A STUDY OF NEW CHALLENGES IN E-LEARNING FOR STUDENTS PURSUING HOSPITALITY PROGRAMS AND NEW DEMANDS OF EMPLOYERS IN HOSPITALITY SECTOR IN DISTRICT FARIDABAD, HARYANA

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Abstract:

We have seen a surge in the universities and standalone institutions offering long term and short-term hospitality programs and modules in the preceding years to support varying human resource demands in the hospitality and tourism sectors. To conduct and persist in competitive and volatile hospitality business environment, graduates require a new set of operational & managerial skills to develop formative thinking for converting the attained skill and knowledge into productivity and performance.

The purpose of the study is to find out and address the new challenges encountered by the hotel management students in online learning and the new norms applicable in Industrial Training & Placement of hospitality students in the post pandemic times. The industry is an inseparable component of the tourism industry and the growth/ downfall in the two is interlinked. The hospitality industry is inclining towards technologically interfaced products and services.

The study also explores the new challenges faced by students pursuing hospitality education in the region of district Faridabad. The researchers have collected data from the said respondents in institutions offering hospitality education programs & the industry. The analysis is based on responses to the online questionnaire. This study takes into account, how Covid-19 pandemic affected the learning of these students as the delivery was in an online mode wherein more than 50% of content is practical oriented since hospitality education caters to skill dependent sector. The study also makes an effort to understand new demands from employers in the sector to meet new challenges in post pandemic era.

Keywords: Hospitality Education, Challenges, Pandemic, Training, Placements.

INTRODUCTION:

COVID-19 had an immediate and extensive impact on the hospitality and tourism industries as a result of the virus's transition into a pandemic. As international travel prohibitions

banned more than 90% of the world's population from travelling, and harsh limitations on community gatherings and movement was implemented and halted (Gösslingetal., 2020).

As a result of this pandemic condition, predicting the future of the hotel business has become impossible. On the other hand, while some projections expect a recovery from prior crises and even growth/decline in the two is interrelated, other forecasts are less positive. (Gössling et al., 2020)

Providing education and training to the masses on a massive scale, for economic survival and to meet the ever-changing needs of society, individual's special needs and tastes, is not possible through the traditional educational system based on brick-and-mortar schools, colleges, and universities. Remote education, e-learning, and virtual universities have become the answer.

Continuous advances in the field of communication technology have resulted in a more efficient and cost effective form of learning than traditional learning strategies. Students and educators now have more control over the teaching and learning processes because of the E-learning mode or platforms post pandemic.

With the outbreak of the Covid-19 last year (2020-2021), students pursuing hospitality programmers experienced significant placement and training obstacles. According to a recent survey by Naukri.com (an Indian employment internet provider), the majority of students in India did not get their offer letters, and a few students who were hired were given deferred joining dates. Other students, however, did not receive a response from the company regarding the status of their work, according to the report (IANS, The times of India, 2021).

Hospitality colleges in the district of Faridabad are one of them, where not only studies but also industrial training was affected, and students who were placed in the Hospitality sector had their jobs called off or their joining date was extended with a lower salary structure. Furthermore, when the new challenges encountered by hospitality sector professionals in online learning, the majority of students and employers encountered difficulties in evaluation and monitoring of the work for a learning experience.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Meaning of Hospitality Student:

A hospitality student is someone who is enrolled in any programme of study in hospitality and tourism (either undergraduate or post graduate) at an institution of higher learning; is registered full-time according to the criteria of his/her individual academic institution, and is not employed full-time.

Meaning of Challenges:

A challenge is a new or difficult task that tests someone's ability and skills. Challenge is something new and difficult that necessitates a great deal of effort and determination. (**Collins**

Dictionary). Challenge also means crossing obstacles, moving ahead against the established norms and practices in an acceptable conduct to accept and vow to do things in a better mode against all odds.

Meaning of Online Education:

Online education is a versatile instructional delivery system that includes all types of learning that occurs over the internet. Online education is the process of acquiring skills and knowledge through electronic devices such as computers, mobile phones, laptop computers, and so on that connects to the internet. Online education allows tutors or mentors to reach out to all students more flexibly and efficiently teach them the necessary skills.

Meaning of Hospitality Education:

Hospitality Education emphasizes on the academic and professional aspects of hospitality businesses. It encompasses the basic concepts like theoretical components, professional skill enhancement, etc. Hospitality Education also covers the managerial aspects and understanding of various cultures that the student has to interact with during the employment.

In the study, the researcher investigated how the unique corona virus 19, which is a worldwide pandemic crisis, has impacted students' education due to the closure of all educational colleges and institutes. It is now a tremendous task for facilitators to provide quality education and enlighten students with knowledge. However, institutes have adapted to the needs of the movement by implementing e-learning tools for giving education and learning to students, allowing knowledge to be delivered with minimal time waste during such times. The study also proposed that for better and more successful learning and teaching in such settings, everyone should place a greater emphasis on the usage of information technology. (S. Dhawan, 2020).

