the disease WHO through its guidelines in 7 march 2020 has prioritized the actions for responding to virus; urged the government to maintain health facilities, raise public awareness, and stock up on medical supplies (WHO, 2020)². The first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in Nepal on 23 January 2020 on a 31-year-old college student returned from Wuhan, China (Bastola et al. 2020).

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought multiple challenges and threats in front of the world. The COVID-19 pandemic affects everyone and everywhere. Threat of the pandemic as a result of COVID-19 is causing a series of transformations in the different spheres of social, political, labor, and economic life (Espino-Díaz et al., 2020). This resulted many countries around the world to made decisions to temporarily close all academic institutions to break the COVID-19 chain (Alawamleh, 2020). This matter has affected almost 80% of the world's student population of nearly 1.37 billion students of 138 countries and 60.2 million teachers were unable to be in the classroom due to the closure of schools and universities (UNESCO, 2020). In such a situation where the students are not allowed to go to school or Universities, the alternative is to move from traditional to online education.

The Covid-19 also affected very badly to different sectors of Nepal like in education, health, farming, trade, tourism, socio-cultural areas as other countries of the world. Before the covid-19 pandemic, education system of the Nepalese Universities, colleges and schools, expect the Nepal Open University, had used face to face (physical classes) teaching-learning process. However, many education institutions shifted to Online class through Zoom, Microsoft Team, Google meet, Google Classroom. Online libraries, TV broadcasts, guidelines, resources, video lectures, online channels are introduced in at least 96 countries (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020).

The Government of Nepal implemented a lockdown starting on March 24 to close schools, colleges, universities including all Educational institution (Sherchand, 2020). Many universities and colleges worldwide suspended classroom teaching due to the novel corona virus pandemic and switched to online teaching (Mahdy, 2020). In Nepal Online class has been a reality since COVID-19 pandemic and served as an alternative educational tool (Gupta et al., 2020). Many education institutions shifted to Online class through Zoom, Microsoft Team, Google meet, Google Classroom. In the context of Nepal, the practice of online classes is new to many colleges (teachers and students) and also there is no good access to electricity and internet service in most parts of the country (Subedi et al., 2020).

It was big challenge for the academic institutions for running their academic programs through on line without sound preparation. However, most of the academic institutions started to use online teaching learning process for their students in order to complete their academic program. Tribhuvan University also requested and issued the notice to all concerned faculties and technical institute to start the classes through online.

In Nepal, it is vital that teachers should be provided with training opportunities for online teaching as almost all of them have not done the job before. A few organizations such as Tribhuvan University, and Kathmandu University, Nepal have started to conduct training to teachers.

Furthermore, University officials need to ensure that each student gets access to technology and internet (Dawadi et al., 2020).

Initially, few faculties of Tribhuvan University in their efforts started delivering their classes online from the very beginning of lockdown in Nepal, but the efforts were insufficient in terms of coverage, later Tribhuvan University formally decided to conduct online classes withholding examination schedule. After three weeks of the lockdown, few other Universities of Nepal followed to Tribhuvan University and decided to continue their on-class mode through online (Gautam & Gautam, 2021). However, it was very challenging for Nepalese academic institutions, because the practice of online classes is new to many colleges (teachers and students) and also there is no good access to electricity and internet service in most parts of the country (Subedi et al., 2020).

Nafree et al., (2020) conducted research during the Covid -19 lockdown period to determine the factors of awareness of students about online learning among the undergraduates of the South Eastern University of Sri Lanka (SEUSL) and they found that Students were facing the internet connectivity issues (40.2%) and more than 50% of the students were happy with online education during this lockdown. Only 19.6% of them preferred the offline learning.

Maposa (2021) conducted research on Factors Influencing Student's Perceptions Towards E-Learning Adoption During COVID-19 Pandemic: A Developing Country Context. He found that students had a positive perception of online learning also found a significant loss of learning due to the unavailability of technology and the cost of data; nevertheless, students agreed that online learning represents the future of teaching and learning.

Gautam and Gautam (2021) found that technological support, infrastructure availability, faculty and students' perception have a significant relationship for the effectiveness of the online mode of the teaching learning process. All stakeholders, including instructors, students, administrators, and the government, are still adjusting to this unique teaching and learning approach (Sharma et al., 2020; Gautam & Gautam, 2021;).

