



INTERNATIONAL RESEARCH JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES AND INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

(Peer-reviewed, Refereed, Indexed & Open Access Journal)

DOI : 03.2021-11278686

ISSN : 2582-8568

IMPACT FACTOR : 5.71 (SJIF 2021)

Library Services Through Distance Education in private Universities: with Special Reference to Chhattisgarh

Salik Ram

Ph.D Research Scholar
Library and information Science,
Dr. CV Raman University, Kota
E-mail: salikramkoshle@gmail.com

Dr. Sarita Mishra

Assistant Professor
Library and information Science,
Dr. CV Raman University, Kota

DOI No. **03.2021-11278686** DOI Link :: <https://doi-ds.org/doi/10.2021-72254287/IRJHISMC210507>

Abstract:

This paper will examine the issues related to role of Distance education Libraries, and library user services Library professionals in distance education system. The exceptional expansion of distance-learning programs at colleges and universities have remarkable implications for providing library services to distance students. The Distance education of the UGC in its norms and guidelines clearly states that all distance education courses that are recognized for the purpose of employment to posts and services under the distance education course the central Government of India. Students should therefor make the sure that the distance education course the intend to pursue is duly recognized and approved by UGC. This article reviews the literature and presents an overview of distance-learning services offered by academic libraries. The focus is on examining additional responsibilities, opportunities, and challenges encountered by academic librarians in serving distance learners. Also detailed are a number of new paradigms that distance librarianship has introduced into the profession of librarianship. The results revealed that a greater proportion of the respondents were not aware of the library services. Distance learners had no remote access to library services and SLM related to subject and electronic resources and other databases and therefore did not strongly agree to the provision of information needs through social media services.

Keywords: distance education, distance university, Academic library services, distance learners, information needs, distance education library, distance education technology, accessibility, awareness of library services

Introduction:

Distance Learning and Indian Students:

From time immemorial, faculty lecturing in a classroom setting, students listening, taking notes, asking questions, and getting those questions answered have been the backbone of traditional academic education. With advancements in communication technology such as the telephone, radio, television and most recently the Internet, new methods of learning, including distance learning, have emerged. Through the Internet, students can now obtain instruction and learn with ease at home by

simply clicking a few buttons on the computer to listen live or asynchronously to a professor thousands of miles away, interact with the professor, and solve problems without having to physically be in a classroom. While a more expensive option for education in terms of set up, distance education has progressed in concept and practice from an “anywhere” to an “anytime” education delivery method.

Distance learning, also known by various names such as distance education, e-learning, mobile learning, or online learning, is a form of education where there is physical separation of teachers from students during the instruction and learning process. It is also an instructional practice that effectively utilizes a wide range of tools and technology to enrich the student learning experience and to facilitate student-faculty and student-student communication. The minimum technological requirements for successful distance learning include the acquisition of hardware such as a computer, mobile device (cellular phones), or webcam, some form of listening device, video conferencing applications such as WebEx or Zoom, Microsoft Windows or Apple operating systems, and a stable internet connection with a speed of about 56K (56,000) or greater .

The distance learning is a Council on Education in Public Health (CEPH) accredited school, located in the heart of downtown Atlanta, an area often referred to as the public health capital of the United States. Given the school's close proximity to leading national, state and local public health institutions, our school attracts many students interested in public health education.

Provid the Library Services in Distance Education System

Services recommended for Distance Education Learners by a Library General Information

- Distance Learning Guide Services
- Interlibrary Loan
- Ask-a-Librarian
- Subject Specialists
- Course Reserves Tools
- Lib Guides Subject Guides
- Libraries' Catalogue
- Databases
- E-Journal Search
- E-Book Collections
- Reference Works
- Technical Help
- Login Problem Report
- Online Course Help

- Help Desk
- Networking and Computer support
- E Learning Student Tutorials

Student Online Teaching Style Preference

Student Academic Workload

Faculty Activities

Student Motivation to Learn

Behavioral and Economic Impact on Students

Student Reports of Positive Outcomes of Distance Learning Experience

While the transition to distance learning was abrupt and unnerving to many students, they reported some positive outcomes. Not having to commute to school and subsequently saving money was reported by more than a third of students ($n= 144$). They said:

“I do not have to commute to campus, which would take at least 2 hours out of my day everyday”

“I don't have to spend an hour and \$61 to commute to Atlanta campus via MARTA”

“I don't have to commute and pay for gas.”

