Critical Investigation into Problems faced regarding Online Examination with respect to Management Education in Post COVID 19 Scenario

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Abstract

Education is a process where examination is the parameter to verify the effectiveness of education performance. An examination is an official test conducted to check the knowledge or ability in a particular subject. Traditionally these exams were conducted in classroom under supervision of appropriate authorities. Due to COVID19, this method was not useful and examination are conducted using online platform. The results of these examination are somewhat not expected. This research was conducted to investigate the problems faced during online examination. The study has revealed many unforeseen issues affecting overall motive of the examination and concluded that the current format of online examination cannot replace existing classroom examination due to various quality and security issues. However appropriately implemented measures to tackle these quality and security related concerns or challenges will certainly help to improve overall effectiveness of online examination and will bring the required flexibility and easiness in the examination process.

Keywords: Management Education, Online Examination, Problem Faced, Post COVID19

1.Introduction

"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world" – Nelson Mandela

Education is a process and the examination is the parameter to verify the effectiveness of education performance. An examination is an official test conducted to check the knowledge or ability in a particular subject. Generally, score in the examination is taken directly as a measure of knowledge in the specific subject. All the efforts put-in by teachers on teaching and the student on learning is focused on getting higher marks in examinations. Examinations have been dominating the process of education and plays significant role among the concern stakeholders. Number of expert committees and commissions had been formed time to time for suggesting required reforms in overall education system in general and in examinations in particular. Different universities and educational institutions had brought many new innovative practices for enhancing and improving quality and efficiency in the numerous processes of their examination systems, particularly its conduct, administration and evaluation pattern.

Even today many universities, colleges and educational institutions use traditional manual method for evaluating and assessing the students. In this, students appear for conventional method of exam in which theoretical question papers are distributed to students in exam hall for pre-decided time duration and specific marks. Based on different types of questions asked in question paper, students attempt various questions. An invigilator distributes answer sheets & question papers, supervises the conduct of exam and at the end, collects written answer sheets. Exam Centre takes responsibility for dispatching the same to Assessment / Evaluation Centre where these answer sheet shall be evaluated. Finally, marks score after moderation shall be entered in computer software system for preparing mark-sheets.

Online Examination System is a web application that establishes network between the educational institution and the students. Institution enters desired questions on the server which they expect to be asked in examination. These questions are displayed as a test to appearing students. Answers entered by students are assessed, evaluated and finally, their scores are calculated automatically and saved in the system. This score then can be accessed by the institution to determine the passes students or to evaluate their performance. Online Examination System is basically executed after realizing necessity and purpose which is ultimately beneficial for the education institution as well as the students' community by large. Online exams satisfy the requirements of education organizations in conducting exams online. Today many organizations are conducting online examinations worldwide successfully and issue results online.

Students can appear for their exams and review their results within quick time period. A student is expected to get himself / herself registered on concern website and submit examination details. Also, student is not required to physically visit a desired place or location in order to appear an exam.

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Hence, the system saves efforts, improve skills as well as save valuable time of both educational institution as well as student. However, the system shall consume lot of time if the examination is been introduced and implemented at the first time for usage.

2.Context of Research

In the Post COVID 19 Pandemic, Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) had introduced online examination for evaluation of student for full credit courses among various programmes including the MBA Programme. This online examination is objective in nature and consists of MCQs (multi choice questions). With respect to MBA Programme, there are sixty questions to be appeared by the students of which evaluation is done based of fifty questions. Students can appear all sixty MCQs, but best of fifty questions answered is considered. Online exam has weightage of fifty marks. Students are expected to appear for online examinations through respective login IDs and passwords. Online exam is conducted for all four semesters of M.B.A. Programme.

3.Methodology

1)Research Objectives:
- To examine the various technical problems faced regarding online examination as a tool of student evaluation with reference to Management Education in Post COVID 19 scenario
- To examine the various non-technical problems faced regarding online examination as a tool of student evaluation with reference to Management Education in Post COVID 19 scenario

2)Research Design: used descriptive research based on qualitative analysis.

3)Data Collection: Research was based on primary data collected through personal discussions and conducting semi-structured interviews with Chief Exam Officers (CEO) and faculty members of various management institutions offering MBA Programme located in Pune city.

4)Scope of Study:
- Study aimed to investigate and examine the different problems faced regarding online examination with reference to Management Education in Post COVID 19 scenario. These problems were broadly classified into technical problems and non-technical problems.
- Study was carried out from the view of faculty / staff members. Hence, faculty / staff appointed as Chief Exam Officer (CEO) and those involved into conduct and execution of University Examinations were contacted and covered.
- Study covered management institutions offering MBA Programme affiliated to Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) located in Pune city.