This study is different from previous researches done by the (Nafrees et al., 2020; Gupta et al., 2020; Sharma et al., 2020; Acharya et al., 2021; Gautam and Gautam, 2021; Mahat, 2021; Maposa, 2021; and Thapa et al., 2021). The students of different programs (MBS, MBA, BBA, BIM BSC-CSIT) of constituent campuses of Tribhuvan University which are operating within the Kathmandu valley are chosen to examine their perception and satisfaction towards online learning during the Covid-19 period through using 9 statements for perception and 2 statements for satisfaction.

Objectives of the Study

This research study has set two objectives to identify students' perception and satisfaction towards online learning. they are;

1. To examine the perception and satisfaction of the students towards online learning during Covid-19 lockdown phase.
2. To assess the impact and relationship between perception statements of students on their satisfaction with online classes.

Review of Literature

Review of literature regarding the concept of online learning, students' perception, and students' satisfaction are given below;

Online learning in on line classes

Online learning is considered as an alternative learning method with the use of computers, laptops, tablets and mobile phones with internet access in synchronous and asynchronous environments. Through these learning methods and environments, students have a freedom in learning and get connected with their teachers anywhere they want (Singh & Thurman, 2019). There are two modes in online learning: 1) synchronous mode which provides the direct interaction between the lecturers and students during class through tools such as videoconference or chatrooms; and 2) asynchronous mode that provides the opportunity for the lecturers and students to interact each other before or after the online class through thread discussion and emails (Algahtani, 2011). Online learning is also known as e-learning, online learning, virtual learning or distance learning. E-learning process in higher education is done with the help of various online platforms. Over time, many notions were used to describe online learning, such as Computer-mediated learning (Anaraki,2004). On line classes are the virtual classes or online platforms where both teaching faculties and students join through electronic devices for teaching -learning activities.

Perception: Perception gives meaning to the information. People detect information through five senses. Customers do not perceive quality in a one-dimensional way, but rather judge quality on multiple factors relevant to the context (Zeithaml et al., 2006). Perceptions of service quality differ between different parties. In addition, perceptions of service quality change over time. In the context of higher education, experiences of students are varied and continuous, over months and years (Cuthbert, 1996a). Students judge or perceive the quality of online learning from different angles like understanding of online classes, easy and comfort of online classes, interaction between teaching faculties and students about doubtful questions etc.

Satisfaction: Satisfaction has been defined as the perception of pleasurable fulfillment of a service (Oliver, 1999). In addition, learning satisfaction represents the construct of students' attitudes that measures affectively students' satisfactions who usually have positive experience towards online learning (Harsasi & Sutawijaya, 2018). Satisfaction is one of the important steps to determine the quality of an online learning. Meanwhile, student satisfaction also can be defined as students' perception towards learning experience which can be increased when learning is planned, and they be able to reflect learning and the provision of appropriate platforms for interaction and collaboration between teachers and students (Rios et al., 2018)

Research Methodology

The research has used descriptive and causal research design based on survey, which has analyzed perception, satisfaction of students towards the online learning classes during the COVID-19 period and examine impact of perception statements of students on their satisfaction towards online classes.

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), sample greater than 30 but smaller than 500 is adequate for the research. This study has taken 205 students for sample. Among the total sample size, 95, 16, 74 and 20 students are chosen from MBS, MBA, BBA and BS-CSIT program. However, this study has distributed total 235 questionnaires through Google form.

Simple random sampling procedure is employed in selecting respondents (students) from four programs of different campuses which are running under the Tribhuvan University of Nepal. Received questionnaires are again entered into IBM SPSS and data were analyzed to achieve the research objectives. Structured questionnaire is used to get the responses from the respondents through using five likert scale (1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3= Moderate, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree.) to know rate values of students' perception and satisfaction. Total 11 statements are used to get the respondents' response about online learning, among them nine statements for students' perception and two statements for students' satisfaction are designed. The researcher used Cronbach's Alpha to test the reliability of data because it is one of the important tools used to check the internal consistency of data.

Result of the research study

This research study has examined students' perception and assessed their satisfaction also regarding the online classes during the COVUD-19. they are given below;

Students' Perception as Academic Program: Students' perception about the online learning is examined through mean value. Responses of students are taken regarding the nine statements of online learning during the Covid-19. It is given below in the table 1:

Table 1
Students' Perception as Academic Program

Statements/Programs	Mean and SD				
	MBS	MBA	BBA	BSCCSIT	Total
1. I feel I learned as much in my online classes as I have in my face-to-face classes	3.26 SD=0.98	3.61 SD=1.5	3.79 SD=1.15	2.11 SD=1.6	3.19 SD=1.01
2. Online Classes are understandable	3.92 SD=0.73	4.67 SD=0.49	3.91 SD=1.04	3.63 SD=1.36	4.03 SD=0.92
3. Online classes are appropriate in theory subjects	3.54 SD=0.84	3.67 SD=1.46	3.71 SD=0.8	3.11 SD=1.19	3.51 SD=0.92
4. Online Classes are appropriate in practical subjects	1.86 SD=0.74	1.61 SD=0.61	1.57 SD=0.63	1.93 SD=1.11	1.74 SD=0.75
5. Online classes are quick (to complete the course)	3.38 SD=0.74	3.61 SD=0.61	3.6 SD=0.63	3.41 SD=1.11	3.5 SD=0.75

6. Online classes are easy/comfort	3.54	3.44	3.5	3.31	3.45
	SD=0.89	0.91	SD=0.75	SD=0.83	SD=0.85
7. Online classes have Faculty-to- Student Interactions as face to face classes	3.16	3	2.78	2.56	2.87
	SD=0.68	SD=1.08	SD=0.82	SD=0.97	SD=0.84
8. On line faculty provides necessary materials and notes	3.6	3	3.78	3.56	3.49
	SD=0.78	SD=1.09	SD=0.92	SD=0.95	SD=0.87
9. Online Faculty provide good quality Feedback	3.95	4.39	3.36	3.63	3.83
	SD=0.97	SD=0.85	SD=1.17	SD=1.04	SD=1.1
Total Mean as Program	3.36	3.44	3.33	3.03	

In the above table 1, nine statements are used to get the students' perception about the online learning. Students' response regarding the statements are taken through using five Likert scale (1= Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3= Moderate, 4 = Agree and 5 = Strongly Agree. The mean value of each statement is calculated to examine the students' perception toward the online learning and students are categorized as academic programs (MBS, MBA, BBA, BSC-CSIT). Nine statements are used to get the perception about the online classes of 205 students of four academic programs MBS, MBA, BBA and BSC-CSIT of different campuses which are running under the Tribhuvan University of Nepal.

Regarding the statement first (I feel I learned as much in my online classes as I have in my face-to-face classes), the mean values of MBS, MBA, BBA and BSC-CSIT students are found 3.26, 3.61, 3.79 and 2.11 respectively, it means perception of MBS, MBA and BBA students is located at rate value "moderate and agree", whereas mean perception of BSC-CSIT students is located at rate value "disagree and moderate". The average mean value of students of four academic program is found 3.19, it shows that students' perception regarding this statement is located at "moderate and agree".

Regarding the second statement, (Online classes are understandable), mean values of MBS, MBA, BBA and BSC-CSIT students are found 3.92, 4.67, 3.91 and 3.63 respectively. Students of all programs besides MBA have perceived "moderate and agree" whereas students of MBA have perceived "agree and strongly agree" towards the statement of "online classes are understandable" and the mean perception (4.3) of all students found at "agree and strongly agree" rate value.

Students' perception regarding the third statement, "Online classes are appropriate in theory subjects", mean values of students of MBS, MBA, BBA and BSC-CSIT are found 3.54, 3.67, 3.71 and 3.11 respectively. Students of all programs have perceived "moderate and agree". Its total average mean value is also found 3.51, it means all students of four academic programs have perceived "moderate and agree".

Regarding the fourth statement, "Online Classes are appropriate in practical subjects", the mean values of MBS, MBA, BBA and BSC-CSIT students are found 1.86, 1.61, 1.57 and 1.93 respectively. Students of all four academic programs have perceived "strongly disagree and disagree" towards this statement. The total average mean value is also found 1.74, it means all students of four academic programs have perceived "strongly disagree and disagree". It has showed that the academic institutions should consider about the practical subject while designing the online classes.

Students' perception regarding the fifth statement, "Online classes are quick (to complete the course)", the mean values of students of MBS, MBA, BBA and BSC-CSIT are found 3.38, 3.61, 3.6 and 3.41 respectively. Students of all four programs have perceived "moderate and agree" towards this statement. Its total average mean value is also found 3.47, it means all students of four academic programs have perceived "moderate and agree".

Regarding the sixth statement, "Online classes are easy/comfort" the mean values of MBS, MBA, BBA and BSC-CSIT are found 3.54, 3.44, 3.50 and 3.31 respectively, it means students of four programs have perceived "moderate and agree" towards this statement. Its total average mean value is also found 3.45, it means all students of four academic programs have perceived "moderate and agree".