Another study revealed that as a result of the COVID -19 situation, institutions are experiencing many problems in their various operations such as organizational process, fewer number of admissions, competitive & entrance exams are cancelled or further postponed, creating massive barriers for aspiring students. Furthermore, this study found that the most difficult aspect of this pandemic is providing quality education and an effective learning process. Furthermore, the study stated that these obstacles can be overcome by making efficient use of online learning methods such as Zoom, Google Meet, and so on. The study found that virtual platforms, eBooks, and online sources should be made available to students in order to strengthen their education and give them with more resources (Jene's 2020).

In their research, it was analyzed that students found it difficult to concentrate during online teaching of method. There are numerous reasons for this, including misdirection of content, a large number of assignments, which leads to overload, and clearing students' doubts and concerns about their examinations. Furthermore, time management is one of the major areas in the new education

system that creates a hindrance in their learning process. (Duraku Hyseni and Linda Hoxha. 2020).

According to their findings, the pandemic is having a disastrous impact on the Indian hotel industry. They also referenced the Ministry of Civil Aviation's report, which stated that due to the pandemic, our country will see a severe downfall in overseas tourists. Furthermore, the similar effect has been observed in our country's domestic tourism (P. K Patel, Kharoliwal S., J. Sharma and Khemariya Prashant 2020).

As per their research, 50 percent of hospitality scholars agreed that the traditional technique, i.e., face-to-face delivery, is less complicated than taking classes online and gaining expertise. Their research also revealed that approximately 80% of hospitality students preferred face-to-face instruction and education over online education. (Mike Sciarini, Jeff Beck & Jeff Seaman. 2012).

Through their research, they discovered that many hospitality aspirants who enrolled in hotel management courses at various colleges with a specific choice for departments in hotels changed their minds regarding their Industrial Training. This demonstrates that industrial training has a direct impact on a student's career perception. Students' view of the course during the admissions process is that they would make the proper decision after completing Industrial Training. (Bathla Gaurav, Rana Varinder, Singh Karan & Kohli Vineet 2020).

According to the report by ISE, there will be societal level adjustments in many sections of our country in the approaching period. The IES also anticipated that as a result of the pandemic, unemployment in our country will rise. However, the government should now respond appropriately and make some necessary decisions such as becoming more interventionist, implementing an employment scheme, offering pay subsidies, and providing other sorts of help. Furthermore, they advised that today's companies, students, and career professionals should foresee the various types of modifications that may be required and become a necessity of gradually market operations. (Institute of Student Employers 2020).

Organizing service practice placements during the COVID-19 outbreak proved to be a difficult task for institutions and employers who provided placements for expecting students. The pandemic had somehow turned core values of welfare work practice on their heads. According to these testimonials, the value of face-to-face encounters, and hence the power of co-presence, has become more important than ever for the welfare service profession. (Sarbu R and Unwin P 2021).

According to a report in the Indian Express, most institute placements were delayed, especially after the Covid-19 outbreak swept the country. Nowadays, the hospitality and tourism industries are concerned that new job titles may arise, while existing ones with the identical job description will become obsolete. As a result, institutions and colleges should create a new curriculum that emphasizes skills-based courses over theoretical courses, as well as more specific placement campaigns. According to a recent Naukri.com poll, hiring in the tourism, hospitality, and

aviation sectors has decreased significantly as most of these companies are not offering new employment as due to outbreak, the highest rate among industries. (Kalra. S 2020).

The Institute of Hospitality provided a few pointers from industry professionals. They suggested that they should try their best in this pandemic situation. They added that interviewers in this new world of hospitality would prefer to see candidates who had excelled in this demanding setting. They also mentioned that this is an important opportunity for kids to focus their time on extra learning and to use this valuable time to enhance their own capabilities and information. Nowadays, it is relatively simple for students to participate in online webinars and other training programs that are specifically related to or supported by their field work. If students will focus on such skills & programs then these knowledge's will help the candidates to increase their ability, resilience and confidence. Moreover, students need to be reasonable and set their outcomes expectations. During these different times everyone needs to think about what is happening right now during this pandemic although everyone needs to be focused on their final goal. Although it may take longer period of time to achieve your results, but it will be worth it in the end when you will receive it." (Institute of Hospitality, 2021).

This study discovered and suggested that in the coming academic year, institutions should use a hybrid teaching technique in which the first 20% of the syllabus is covered online, and the remaining 80% of the syllabus is covered in physical classrooms once the pandemic situation is under control for the quality of education. According to the researcher, the hospitality, travel, tourist, and aviation industries will only need fewer than 24 months to recover and return to their prior levels. This possible role in the hospitality industry will contribute to a new type of hospitality sector, as there will be a huge change in technology to hotel operations at all levels.

Career options in every facet of the department are limitless, ranging from operational responsibilities to managerial roles. In addition, if a person has a degree in hospitality and professional experience, he or she may be able to change careers and work in other service areas. Students considering a career in hospitality are advised to acquire intellect, a sense of need, refine themselves towards human sensations, hard skills, interpersonal skills, a strong theoretical concept, and a lot of experience. (Makkar, D. R. 2020).