Other positive outcomes listed included the fact that students had more time to work on assignments and to be with family and friends (21 responses) - *“Because courses have switched to online I now have more time to complete assignments and make sure the assignments submitted are done well.”* Some students learned to manage their time (three responses), others had faculty support (19 responses)- *“I think that some teachers have really shown flexibility and a strong desire to continue to help our class connect and keep things as normal as possible,”* and a few had flexibility and thus, could manage course schedules at their own pace (27 responses). Only a small percentage of students reported that there were no positive outcomes (10 responses).

Student Recommendations:

In response to what Distance learning SPH leadership and faculty can do to make the distance-learning experience a better one, students provided 141 qualitative responses, which have been clustered into eight broad recommendations;

- Improve faculty accessibility, communication, teaching (more engaging), and care for students during this time (41 responses),
- Acknowledge the situation, understand students, and be lenient with grading (30 responses),
- Reduce course assessments and workload (20 responses),
- Nothing needs to be done, good job (18 responses),
- work on technology, provide students with access to devices, internet and academic software (11 responses),

(vi) train and provide faculty with resources (seven responses),

(vii) conduct graduation ceremony (three responses) and

(viii) reduce tuition fees (two responses).

Discussion:

The study was conducted to identify challenges Distance learning students experienced as a result of the transitioning of all courses online in response to COVID-19, what faculty need to do to address the challenges that students faced, and also to identify the positive efforts that faculty made during the transition. Findings from the study provide information on the challenges and potential benefits Distance learning students experienced as a result of the transition of all courses to an online format owing to COVID-19 for the rest of the fall 2020 semester. The results also provide information on the strategies employed by Distance learning faculty that positively impacted student motivation during the pandemic, those that need to be improved upon, and those which can be replicated going forward.

Student Technology and Connectivity:

Prior to the study, Distance learning faculty were concerned that students would have difficulty accessing and participating in courses online due to challenges associated with access to technology off campus. There was also a concern that this challenge along with other factors would affect student motivation to learn, academic performance, and success in classes during the spring 2020 semester. Faculty concerns are well documented in the literature. confirmed that lack of access to technology by college students has the tendency to negatively impact their learning outcomes . Study results however showed the contrary, only one of the 184 students surveyed did not have access to a technological device. Nonetheless, access to a technological device does not guarantee access to internet services.

Although Distance learning provided students with access to the Schools hotspot, study results found that many could not use those hotspots to access the internet. Students who were unable to access internet services had to find alternative means. Given that distance learning will continue for the foreseeable future, it is imperative for Distance learning leadership to further examine this matter and seek viable solutions to assisting students with gaining reliable internet access. This is a matter for the success of our students, which is inexplicably tied to the future of higher education overall.

Student Online Teaching Style Preference:

The majority of students indicated a preference for the asynchronous approach to online teaching. Their choice was primarily based on the fact that it gave them the ability to learn at their own pace, and to do course work when they were ready. Additionally, having access to pre-recorded

course lectures and other resources was convenient and enhanced their ability to manage their schedule from wherever and at whatever time. This finding is consistent with what Trach noted and what Distance learning faculty found based on evidence from a small unpublished student survey that was conducted when the Distance learning the Bachelor of Science in Public Health (BSPH) program was initially established in 2017. When asked to rank their preferred course offering modality, the majority (46%) of pre-public health students, opted for the 100% online (asynchronous) offering. According to Trach, asynchronous learning gives students the ability to access course information, demonstrate what they have learned, and to communicate with classmates and instructors on their own time without having to be in the same classroom or same time zone. To Trach, asynchronous learning not only provides flexibility for non-traditional students, but also accommodates different learning styles, as students can choose the order they wish to cover material and how much time they want to dedicate to delving into a particular class (15). On the other hand, some students said the synchronous approach was the better option in that, it gave them the opportunity to participate in live streamed lectures, allowed for high faculty-student interaction, and the receipt of immediate feedback on course material. It also gave them some structure and caused them not to be lazy with their schoolwork. In their study, Lobel et al. found that one frequently mentioned advantage of the synchronous learning method, was the spontaneous and dynamic nature of interactions that the asynchronous method does not support. Other students preferred a blend of the synchronous and asynchronous style of teaching.

