

Awareness, Benefits and Challenges of E-Learning Among the Faculty of Kurukshetra University Kurukshetra: A Study

Shivcharan*

Abstract

This paper's purpose is to examine and discuss the awareness, benefits and challenges of e-learning among the faculty of Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra. In this study, survey method was adopted and questionnaire was used for data collection. The finding showed that awareness about information and communication technologies (ICT) or e-learning among the university students was good but e-learning software's knowledge was very poor and respondent's main source to know about e-learning was the internet. Many students thought that studying through e-learning was a good idea. The study also found that majority of students agreed to e-learning, as it provides an attractive learning environment and helps to acquire new ideas. Furthermore, the finding also revealed that majority of students thought that lack of familiarity to English language, lack of technology know-how, lack of financial resources and limited infrastructure were main problems in e-learning. On the basis of the findings, it can be said that librarians can play vital role in creating IT infrastructure for effective e-learning environment in universities.

Keywords: E-Learning, Awareness of E-Learning, Benefits of E-Learning, Challenges of E-Learning, ICT

Introduction

Today's education system has taken different shapes, especially the language spoken by majority of individuals and learners is information and communication technologies (ICT). Learners of today have tried to embrace these technologies to enhance their learning in institutions (Eke, 2012). The use of new multimedia

technologies and the internet in learning is seen as a means to improve accessibility, efficiency and quality of learning by easing access to resources and services as well as remote exchanges and collaboration. E-learning has become a new paradigm and a new philosophy in education with a mission to serve as a development platform for present-day society based on knowledge (Kamba, 2009).

E-learning has become an important component of both formal and non-formal education. The advancement of e-learning in universities is also influenced by the introduction of learning management (Tot, 2011). E-learning is learning attempted through electronic means for achieving the computer and network-enabled transfer of skills and knowledge. It includes the electronic applications and processes applied to teaching and learning. E-learning applications may include web-based learning, computer-based learning, virtual classrooms, and digital (Tripathi and Jeevan, 2010). The main purpose of this paper was to identify and analyze major challenges, benefits of e-learning among the faculty of Kurukshetra University.

Review of Literature

Numerous studies have been conducted on challenges and benefits of e-learning in higher education. (Nfila, 2015) pointed out that Digital Libraries provide technology-based information resources and services to allow learners to access relevant information anywhere anytime, as well as provide empowerment for innovative and life-long learning. It also provided a clear relationship between

* Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Library & Information Science, M. D. University, Rohtak, Haryana, India.
Email: shivcharan064@gmail.com. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1865-0274>

e-learning, digital scholarship, and digital libraries and showed how digital libraries are linked to e-learning. Naresh and Sree Reddy said that e-learning gives flexible and easy environment to the students at less cost and suitable time and place. Rather than technology and other skills, the user perception and willingness plays an important role in e-learning efficiency in both the developing and developed countries.

Patkar discussed the impacts of e-learning on the learner, faculty, and library using the framework of the laws of media enunciated by Marshall McLuhan. He further discussed how e-learning and new form of the library fit well in the emerging concept of self-service society. To spread the modern education to the remote corners of India, a plan of indorsing the e-learning assisted by the advanced library and technology is suggested. El-arabawy and Badawood discussed that there are many practical problems in implementing e-learning programs in university due to lack of resources, such as lack of computers in the classroom, slow speed of internet and other resources at university. Improving the computer laboratories and lecture halls is one of the major thing that must be done in the university. Uhomoibhi said e-learning and the use of ICT is playing vital role in shaping teaching and learning in Northern Ireland. Its application is providing innovative and creative ways for knowledge and technology transfer. It is facilitating the establishment of a skilled community and workforce for a knowledge society. Tuparova et al. estimated the current level and practices of e-learning in Bulgarian universities. The study revealed that 97% of the respondents used computers for word processing and internet access that was the positive trend, 25% of the respondents pointed that did not use computers for their work, and 2% not answered, 5% of the lecturers did not use the internet at all and 2% not answered.

Objectives of the Study

- To know the current status of e-learning among the faculty members of Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra.
- To identify the challenges and benefits that faculty face in using e-learning.

- To study faculty perception toward e-learning.

Methodology

In this study, questionnaire method was used for the collection of quantitative data from participant. The questionnaire was divided into the following six sections; Personal Information, awareness of e-learning, awareness about ICT, in this section used five point response scale, where 1= Excellent and 5=Poor. Next sections were Benefits, Challenges and other aspects of e-learning, in these sections used five point response scale, where 1=Strongly Agree and 5= Strongly Disagree.