According to the author, several educational establishments have started online internships and training programmers in many departments of their universities. Furthermore, the institutes focus on and encourage diverse study areas related to difficulties that the sector is attempting to solve through motivating young scholars. Students can select internship tasks that are relevant to their field of study. Following that, they will be guided in their research by an institutional mentor and an industry specialist. This new approach to internships should be participatory, student-centered, and practical. Nowadays, it is a fundamental necessity of the hour to ensure educational survival and to

contribute to student leadership. For managing all placement-related operations, all institutes have migrated to online platforms using various platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams. We must keep in mind that the (Awasthi, A. 2020).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY:

Following the careful evaluation of these most recent secondary data in the literature review section and with the present form of framework, five major objectives were framed for the study.

1. To identify the effects of online education on hospitality students in the district of Faridabad, Haryana.

2. To comprehend the impact of E-Learning tools on hospitality students.

3. To identify the problems and new norms that hospitality students encounter in the E-learning mode.

4. To determine the impact of online learning due to COVID-19 on hospitality students in their internships and placements.

5. To identify the additional needs and challenges that employers face as a result of this pandemic.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

The study primarily focused on the obstacles faced by aspiring hospitality students, and the constraints in virtual and online education as a result of the effects of COVID 19.Survey method using Google Form Questionnaire has been used as the data collection tool to reach out to maximum respondents.

Likert Scale is used where the respondent can rate the statement on a scale of 1 to 5 which are represented as 1. Strongly Disagree, 2. Disagree, 3. Neutral, 4. Agree and 5. Strongly Agree. The research data was analyzed utilizing both qualitative and quantitative data entry methods.

The researchers have selected a population size of 1200 from the hotel management colleges in Faridabad, Haryana. Some of them are Institute of Hotel Management, Faridabad, The Lalit Suri Hospitality School, Faridabad, and Faculty of Hotel Management, Manav Rachna International Institute of Research and Studies, Lingayas Vidyapeeth Faridabad, Rawal Institute 0f Management, and IIHM Faridabad, etc.

DATA ANALYSIS & INTERPRETATION:

In this section, the study has represented the various questions and its responses collected from the target population through online survey, afterwards they were examined with the help of a simple percentage method pie chart.

OBJECTIVE 1: THE EFFECTS OF ONLINE EDUCATION ON HOSPITALITY STUDENTS.

The following statements have been used to derive information to attain the objective:

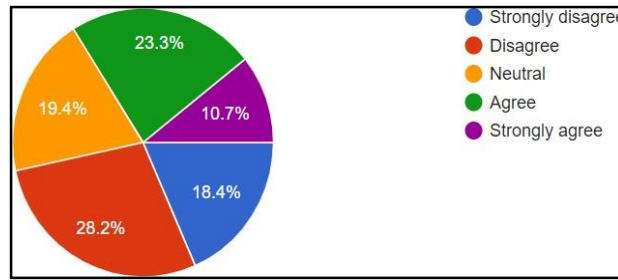1. Teachers are able to provide equal attention to all the students in an online learningclass.
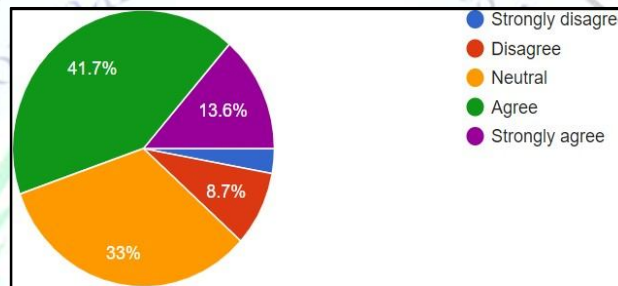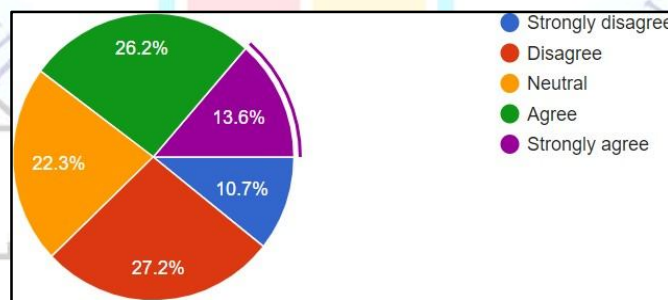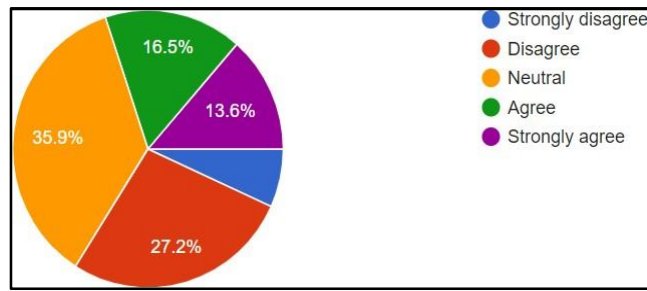

Figure 1

Based on Figure 1 it is clearly interpreted that 18.4 % strongly disagree, 28.2% disagree, 19.4% neutral, 23.3% agree and 10.7% strongly agree. As indicated 28.2% of respondents disagree with the above statement. It can be stated that the learners feel that teachers are not able to provide equal attention to the learners in online learning.