Students' perception regarding the seventh statement, "Online classes have Faculty-to-Student Interactions as face to face classes", the mean values of MBS, MBA, BBA and BSC-CSIT are found 3.16, 3, 2.78, and 2.56 respectively, it shows that students of MBS and MBA have perceived "moderate and agree" whereas students of BBA, and BSC-CSIT have perceived "disagree and moderate" regarding this statement. Its total average mean value is also found 2.87, it means all students of four academic programs have perceived "disagree and moderate".

Regarding the eighth statement (On line faculty provides necessary materials and notes), the mean values of MBS, MBA, BBA and BSC-CSIT students are found 3.60, 3, 3.78 and 3.56 respectively, it means perception of MBS, BBA and BSC-CSIT students is located at rate value "moderate and agree", whereas perception of MBA students is found "moderate". The average mean value of students of four academic is also found 3.49, it means all students of four academic programs have perceived "moderate and agree".

Similarly, regarding the ninth statement, "Online Faculty provide good quality Feedback", the mean values of MBS, MBA, BBA and BSC-CSIT students are found 3.95, 4.39, 3.36 and 3.63 respectively, it means perception of MBS, BBA and BSC-CSIT students is found "moderate and agree". Likewise, the perception of MBA student regarding this statement is found "agree and strongly agree". Likewise, the average mean value is 3.83, it means students of four academic programs have perceived "moderate and agree" regarding this statement.

Similarly, its has revealed that aggregate mean value of all students of nine statements as all academic program are found "moderate and agree", however MBA students mean value is found highest whereas BSC-CSIT students' mean value is found lowest.

Students Satisfaction towards Online Classes

Two statements are used to assess the satisfaction of students towards the online classes that is revealed from the table 2;

Table 2
Students' Satisfaction toward online Classes as Academic Program

Statements and Programs	Mean				
	MBS	MBA	BBA	BSC-CSIT	Total
1. Online classes should be continued in future	3.58	3.44	3.70	3.21	3.46
	SD=0.67	SD=1.42	SD=1.56	SD=1.52	SD=2.38
2. Online students are satisfied with on line classes	4	3.33	3.4	3.22	3.33
	SD=0.87	SD=1.33	SD=1	SD=1.15	SD=0.98

To assess whether students are satisfied or not with online classes toward online classes as academic programs (MBS, MBA, BBA and BSC-CSIT), the above table shows that satisfaction of all MBS (3.58), MBA (3.44), BBA (3.70) and BSC-CSIT (3.21) students regarding the “Online classes should be continued in future” is located at “moderate and agree” rate values, however, students of BBA have highest mean value (3.7) whereas students of BSC-CSIT have lowest mean value.

Similarly, satisfaction of students toward the “Online students are satisfied with classes” statement, it is found that students of MBA (3.33), BBA (3.4), and BSC-CSIT (3.22) have located at “moderate and agree” rate value whereas satisfaction of students of MBS (4) have put their agreement at “agree” rate value.

Impact and Relationship between Satisfaction and Perception Statements

Regression model is used to examine impact of students' perception statements on students' satisfaction with online classes as well as significant relationship between students' satisfaction with online classes and perception statements. The model is given below;

Table 3
Regression Model

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error		
(Constant)	3.549	.322	11.011	.000
X1	-.0334	.090	-3.711	.000
X2	0.076	.070	1.092	.276
X3	0.080	.055	1.393	.166
X4	0.427	.080	5.839	.000
X5	0.038	.067	.565	.573
X6	-0.306	.058	-5.305	.000
X7	-0.025	.058	-4.444	.000
X8	-0.403	.072	-5.596	.000
X9	0.464	.055	8.427	.000

$$Y=3.54+0.334x_1+0.076x_2+0.080x_3+0.427x_4+0.038x_5+0.306x_6+0.025x_7+0.403x_8+0.464x_9+e$$

Where,

Y = Online students are satisfied with classes

x₁= I feel I learned as much in my online classes as I have in my face-to-face classes, x₂= Online Classes are understandable, x₃= Online classes are appropriate in theory subjects, x₄= Online Classes are appropriate in practical subjects, x₅= Online classes are quick, x₆= Online classes are easy/comfort, x₇= Online classes have Faculty-to-Student Interactions as face to face classes, x₈ = On line faculty provides necessary materials and notes, and x₉= Online Faculty provide good quality Feedback.

This regression model has revealed that statement x₉ (Online Faculty provide good quality Feedback) has given highest impact on students' satisfaction with online classes. The ninth statement has indicated that if one-unit changes in this statement, satisfaction of students with online classes increases by 0.464, whereas statement x₇ (Online classes have Faculty-to-Student Interactions as face to face classes "0.025") has given lowest impact on students' satisfaction with online classes.

