STUDENTS' PERCEPTION TOWARDS ONLINE EXAMINATIONS OF UNIVERSITY

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Abstract
Earlier it was a very time consuming and tedious process where both students as well as university used to perform all tasks manually be it Student Registration, Setting Question Papers, Setting Schedules to finally declaring the result. It was cumbersome since these details were now generated, managed and kept in computers. It was still not that much simpler Later the process became a lot easier when computer system were introduced and all for students because they were still expected to come in person to register, appear for exam at exam center and for all those formalities. Now we are expected to develop a web application which converts all of these tasks atomized as well as web enabled. The examination department is responsible for the marinating of question paper and it would be completely secure. This is the era of computer and we are adopting fast mechanism to solve any problem. In this direction, the researchers made an attempt to study the Student"s perception on online examinations of conducted by the University.

Keywords: Assessment, Online exam, Perception, Satisfaction, Internet based exam.

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Introduction
To examine somebody or something is to inspect closely; hence, an examination is a detailed inspection or analysis of an object or person. In an academic or professional context, examinations (or exams in short) are tests which aim at determining the ability of a student or a prospective practitioner. Exams are usually written tests, although some may be practical or have practical components, and vary greatly in structure, content and difficulty depending on the subject, the age group of the tested persons and the profession. A person who passes an examination receives a diploma, a driving or professional license, depending on the examination's objectives. A competitive examination is an examination where applicants compete for a limited number of positions, as opposed to merely having to reach a certain level to pass.
A comprehensive examination is a specific type of exam taken by graduate students, which may determine their eligibility to continue their studies. An examination is usually supervised by an invigilator. The invigilator is responsible for the smooth running of the examination, and for ensuring that there is no cheating.

Objectives of the study
The present study is being undertaken with the following objectives:
1. To identify the different methods of University Examinations
2. To exhibit the students' perception towards online examinations
3. To know the Satisfaction Level on Current Online Examination

Research methodology
The study is both descriptive and analytical in nature. For research primary and secondary data were gathered. The random sampling method is used to collect the Primary data. Out of the large student population, a randomized approach was adopted to collect response from students who has undergone the just completed examination (both offline and Online).

TABLE – 1: sample Size: for online examination

Sl No	Zone	No. of Questionn-aires Expected	Filled in Questionn-aires received	Gross Response Rate	Rejected Questionn-aires	Usable Questionn-aires	Effective Response Rate
1	North	60	50	83.3%	6	44	73.3%
2	South	60	57	95.0%	3	54	90.0%
3	East	60	46	76.7%	4	42	70.0%
4	West	60	48	80.0%	7	41	68.3%
	Total	**240**	**201**	**83.8%**	**20**	**181**	**75.4%**

TABLE – 2: sample size: for offline examination

Sl No	Zone	No. of Questionnaires Expected	Filled in Questionnaires received	Gross Response Rate	Rejected Questionnaires	Usable Questionnaires	Effective Response Rate
1	North	60	52	86.7%	2	50	83.3%
2	South	60	54	90.0%	5	49	81.7%
3	East	60	48	80.0%	7	41	68.3%
4	West	60	48	80.0%	5	43	71.7%
	Total	**240**	**202**	**84.2%**	**19**	**183**	**76.3%**

Theoretical background

There are many ways of assessing a learner. It may vary from orally asking questions to written, presentation, viva or seminar. However, all these are aimed at evaluating the learner to know how much he has understood the studied concept. These assessments may be classified into Direct Assessments and Indirect Assessments.

1. **Direct Assessment**

This method comprises of various face-to-face interactions of the learner with the evaluation team. It comprises:

- Oral Questions
- Viva
- Presentations
- Seminars
- Practical exams

2. **Indirect Assessment**

This includes various indirect methods of evaluating the students to analyze their level of understanding. It comprises

- Written Examination
- Online Examination

Online Assessment: Principles and Practices

Learner assessment has a foundation of good practice whether it takes place online or face-to-face (Dirks 1997; Zvacek 1999). Assessment is usually intended to provide both instructors and learners with information on progress and to measure achievement of learning goals. Formative assessments provide ongoing feedback to improve instruction and learning. Summative assessments are made to assign value to what has been learned (Australian National Training Authority 1999; Hopper 1998). Principles of good assessment include validity (does it measure what is intended?), reliability (does it consistently produce the same information?), flexibility (are various methods and approaches used to accommodate diverse needs?), and fairness (is it free from biases?) (ANTA 1999; Juchnowski and Atkins 1999), the quality of test construction matters because assessment has multiple purposes and multiple methods are needed.