The population of the study was 120 consisting of Professor, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor of each discipline (Science, Social Science and Art & Humanities) from Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra. The population was very large therefore random sample of 120 faculty (40) from each discipline was selected. After the repeated request the investigator was able to get 95 questionnaires and out of these 90 questionnaires duly field up by faculty were found valid for analysis. Data were proceed and analyzed using MS Excel. Detailed breakup of the sample as given below

Table 1: Total Population of the Study

Sr. No.	Professor	Associate Professor	Assistant Professor	Total
Art & Humanities	5	4	22	31
Science	4	3	23	30
Social Science	6	3	20	29
Total	15	10	65	90

Analysis

Respondent's Profile

Out of 90 responses it was found that 66 (73.33%) were males and 26 (26.67%) were females. The largest group of faculty 54 (60%) was comprised of those in the age group of 25–35 years. The smallest group of faculty 05 (5.56%) was age between 55 above years (Table 2).

Table 3 presents an overview of discipline-wise distribution of respondents. Mostly of the respondents were from Art & Humanities Disciplines 31 (34.44%) faculty. The results showed that ICT utilization was more among Art & Humanities Disciplines, Science at second position and last was Social Science.

Table 2: Gender- and Age-Wise Distribution

Gender						Age group		
Male		Female		Total		Age	N	%
N		N	%	N	%	25-35	54	60
66	57.60	26	42.40	90	100	35-45	20	22.22
						45-55	11	12.22
						55 above	5	5.56

Table 3: Discipline-Wise Response

Discipline	Faculty	
	N	%
Science	30	33.33
Social Science	29	32.22
Art & Humanities	31	34.44
Total	224	100

Awareness of E-Learning

Table 4 indicates respondent’s awareness level of e-learning and source to know about e-learning. All of the respondents 90 (100%) were aware about e-learning. For most of the respondents 53 (59%) the main source to know about e-learning was the internet. Respondent’s

awareness level of e-learning was very good, and the internet was the major source to know about e-learning.

Table 4: Awareness of E-Learning

Sr. No.	Statements			
			N	%
1.	Are you aware of e-learning?	Yes	90	100
		No	00	00
		Total	90	100
2.	Where did you come to know about e-learning?	Colleagues	19	21
		Internet	53	59
		Newspaper/Magazine	10	11
		Others	08	9

Awareness About ICT

Information Communication Technologies (ICT) is becoming an essential part of daily routine works like: office work, entertainment and educational purposes etc., so awareness about ICT is very necessary for everyone. Table 5 shows faculty’s awareness about ICT and e-learning software. This indicates that the faculty perceived their overall awareness about ICT as well and knowledge of e-learning software as poor. Response shows that majority of faculty members have good knowledge about Document Formats, i.e. 37 (40%), about MS Word i.e. 40 (44%), Power Point, i.e. 37 (41%), the Internet, i.e. 44 (49%), E-Mail, i.e. 41 (46%). Social Networking Sites, i.e. 33 (37%), Online Chat, i.e. 24 (27%), Video Conference Tool, i.e. 32 (36%), however, poor knowledge of e-learning software, i.e. 32 (36%). This indicates that faculty perceived themselves as more skillful with general-purpose ICT tools than with e-learning software.

Table 5: Awareness about ICT

	Excellent	%	Good	%	Average	%	Fair	%	Poor	%
Documents Formats	26	29	37	41	18	20	3	3	6	7
MS Word	30	33	40	44	11	12	6	7	3	3
Power Point	23	26	37	41	22	24	3	3	5	6
Internet	35	39	44	49	5	6	2	2	4	4
E-Mail	33	37	41	46	10	11	4	4	2	2
Social Sites	33	37	31	34	17	19	2	2	7	8
Online Chat	21	23	24	27	32	36	3	3	10	11
Video Conference Tools	19	21	17	19	32	36	11	12	10	11
E-Learning Software	6	7	15	17	17	19	20	22	32	36

Attitude Toward of E-Learning

Table 6 shows the overall response of the faculty members toward e-learning is positive attitude. Response reveals that majority of faculty members, i.e. 61 (69%) agree with personal interest in the use of ICT for teaching, 48 (54%) faculty members agree with using e-learning

is a good idea, 41 (46%) agree with using e-learning would be a pleasant experience, 45 (51%) agree with using e-learning to improve teaching quality, 43 (48%) agree with e-learning enables to teach more efficiently than traditional learning and 36 (40%) faculty members strongly agree with you are in favor of full time e-learning as it lacks the face to face interaction between students and faculty.

