

ATTITUDE OF MANAGEMENT STUDENTS' FROM NORTH KARNATAKA TOWARDS E-LEARNING : "AN EMPIRICAL STUDY"

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i) Introduction :

Internet has made its entry in almost all the domains of human endeavor. Be it Commerce, Literature, or Astrology or be it Technology- we find that all the areas have got themselves dramatically transformed due to the impact of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in general, and Internet in particular.

Education is no exception to this phenomenon.

'Learning - Teaching - Evaluation' process is getting radically transformed – thanks to capabilities of Internet.

Internet as the media has got the potential of making educational process truly 'Student centric'. This is the technology, which has the capability of nullifying the constraints of conventional educational delivery and evaluation system. This is the tool for making education available at any time, at any place. Besides, the learner can learn and get evaluated at any pace! Things those were unthinkable before the advent of Internet are very much possible today in this Digital Age.

MBA/BBA Courses offered in different B-Schools are meant for preparing the professionals with right knowledge, skills and attitudes for managing business entities.

Though the number of management graduates and postgraduates churned out every year is on increase – there is a great deal of concern with regards to quality. On one extreme we have premium brands, while the majority are at the other extreme –which come in substandard category.

One of the reasons for such a variation is lack of uniformity in quality of academic inputs at various B-schools.

Internet can be used to offer a high quality and uniform input for the students of different institutes, so that the quality of the students passing out can be enhanced.

In spite of its obvious advantages over the conventional mode of education, the speed with which the new technology is getting adopted and assimilated is rather slow.

eLearning in business education is still in the nascent stage of development in India. One of the factors for the slow pace of its adoption is the attitude of the students towards Internet as tool of education.

The present study aims at ascertaining the nature of perceptions and attitudes of the MBA students towards the Internet as an educational delivery and evaluation mechanism.

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ii) Utility of the Research :

The findings of this research will be useful for the new generation educational planners, On Line Learning (OLL) Solution Providers and the agencies promoting On Line Learning, in planning and implementing their activities. It will be also useful for the researchers in the area of Educational Technology, by providing direction for further research.

iii) Research Background and Research Gap:

In the recent years there has been a spurt in the research work in the area of Internet Based Education.

Mitra and Steffensmeier (2000)³, concluded that networked learning institutions where in students have access to Computers could foster positive attitude towards use of Computer Aided Education.

Liu, Macmillan and Timmons (1998)⁴, perceived integrating of computers in to Learning System as a complex instructional system in which student learning is impacted by Students, Teachers, Administrative and Technical Staff, Computer Hardware/Software and Class setting.

According to Marzano and Pickering (1997)⁵, students' attitudes and perceptions will impact the learning they achieve. Study by Daley, Watkins, Williams and Courtney (2001), support that assertion and extend that to On Line Environment.

However there exists a research gap with regards to nature of students' attitude towards using Internet for Management Education, especially in Indian context.

The present paper attempts to fill up that gap identified.

iv) Methodology :

Objectives of the study -

The study aims at seeking the answers to following questions:

- i) What is the nature of attitudes of the students of MBA towards eLearning? –Do they vary depending upon the basic degree of students and Computer Awareness Level, etc.?
- ii) What is the perception of the prevailing learning environment and its relation with the attitude of the students towards On Line Learning?
- iii) What is the level of Computers and Internet Skills of the students concerned and its relation with the Attitude towards eLearning?

a) Sampling -

From six MBA institutes affiliated to Karnatak University 64 Students were chosen for the purpose of this research.

The total population being 640, a Sample of 10% numbering 64 was taken using Quota Sampling Technique.

b) Research Instrument-

Questionnaire with following sections were designed.

Section 1 Pertains to Demographic Data, seeking the details on Gender, Basic Degree, Specialization, etc.

Section II determines the competence level of the students with regards to ICT.