Advantages

Online assessment offers a number of advantages (Assessing Students.1999; Juchnowski and Atkins 1999; Ravitz 1998). They are:

- Ease of distribution
- Timeliness (when the assessment is available and how long it is available)
- Provision of feedback scores and explanations may be given immediately; e-mail allows for both individual and group feedback; learner feedback to the instructor can be incorporated immediately into the course.
- Links to tracking and management systems
- Interactivity

If WWW-based learning systems simply mirror the pragmatic weaknesses in the assessment process practiced by educators in traditional settings, there will be a lack of emphasis on the special advantages that the computer can provide. (Hopper 1998). Assessment at a distance should take advantage of the best features of the online environment. Nelson (1998) describes the Web's potential for real world, authentic performance assessments. Web-based assessment enables true scaffolding (Hazari and Schnorr 1999); for example, an instructor can develop critical thinking questions based on the content and tenor of online discussion, rather than having a predetermined set of questions. The online environment enables learners to regulate and monitor their own learning (Hazari and Schnorr 1999; Ravitz 1998). Informal quizzes can give learners instant feedback to gauge their understanding of a topic; hyperlinks can lead learners to sources that explain incorrect answers. With its flexible participation structures, the Internet allows learners to pace their own activities, share information at opportune times, receive feedback and interact with Information access/management (database development, bibliography, problem solving) Demonstrating knowledge (written exam with local proctors, quick feedback through multiple choice, true/false, matching, short answer test)

- Communicating (debate, role play, PowerPoint presentation, report journal, essay)

others, all while building a permanent record of their activities and what they have learned (Ravitz 1998).

The unique characteristics of the Web as a hyper medium give online learning environments the potential to facilitate dialogue between learners and materials, their instructors, and fellow learners (Wild and Omari 1996). The learning community model enables learners to conduct collaborative projects, engage in teamwork, and adopt a variety of roles on all aspects of the contemporary workplace (Marshall 2000). Assessments of qualitative aspects such as coherence and comprehensiveness of projects, team functioning, and interpersonal skills can thus reflect how learners will be evaluated in the world of work.

Integration of content, online tasks and assessment are essential elements. Hedberg and Corrent-Agostinho (2000) describe how Web-based group project tasks were completed at various intervals during a course rather than at the end of the semester. The tasks thus became resources that learners accessed to assist them with the final group project.

Types of online assessment

A variety of methods may be used online to assess learners in the following areas (Morgan and O'Reilly 1999):

- Critical thinking (essays, reports, reflective journals)
- Problem solving (multimedia or text-based scenarios, simulations using CD-ROM, videoconferencing)
- Demonstratingtechniques (videoconferencing, verification by workplace mentor, site monitor).
- Self-management (journal, autobiography, portfolio, learning contract)

- Designing, creating (portfolios, projects using video or the Web)

Teamwork and collaboration (e-mail, listserv, or conferencing discussions/ debates)

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY
Table – 3: Infrastructure Facilities for Online Examination

Infrastructure Rating	Total
Excellent	41
Good	100
Normal	36
Poor	5
Very Poor	1
Grand Total	183

Source: Field survey data

The respondents were asked to rate the infrastructure facilities provided for the Online Examination. Out of the 183 Respondents, 100 respondents rated the facilities as GOOD rating 55% of the overall, while 41 respondents rated Excellent which is 22% of the total. Only 20% of the respondents rated Normal . However, less than 4% (6 respondents) have rated negatively for the Infrastructure facilities. Overall 77% respondents rated the Infrastructure facilites as Above average .