Table 6: Attitude Toward of E-Learning

Sr. No.		SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%
1	Personal interest in the use of ICT for teaching.	14	16	61	69	9	10	3	3	2	2
2	Using e-learning is a good idea.	34	38	48	54	6	7	1	1	0	0
3	Using e-learning would be a pleasant experience.	23	26	41	46	25	28	0	0	1	1
4	Using e-learning to improve teaching quality.	34	39	45	51	8	9	1	1	0	0
5	E-learning enables to teach more efficiently than traditional learning.	25	28	43	48	16	18	5	6	1	1
6	You are in favor of full time e-learning as it lacks the face to face interaction between students and faculty.	36	40	25	28	16	18	10	11	2	2

Benefits of E-Learning

Table 7 shows that most of the faculty, i.e. 58 (64%) agree with easy to share information through e-learning, 50 (56%) agree with e-learning save time and effort of both faculty and students, 59 (66%) agree with minimizes cost of teaching and learning, 55 (61%) agree with provides

efficiency in teaching, 53 (59%) agree with e-learning system is easy to use in teaching, 58 (64%) agree with e-learning is an effective medium for teaching, 53 (59%) agree with e-learning helps to acquire new ideas and technology, 58 (64%) agree with flexible working conditions (in terms of time and space) in e-learning and 40 (45%) agree with e-learning is compatible with lifestyle.

Table 7: Benefits of E-Learning

Sr. No.		SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%
1	It is easy to share information through e-learning.	24	27	58	64	7	8	1	1	0	0
2	Save time and effort of both faculty and students.	32	36	50	56	4	4	4	4	0	0
3	Minimizes cost of teaching and learning.	17	19	59	66	9	10	2	2	2	2
4	Provides efficiency in teaching.	21	23	55	61	11	12	2	2	1	1
5	E-learning system is easy for use in teaching.	25	28	53	59	6	7	6	7	0	0
6	E-learning is an effective medium for teaching.	21	23	58	64	9	10	2	2	0	0
7	E-learning helps to acquire new ideas and technology.	25	28	53	59	8	9	4	4	0	0
8	Flexible working conditions (in terms of time and space) in e-learning.	22	24	58	64	10	11	0	0	0	0
9	E-learning is compatible with your lifestyle.	23	26	40	45	23	26	3	3	0	0

Challenges of E-Learning in Higher Education

Find the challenges of e-learning in higher education is one of the main motives of this study. Table 8 shows that faculty respondents, i.e. 45 (50%) agree with lack of comfort with technology is a challenge in e-learning,

38 (42%) agree with students lack of knowledge about computers, 31 (35%) are undecided about faculty and students lack of knowledge about the internet, 31 (35%) agree with negative attitude of faculty or students, 40 (45%) agree with limited infrastructure to support the use of technology for e-learning, 46 (51%) agree with lack of

financial resources, 56 (62%) faculty agree with lack of administration support for e-learning in departments, and

45 (52%) agree with lack of training facility provided for e-learning techniques.

Table 8: Challenges of E-Learning in Higher Education

Sr. No.		SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%
1	Lack of comfort with technology.	4	8	45	50	12	13	22	24	7	8
2	Students lack of knowledge about computers.	9	10	38	42	27	30	15	17	1	1
3	Faculty and Students lack of knowledge about Internet.	2	2	29	33	31	35	29	33	3	3
4	Negative attitude of faculty or students.	3	3	31	35	23	26	24	27	7	8
5	Limited infrastructure to support the use of technology for e-learning	26	29	40	45	15	17	8	9	0	0
6	Lack of financial resources.	26	29	46	51	10	11	6	7	2	2
7	Lack of administration support for e-learning in departments.	16	18	56	62	10	11	6	7	2	2
8	Lack of training facility provided for e-learning techniques.	25	29	45	52	9	10	5	6	3	3

Other Aspects of E-Learning

These statements are related to the other aspects related to the e-learning like: training of e-learning and future use of e-learning in the study and teaching. Table 9 shows that overall response scores of the faculty are positive. 47 (52%) feel the need of training for e-learning, 57 (63%)

agree with intend to use the Internet to support for their teaching, 46 (51%) agree with intend to use the e-learning tools in future teaching, 50 (56%) agree with department spending in support of students and faculty IT needs for e-learning is adequate and 43 (48%) think department plans to start e-learning courses in the future.

