Print- Media Experience to Boost-up ODL Courses On-line at Mumbai University

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Abstract

Institute of Distance and Open Learning, University of Mumbai is on the phase of major changes and quality improvement in the various programmes, its courses and infrastructure. The present system has succeeded with the help of print media and counseling. The author has found lacunas and errors in the system and suggested on-line model for implementing distance education effectively. The University of Mumbai has dual mode model and accommodates distance and conventional learners. So the author thinks a type of research is required in respect of conventional system and combines the quality of both modes. The combined model will become unique experiment in higher education of India.

Key words : Print Media, ODL, SLM, PCP, Quality Measurement.

Introduction

Institute of Distance and Open Learning, University of Mumbai was established in 1971 for providing conventional courses through distance mode. This system is only for working class within the jurisdiction of the University, for those who want to complete their education. At present 82000 students are enrolled for various courses which are more demanding from learning community. This Institute is providing academic support through the print media and counseling since its inception. The learners prefer books developed by course writers /experts. The course writers /experts are available from affiliated colleges and institutes. Even after 45 years from its beginning, the print media and counseling has been the backbone of distance education.

Now the technology, especially electronic technology, has given the boost to ODL in terms of its delivery mechanism and on line courses are available to learners. Mumbai University's distance education is on the way to come up with 'on-line courses' with sound experimental background of print media. In his PhD thesis on a quality improvement of B. A. progroamme of ODL courses, Dr Sanjay Ratnaparakhi draws some conclusions for improvement that should be great help to design on- line courses. He feels that without considering the print media the e-learning courses would remain incomplete or remain ineffective to fetch better success to ODL development. Extending the same idea, the present author feels that blend of print media and counseling can be used effectively by conversion of it into e-learning system to strengthen the present print media base system.

Quality Concepts

The author in his above cited Ph. D work dealt with quality assurance of dual mode in reference with B.A Programme of Institute of Distance and Open Learning, University of Mumbai. Further he discussed some concepts and definitions of quality assurance. Mainly the following discussions have been made to focus concepts of quality assurance:

"The totality of features and characteristics of product or service that bears on its ability to satisfy stated or implicit needs" (British Standards Institution 1978).

Quality which is seen by much development, i.e. chance of the specification over time, has been defined as 'fitness for purpose, i.e to what extent

the product or service meets the stated institutional purpose (Green 1994).

The author took review of Professor Mugride Ian, approach on quality assurance, quality approach for professional courses, quality standard for e-learning, quality assurance practices in different countries like Israel, U.K, Germany, and Norway, DEC, IGNOU approach, YCMOU approach and NAAC approaches for colleges and universities in India.

Purpose

To identify an appropriate measure to create effective on line courses in dual mode education in background of same syllabus for conventional (regular) and distance learning students and having to face same examination. The author has done survey for his Ph.D programme to improve the quality of distance mode education under dual mode educational system. Same survey has been used, as background, to understand the potential difficulties in bringing the quality in 'on-line' courses which are likely to be used by both types of students-ODL and conventional education. Thus new outlook is need of an hour to introduce on-line courses in dual mode educational universities like Mumbai University. It is an attempt to recombine and to reconstruct the existing harmonies to create altogether different but relevant to the present state of dual education.

The Ph.D. dissertation work includes 'Survey of distance mode learners in dual mode education at Mumbai University' and the data analysis of this dissertation has been the source of data for the present study. The thesis was submitted for award of Ph.D. degree to YCMOU, Maharashtra, India, titled as "Macro and Micro Study of B.A Programme of Institute of Distance Education of University of Mumbai for Quality improvement". Thus the content of data analysis is re-analysed to understand the importance in the developing of on-line courses.

Findings

I
General Information :
1. Participated distance learners in survey:

B.A III distance learners participated in survey and 354 learners (12.25%) out of 2888 gave their feedback.

Informants Gender	Frequency ——	Percentage ——
Male	128	36.15%
Female	226	63.8%
Total	354	100%

The above table indicates that the female participants are more than male.

2. Urban and Rural Learners:

Informants	Frequency	Percentage
Rural	97	27.40%
Urban	257	72.60
Total	354	100%

It shows that the urban participants were more than rural distance learners.

3. Language of Instruction for B.A course.

Informants	Frequency	Percentage
Marathi	213	60.16%
Hindi	13	3.7%
English	128	36.14%
Total	354	100%

Most learners prefer Marathi language as instruction of medium and second preference is given to English language.

