



E- Learning- Revolutionizing Management Education in Digital Age

Dr. Manjari Agarwal

Assistant Professor School of Management Studies and Commerce Uttarakhand Open University, Haldwani

ABSTRACT

e-learning is gradually been adopted in professional programmes especially in Management Programmes across the globe as it is facilitating all the requirements of a traditional class room setup. Management programmes can be offered in e-learning mode by using technological advancements which can enhance managerial skills in the learners for competing successfully in the global business environment. Nevertheless, deployment of ICT in analyzing case studies and real corporate examples can scale up the teaching and learning of management programmes and can also foster employability skills among the learners. Thus, there is a need for adopting latest technologies, virtual infrastructure, e-contents and softwares in the management education, both in curricula as well as in dissemination, for facilitating learners in acquiring skillset sufficient enough for operating in the newfangled business environment.

KEYWORDS

e- learning, management education, ICT

Introduction

E-learning has contributed into a technology-driven paradigm that has transformed the educational processes by providing creativity, innovation and diverse styles in teaching and learning. In nutshell, it is transferring of knowledge and information to learners using Information and Communication Technologies. E-learning is delivery of contents using extensive technological tools and computers with an intention to provide autonomy and flexibility to learners as well as teachers. The term E-learning is interchangeably used with related terms like virtual learning, online learning, web-based learning, internet learning, distributed learning, networked learning, tele-learning, computer-assisted learning, web-based learning and the likes (Mohamed, 2004). However, broadly e-learning refers to delivery of learning objects using electronic technologies.

Ally Mohamed (2004) defines online learning as “the use of the Internet to access learning materials; to interact with the content, instructor, and other learners; and to obtain support during the learning process, in order to acquire knowledge, to construct personal meaning, and to grow from the learning experience”. Marc Rosenberg in 2001 defined e-learning as “the use of Internet technologies to deliver a broad array of solutions that enhance knowledge and performance.” Further, Stockley explains that e-learning involves the use of a computer or electronic device (e.g. a mobile phone) in some way to provide training, educational or learning material. (Derek Stockley 2003).

Thus, on-line learning support learners and helps them in boosting their morale against any technological apprehensions, encourage them, and make them aware of becoming more independent. Thus, the teacher provides guidance and facilitate learners in chalking out decisions in respect to learning processes, methodology and content selection, and hence transfers authority over the programme. Teacher put little emphasis on the contents rather assists their students as how to approach contents and tasks available online. This has changed from teacher centered approach to student centered approach and has restructured the learner's role and hence reconceptualised and revitalized the learning style. Online learners therefore enjoyed the increased flexibility, autonomy and choice in the way they study contents.

Advantages of e-learning

E-learning is assessed to offer the following advantages;

- **Learner-centric-** The teacher provides guidance and facilitate learners in chalking out decisions in respect to learning processes, methodology and content selection, and hence transfers authority over the programme.
- **Flexible Learning-** It provides flexibility in terms of place, pace and duration of study.
- It provides Anytime, Anywhere, Anypace learning which is particularly suitable for the learners pursuing programmes in part-time mode, just-in-time learners and adult learners.
- **Unlimited reach and absence of geographical barriers-** Providing access to high quality education to all those who seek it irrespective of age, region, religion and gender. A teacher can instructs thousands of students in different locations at the same time using virtual classrooms.
- **Severall learning styles-** Learners can learn through their personalized learning styles using mobile devices, virtual classes, discussion forums, chat sessions etc.
- **Learning at one's own pace and at own convenience** – Learners can repeatedly listen to lectures and discussions till they are well-versed with the concepts and can study contents at their own pace and convenience.
- **Latest information** – Online learning can easily accommodate latest information from quality contents available on web such as open educational resources and these contents can also be shared with peers and can be improved using learner's feedback.
- **Discussions Alternatives-** Online learning provides a wider platform for debate and discussions and thus can endorse understanding of the subject more deeply.
- **Higher usage of contents-** OER available in online learning mode can cater to large number of students across the globe.
- **Near to real-life situations-** Real life problems, case studies can be effectively be discussed through virtual classroom, thus providing ample opportunities for learning.
- **Boost Morale-** In on-line learning teacher renders it support to the learners and help them in boosting their morale against any technological apprehensions, encourage them, and make them aware of becoming more independent.
- **Authentic assessment of learning outcomes** – Learning outcomes can be easily and regularly assessed by the way of online tutorials, online class-

rooms, online chat sessions and powerful simulation environment.

Comparison of Classroom Learning and Online Learning
The key differences between class room learning and on-line learning are presented as under;

	Classroom Learning	Online Learning
Cost	Cost Effective	Higher Development Cost
Flexibility	Least flexible	Highly Flexible
Communication Modes	Face to Face Teaching	Video Conferencing Chat Sessions Virtual Classes Social Platforms Mails Message boards Online chatting
Prominence	Teacher Centric	Learner Centric
Interaction With Teacher Social Interaction	Occasionally Good interaction with colleagues and friends	Highly Communicative Less interaction with classmates and friends
Learning Outcomes	Learning outcomes are assessed periodically.	Learning outcomes can be easily and regularly assessed by the way of online tutorials, online classrooms, online chat sessions and powerful simulation environment.
Assessment	Brief and less relative assessment	In-depth, transparent and instant feedback assessment of each learner.
Attrition Rates	Less	High
Understanding Lectures as per the learner's pace	Impossible	Extremely Possible

Table 1: Comparison of Classroom Learning and Online Learning

Thus, e-learning is itself is educational panacea for overcoming the problems of traditional teaching practices and modes. E-learning has offered potential benefits as it has provided a platform for student queries, analysis and construction of new knowledge.