Student Academic Workload:

Although students indicated that their academic workload significantly increased as a result of the transition to distance learning, it did not affect their motivation to learn or to complete their assignments on time. This shows that irrespective of the challenges, students were determined to complete the semester with good grades. It also suggests that the best way forward with distance learning will be to adjust expectations, and to reduce assessments that overly test online participation and content assimilation. The best way forward will also require faculty to check on students from time to time and to talk with them about their academic challenges to strike the right balance and not overburden students. Some students indicated that faculty engagement in such activities will be very helpful.

Faculty Activities:

In preparation for the transition to a full distance learning format, Distance learning faculty engaged in a series of preparatory activities to make the transition a smooth one. Results from the study show that the attention that was given to preparing faculty for meeting student needs in the online format was communicating course expectations to students, making available recorded class

lectures and being accessible for office hours. Investigations from demonstrate that students show a high probability of assigning an excellent overall rating for faculty who in their view, facilitate learning, effectively communicate course materials and information, organize courses effectively, assesses student progress accurately, show interest in students' learning, and show respect for their students. Student Motivation to Learn Over 50% of students surveyed indicated that they were motivated to learn regardless of the learning environment. Thus, it was not surprising that they completed their assignments and turned them in on time and also remembered to log in to take quizzes. Some aspects of student motivation can be attributed to their access to faculty during the semester, their ability to access course materials and recorded lectures asynchronously, and the flexibility of schedules. define motivation as the process whereby goal-directed activity is instigated and sustained. They indicate that one's motivation can influence what they learn, how they learn, and when they choose to learn. According to available literature, motivated learners are more likely to engage in challenging activities, be actively engaged, adopt an approach to learning, and exhibit enhanced performance and persistence even under challenging circumstances.

Behavioral and Economic Impact on Students:

Not as many students were worried about contracting COVID-19 (24.7%). Financially, the majority of students (66.1%) had their economic activities disrupted by the pandemic. As was predicted by economists, the implementation of mitigation efforts around the world to counteract the tightening grip of COVID-19 will accelerate job losses and create new schedules. This is exactly what happened to Indian students who work. Consistent with what Indian faculty presumed, a little under 37% of students said that overall, their daily lives had been affected by the pandemic a lot. With unimaginable national response measures in place to contain the pandemic, families have been separated, public spaces have been closed, and economic activity has drastically slowed down, creating a new normal, and rearranging the lives of Indian students to fit into the shifting landscape. Indian international students who have no home in the US except campus, had to cope not only with the closure, but also with the fear that inflation arising from global economic inactivity, could potentially affect their scholarships.

Student Positive Outcomes of Distance Learning:

As students were still processing the shock of campus closure and adjusting to the new world of predominantly online classes, the general consensus was that they would miss out on face-to-face interaction with faculty and their peers. This is because, in any given semester, students do not usually enroll in only online courses- they usually go for a combination. After analyzing the data collected, it became apparent that many students were okay with not having to be in the physical presence of faculty - in so far as faculty communicated course expectations, were available, and

made course materials and assessments available. Less commuting, saving on gas, having more time to do assignments, time management, and spending time with family were some of the positive outcomes proffered for the closure of campus. Additional positive outcomes stated included having more time to rest, increased communication with faculty, and obtaining leniency with assignment submission dates. The responses associated with time management were unforeseen.

Student Recommendations:

Students provided a number of recommendations in response to the question related to what Indian students' leadership and faculty can do to improve the distance learning experience. After analysis of the qualitative statements made by the students regarding recommendations, the following six themes emerged; (i) Need for reliable technology; (ii) more flexibility in assessments and grading; (iii) improve faculty access and response times to student correspondence; (iv) adjustment to student course workload; (v) faculty preparation for online teaching; and (vi) facilitate engaging content for synchronous classes.