2. Online education is not able to close the gap of new skill set needed post pandemic for learners.

Figure: 2

Based on Figure 2 it is clearly interpreted that 3 % strongly disagree, 8.7% disagree, 33% neutral, 41.7% agree & 3% strongly agree. As indicated online education is not able to fill the skill gap forlearners.

3. Time management is difficult in onlinelearning.

Figure:3

Based on Figure 3 it is clearly interpreted that 10.7 % strongly disagree, 27.2% disagree, 22.3% neutral, 26.2% agree & 13.6% strongly agree. It can be stated that Time Management in online learning is difficult due to multiple reasons.

4. Online learning is better for peer (student to student interaction) learning.

Figure: 4

Based on Figure 4 it is clearly interpreted that 6.8 % strongly disagree, 27.2% disagree, 35.9% neutral, 16.5% agree & 13.6% strongly agree. As indicated the majority of respondents have neutral opinion which indicates that there is no significant impact on peer learning in online mode. Whereas 27.2% of the respondents have a strong agreement that peer learning is impacted in online learning.

5. Improper internet connectivity is a barrier in dissemination of information in E-Learning Platforms.
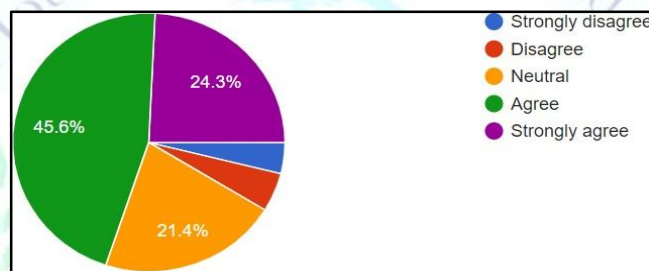
Figure: 5

Based on Figure 5 it is clearly interpreted that 4.3 % strongly disagree, 4.2% disagree, 21.4% neutral, 45.6% agree & 24.3% strongly agree. As indicated 45.6% of respondents agree that this is the major issue.

OBJECTIVE 2: TO COMPREHEND THEIMPACT OF E-LEARNING TOOLS ON HOSPITALITY STUDENTS**.**

The following statements have been used to derive information to attain the objective:

1. E-learning mode leads to difficulties in understanding given instructions.
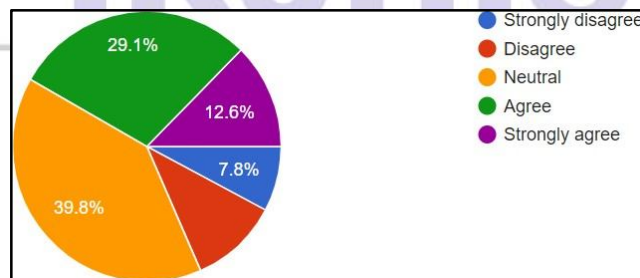
Figure: 6

Based on Figure 1 it is clearly interpreted that 7.8 % strongly disagree, 10.7% disagree, 39.8% neutral, 29.1% agree & 12.6% strongly agree. Majority of respondents have stated that online mode does not affect the understanding of instructions given.

2. Online learning platforms are cost effective.
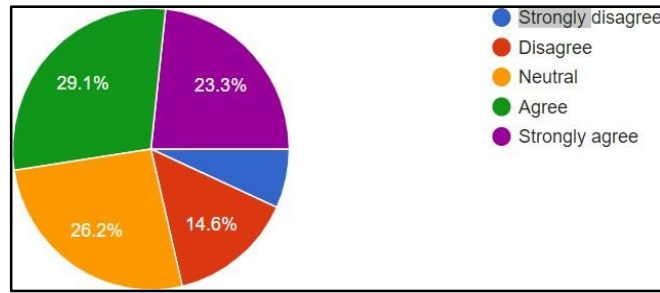

Figure: 7

Based on Figure 7 it is clearly interpreted that 6.8 % strongly disagree, 14.6% disagree, 26.2% neutral, 29.1% agree & 23.3% strongly agree. It is understood that most of the respondents agree that online learning platforms are cost effective.
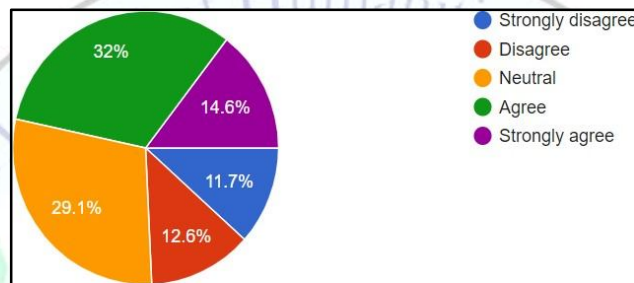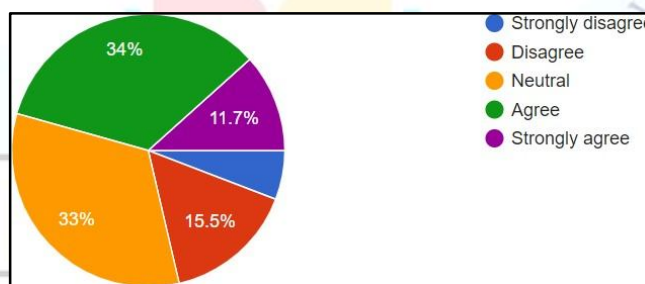
3. Online learning tools are interactive.

