



DETAILED FEEDBACK ANALYSIS REPORT OF STAKEHOLDERS ON TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS AT IGNOU: (2020-2021)



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The Centre for Internal Quality Assurance (CIQA) had developed tools for obtaining feedback from all stakeholders on the teaching-learning process during the year 2020-21. The data collected from the teachers, academics and academic counsellors were compiled into Feedback Analysis Reports by CIQA and Regional Services Division, namely:

1. Feedback Analysis Report of Teachers (2020-2021)
2. Feedback Analysis Report of Academics (2020-2021)
3. Feedback Analysis Report of Academic Counsellors (2020-2021)

CIQA has prepared a **DETAILED FEEDBACK ANALYSIS REPORT OF STAKEHOLDERS ON TEACHING-LEARNING PROCESS AT IGNOU: (2020-2021)** by analyzing the data presented in the above mentioned Reports.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a nationwide lockdown leading to the closure of all academic institutions. This necessitated the Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU), India to continue its teaching-learning activities using online/ digital means. The present study was undertaken with the objective of analyzing the teachers', academics', and academic counsellors' perceptions regarding their online teaching-learning experiences during the lockdown and their use of online methods for: the transaction of the curriculum; academic support; formative and summative evaluation of the learners; and their suggestions for the further improvement of the online teaching-learning processes. This paper presents the findings of this empirical research study of the IGNOU. Majority of the respondents agreed that digital technologies are effective for engaging learners in teaching- learning (61.1%); most digital technologies are effective for transaction of content, knowledge building and skill development (57.9%). Majority of the respondents agreed that the learners were appreciative of the facility to submit their assignments and projects online (66.7%); and the online assignment and project submission mechanism had been a successful initiative (67.9%). Majority of the respondents agreed that online and on-demand term-end examination should replace pen and paper-based examinations. It was found that age of teachers, academics and academic counsellors was significantly associated with their perception on online teaching- learning and evaluation process. The results revealed that the major stakeholders had expressed their ease of use and adoption of online technologies for teaching, learning and evaluation process which has now become the new normal for the University and its learners.

INTRODUCTION

There has been a paradigm shift in the educational system in recent years, whether it is in the curriculum or instructional design. Government of India initiatives, such as i) an indigenous IT Platform for hosting Indian Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) titled *SWAYAM* (Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds); ii) University Grants Commission (UGC) Regulations for offering open and distance learning and online courses, iii) establishment of the a digital depository (National Academic Depository- (NAD) for school leaving certificates, degrees and other academic awards of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs); iv) implementing the National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT); v) rolling out of a New Education Policy, 2020; vi) *SWAYAM PRABHA* for telecasting high quality educational programmes through Direct to Home (DTH) channels in Indian languages; vii) ranking of HEIs annually based on credible and verifiable data through NIRF (National Institutional Ranking Framework); viii) revisiting the assessment and accreditation process for HEIs by integrating advanced ICT based methods; among others; which set the pace for the next level in the Indian education system (Srivastava and Suman, 2018).

Lockdown due to COVID pandemic had brought the educational system particularly the conventional system to a standstill. However, it did not affect the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) system in a big way since use of technology was already in practice though not in an extensive way. However, the COVID pandemic came as a blessing in disguise compelling the educational institutions to adopt technology as the only viable tool for the teaching- learning process.

Prior to COVID pandemic, the instruction at IGNOU for ODL programmes was provided primarily through self-learning materials (SLMs) in print which were also available online on the web-based repository (e-Gyankosh and IGNOU e-Content App). The SLM were supplemented with audio and video programmes broadcast and telecast through IGNOU transmission channels viz. GyanVani (broadcast channel) and GyanDarshan and *SWAYAMPRAHBA* (telecast channels). The distance learner was also provided face-to-face academic counselling at Learner Support Centres (LSCs) and Overseas Study Centres (OSCs) for two-way interaction with academic counsellors and peers. Counselling support was also provided through teleconferencing (GyanDarshan TV Channel); interactive radio counselling (FM channels); web-based internet radio (GyanDhara). IGNOU was also offering online programmes hosted on the IGNOU's e-platform (IGNOU LMS) and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) on the *SWAYAM* platform.

At IGNOU, teachers, academics and academic counsellors are the major functionaries involved in conceptualization and development of need-based educational programmes, transacting the curricula, providing academic support to the dispersed distance learners through the organization of academic counselling; assessing and evaluating the performance of the learners.

Faculty develop self-learning materials (SLMs) in print or online in various formats such as e-SLMs, audio programs, MOOCs, open educational resources, and more. Furthermore, teachers conduct extensive research in order to stay up to date with developments in the field, as well as supervise the research work of their learners/research scholars. They develop tools for formative and summative assessment, evaluate the learners' performance, and document and track their progress. Additionally, the teachers offer guidance to distance learners via a variety of electronic/digital platforms.

The University's academics are predominantly engaged in academic activities related to admission, supporting the learning endeavors of learners at IGNOU, such as informing, advising, and counselling learners (pre-admission, post-completion); organizing and monitoring the conduct of academic counselling sessions; resolving grievances; conducting telecasts, broadcasts, webcasts; producing audio and video contents; building databases; and research related to the delivery of the programmes.

Counselling sessions are conducted at the LSCs and OSCs by the academic counsellors to help learners in their learning process by supplementing the academic content; resolving their queries; solving their doubts; and evaluating their performance through various tools of formative assessment. The academic counsellors are providing part-time services to the University as they are working as full time teachers in the conventional system.