Practices that did not enhance their experience will be addressed and those that were positive will be documented and replicated in the future. Research shows that educational experiences that are active, engaging, and student-owned lead to deeper learning.

Study Limitations:

Limitations to this study include the fact that <25% of the Indian student population participated in the study. While the data is supportive of the efforts that SPH faculty and leadership have exerted in facilitating effective, relevant pedagogy during this crisis, it would have been preferable to have at least one-third of the student body respond. Additionally, the study is limited in that, it was conducted in unprecedented times, where there was a high likelihood that students' emotional levels could have affected their perceptions of the impact of the online transition.

Conclusion:

Despite the unprecedented events that led to the need for Indian students to conclude the spring 2020 semester via distance learning approaches, this study found that students were still motivated to learn and to complete their assessments and assignments on time. Considering that the abrupt and unforeseen changes also had an impact on faculty teaching, motivation and preparation, student recommendations for SPH leadership and faculty to take certain measures to make their distance learning better going forward, were documented and will provide evidence for changes in the future. This study is specific to student outcomes only at Indian, however, some of the recommendations provided by students may be pertinent to other institutions of higher learning.

References:

1. Shachar M, Neumann Y. Differences between traditional and distance education academic performances: a meta-analytic approach. *Int Rev Res Open Dist Learn*. (2003) 4:1–20. doi: 10.19173/irrodl.v4i2.153 CrossRef Full Text Google Scholar
2. Simonson GAB. *Distance Learning Education*. Britannica: Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. (2016).
3. Klein A. *The Every Student Succeeds Act: An ESSA Overview*. (2016). Available online: <http://www.edweek.org/ew/issues/every-student-succeeds-act/> (accessed September 9, 2020).
4. Al-Tamimi DM. Application of information and communication technologies in medical education. *J Fam Comm Med*. (2003) 10:67–76. PubMed Abstract Google Scholar
5. Friedman J. *Tackle Challenges of Online Classes Due to COVID-19*. (2020). Available online at: <https://www.usnews.com/education/best-colleges/articles/how-to-overcome-challenges-of-online-classes-due-to-coronavirus> (accessed September 9, 2020).
6. Armstrong-Mensah E, Ramsey-White K, Alema-Mensah E. Integrative learning in US undergraduate public health education: a review of student perceptions of effective high-impact educational practices at Georgia State University. *Front Public Health*. (2019) 7:101. doi: 10.3389/fpubh.2019.00101 PubMed Abstract CrossRef Full Text Google Scholar
7. Liu S GJ, Khan B, Yen C-J. Toward a learner-oriented community college online course dropout framework. *Int J E-Learn*. (2007) 6:519–42. Google Scholar
8. Trach E. *Asynchronous Learning: Definition, Benefits, and Example Activities*. (2018). Available online at: <https://www.schoolology.com/blog/asynchronous-learning-definition-benefits-and-example-activities#:~:text=Asynchronous%20learning%20allows%20flexibility%20for,dive%20into%20a%20given%20topic> (accessed September 9, 2020).
9. Lee YN. *7 Charts Show How the Coronavirus Pandemic Has Hit the Global Economy*. (2020). Available online at: <https://www.cnbc.com/2020/04/24/coronavirus-pandemics-impact-on-the-global-economy-in-7-charts.html> (accessed September 9, 2020).
10. Carol L. *The Coronavirus Pandemic Has Revealed How Fragile Everyday Life Is*. (2020). Available online at: <https://theconversation.com/the-coronavirus-pandemic-has-revealed-how-fragile-everyday-life-is-134637> (accessed September 9, 2020).
11. Biswas A, Bhattacharjee U, Chakrabarti AK, Tewari DN, Banu H, Dutta. Emergence of Novel Coronavirus and COVID-19: whether to stay or die out? *Crit Rev Microbiol*. (2020) 46:182–93. doi: 10.1080/1040841X.2020.1739001 CrossRef Full Text Google Scholar