Figure: 8

Based on Figure 8 it is clearly interpreted that 11.7 % strongly disagree, 12.6% disagree, 29.1% neutral, 32% agree & 14.6% strongly agree. It can be seen that almost 48% respondents have indicated that this mode of learning is interactive.

4. E-Learning platforms provide additional opportunities to gather extended knowledge.

Figure: 9

Based on Figure 9 it is clearly interpreted that 5.8% strongly disagree, 15.5% disagree, 33% neutral, 34% agree & 11.7% strongly agree. As indicated the most of the respondents are in agreement with the statement. Therefore, it can be said that E Learning platforms offer extra opportunities for interested students.

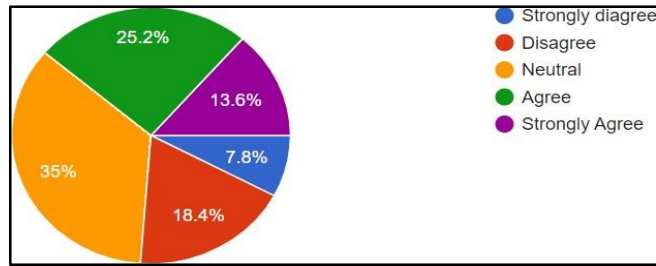**5.** It is easy to learn and understand through E-learning tools.

Figure: 10

Based on Figure 10 it is clearly interpreted that 7.8% strongly disagree, 18.4% disagree, 35% neutral, 25.2% agree & 13.6% strongly agree. As indicated the ratio of students who are comfortable in learning and understanding using E Learning tools is higher.

OBJECTIVE 3: TO IDENTIFY THE PROBLEMS AND NEW NORMS THAT STUDENTS NEED TO LEARN IN USING THE E-LEARNING PLATFORMS.

The following statements have been used to derive information to attain the objective:

1. Online learning platforms are easily accessible.
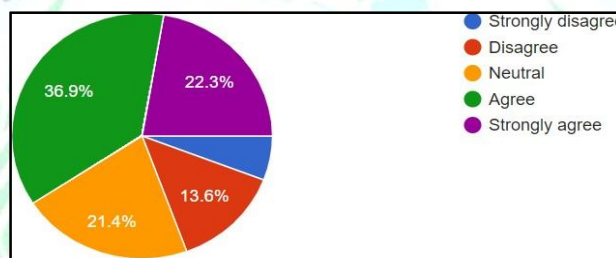
Figure 11

Based on Figure 11 it is clearly interpreted that 5.8% strongly disagree, 13.6% disagree, 21.4% are neutral, 36.9% agree & 22.3% strongly agree. As indicated in the ratio of responses, majority are in agreement with the statement. This makes it clear that accessibility is not an issue in using E Learning platforms.

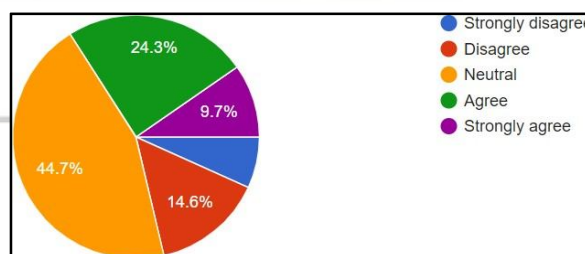**2.** Remote learning has delivered expected results for learners.

Figure: 12

Based on Figure 12 it is clearly interpreted that 6.7% strongly disagree, 14.6% disagree, 44.7% are neutral, 24.3% agree & 9.7% strongly agree. As indicated it can be interpreted that remote learning has not given desired results for most of the learners.

3. E Learning provides opportunities to learn in lighter (happy) mode.
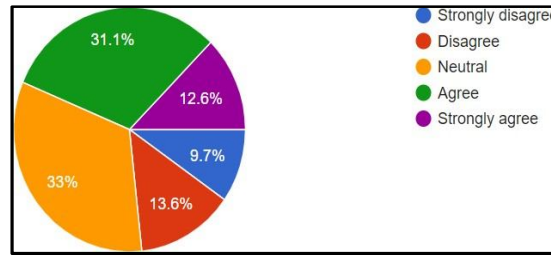

Figure: 13

Based on Figure 13 it is clearly interpreted that 9.7% strongly disagree, 13.6% disagree, 33% are neutral, 31.1% agree & 12.6% strongly agree. The majority of respondents agree that online learning provides opportunity to learn in lighter mode.