Review of Literature

Various researches have been traced that identified that e-learning is shaping the future of business schools in innovative ways.

Salmon in the year 2000 identified that students and faculty of management programme are positively inclined for online delivery mechanism and courses. In a study conducted by Bishop T. and SchWeber C. (2001) regarding cost effectiveness of online MBA programme, it was examined by the researchers that the students learning via conventional method assessed convenience in using electronic resources and were interested to use electronic services originally developed for the online student, such as registration and library research. Popovich and Neel (2005) examined the increasing importance of delivering education via internet for business schools that are consistent with the broader trends in higher education. Hawawini Gabriel (2005) considered e-learning as an opportunity for business schools in developing tailor-made management courses as per the requirement of companies and also considered e-learning significant for catering larger number of business students across the globe and particularly for developing countries. Karl L. Smart and James J. Cappel (2006) examined the student's perceptions regarding integration of online learning in undergraduate business courses and it was found that participants of elective course rated online modules significantly better than those in required course.

MintuWimsatt, Sadler and Kendra Ingram (2007) found that more than half of the students of MBA programme claimed that they are more creative in their online courses because they want their input to have more value added. Arbaugh et al. (2009) found that volume and quality of research in online

and blended business education has increased dramatically during the past decade. Similar view has been presented by Ojeag and Igbiniedion in year 2012, they opined that in online learning business students are able to communicate, collaborate and cooperate with their fellow learners in spite of geographical limitations. Mohelská and Sokolova (2014) found that training in basic managerial skills with the help of e-learning is as efficient as by traditional education methods.

Due to its unique advantages, e-learning is gradually been adopted in professional programmes especially in Management across the globe as it is facilitating all the requirements of a traditional class room setup. Studies reviewed have established that adoption of e-learning for management programme can provide real-world studies for learning and it can provide an environment which may foster critical thinking, self-reflection, multifacted and group learning which is important for professional growth and development.

E-learning for Management Education

Management programmes can be offered in e-learning mode as by using technological advancements it can inculcate managerial skills in the learners for competing successfully in the global business environment. Nevertheless, deployment of ICT in analyzing case studies and real corporate examples can scale up teaching and learning styles for management programmes and can also foster employability skills among the learners It can be launched in all the three ways web integrated in the classroom to supplement teaching, web used in a mixed mode (as blended learning), and web used independently as a standalone system.. E-learning technologies have the potential to create interactive learning environment wherein students can learn collaboratively and can share knowledge of latest business trends and information at just a click away. Further, Virtual lectures of the renowned management gurus across the globe can be made available to the budding managers.

Thus, online learning can be more effective for management education if it is integrated into curricula and delivery strategically. Therefore, the following aspects should be integrated for effective adaption of e-learning;

- the interactivity and access to faculty/counselors/mentors who could respond to students queries,
- Feedback on assignments and case studies
- Discussion sessions and
- Constant motivation and encouragement of learners to successfully pursue the programmes.

Besides these, the following quality criteria should be considered while formulating instructional design for ensuring the success of management education:

- Quality, design, development, and delivery of contents and instructional materials.
- Application and use of delivery technologies.
- Delivery of learning materials.
- Enhancing student participation through proper techniques.
- Existence of quality control and quality assurance systems to avoid skepticism.
- Effective Learner Support Services.
- Convergence of Technologies.

Various Aspects to be dealt while adapting e-learning for Management Education

- Self paced hyper media design and pedagogical ideas for self directed learning particularly for courses of organisational behaviour, strategic management and the likes.
- Careful selection of instructional themes well suited for web based instructions.
- The contents should be delivered according to the cogni-

- tive strategy associated with the selected learning phase.
- Integration of available resources and cultivating the context and the environment that allows students to access the best material available. Such approach can be applied for courses like business environment, corporate laws, management information system, project management etc.
- Development & Maintenance of a Web Portal which is used to provide information and updates to learner and public at large.
- Live Support System for Online Counseling which is useful in addressing queries generated by management students as well as prospective students.
- Online computer marked or tutor marked assessment to test the knowledge of the learners with respect to the particular learning outcomes.
- Assignments should be submitted to the subject expert on-line and feedback should be conveyed to the learners through the comments on the assignments given by the tutors.
- Lectures should also be given in virtual classrooms using modern communication methods.
- Discussion Forums, Blogs, Chats etc. using LMS should be conducted for promoting social interactions among the learners for broadening the gamut of cognitive learning .
- Appropriate Softwares should be imbibed in online learning platforms particularly for the courses of Statistics, Marketing Research, Research Methodology, Financial Management, Security Analysis etc.
- Tie-ups with renowned management institutions across the globe for lectures, seminars and webinars for giving insights about corporate shifts and trends.

Conclusion

With the growth of e-commerce and other technological innovations, the business environment has changed drastically and significantly. Thus, there is a need for adopting latest technologies, virtual infrastructure, e-contents and softwares in the management education, both in curricula as well as

in dissemination, for facilitating learners in acquiring skillset sufficient enough for operating in the newfangled business environment. In such a scenario, utilizing e-learning or blended learning in management programmes may provide new dimensions to the quality of teaching, learning and research. Thus, e-learning technologies in management education will change the traditional pedagogical approach to reflective and practical approach. Further, through e-learning technologies, management institutions can provide learners with best learning resources like MOOCs and OERs and can provide lectures from management and corporate gurus worldwide thus completely transforming the educational environment in the country. Therefore, management institutions in India have to rethink and reorient their strategies for preparing competent and qualified managers and leaders in e-era.

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