Table 9: Other Aspects of E-Learning

Sr. No.		SA	%	A	%	U	%	D	%	SD	%
1	You feel the need of training for e-learning.	25	28	47	52	8	9	7	8	3	3
2	You intend to use the internet to support your teaching.	29	32	57	63	2	2	2	2	0	0
3	You intend to use the e-learning tools in your future teaching.	31	34	46	51	12	13	1	1	0	0
4	Department's spending in support of students and faculty's IT needs for e-learning is adequate.	11	12	50	56	18	20	9	10	2	2
5	Department plans start e-learning courses in future.	13	14	43	48	30	33	1	1	3	3

Summary of Findings

- The findings reveal that the overall perceptions of the faculty are positive towards awareness of e-learning. All faculty respondents are aware of e-learning and the Internet is the major source to know about e-learning.
- Faculty respondents are aware of E-Mail, MS Word, Power Point, and Document Formats as compared to e-learning software.
- Faculty are interested in using e-learning in teaching and agree that using e-learning for teaching is a good idea.
- Faculty are not in favor of full time e-learning because it will lead to lack of interaction between faculty and students.
- The result shows that e-learning has many benefits like easy to use, save time and effort, effective medium for both faculty and students.
- Finding revealed that challenges of e-learning in Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra are lack of comfort with technology, lack of knowledge about computers, limited infrastructure to support the use of technology for e-learning, lack of financial resources, lack of administration support for e-learning in departments and lack of training facility for e-learning.

- Faculty are intend to use e-learning in their future teaching and think that departments should spend money in support of e-learning.
- Faculty are in favor of starting e-learning courses in future.

Suggestions/Recommendations

- Faculty should attend regular training courses related to the e-learning systems.
- It is necessary to change the faculty's attitude toward e-learning.
- University should provide sufficient financial support for training skilled and enthusiastic staff.
- In order to remove e-learning challenges like faculty and students having little knowledge about e-learning software, lack of comfort with technology etc. there is a need of sufficient planning and investment to prepare the way for removing these barriers.

Conclusions

This study focused on the benefits and challenges of the e-learning at Kurukshetra University, Kurukshetra in India. It also explores faculty's attitude toward e-learning or level of awareness about ICT tools. Outcomes demonstrated that Kurukshetra University faculty need to increase the level of their technological skills to significantly benefit from the opportunities offered by e-learning. E-learning has found its special positions and identify in today's information age, but its development and applications face different challenges that require identification, removing and acquiring suitable policies.

References

Eke, H. N. (2012). The perspective of e-learning and libraries in Africa: Challenges and opportunities.

- Library Review*, 59(4), 274–290. Retrieved from <http://doi.org/10.1108/00242531011038587>
- El-arabawy, M., & Badwood, A. (2009). Faculty's awareness and challenges of e-learning in TAIF University, 1–4.
- Kamba, M. A. (2009). Problems, challenges and benefits of implementing e-learning in Nigerian universities: An empirical study. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning*, 4(1), 66–69. Retrieved from <http://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v4i1.653>
- Nfila, R. B. (2015). Academic libraries support for e-learning: Initiatives and Opportunities: The case of University of Botswana Library, 1–14.
- Naresh, B., & Sree Reddy, B. (2015). Challenges and opportunity of e-learning in developed and developing countries: A review. *International Journal of Emerging Research in Management & Technology*, 4(6), 259–262.
- Patkar, V. (2009) E-Learning: Liberation of education and training with evolving library and technology support. *DESIDOC Journal of Library & Information Technology*, 29(1), 14–22.
- Tot, M. (2011). E-Learning in LIS education: Satisfaction of part-time LIS students with omega. In *INFUTURE2011: Information Sciences and e-Society*, 217–224.
- Tripathi, M., & Jeevan, V. K. J. (2010). E-Learning library and information science: A pragmatic view for India. *DESIDOC Journal Library Information Technology*, 30(5), 83–90.
- Tuparova, D., Tuparov, G., Ivanov, S., Karastranova, E., & Peneva, J. (2006). Teachers' attitude towards e-learning courses in Bulgarian universities. *Current Developments in Technology-Assisted Education*, 1755–1759.
- Uhomoibhi, J. O. (2006). Implementing e-learning in Northern Ireland: Prospects and challenges. *Campus-Wide Information Systems*, 23(1), 4–14. Retrieved from <http://doi.org/10.1108/10650740610639697>