4. Appearing for exams in online mode assures honest responses.
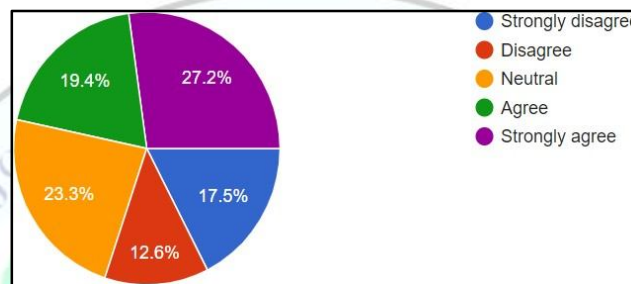

Figure: 14

Based on Figure 14 it is clearly interpreted that 17.5% strongly disagree, 12.6% disagree, 23.3% are neutral, 19.4% agree & 27.2% strongly agree. It can be stated that respondents are almost equally divided in opinion on the statement.

5. The lack of training to use online education tools leads to poor responses and understanding of concepts by learners.
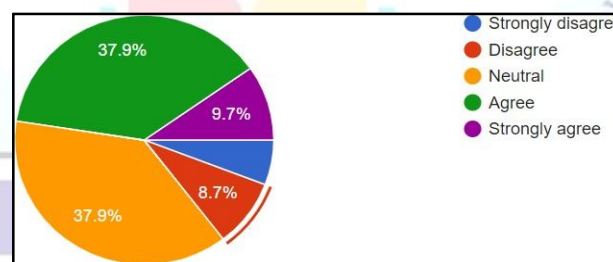

Figure: 15

Based on Figure 15 it is clearly interpreted that 5.8% strongly disagree, 8.7% disagree, 37.9% neutral, 37.9% agree & 9.7% strongly agree. As indicated, there is a conflict between being in agreement and staying neutral. But it can also be stated that learners are not necessarily needing additional training for using tools in online education.

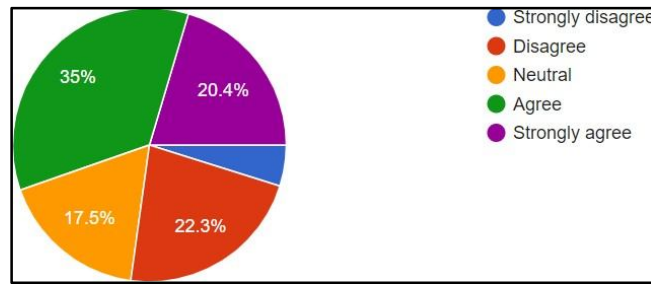**6.** E-learning leads to increased confidence gap between teachers and learners.

Figure: 16

Based on Figure 16 it is clearly interpreted that 4.8% strongly disagree, 22.3% disagree, 17.5% neutral, 35% agree & 20.4% strongly agree. As indicated it can be stated that there is a definite confidence gap between the teachers and learners in E Learning mode.

OBJECTIVE 04: TO STUDY THE INFLUENCE OF COVID-19 ON HOSPITALITY STUDENTS DURING INTERNSHIPS AND PLACEMENTS.

The following statements have been used to derive information to attain the objective:

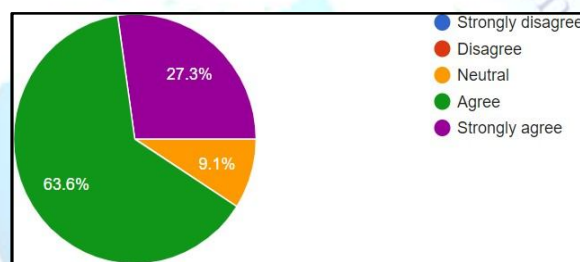1. Employers have limited opportunities to guide the interns due to their previous learning in online mode.

Figure: 17

Based on Figure 17 it is clearly interpreted 9.1% neutral, 63.6% agree & 27.3% strongly agree. It is clearly evident from the above interpretation that majority of the employers feel that online learning of basic concepts makes the application of the same difficult in practical.

2. E-Learning has negatively impacted the actual skills enhancement happening during internships.
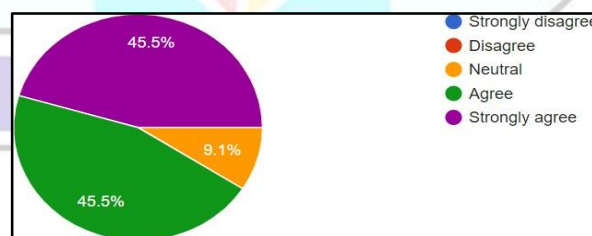

Figure: 18

Based on Figure 18 it is clearly interpreted 9.1% neutral, 45.5% agree & 45.5% strongly agree. As indicated majority of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement. Thus, it can be said that major skill enhancement is possible only in offline learning.