Table 4: Administration of Online Examination

Source: Field survey data

Out of the 183 Respondents, 95 respondents have rated the Exam Administration as

Table-6: Network Connectivity in Online Examination

Network connectivity Rating	Total
Best Speed with Continuous Connectivity	43
Giving problem once or twice	4
Good connectivity	84
No problem	50
Often giving problem	2
Grand Total	183

Source: Field survey data

Good amounting to 52%, while 56 respondents have rated Excellent which is 30% of the total. 24 respondents have rated the Exam Administration as normal while only 8 have rated it negatively. The Negative response is 5% of the total responses. Overall 82% have appreciated the Exam Administration.

Table 5: Comfort of Answering in Online Examination

Rating of Comfort of answering	Total
Bad	5
Best in Industry	19
Better	103
Upto the Expectation	55
Very Bad	1
Grand Total	183

Source: Field survey data

For the rating on Comfort of Answering during Examination, 66% have appreciated with Better and Best in Industry . Out of total 183 responses, 19 have rated it as Best in the Industry while 103 have rated it as Better leading to 56% and 10% respectively. 30% of the respondents have rated Up to the Expectation . However, 4% have rated it negatively saying 3% as Bad while 1% rated it to be Very Bad .

The network connectivity is the major backbone of the Online Examination. The connectivity issues create havoc in the Examination. The respondents were asked to rate the Network Connectivity and overall 70% appreciated when 3% negated the rating. However, 27% said No Problem in the Connectivity, 84 Respondents rated it as Good Connectivity while 43 respondents rated it as Best Speed with Continuous Connectivity . However, 4 (2%) respondents rated it as Giving Problem once or twice and 2 (1%) as Often Giving Problem .

Table – 7: Satisfaction Level on Current Online Examination

Sl. No.	Statement	Excellent 5	Good 4	Normal 3	Poor 2	Very Poor 1	Total	Mean	.D
1.	The Infrastructure facilities	41 (22.4%)	100 (54.6%)	36 (19.7%)	5 (2.7%)	1 (0.5%)	183 (100%)	3.96	0.76
2.	The administration of the examination	56 (30.6%)	95 (51.9%)	24 (13.1%)	5 (2.7%)	3 (1.6%)	183 (100%)	4.07	0.83
3.	The Comfort of answering examination	19 (10.4%)	103 (56.3%)	55 (30.1%)	5 (2.7%)	1 (0.5%)	183 (100%)	3.73	0.70
4.	The Network Connectivity	43 (23.5%)	84 (45.9%)	50 (27.3%)	4 (2.2%)	2 (1.1%)	183 (100%)	3.89	0.83

Source: Field survey data

In the course of the survey, Four questions were asked to capture the overall performance of the current Online Examination administration satisfaction level. The responses were captured in 5 point Likert Response format (Excellent =5; Good = 4; Normal = 3; Poor = 2; Very Poor = 1) across the Four perceptual dimensions revealed that, the respondents are satisfied with the Online Exam Administration. The Mean Values of each Variable ranging from 4.07 to 3.73 indicates that respondents are indication of this. The Standard Deviation value within 0 – 1 indicates that, most of the respondents are near to the Mean Value.

Table 8: Age-wise Acceptance of Online Examination

Age	If provided with Online Examination			
	Accept It	Not known	Reject It	Grand Total
<25	46	6	13	65
25-30	52	1	12	65
30-35	22	3	6	31
35-40	10		1	11
>40	9			9
Grand Total	139 (76.8%)	10 (5.5%)	32 (17.7%)	181

Source: Field survey data

Students of Offline Examination were asked to respond about their willingness to take Online Examination, if provided. The responses were grouped into different age groups and of all the age groups, acceptance was observed above 75%. Overall acceptance is 76.8% while rejection is just 17.7% and 5.5% were not sure about the Online Examination Acceptance. The increasing age group has a positive effect on the acceptance of the Online Examination.