1. Study Material:
1. When are you getting study material after completion admission process?

Information	Frequency	Percentage
Immediate getting	136	38.42%
After some days	62	17.52%
After one month	35	9.88%
Getting late	45	12.72%
Very late	76	21.46%
Total	354	100%

It is observed that most of learners claim that they are not getting a study material in proper time. So more on-line access will work to learners

2. Reaction about Book Reading.

Information	Frequency	Percentage
Total reading of book	224	63.28%
Less reading of book	60	16.95%
Very less reading of book	38	10.74%
Not feel to read the book	11	3.10%
No reading of book	21	5.93%
Total	354	100%

It is observed that the highest number of learners (224) try to read all contents. However other learners are not happy with books. So interactive on-line learning will give a more academic support to distance learners

3 .Selected Subjects/ Papers and Availability of Study Material.

Information	Frequency	Percentage
Yes. Getting all material	155	43.78%
Less books are getting	107	30.23%
Few books are getting	19	5.37%
Not getting books	73	20.62%
Total	354	100%

In this table it is seen that 155 learners are claiming that they are getting books for their selected subjects and others are claiming that they are getting books for their subjects. Here also a preparation of books in all subjects is big task before institute so an on-line interactive study material will give more relief to distance learners.

4. Learners Expectations about Books.

Information	Frequency	Percentage
Books : Self-instructional form	210	59.32%
Books : Like Open University	91	25.71%
Books : Without PCP will understand	53	14.97%
Total	354	100%

The highest 210 (59.32%) learners wanted books in SIM/SLM format however other wanted interactive books. On-line books provide greater and better access to learners.

5. Reaction about Utilization of Other Books in Learning Process.

Information	Frequency	Percentage
Conventional books	66	18.64%
Notes available in market	165	46.61%
Self notes	73	20.62%
Private help from others	21	5.93%
Other help	29	8.20%
Total	354	100%

It is observed that most of learners are dependent on other material and they are not happy with present material prepared by Institute. So here also major scopes for developing study material with quality aspect and utilization technology for on-line learning.

6. Reactions about Availability of Audio-Video in Learning Process.

Information	Frequency	Percentage
Yes. We get A/V support	60	16.95%
Yes. We get short support	89	25.15%
Few support	39	11.00%
No availability of A/V support	119	33.62%
No awareness to Institute about A/V	47	13.28%
Total	354	100%

The above table indicates that much more A/V support is not available in Institute so one more component will work for developing on-line learning process and learners will get more help from A/V.

2. **Personal Contact Programme (PCP):**
1. Response about PCP for All Courses.

Information	Frequency	Percentage
Yes. PCP for all courses	104	29.38%
PCP for few courses	143	40.40%
PCP is rare	46	12.99%
PCP is very rare	26	7.34%
PCP not organized	35	9.89%
Total	354	100%

Personal Contact Programme is most important activity for distance learners because learners are getting interaction with teachers and experts. The above table shows that learners are not getting PCP for all subjects. Hence on –line lectures will be more suitable for learners.

2. Response about Academic Communication and PCP Help.

Information	Frequency	Percentage
100%	54	15.26%
90 to 100%	78	22.03%
80 to 60%	90	25.42%
60 to 40%	65	18.37%
Less than 40%	50	14.12%
No response	17	04.80%
Total	354	100%

The purpose of organizing PCP is academic interaction and communication will be reached to learners and they will get more idea about content. The above table shows that most of the learners are not happy with present structure of PCP. Hence a more interactive PCP is suitable for them. On-line component will work in this regard.

3. Evaluation:
Response about Continues Evaluation Process.

Information	Frequency	Percentage
Yes we want continues evaluation	111	31.36%
No	55	15.54%
Little but say we agree	103	29.09%
Few say no	21	5.94%
Few say yes and few say no	64	18.07%
Total	354	100%

Continuous assessment and evolution of distance learners is one of the ideal terms which provide a confidence to them. The above table shows that most of the learners are not ready for the continuous assessment and evolution process. But this is basic need of quality improvement of the system. The scattered distance learners will cover with help of on-line platform and they shall enjoy the learning experience/process.

4. QualityMeasurement:
The author has done work on quality improvement of B.A programme, IDOL , University of Mumbai. The quality measurement done on five-pointscalei.e 81-100%, 61-80%, 41-60%, 20-40% and 0-20% with five questions.

1. Does a B.A Programmehavepotentiality (usefulness')?

Information	Frequency	Percentage
81-100%	81	22.89%
61-80%	96	27.11%
41-60%	80	22.60%
21-40%	48	13.56%
0-20%	49	13.84%
Total	354	100%

The highest 96 (27.11%) learners responded that they have seen potentiality up to 61-80% range while 81(22.89%) learners said that potentiality is up to 81-100% range. And other 80(22.60%) learners gave their result up to 41-60%. So more potentiality will be required for satisfaction of learners and it will possible after more modification in course structure as per requirements of learning community. On-line course structure and delivery will give major support to bringing more potentiality in B.A.Programme.