THE CHANGED SCENARIO

The Government of India declared a nationwide lockdown to prevent the spread of COVID. The COVID pandemic lockdown and restrictions had changed the educational scenario topsy-turvy. The educational institutions (both conventional and ODL) were forced to adopt ICT tools for teaching- learning process. On 23rd March 2020, the University advised its teachers, academics, and non-teaching staff to work from home. As a consequence, IGNOU had to adapt alternative strategies to meet the requirements of the learners by implementing online methods for delivering SLM and providing tutoring and counselling services. The lockdown conditions restricted the University from delivering the SLM at the doorsteps of the learners. As an immediate solution, the University provided soft copies of the SLM to its learners on the IGNOU eContent Mobile App and directed the learners to access the SLM available in the eGyankosh web portal. Additionally, academic content was broadcast via scheduled radio broadcasts on GyanVani and GyanDhara, and regularly scheduled telecasts on GyanDarshan and SWAYAM PRABHA channels. Face-to-face counselling sessions were suspended and replaced with counselling through electronic channels namely: interactive radio counselling; Web-enabled Academic Support (WEAS) portal; and Social Media such as FaceBook, YouTube, WhatsApp, etc. and other online digital platforms such as Google Meet, WebEx, Zoom, etc . These counselling sessions were conducted by the teachers of the University and academic counsellors confined to their homes.

Even though this alarming situation had compelled the educational institutions to adopt online modes of delivery, it was essential to get the opinion from the major stakeholders (teachers, academics and academic counsellors) who were involved in this process. In this way, we could come to a conclusion about the viability of online pedagogy to deliver educational programmes cost-effectively and effectively to the unreached. This study focuses on getting the feedback and opinions about the online teaching and learning process with major emphasis on the quality of the services provided by the teachers, academics and academic counsellors with respect to different aspects of teaching-learning, counselling, and evaluation.

RELATED STUDIES

A research field of great interest for researchers has been the impact of the pandemic on education, the teaching-learning process, and stakeholders namely: universities, teachers, and students.

Naik *et. al.* (2021) investigated the efficacy of online teaching-learning process with the stakeholders of all higher education courses. Two-thirds of students were unable to participate in the online classes due to lack of technical and infrastructure support, power supply, and network data. Study results indicated that practical topics were difficult to comprehend online, but theoretical subjects were easy. Morning time was preferred for online classes by most of the students. Several students felt that some sections covered online during the lockdown period need to be redone in the face-to-face classes post-lockdown.

The universities did not provide optimal conditions for online learning. Teachers, students, and universities (69.4%) were unprepared for the abrupt migration to online method of education. They encountered technical problems frequently with the platforms provided by the universities due to poor connectivity. Many students reported that they were overloaded and had less free time during online learning (Coman *et. al.*, 2020).

Technology advancements, penetration, and innovation were evidently steered forward by the pandemic. In order to continue its activities and carry out its teaching-learning and student support functions uninterrupted, IGNOU has migrated from LSC-based face-to-face counselling and tutoring to online tutoring and counselling for its 11 lakh students. The University faculty at its Headquarters, and the academics at its Regional Centres conducted counselling using Google Meet, Zoom, YouTube, Facebook Live and Cisco WebEx platforms. In addition to the online tools, the broadcast and telecast media of the University were used extensively (Srivastava *et al.*, 2020).

Jena (2020) conducted an analysis of educators' perceptions of online courses during the lockdown period, observing they were content with how their time was utilized to conduct online classes, although initially they had to learn how to conduct online classes. Additionally, he reported poor attendance and low interaction during online sessions, which may have been caused by poor audio and video quality or

poor internet connectivity. An advantage of online sessions was that they can be recorded, edited, and uploaded to the institution's website so that the distance learners can access them at their convenience and learn at their own pace.

Gopal *et. al.* (2021) opined that the high level of satisfaction and performance of students' in the online classes was dependent on the four factors *viz.* quality of instruction, course design, prompt feedback, and students' expectations.

Based on the observations of professors and learners during the COVID-19 pandemic in Morocco, Elfirdoussi *et. al.* (2020) concluded that online learning was not more interesting than traditional learning and professors must teach at least 50% of their lectures through face-to-face instruction.

Kulal and Nayak (2020) reported that though students were comfortable with online classes, it cannot replace traditional classroom learning due to technical difficulties encountered and lack of proper knowledge and training on conducting online classes by their teachers.

According to the Mishra *et. al.*, 2020, to teach online through online mode, excellent domain knowledge, proficient computer skills, clear communication skills, and emotional connection to students are necessary.

HEIs are compelled to explore and adopt new technological interventions in all of their operations and pedagogical approaches that suit the evolving ecosystem to meet the requirements of new generation learners. It was also foreseen that the demand for online education was bound to increase in India with internet penetration getting better and cheaper (Srivastava & Suman, 2018). Though the authors did not foresee the advent of a pandemic that would trigger the online education in India irrespective of the target group, they have visualized that online education is a viable alternative for Indian learners to improve their knowledge and skills. The researchers had also addressed the issue of the digital divide and proposed the concept of Digital Learning Hubs (DLH), where learners could access computers with internet connections, utilize Wi-Fi facility, participate in online discussion forums, web conferencing, view video on demand (VoD) and pre-recorded lectures, surf the net, utilize online resources, e-libraries, prepare and submit assignments online, participate in online group activities and projects, attempt online tests and appear for proctored term-end examinations both online and if required offline.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Sudden exposure to the use of online teaching technologies on a mass scale by the teachers, academics and academic counsellors aroused the interest of the researchers to understand the paradigm shift in the teaching-learning process that occurred during the pandemic period. The present study aims to understand the impact of the shift on the teachers, academics and academic counsellors of the University while planning and executing the changed methods of teaching, learning and evaluation.

This study aims to:

- elicit the feedback of the teachers, academics, and academic counsellors on the transition to online/ digital mode for teaching, learning and evaluation during the lockdown period;
- analyze the teachers', academics', and academic counsellors' perceptions regarding the use of online methods for the transaction of the curricula; academic support; and formative and summative evaluation of the learners; and
- recommend the way forward for adopting online teaching- learning processes at the University.

METHODOLOGY

The researchers conducted an online survey to seek the feedback from different stakeholders *viz.* the teachers, academics and the academic counsellors regarding the use of online mode for delivering academic content, providing counselling support, and evaluating the learners' performance.

Population

A total of 255 teachers serving at 21 Schools of Studies and STRIDE, 192 academics at IGNOU Headquarters and 56 Regional Centres, as well as academic counsellors at more than 1800 LSCs and 23 OSCs participated in the study.