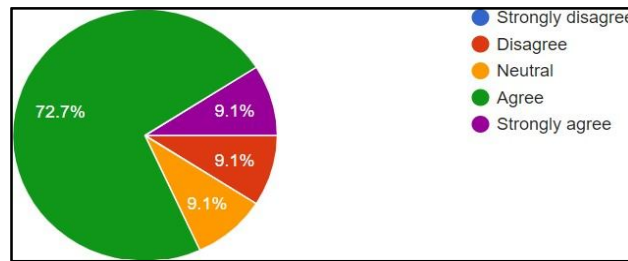3. Hospitality industry has inclined towards technology interfaced products and services post pandemic.

Figure: 19

Based on Figure 19 it is clearly interpreted that 9.1% disagree, 9.1% neutral, 72.7% agree & 9.1% strongly agree. This can be stated from the above interpretation that hospitality industry has made a shift towards technology enabled products and services post Covid 19.
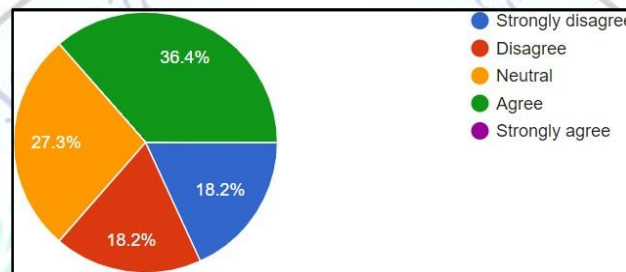
4. Evaluation in an online mode is moreauthentic.

Figure: 20

Based on Figure 20 it is clearly interpreted that 18.2% strongly disagree, 18.2% disagree, 27.3% neutral, 36.4% agree. As indicated majority of respondents are in agreement with the statement and support the authenticity of evaluation in online mode.
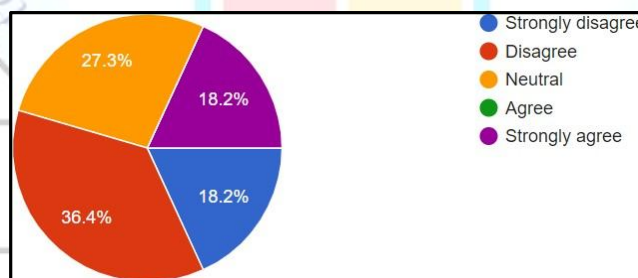
5. E-learning aids help improve professional skills.

Figure: 21

Based on Figure 24 it is clearly interpreted that 18.2 strongly disagree, 36.4% disagree, 27.3% neutral, 18.2% strongly agree. As indicated it can be stated that majority of respondents feel that there is no significant change in acquiring professional skills through E Learning tools.

OBJECTIVE 5: TO ASSESS THE ADDITIONAL NEEDS AND CHALLENGES THAT EMPLOYERS FACE AS A RESULT OF THE PANDEMIC.

The following statements have been used to derive information to attain the objective:

1. Offline communications are essential for conveying the schedule of online classes.
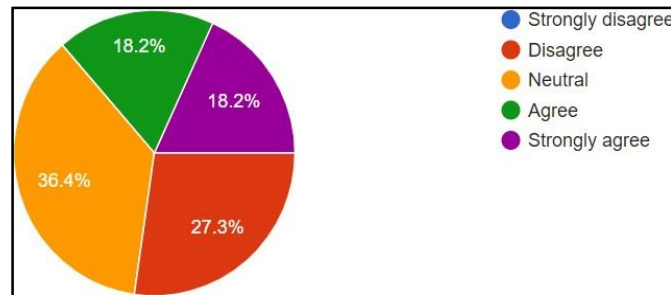

Figure: 22

Based on Figure 22 it is clearly interpreted that 27.3% disagree, 36.4% neutral, 18.2% agree & 18.2% strongly agree. As indicated, most of the respondents are neutral and it can be understood that offline or online communication does not deter them from adhering to the schedules.

2. There is a requirement of new set of operational skills to perform duties with efficiency in post pandemic times.
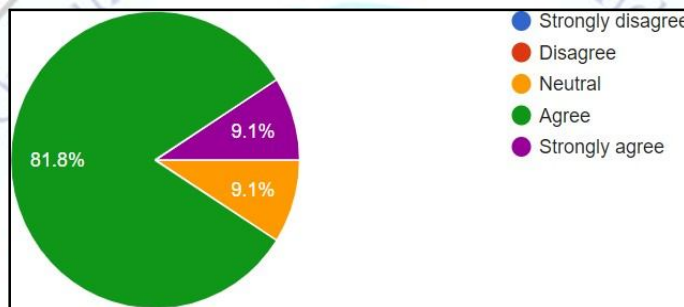

Figure: 23

Based on Figure 27 it is clearly interpreted that 9.1% neutral, 81.8% agree & 9.1% strongly agree. As indicated majority of the respondents are in agreement with the statement. Therefore, it can be stated that learners and employees need to acquire new skill sets in the new era of hospitality operations.