Statements x₁(I feel I learned as much in my online classes as I have in my face-to-face classes), x₄(Online Classes are appropriate in practical subjects), x₆(Online classes are easy/comfort), x₇ (Online classes have Faculty-to-Student Interactions as face to face classes), x₈ (On line faculty provides necessary materials and notes) and x₉ (Online Faculty provide good quality Feedback) found significant relationship with students' satisfaction with online classes at both 95% and 99% confidence level because p value of t statistic found 0.000 in statements x₁, x₄, x₆, x₇, X₈ and x₉. However remaining statements x₂, x₃, and x₅ are not found significant relationship with students' satisfaction with online classes.

Discussion

The result of this study regarding online classes found moderate to strongly agree regarding all seven statements “Online Classes are understandable (4.03)”, ninth statement “Online Faculty provide good quality Feedback(3.83)”, third statement “Online classes are appropriate in theory subjects (3.51)”, fifth statement ”Online classes are quick (to complete the course, 3.50)”, eight statement "online faculty provides necessary materials and notes, (3.49)" sixth statement "Online classes are easy/comfort (3.45)", first statement “I feel I learned as much in my online classes as I have in my face-to-face classes (3.03)”, it means the research result of this study is looked so similar with the research result done by Mahat (2021), he stated that more than 59% respondents believed that online class was one of the easiest platforms to share the knowledge and collect the required information. Most of the respondents intended to use online-class platform to enhance their learning and communication skill. He conducted on "Students’ Perception towards Online-Class during COVID-19 Pandemic" in the public (Shanker Dev Campus) and Private (Times International Collage) collage of Kathmandu District.

However, research results of Gupta et.al. (2020), Thapa et.al. (2021), and Acharya et.al (2021) found different, Gupta et.al. (2020) found that 55.4% students were disagreed about online classes are more effective. They had conducted research study on "Perception of Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) students of Kathmandu University on online learning during COVID-19 pandemic". Likewise, Thapa et al. (2021) conducted research study on "Nursing students’ attitude on the practice of e-learning: A cross-sectional survey amid COVID-19 in Nepal" and only about 34% of the students found e-learning as effective as traditional face-to-face learning that is not similar with the result of this study. Acharya et al. (2021) found that 64.6% of the respondents were unsatisfied with online classes. They had conducted study on "Digital learning Initiatives, Challenges and Achievement in Higher Education in Nepal Amidst COVID-19".

Similarly, this study found that students are satisfied in both statements (“Online classes should be continued in future” and “Online students are satisfied with classes”) because they have put their agreement at moderate and agreement rate value, which results look so similar with the research result done by Rana and Shrestha (2021) and Shaid et al., (2021). However, Rana and Shrestha (2021) had done in nursing campuses, they found more than half (56%) of students were satisfied with online learning. Students' satisfaction is one of important factors for effective outcome from online learning. So, E-learning is a good opportunity to continue education in future. Shaid et al., (2021) found that about 58.5% of the students were satisfied or fully satisfied towards the online classes being conducted. But Karki et al., (2021) conducted among 206 students of Shanker Dev Campus studying in Master level in Nepal finding revealed that majority of the student’s found physical class was more effective than online class in terms of accessibility, easy to use resources, and importance to enhance teaching-learning habit. Likewise, Ansar et al., (2020) found that overall, 78% of students were dissatisfied from online learning which has been implemented across all the universities of Pakistan in the wake of COVID-19 lockdown.

Conclusion and Implication

This research study has concluded that online classes are found effective and students are satisfied also however, online classes are not found effective for the practical subject and it showed poor interaction between faculties and students. Statement x9 (Online Faculty provide good quality Feedback) has given highest impact on students' satisfaction with online classes. However, Universities and campuses need to improve the online classes though making more interactive between teachers and students as well as interesting also. This is the age of IT (Information Technology), so need to develop the online courses and syllabus as nature of the subject (theory and practical). Online classes help to reduce the cost and time of transportation and it facilitates to provides better education from the qualified and well experienced faculties to those students who are living in the remote areas. We both academic institutions and students can get the opportunities, if partial online classes as nature of subject can be imposed in the existing physical teaching system. Now, government and decision maker of University or campuses need to consider about some online classes also along with the physical classes for delivering the knowledge or courses to students. Students of remote area can get the benefits from such online classes. Qualified faculties of one campuses can deliver their knowledge, ideas, motivational information, experiences to all students of all campuses and provides the opportunities to both faculties and students for exchanging their knowledge and experiences.

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