Research Instruments Used

The instruments were composed of semi-structured questionnaires using Likert's scale, with the five options *viz.* Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neutral (N), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD) for the teachers, academics and academic counsellors. The questionnaires comprised three sections: i) the basic profile of the respondents; ii) respondent's perspective on online teaching-learning during pandemic and iii) open-ended questions seeking the suggestions from the respondents regarding the way forward for adopting online teaching- learning processes in the University.

Data Collection

Questionnaires were administered to the stakeholders using Google form by sharing the links on their personal email addresses. A total of 95 teachers, 84 academics and 1063 academic counsellors responded to the survey.

Data Analysis

Both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used to analyze the data collected and the outcomes were presented in the form of graphs and tables highlighting the findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of the study provided an insight into the perceptions of the teachers, academics and academic counsellors on the changes in the teaching-learning processes during the period of COVID pandemic. The researchers also analyzed the effect of age of the stakeholders on their perception towards the adoption of changed methods of teaching- learning. This section discusses the results and responses of the three categories of respondents i.e. teachers, academics and academic counsellors. The results are presented in four major sections viz. Demographic background of the respondents, Perspectives of Teachers, Perspectives of Academics and Perspectives of Academic Counsellors on Teaching-Learning and Evaluation Process of the University during the pandemic.

1. Demographic Background of the Respondents

The respondents' demographic profile viz. gender, age, and experience in the ODL system is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic background of the respondents

| S.N. | Demographic Background | Percentage | | |
|------|---------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|----------------------|
| | | Teachers | Academics | Academic Counsellors |
| 1) | Gender | Female | 51.6 | 31.3 |
| | | Male | 48.4 | 68.7 |
| 2) | Age Group | 25 to 35 years | 3.2 | 0.0 |
| | | 36 to 45 years | 31.2 | 32.2 |
| | | 46 to 55 years | 40.9 | 48.2 |
| | | 56 years and above | 24.7 | 20.6 |
| 3) | Experience in ODL system | Less than 5 years | 14.3 | 3.5 |
| | | 5-15 years | 44.4 | 57.2 |
| | | 16-25 years | 22.2 | 21.4 |
| | | Above 25 years | 19.1 | 17.9 |

Source: IGNOU (2021a); (2021b); (2021c)

The response rate of academics was slightly higher (43.8%) than that of the teachers (37.2%). Gender-wise responses revealed that majority of the respondents were males i.e. 68.7% and 63.6%, respectively in academics and academic counsellors, whereas in teachers, the sex ratio was 51.6% females: 48.4% males. Majority of the respondents belonged to the age group of 46-55 years in both teachers (40.9%) and academics (48.2%) whereas maximum academic counsellors (34.7%) belonged to the age group of 36-45 years. It was also found that majority of the respondents had working experience in ODL and Online system in range of 5-15 years i.e. 44.4% (teachers) and 57.2% (academics) followed by the work experience ranging from 16-25 years (22.2% in teachers and 21.4% in academics) whereas majority of the academic counsellors (55.9%) had less than five years of working experience in the ODL and Online system.

2. Perspectives of Teachers on Teaching-Learning and Evaluation Processes

The perspectives of teachers on teaching-learning and evaluation processes undertaken online during the pandemic lockdown with respect to the quality of SLM, academic counselling, assignment evaluation and term end examinations is presented in Table 2. The detailed analysis of the responses of the teachers on the statements is discussed below:

Table 2: Perspectives of Teachers on Teaching-Learning and Evaluation Processes

| S. No | Statement | SA | A | UD | DA | SDA | Mean |
|-------|--|------|------|------|------|-----|-------------|
| 1. | You are comfortable with providing online counselling through Google Meet/ Zoom etc. for interacting with the learners. | 52.6 | 38.9 | 4.2 | 3.2 | 1.1 | 4.39 |
| 2. | You like to provide live counselling through sessions on social media platforms like YouTube / Facebook etc. | 25.3 | 35.8 | 24.2 | 9.5 | 5.2 | 3.66 |
| 3. | Counselling sessions through YouTube/Facebook has limitation of not being able to interact with the teacher except through chat. | 33.7 | 50.5 | 8.4 | 6.3 | 1.1 | 4.09 |
| 4. | Teachers while teaching through online modes are not able to connect with the students at emotional level. | 21.1 | 36.8 | 13.7 | 24.2 | 4.3 | 3.46 |
| 5. | To clarify concepts through online counselling is more difficult than in F2F counselling sessions. | 16.8 | 38.9 | 9.5 | 30.5 | 4.2 | 3.34 |
| 6. | Learners keep on discussing their own issues simultaneously which makes the online counselling ineffective. | 11.6 | 32.6 | 18.9 | 31.6 | 5.3 | 3.14 |
| 7. | Developing a rapport online with the learners is better compared to pre- pandemic time. | 17.9 | 43.2 | 20 | 11.6 | 7.3 | 3.53 |
| 8. | Digital technologies are effective for engaging students in teaching-learning. | 24.4 | 61.1 | 8.3 | 5.2 | 1.0 | 4.02 |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----|---|------|------|------|------|------|-------------|
| 9. | Most digital technologies are effective for transaction of content: knowledge building and skill development. | 16.8 | 57.9 | 17.9 | 7.4 | 0 | 3.84 |
| 10. | Knowledge and skills about the use of digital technologies needs to be augmented through professional development. | 40 | 53.7 | 5.2 | 1.1 | 0 | 4.33 |
| 11. | Development of 'hands-on' skills for disciplines which require practice is not possible through technology. | 21.1 | 33.7 | 18.9 | 25.2 | 1.1 | 3.48 |
| 12. | With increasing use of technology and the internet usage, eSLM has the ability to replace the printed SLM. | 9.5 | 20 | 17.9 | 37.9 | 14.7 | 2.72 |
| 13. | Learners can be provided with the electronic gadgets like Tablet loaded with e-SLM which can also be used for attending online counselling sessions. | 18.9 | 51.6 | 11.6 | 14.7 | 3.2 | 3.68 |
| 14. | Self Assessment Questions in the SLM should be thought provoking (like scramble words, analyze the graph, crossword etc.) instead of simple objective or subjective questions which only help in recalling the content. | 31.6 | 46.3 | 15.8 | 4.2 | 2.1 | 4.01 |
| 15. | There is scope for online assessment of assignments. | 18.9 | 54.7 | 10.5 | 11.7 | 4.2 | 3.73 |
| 16. | Already existing OER can be adopted to replace the new programme / course development or updating the existing courses. | 9.5 | 47.4 | 20 | 22.1 | 1.0 | 3.42 |
| 17. | MOOCs can be adopted as replacement to the development of new course/revision of existing courses. | 12.6 | 31.6 | 25.3 | 24.2 | 6.3 | 3.20 |
| 18. | Course writing/editing/revision can be done online through cloud which can be accessed simultaneously by different experts. | 7.4 | 52.6 | 15.8 | 20 | 4.2 | 3.39 |
| 19. | All existing SLM should be converted to e-Pub format. | 14.7 | 37.9 | 32.6 | 12.7 | 2.1 | 3.51 |
| 20. | Meetings for course design and development as well as revision can be done online instead of face to face mode. | 18.9 | 30.5 | 11.7 | 32.6 | 6.3 | 3.23 |
| 21. | Training for course writing, editing, vetting and translation can be done entirely online. | 22.1 | 35.8 | 9.5 | 25.3 | 7.3 | 3.40 |
| 22. | Online and on-demand term-end examination should replace pen and paper based examination. | 6.3 | 21.1 | 24.2 | 31.6 | 16.8 | 2.68 |
| 23. | The weightage of internal assessment should be increased to more than 50% from the current 25-30%. | 9.5 | 15.8 | 17.9 | 37.9 | 18.9 | 2.59 |
| 24. | Questions for term-end examination should be completely MCQ based. | 3.1 | 7.4 | 11.6 | 46.3 | 31.6 | 2.04 |
| 25. | Questions for term-end examination should be a mix of MCQ and subjective type questions. | 14.7 | 53.7 | 10.5 | 11.6 | 9.5 | 3.53 |