Section III determines the availability of necessary infrastructure and environment for eLearning with regards to Content Delivery, Interactions with the faculty and Evaluation Process.

Section IV ascertains the attitude of the students with regards to eLearning.

Section II through IV contain the statements followed by the boxes for indicating the ranking with regards to agreement with the statement (Likart Scale)

c) Statistical Tool for the Analysis -

The analysis is carried out using F Test and one-way ANOVA and F Test.

v) Results :

a) Students' Attitude towards On Line Learning :

There were seven statements measuring students' Attitudes towards using of Internet for learning. For each statement the responses were coded as - 1 For Strongly Disagree to 5 For Strongly Agree.

Thus the scores of each student on seven statements range from 7 to 35.

**Table No. 1
Frequency and Classification of the Attitudes.**

Scores	Attitudes	Frequency
6.5-17.5	Negative	00
17.5-26.5	Neutral	12
26.5-35.5	Positive	52

- i) It is found that 81.25 %, i.e. more than majority of the students have got positive Attitude towards eLearning (Use of Internet in Education).
- ii) No student comes in Negative Attitude Category.
- iii) 18.75 % Students of the sample have got Neutral Attitude towards eLearning.
- iv) Using One Way ANOVA Analysis it is found that there were no significant differences in students' Attitude towards use of Internet for learning, based on their basic Degrees and Specialization chosen at MBA level. (Table No. 2 and Table No. 3)

**Table No. 2
ANOVA Table- Attitude-Basic Degree**

		F	Sig.
Attitude * Degree	Between Groups(Combined)	1.648	.151
	Within Groups		
	Total		

Table No. 3
ANOVA Table- Attitude- Specialization at MBA

		F	Sig.
Attitude * Specialization	Between Groups (Combined)	.391	.760
	Within Groups		
	Total		

b) Relationship between Students' basic knowledge of Computers/Internet and attitude towards eLearning/Using Internet for Education :

Seven statements measured students' basic knowledge of Computers and Internet. For each statement responses were coded 1 For Strongly Disagree to 7 For Strongly Agree.

Table No.4 gives the Frequencies and classification.

Correlation between Computer/Internet Knowledge and Attitude towards eLearning was established. On comparing Pearson's 'r' Value (0.21034) with 'P' Value (<0.05) it is evident that there is a positive but weak relationship between them.

Table No. 4
Frequencies and classification based on Computer/Internet Knowledge.

Scores	Computer/Internet Knowledge	Frequency
6.5-17.5	Poor	01
17.5-26.5	Average	12
26.5-35.5	Good	51

c) Relationship between Students' Perceptions of prevailing learning environment at their institute with their attitude towards use of On Line Learning:

Seven Point Statements measured students' Perceptions of prevailing Learning Environment. For each statement responses were coded 1 For Strongly Disagree to 7 for Strongly Agree.

Table No. 5 gives the Frequencies and the Classification.

The correlation between Perceptions of the students regarding prevailing learning environment and their Attitude towards eLearning was established.

On comparing Pearson's 'r' Value (0.444084) with 'P' Value (0.05) it indicates that there is positive but very weak relationship between them.

Table No. 5
Frequencies and the Classification based on Students'
Perceptions of Learning Environment.

Scores	Perception of Learning Environment	Frequency
6.5-17.5	Unfavorable	03
17.5-26.5	Neutral	25
26.5-35.5	Favorable	36

vi) Discussions:

The study revealed that generally the students of MBA Institutes of North Karnataka are inclined positively towards Internet as educational delivery tool. This perception was not Basic Degree or MBA Specialization specific.

There is weak but positive relationship between the students' basic knowledge of Computers/ Internet and Attitude towards use of Internet for educational delivery.

It is also found that there is general perception of learning environment to be favorable with very small percentage of the sample finding it to be unfavorable for eLearning.

Overall scene at the North Karnataka is quite encouraging for the implementation of eLearning initiatives in Management Education.

vii) References:

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