3. There is lack of initiative by students during online learning.
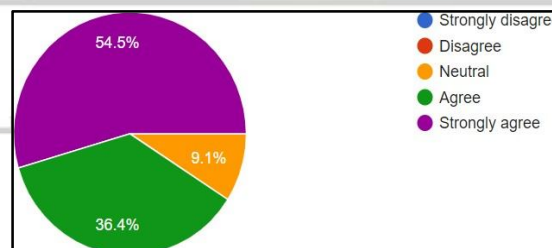

Figure: 24

Based on Figure 24 it is clearly interpreted that 9.1% neutral, 36.4% agree & 54.5% strongly agree. As indicated majority of the respondents are strongly agreeing with thestatement. It can be said that students have to be more enterprising and outgoing to get the best out of online learning.

4. Learners do not make efforts to ensure desired outcomes of content delivered in E Learning.
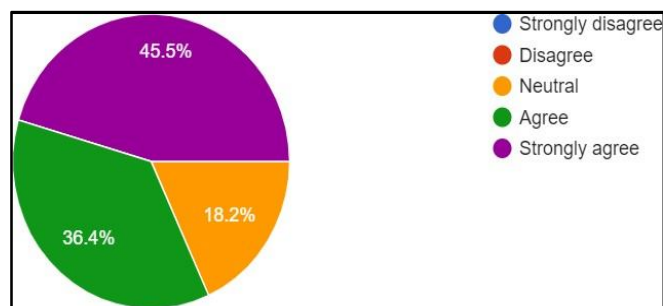

Figure: 25

Based on Figure 25 it is clearly interpreted that 18.2% neutral, 36.4% agree & 45.5% strongly agree. As indicated the ratio of students' majority are strongly agree with the statement. It can be thus stated that desired outcome of online learning is majorly dependent on efforts made by learners.

FINDINGS & DISCUSSION:

In this section, the study represents the findings based on the survey conducted on hospitality students and employers to understand the impact of new challenges, learning & new demands for the student and the employers post pandemic in hospitality sector in District Faridabad, Haryana.

Based on the survey students and the employers hospitality sector has changed drastically and requires the new parameters for the selection and the placements and acquiring the new aids or tools for the learning.

Major finding of the study is summarized as follows:

- Learners feel that teachers are not able to provide equal attention to the learners in online learning.

- Online education is not able to fill the skill gap for learners

- Time Management in online learning is difficult due to multiple reasons.

- Peer learning is impacted in online learning.

- Online mode does not affect the understanding of instructions given.

- E learning is an interactive mode of communication.

- E Learning platforms offer extra opportunities to learn for interested students.

- Ratio of students who are comfortable in learning and understanding using E Learning tools is higher.

- Remote learning has not given desired results for most of the learners.

- Online learning provides opportunity to learn in lighter mode.

- Respondents are almost equally divided in opinion on the statement that Appearing for exams in online mode assures honest responses.

- Learners are not necessarily needing additional training for using tools in online education.

- There is a definite confidence gap between the teachers and learners in E Learning mode.
- Employers feel that online learning of basic concepts makes the application of the same difficult in practical.
- Major skill enhancement is possible only in offline learning.
- Hospitality industry has made a shift towards technology enabled products and services post Covid 19.
- There is authenticity of evaluation in online mode.
- There is no significant change in acquiring professional skills through E Learning tools.
- Offline or online communication does not deter them from adhering to the schedules.
- Improper internet connectivity is a barrier in dissemination of information in E-Learning Platforms
- Online learning platforms are cost effective.
- Accessibility is not an issue in using E Learning platforms
- Learners and employees need to acquire new skill sets in the new era of hospitality operations.
- Students have to be more enterprising and outgoing to get the best out of online learning.
- Desired outcome of online learning is majorly dependent on efforts made by learners.

CONCLUSION & RECCOMMENDATION:

According to the findings of the study, it is analyzed that respondents found it difficult to concentrate during online learning for a variety of reasons including distraction, improper internet connectivity, etc. As the data is interpreted, it is identified that almost fifty percent of the respondents thought that offline classes, i.e. conventional methods, are more intelligible than online lectures. The respondents stated that skill enhancement is not as effective in online learning and that there is no significant change in acquiring professional skills. In the study, it is found that accessibility, online learning opportunities for students, and authenticity of evaluation are not a problem on e-learning platforms. Also, majority of them have the opinion that appearing for exams in online mode provides an equal opportunity. The study also shows that respondents are comfortable in learning & understanding using e-learning tools. It is recommended that the institutes should give more importance to develop a new curriculum, skill-based bridging courses and assure targeted placement campaigns. Also, Covid-19 had an influence on the industrial training due to which students have lack of actual & practical knowledge because of which they are not able to fulfill the set demands of the employers. According to the study both the students and trainers experienced that the lack of training exposure in online mode leads to poor responses & they are not able to fill the skill gap for the learners. Students have to be more enterprising & outgoing and need to acquire new skill sets according to new trends or demands in the hospitality industry. Further scope of research in the above context can be explored for a future studies.

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