Source: IGNOU (2021a)

A) Use of technology in Course Development and SLM

As far as course designing is concerned, there is still debate going on whether technology can be used effectively. The results of the study revealed that majority of the teacher respondents disagreed that meetings for course design and development as well as revision (32.6%) can be done online instead of face-to-face. However, it was observed that most of the respondents agreed that training for course writing, editing, vetting and translation (35.8%) can be done online. Similarly, just over half of the respondents (52.6%) agreed that course writing/editing/revision could be done online through cloud which could be accessed simultaneously by different experts. In recent times, adoption of ICT tools has gained popularity and many organizations and institutions are developing and delivering educational programmes through Open Educational Resources (OERs) and Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

A large section of the teacher respondents (47.4%) agreed that the already existing OERs could be adopted for updating the existing courses. Similarly, nearly one-third (31.6%) of them felt that MOOCs could be adopted as a replacement to the development of new course/ revision of existing courses. Opinion about delivering the SLM through electronic format was obtained from the teachers. With increasing use of technology and internet usage among the learners, learners can be provided study materials in the form of e-SLM instead of printed study materials. However, most of the teacher respondents disagreed that e-SLM had the ability to replace the printed SLM. This might be due to the fact that it was not convenient for the learners to read the study materials in electronic device with the same focus as that of the printed study materials; and it would lead to fatigue and strain to eyes after some time. However, just over half of the respondents agreed (37.9%) or strongly agreed (1.7%) that all existing SLM should be converted to e-PUB format. This will not only help the techno-savvy learners but also the visually impaired learners to access the study materials. Nearly two-third respondents agreed (18.9%) or strongly agreed (51.6%) that learners could be provided with the electronic gadgets like Tablet loaded with e-SLM which could also be used for attending online counselling sessions.

B) Online Academic Counselling

It is clearly evident from Table 2 that majority of the respondents agreed that digital technologies were effective for engaging learners in teaching-learning (61.1%); most digital technologies were effective for transaction of content, knowledge building and skill development (57.9%). Further, knowledge and skills about the use of digital technologies needed to be augmented through professional development (53.7%). Similarly, most of them (61.1%) felt that developing a rapport online with the learners was better compared to pre-pandemic time. Regarding opinion about conducting counselling sessions online, majority of the teacher respondents (52.6%) strongly agreed that they were comfortable with providing online counselling through Google Meet/ Zoom etc. for interacting with the learners. Further, most of them agreed that they liked to provide live counselling through sessions on Social Media platforms like YouTube / Facebook etc.

Even though there were many advantages in the use of technology for teaching-learning process, respondents also expressed their opinion about their limitations. Nearly half of the respondents (50.5%) agreed that counselling sessions through YouTube/Facebook had limitation of not being able to interact with the learner except through chat. Similarly, nearly one-third of them agreed that teachers while teaching through online modes were not able to connect with the learners at emotional level (36.8%) and it was more difficult to clarify concepts through online counselling as compared to F2F counselling sessions (38.9%). Almost an equal number of the teacher respondents agreed (32.6%) and also disagreed (31.6%) that learners kept on discussing their own issues simultaneously which made the online counselling ineffective. This might be due to the fact that counselling in online and distance education was not only about solving problems related to the subject, but also about solving personal problems which aided in effective teaching-learning process. Just over half of the respondents (54.8%) strongly agreed (21.1%) or agreed (33.7%) that development of 'hands-on' skills for disciplines which required practice was not possible through technology.

C) Evaluation (Formative and Summative)

Assessment of learners' performance using online tools was a debatable topic due to authenticity and trust issues. Hence, over the years, online evaluation techniques like the proctored examination, online quiz, e-portfolio, open book examination etc. are gaining popularity. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, use of online technologies for evaluation of learners has taken off and there is an immense scope of using such online tools in near future in a regular way. Majority of the teacher respondents (54.7%) also agreed that there was a scope for online assessment of assignments. However, most of the respondents (31.6%) disagreed that online and on-demand term-end examination should replace pen and paper based examinations. This clearly showed that the teachers were in favour of online assessment for formative assessment and not for summative assessment. However, with the rapid development in information technology, the scenario might change in years to come. There was a major disagreement (37.9%) among the respondents regarding increasing the weightage of internal assessment from the current 25-30% to more than 50%. This was because our traditional education system was mostly based on formative assessment and there was a need for a paradigm shift in the approach of the teaching community if this scenario had to change. Similarly, nearly half of the respondents (46.3%) disagreed that questions for term-end examination should be completely Multiple Choice Question (MCQ) based. Most of them (53.7%) were of the opinion that the questions for term-end examination should be a mix of MCQ and subjective type questions.