Table 9: Sex-wise Acceptance of Online Examination

Sex	If provided with Online Examination,			
	Accept It	Not known	Reject It	Grand Total
Female	63	6	13	82
Male	76	4	19	99
Grand Total	139	10	32	181

Source: Field survey data

Out of the 181 respondents, sex-wise acceptance of Online Examination revealed that, there is no major difference in acceptance of Online Examination by both genders. Nearly 80% of the Male and Female are accepting the Online Examination and nearly 18% of both are against the Online Examination. However, 2% of both have not responded on the Acceptance criteria.

Table 10: Program-wise Acceptance of Online Examination

Program Studying	If provided with Online Examination,			
	Accept It	Not known	Reject It	Grand Total
Allied Health	7			7
Hospitality and Tourism	5		8	13
Information Technology	47	2	4	53
Journalism	2		1	3
Management and commerce	74	8	19	101
Others	4			4

Grand Total	139	10	32	181

Source: Field survey data

The Program-wise breakup of the Acceptance of Online Examination revealed the fact that, except Hospitality and Tourism, all program students are more willing to accept the Online Examination. When it is 100% in Allied Health and Others, it is nearly 80% in Information Technology, Management and Commerce, and Journalism.

Table- 11: Program-wise Requirement for Appearing for Online Examination

Program-wise Requirement for Appearing for Online Examination						
	Requirement for Appearing Online Examination					
Program Studying	Can Appear without Training or Demo	Demo Only	Not Sure	Not willing	Training with Demo	Grand Total
Allied Health		3			4	7
Hospitality and Tourism		1	1	7	4	13
Information Technology	13	7	5	2	26	53
Journalism			1	1	1	3
Management and commerce	5	8	12	18	58	101
Others	3				1	4
Grand Total	21 (11.6%)	19 (10.5%)	19 (10.5%)	28 (15.5%)	94 (51.9%)	181

Source: Field survey data

The Respondents were asked about their requirement for appearing for the Online Examination. Whether they can appear directly without any support or they require support in the form of Demo/Training, etc. Out of 181 respondents, 11.6% can appear with any training or Demo while 10.5% require demo of the Online Examination to know about it. 94 require Training with Demo leading to 51.9% of the total. However, 10.5% are not sure about their requirement while 15.5% are not willing to appear for the online examination.

Of the Program wise breakup, majority of the Information Technology course students can appear without training or Demo, majority of the Management and Commerce students can appear with Training and Demo. The rejection rate and unknown rate is comparatively less in case of Information Technology students.

Table-12: Residential Impact on Online Examination Acceptance

Coming From	If provided with Online Examination			
	Accept It	Not known	Reject It	Grand Total
Metropolitan	31	4	9	44
Rural	39	2	8	49
Urban	69	4	15	88
Grand Total	139	10	32	181

Source: Field survey data

There is not much difference acceptance of Online Examination based on the residential status. There is equal level of acceptance in the Metropolitan, rural and urban students for the Online Examination. This may be due to the current development of communication and IT in India.

Conclusion

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In the competitive era, each and every University is looking towards the qualitative and cost-effective methods of examination to implement with. The increasing number of students and the number of exam papers, it is a must to the University to go for online examination. However, it is like a twin-edged sword, where there are benefits as well as the problems. The University should carefully design its online examination strategy eliminating all such problems and reap the benefits of the technology and the students need simultaneously.

Few Universities are also thinking on the new model of Online Examination – i.e. On-Demand Examination. In this mode of examination, the legacy system of announcing single Examination time-table by the University is removed. Instead, students will select the Examination date and time with available venue and reserve the schedule. This schedule opted will be approved/rejected based on the affordability and availability of the seats. The communication in this regard will be sent to the individual student. The approved students will get the Admit Card for the schedule booked by them. The Examination venues can be fixed at Zonal Offices, Regional Centers or Colleges where the required infrastructure and other facilities are available. However, the facilities should be available at least for 30-60 days in a stretch, so that students get a flexibility to fix the schedule.

In a University where the students are required to complete the minimum hours of study and submit the assignments before writing examination, the Examination process can be tuned in such a way that, the admissions can be kept open for the full year and students who enroll for a course ear-marked for on-demand examination, should pass-through the minimum required study hours and submit the assignments. Only after both these are completed, the University authorities can approve the student for the On-demand examination, which will be open for the scheduled time period or for the whole year.

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