5)Sampling Plan:
- Population: Person (staff) appointed as Chief Exam Officer (CEO) and faculty members involved into conduct and execution of University Examinations in various management institutions offering MBA Programme located in Pune city.
- Sampling Frame: Chief Exam Officer (CEO) and faculty members working in management institutions affiliated to Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU).
- Sample Size: 26 respondents working in 17 management institutions.
- Sampling Method: Convenience Method

6)Limitations of study
- Research was limited to management institutions offering MBA Programme.
- Research was limited to institutions located in Pune city.
- Research was limited to online examination conducted during Post COVID 19 scenario.

4. Observations and Discussions

1) Technical Problems:

a)Registration for examination

- ·Login and password not received – All the MBA students appearing for examination are supposed to register for exam using the portal of SPPU. During registration process, student is expected to submit the email ID for further communication of credentials (User ID & Password) to appear for examination. Sometimes it is observed that students do not receive the credentials in time. In such cases, institute cannot help student as institutes are not involved directly in this process. Students need to co-ordinate with SPPU exam function directly to get the credentials. This leads in wasting the time which can be used for preparation of examination.

b)Execution of examination

Two important factors to execute online examinations are –

1) Connectivity – Continuous Internet connection at appropriate speed

2) Compatibility – Compatibility of device used by students to attend examination

Absence of any of these factors results in one or more challenges faced by students.

- Site not reachable – Students are not able to connect to examination portal.
- Unable to login – Examination portal is accessible but students are not able to connect to session even after using correct credentials.
- Unable to use UI (User Interface) – Students are not be select the options provided on the screen (User Interface). Application / screens becomes unresponsive.
- Session Continuation – Even after getting connected to examination session, sometimes students get logged off automatically, system tries reconnection which some time succeeds, sometimes fails and system keeps retrying.
- Session termination and auto submission of progress - Sometimes active session gets terminated abruptly and the progress gets submitted automatically

2) Non-Technical Problems:

- Authenticity is doubt – As the exam are not invigilated, it raises the question on overall authenticity of examination. It is observed that the overall result / score is drastically improved compared to earlier exams which were conducted in vigilant mode.
- Copy very easy – The basic principle of current examination policy is 'closed book'. However, with these online examinations, this principle is difficult to practice. Students can and are referring to books during exams which is evident by the analysis of the examination score. Many students have got 100% score (some times more than 100% as students have attempted all the questions including optional ones) in multiple subjects.
- Some concepts not possible online examination – Knowledge of some concepts can not be assessed in MCQ format
- Not possible to cover every concept – Difficult to combine various concepts to incorporate in MCQ
- Confusions among options – Having very thin line in the options provided leads to confusion
- Designing MCQ not easy - It is an art. Considering the current syllabus of MBA, it is very difficult to assess the knowledge of student with the level of MCQ currently followed

5.Conclusion

- Overall purpose of MBA courses is to make student aware of various concepts / methodologies in management which students should understand and apply in Industry after completing the academics. The purpose of MBA examinations is to assess knowledge acquired by student on these various concepts / methodologies and how they can apply these concepts / methodologies in practical situations. However current format of online examination is not helping to meet the objective of the examination.
- Considering the current situation of epidemic and the limitations current format of online examinations is playing the role of workaround but this is not a permanent solution. However, considering the current challenges observed during study of this research and the advantages of online examination (e.g. flexibility, ease of execution, less resource requirements) a complete new format of online examination, instead of or additional to existing MCQ will certainly help. New online format should support Subjective assessment instead of Objective assessment only.

6.Suggestions

After having detailed analysis on the challenges found through rounds of discussions with various Chief Exam Officers (CEO) and faculty members of various management institutions offering MBA courses, Researcher has concluded that current online examination needs a revision considering points mentioned below –

1)Preparing for Examination

a.Preparing students for online examination

   i.Students needs to be trained on actual implementation of concepts in the form of case studies

   ii.Case studies should be different for trainings and actual examinations

b.Need to have a complete revision of Online examination.

   i.Instead of current approach of MCQ (Objective), Subjective type of examinations should be conducted using online platform.

   ii.Instead of definitions, focus should be on understanding and application of concept

   iii.Scenario based examination

   iv.Instead of a common set of questions, random selection of questions from the database should be applied

2) Conducting examination

a. Selection of online platform

   i.Cloud based online examination platform

   ii.Mandatory check for pre-requisites

   iii.Appropriate security features such as using biometric for student identification

b.Conducting online examination

   i.Validation of technical Pre-requisites before examination

   ii.Enablement of additional security features such disallow usage of additional display, no shift of windows during examination, no paste option available etc.

   iii.Enablement of video proctor to maintain authenticity for online examination

   iv.Random selection of cases and questions

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