3. Perspectives of Academics on Teaching-Learning and Evaluation Processes

The data presented in Table 3 refers to the perspectives of academics on the various aspects of teaching-learning and evaluation processes like quality of SLM, academic counselling, assignment

evaluation and term end examinations. The detailed analysis of the responses of the academics on statements is discussed below:

Table 3: Perspectives of Academics on Teaching-Learning and Evaluation Processes

| S. No. | Statement | SA | A | N | D | SD | Mea n |
|--|---|----------|----------|-----|-----|----|-------------|
| A) Self learning Material (SLM) - Print & Digital | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Coverage of the Content in the SLM is adequate. | 50 | 42. 8 | 3.6 | 3.6 | 0 | 4.39 |
| 2 | The content is well presented with illustrations. | 45. 2 | 45. 2 | 7.2 | 2.4 | 0 | 4.33 |
| 3 | The level of the language used in the SLM is appropriate. | 35. 7 | 51. 2 | 9.5 | 3.6 | 0 | 4.19 |
| 4 | Learners should receive the SLM before coming to the session. | 85. 7 | 6 | 4.7 | 3.6 | 0 | 4.74 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|-----|----|----------|----------|-----|-------------|
| 5 | The learners' preference for e-SLM is growing. | 7.1 | 44 | 28. 6 | 17. 9 | 2.4 | 3.36 |
|---|--|-----|----|----------|----------|-----|-------------|

B) Academic Counselling

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------|----------|-----|-----|-----|-------------|
| 1 | The RCs and LSCs use social media adequately for disseminating information to the learners. | 40. 5 | 46. 4 | 9.5 | 3.6 | 0 | 4.24 |
| 2 | There should be one integrated programme-wise schedule for face-to-face and online counselling. | 51. 2 | 40. 5 | 4.8 | 2.4 | 1.1 | 4.38 |
| 3 | Faculty from the School of Studies should prepare the online academic counselling schedule in coordination with RCs. | 64. 3 | 23. 8 | 9.5 | 2.4 | 0 | 4.50 |
| 4 | The information regarding academic counselling is disseminated to the learners well in advance | 56 | 32. 1 | 7.1 | 3.6 | 1.2 | 4.38 |
| 5 | The learners appreciate the use of Facebook, Google Meet, Zoom and other digital platforms for academic counselling purposes. | 26. 2 | 47. 6 | 25 | 1.2 | 0 | 3.99 |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|
| | 6 The online academic counselling sessions are interactive and participatory. | 13. 1 | 50 | 23. 8 | 13. 1 | 0 | 3.63 |
| | 7 Participation of learners in the online counselling sessions is encouraging. | 9.5 | 42. 9 | 26. 2 | 21. 4 | 0 | 3.40 |
| | 8 With increased access to technology, greater reliance on online mode of counselling should be considered. | 22. 7 | 60. 7 | 8.3 | 8.3 | 0 | 3.98 |
| | 9 It is possible to conduct practical sessions effectively through online mode. | 7.1 | 21. 4 | 27. 4 | 33. 3 | 10. 8 | 2.81 |

C) Assignment Evaluation

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----|-------------|
| | 1 The learners are able to find their relevant assignments on the IGNOU website. | 34. 5 | 51. 2 | 7.1 | 6 | 1.2 | 4.12 |
| | 2 The learners are appreciative of the facility to submit their assignments and project online. | 16. 7 | 50 | 17. 9 | 13. 1 | 2.3 | 3.65 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---|--|----------|---------|----------|---|-----|-------------|
| 3 | The online assignment and project submission mechanism has been a successful initiative. | 17. 9 | 50 5 | 22. 5 | 6 | 3.6 | 3.73 |
|---|--|----------|---------|----------|---|-----|-------------|

D) Term-end Examination

| | | | | | | | |
|---|---|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------|
| 1 | Online and on-demand term-end should also be considered in addition to pen and paper-based examinations. | 36. 9 | 45. 2 | 11. 9 | 4.8 | 1.2 | 4.12 |
| 2 | The weightage of internal assessment should be increased | 8.3 . | 16. 7 | 26. 2 | 41. 7 | 7.1 | 2.77 |
| 3 | Questions for term-end examination should be completely MCQ based. | 8.3 . | 13. 1 | 20. 2 | 47. 7 | 10. 7 | 2.61 |
| 4 | Questions for term-end examination should be a mix of MCQ and subjective type questions. | 32. 1 | 57. 1 | 4.8 | 3.6 | 2.4 | 4.13 |
| 5 | The University should organize Orientation programmes for academic counsellors focusing on online/digital counselling and evaluation methods. | 76. 2 | 20. 2 | 3.6 | 0 | 0 | 4.73 |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|--|----------|----------|----------|----------|-----|-------------|
| | 6 Induction meetings are useful in familiarizing the newly enrolled students with the ODL system. | 86. 9 | 11. 9 | 1.2 | 0 | 0 | 4.86 |
| | 7 The RCs/LSCs should keep in touch regularly with the learners through email/sms to sustain their motivation. | 78. 6 | 19 | 2.4 | 0 | 0 | 4.76 |
| | 8 RC/ Division/ Centre/ Institute/ Unit/ Cell is equipped with adequate physical and human resources for providing effective student support. | 25 | 23. 8 | 15. 5 | 28. 6 | 7.1 | 3.31 |

Source: IGNOU (2021b)

A) Self learning Material (SLM) - Print & Digital

SLM either in printed form or in digital medium are always the main source of learning in any ODL and Online system of education. The ideal SLMs are supposed to be self-motivating, self-learning, self-explanatory, self-contained, self-directed and self-evaluating in nature. It is believed that the teacher is in-built in SLM to provide learning experiences. SLM guides and supports the learner during his/her entire studentship. It not only builds the confidence but also keeps the learner motivated. In the present study, maximum respondents either strongly agreed (50%) or agreed (42.8%) that the coverage of content in SLM was adequate, with the mean value of 4.39. Similarly more than 86% of the respondents felt that the content was well presented with illustrations (90.4%); the level of the language used in the SLM was appropriate (86.9%); and learners should receive the SLM before coming to the counselling session (91.7%). About half of the respondents (51.5%) agreed or strongly agreed that the learners' preferred e-SLM over printed SLM also supported by the mean value (3.36).

B) Academic Counselling

Academic counselling is a very vital part of any ODL/ Online programme. Academic counsellors not only support the distance learners in their course of study but also clear their doubts, and also orient them about the system, guide them wherever required and motivate them to complete the programme. In fact,

academic counselling sessions are a good platform to interact with fellow learners. Majority (86.9%) of the respondents agreed to use Social Media for disseminating information regarding academic counselling sessions to the distance learners and also to a single integrated programme-wise schedule for face-to-face and online counselling (91.7%). The maximum respondents agreed that the faculty from the Schools of Studies should prepare the online academic counselling schedule in coordination with the Regional Centres (RCs) and the information regarding academic counselling should be disseminated to the learners well in advance (88.1%). It was found that the distance learners appreciated the use of Facebook, Google Meet, Zoom and other digital platforms for academic counselling. The maximum respondents agreed that the online academic counselling sessions were interactive and participatory but very few were agreed that it was also possible to conduct practical sessions effectively through online mode.

C) Assignment Evaluation

Assignments are the major tool of continuous assessment. Majority (85.7%) of the respondents agreed that the learners were able to find their relevant assignments on the IGNOU website. But it was also found that around half of the respondents agreed that the learners were appreciative of the facility to submit their assignments and projects online (66.7%); and the online assignment and project submission mechanism had been a successful initiative (67.9%).

D) Term-end Examination

Term-end Examination is the summative assessment and carries the maximum weightage of learners' assessment. Majority of the respondents strongly agreed that online and on-demand term-end examination should also be considered in addition to pen and paper-based examinations; questions for term-end examination should be a mix of MCQ and subjective type questions; the University should organize Orientation programmes for academic counsellors focusing on online/digital counselling and evaluation methods; induction meetings were useful in familiarizing the newly enrolled learners with the ODL and Online system and RCs/LSCs should keep in touch regularly with the learners through email/SMS to sustain their motivation supported by the mean value greater than 4. But very few respondents believed that the weightage of internal assessment should be increased and question for term-end examinations should be completely MCQ based.

4. Perspectives of Academic Counsellors on Teaching-Learning and Evaluation Processes

This section reflects the perspectives of academic counsellors on the various aspects of teaching-learning and evaluation processes like curricular components and delivery of the programme available in digital form, digital format of SLM, online academic counselling, online assignment evaluation and term end

evaluation during pandemic period. The detailed analysis of the responses of the academic counsellors was done and presented under following sub headings:

A) Curricular Components and Delivery of the Programme

Majority (88.9%) of the respondents agreed that the content coverage in the SLM (blocks and units) was adequate; and the content was well illustrated with examples, figures and diagrams/charts (Figure 1). There was a conceptual clarity in the content of the course and the language used in the course units was easy to understand. Maximum respondents found the difficulty level of the course was as per level of the programme. They also agreed to the statement that the self-check exercises provided in the units facilitated learning.

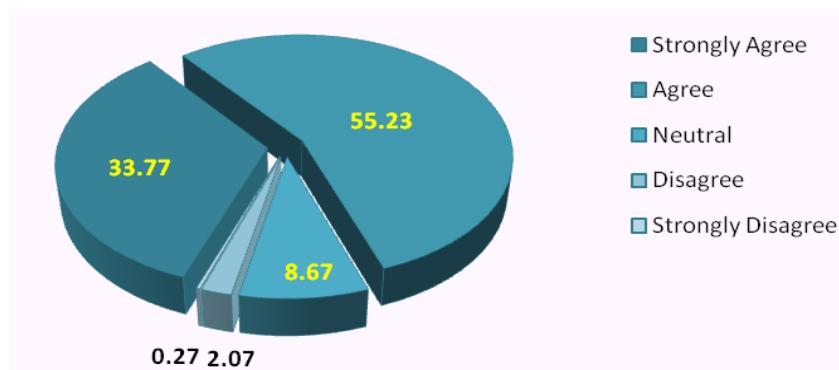


Fig 1: Academic Counsellors' Perception on Curricular Components and Delivery of the Programme

Source: IGNOU (2021c)

B) Digital Self Learning Material and Support

The University has a digital repository viz. e-Gyankosh and also has an IGNOU e-Content app which can be easily accessed by distance learners at their convenient place and time. Figure 2 clearly illustrates that majority of the academic counsellors agreed that IGNOU provided supplementary media support through GyanVani/ GyanDhara/ GyanDarshan channels and web enabled academic support (WEAS) for reinforcing learning and the Social Media platforms used by the University like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Zoom, WebEx, Google Meet etc. for teaching-learning and student support, enhanced the outreach of the programme.

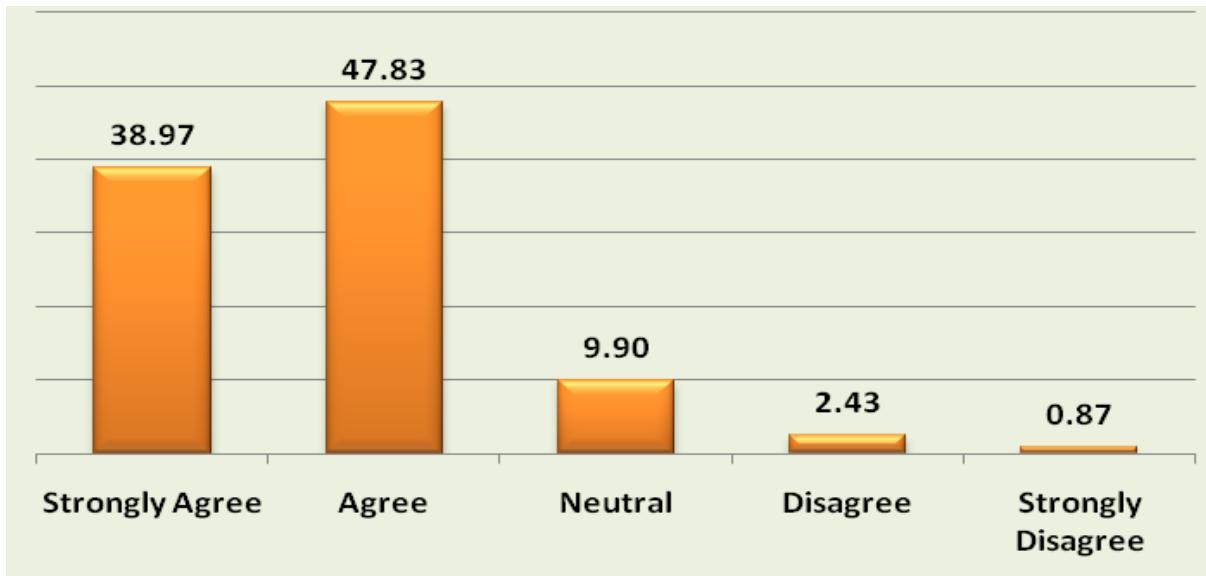


Fig 2: Academic Counsellors' Perception on Digital Self Learning Material and Support

Source: IGNOU (2021c)

C) Online Academic Counselling

Pandemic changed the way academic counselling was conducted and so did the perception of academic counsellors towards it. Figure 3 shows that majority (84.7%) of academic counsellors agreed or strongly agreed on the online academic counselling. Majority (73%) of the respondents accepted that the counselling schedule was made available to them well in time and counselling schedule links were easily accessible on the website of the Regional Centres. Majority of the respondents (84.70%) agreed that the counselling sessions were held as per the schedule. The online platforms were easy to use and attendance of learners during the online sessions was satisfactory. The online counselling sessions were interactive but sometimes they faced misdemeanor of learners during online counselling sessions. Majority of them agreed that during the pandemic, the University promptly provided counselling support using various digital and Social Media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Zoom, WebEx, Google Meet, etc.

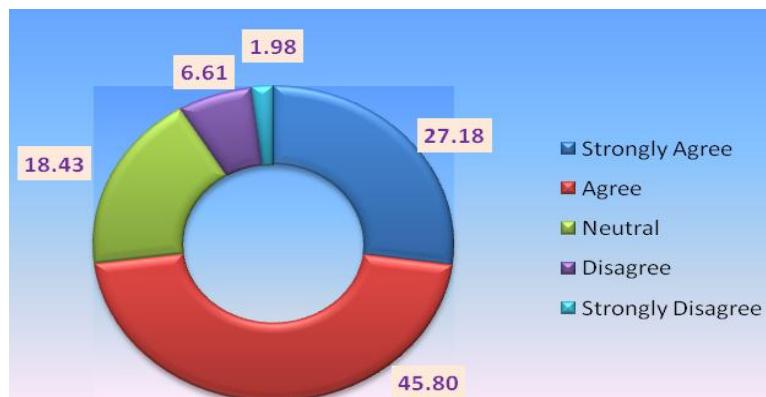


Fig. 3: Academic

Counsellors' Perception on Online Academic Counselling

Source: IGNOU (2021c)

D) Online Assignment Evaluation

Assignments evaluation was done totally online during pandemic period. Figure 4 reflects the perception of academic counsellors on online assignment evaluation. It was found that majority (78%) of the academic counsellors were comfortable in using the digital platform for evaluation of assignments and found it convenient to transmit the assignment awards online to the University but there was a need for training of academic counsellors in digital evaluation strategies.

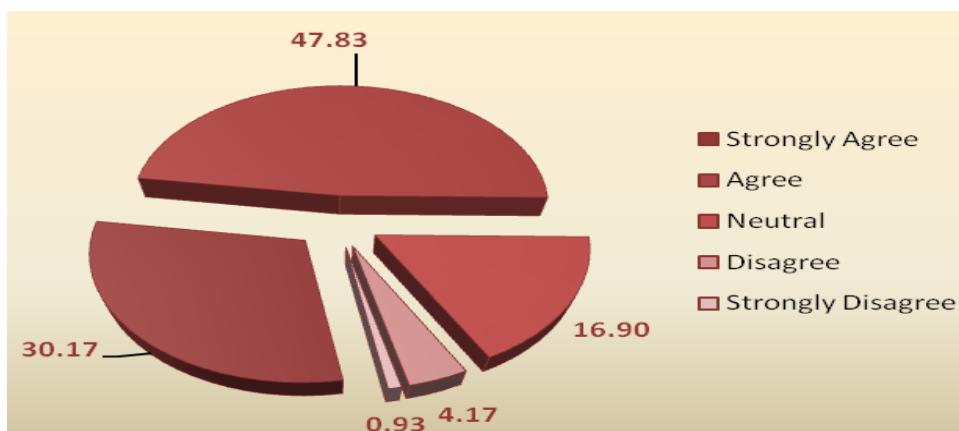


Fig. 4: Academic

Counsellors' Perception on Online Assignment Evaluation

Source: IGNOU (2021c)

E) Term-End Evaluation

Conduct of Term- End Examinations was the only activity performed by the University in offline mode by strictly adhering to the COVID-19 protocol. The opinion of academic counsellors was sought on term-end examination evaluation and results are reflected in Figure 5. Majority of the respondents agreed that

online and on-demand term-end examination should replace pen and paper-based examinations. Around half (51.80%) of the respondents agreed that the weightage of internal assessment should be increased to more than 50% from the current 25-30% but few agreed in making the term-end examination completely MCQ based instead 83.2% who agreed that the questions for term-end examination should be a mix of MCQ and subjective type questions.



Counsellors' perception on Term-end Examination evaluation

Source: IGNOU (2021c)

EFFECT OF AGE ON THE PERCEPTION ON ONLINE TEACHING LEARNING AND EVALUATION

A regression analysis was done to see the effect of respondents' age on their perceptions on online teaching-learning and evaluation process. It was found that age of academics and academic counsellors was significantly associated with their perception on online teaching-learning and evaluation process (Table 4).

Table 4: Effect of age on the perception on online Teaching Learning and Evaluation

| ANOVA (Teachers) | | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|-------|------|------|--------------|
| | df | SS | MS | F | Significance |
| Regression | 1.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.02 | 0.88 |
| Residual | 93.00 | 20.28 | 0.22 | | |
| Total | 94.00 | 20.28 | | | |
| ANOVA (Academics) | | | | | |
| | df | SS | MS | F | Significance |

| | | | | | |
|------------|-------|-------|------|------|------|
| Regression | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 4.62 | 0.03 |
| Residual | 82.00 | 17.67 | 0.22 | | |
| Total | 83.00 | 18.67 | | | |

ANOVA (Academic Counsellors)

| | <i>df</i> | SS | MS | <i>F</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
|------------|-----------|--------|------|----------|---------------------|
| Regression | 1.00 | 2.87 | 2.87 | 16.41 | 0.00 |
| Residual | 1062.00 | 178.88 | 0.18 | | |
| Total | 1063.00 | 181.75 | | | |

ANOVA (Teachers)

| | <i>df</i> | SS | MS | <i>F</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
|------------|-----------|-------|------|----------|---------------------|
| Regression | 1.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.02 | 0.88 |
| Residual | 93.00 | 20.28 | 0.22 | | |
| Total | 94.00 | 20.28 | | | |

ANOVA (Academics)

| | <i>df</i> | SS | MS | <i>F</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
|------------|-----------|------|------|----------|---------------------|
| Regression | 1.00 | 1.00 | 1.00 | 4.62 | 0.03 |

| Residual | 82.00 | 17.67 | 0.22 | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|--------|------|----------|---------------------|
| Total | 83.00 | 18.67 | | | |
| ANOVA (Academic Counsellors) | | | | | |
| | <i>df</i> | SS | MS | <i>F</i> | <i>Significance</i> |
| Regression | 1.00 | 2.87 | 2.87 | 16.41 | 0.00 |
| Residual | 1062.00 | 178.88 | 0.18 | | |
| Total | 1063.00 | 181.75 | | | |

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The suggestions and recommendations on the online teaching-learning and evaluation processes proposed by the stakeholders are presented below:

A) Adoption of Online Methods for Teaching-Learning

- Mandatory Online Orientation programme of 5 days on online learning system is required to help learners feel comfortable in an online classroom environment and understand the delivery system, online support services, assessment and evaluation system.
- An app-based comprehensive Learning Management System (LMS) with provision for online study materials and assignments; submission of online assignments; online assessment of assignments; chatting; emails; tracking the progress; online evaluation; and certification will further ease the learning experience in the online environment.

- School-wise / Programme-wise helpdesks exclusively for addressing the learner' issues may be created to reduce the learner grievances and increase the learner satisfaction.
- Virtual labs for all practical-based courses need to be identified which can provide a simulated experience and demonstration to the learners irrespective of place, pace, time and type of labs. For providing hands-on training, e-platforms like Google Meet, ZOOM etc., can be used for synchronous interactions between learners and teachers. To increase the learner experience, an Artificial Intelligence (AI) lab may be introduced in the future to promote the anytime anywhere learning.
- SLMs in print need to be converted into e-SLM by adopting the four quadrant approach and embedding them with simulation, gamification, online testing, etc. to make them more interactive for effective promotion of online teaching materials.
- The web links of course material along with the links to the assignments, should be provided in the confirmation letters to the learners mailed to them on successful completion of admission.
- All the SLMs need to be translated into other regional languages and uploaded on the web portal for facilitating learning. To expedite this process, an AI-based translation tool should be adopted. For learners with disabilities, SLM needs to be in accessible format, preferably e-Pub format.

B) Internal Assessment and Term End Examinations

- Question banks need to be prepared for all the courses to facilitate smooth conduct of examination to overcome all the hurdles of manual paper setting and avoid any chance of paper leakage. MCQ-based question banks need to be developed to facilitate conduct of online examination.
- An Online repository of previous years question papers with ideal responses should be available programme-wise on the webpage of the concerned School of Studies.
- Online examinations should be conducted for every course as part of internal assessment. Learners should be allowed three attempts and the best of two should be taken for assessment.
- Term papers, project work, e-portfolio, application oriented assignments, internship, etc. should be the tools of internal online assessment.

- Introduction of self-testing assessment tools should be a mandatory inclusion in the instructional design of every e-SLM to provide instant feedback on the performance of the learner.

C) Infrastructure requirements for providing e-support services

- Establishment of Digital Hubs at the HQs and all Regional Centers by setting up smart/digital classrooms with high-end computers and high speed Internet facility, high storage servers and uninterrupted power supply will facilitate the online teaching-learning process.
- The digital hubs will also be opened to the learners who do not possess their own digital devices or would prefer to study in groups. Such steps will help in erasing the digital divide.
- Electronic kiosks with a touch screen facility may be installed at Public Places and all Regional Centres for offering better e-support services.
- Integrated University e-Management System covering the three levels: the Headquarters, Regional Centres and Learner Support Centres needs to be put in place.
- There should be only one exclusive portal for receiving the grievances to avoid duplicity and multiplicity of the same issues.

CONCLUSION

In its endeavour to set a new normal during the pandemic, the University has taken a digital leap. The shift has taken place from traditional methods of distance education to online teaching–learning and evaluation processes. The major stakeholders have expressed their ease of use and adoption of online technologies for teaching-learning and evaluation process which has now become the new normal for the University and its learners. The process is on towards the adoption of new technologies for making the teaching-learning more interactive and engaging. The analyses of this paper will facilitate the decision makers to take informed steps for facilitating the stakeholders to embed the new-age technologies to bring in heutagogical transformation of the educational system.

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