2. Is B.A. Programme Developing Knowledge and Skills?

Information	Frequency	Percentage
81-100%	77	21.75%
61-80%	99	27.96%
41-60%	73	20.62%
21-40%	53	14.98%
0-20%	52	14.69%
Total	354	100%

The highest 99 learners said that the B.A. Programme is developing knowledge and skills up to 61-80% and 77 learners claim that B. A Programme has capacity to develop knowledge and skills up to 81-100%. But others do not agree with their views. So, more modifications are required in B. A Programme for quality improvement and on- line plat mechanism will give new development stage in B.A. Programme.

3. Is B.A Programme supplementing for your needs?

Information	Frequency	Percentage
81-100%	104	29.37%
61-80%	87	24.58%
41-60%	73	20.62%
21-40%	48	13.56%
0-20%	42	11.87%
Total	354	100%

The above table shows that 104(29.37%) learners agree that B.A. Programme is supplementing them up to 81-100% for their needs. And 87(24.58%) learners said that B.A Programme is supplementing them up to 61-80% while 42(11.87) learners are not happy with Programme. So more improvement with need base programme is one of requirement before Institute. And on-line support will give major support for this task.

4. Is B.A Programme convertible?

Information	Frequency	Percentage
81-100%	65	18.36%
61-80%	94	26.56%
41-60%	80	22.59%
21-40%	66	18.65%
0-20%	49	13.84%
Total	354	100%

On this question the highest 94(26.56%) learners said that they feel the Progromme is convertible up to 61-80% and 80 (22.59%) learners are feel this programme is convertible up to 41-60%. While 49 (13.84) claiming that B.A Programme is less convertible its range is 0-20%.So more quality improvement is required. A. Programme consists of Social Sciences and Languages which depend upon development of society. There is a huge development taking place in the social life and it should be incorporated in B.A. Programme. On-line mechanism will help to this new development.

5. Is B.A Programme fulfilling quality standard?

Information	Frequency	Percentage
81-100%	102	28.81%
61-80%	90	25.42%
41-60%	62	17.51%
21-40%	48	13.57%
0-20%	52	14.69%
Total	354	100%

The above table shows that 102(28.81) learners said that B. A. Programme fulfill quality standard up to 81-100%. 90(25.42%) learners noted that this programee fullfil quality standard up to 61-80% range. There are 52 learners who claimed that B. A Programmefulfill quality standard up to 0-20%. Hence more quality improvement is required in present programme. This quality will be assured after some major changes in syllabus, books, delivery system, communication, support services etc. With the help of new and appropriate technology and on-line support, this task will cover.

5. Communication:
Response about getting information through website: www.mu.ac.in

Information	Frequency	Percentage
100%	70	19.78%
90-100%	82	23,16%
80-60%	70	19.78%
60-40%	57	16.10%
Less than 40%	75	21.18%
Total	354	100%

The above table indicates that the highest 82(23.16%) learners said that they are getting information about Institute up to 90-100%. 70 (19.78)learners said that they are getting 100% information while other 70 learnersclaimthat they are getting information up 80-60% range. 75 (21.18%) learners said that they are getting information less than 40% through web. Nowadays delivery of information and web support is main task in ODL where learners are more dependent on it. So, more active delivery system is required in system. On-line mechanism will give proper support on this task.

II
Micro Study :

A. Case Study of 34 Political Science learners:
The author had made the micro study in two parts: first is case study of 34 learners of T.Y.B.A

having Political Science subject and another detail interview of member of Board of Study(BoS) of Political science, course writer of Political science, editors. Dean of Arts Faculty, University of Mumbai and experts in ODL.

Total 34 T.Y.B.A learners belonging to Political Science participated in this Case Study. And findings of case study are as blow:

Male	Female
14	20

1. Learners said that they are dependent upon books available from market.
2. Learners are not satisfied with presentation and standard of books provided by Institute.
3. Personal Contact Programme(PCP) is not organized properly with both language i.e. English and Marathi
4. Institute should provide books in regional language Marathi
5. A learner wanted continuous assessment process.
6. Institute gives the academic and administrative support to learners.
7. A simple language is required in preparation of study material.
8. Learners wanted more standard in delivering process.
9. Some learners claimed that they are not happy with present Marathi medium books.
10. Learners' needs should consider in planning of courses and its implementations.
11. Learners wanted A/V support in learning process.
12. ODL method seriously consider in evaluation process of learners.
13. Library support is very week and learners want this support for their learning of various subjects.
14. Learners are not getting new information and development in books of Political Science.
15. All learners stress on over all development in B.A. course and particular in subject of Political Science.

B. Analysis of Experts interviews:

In this schedule author has conducted interviews of following experts:

Chairman BoS, Political Science(1), Member of BoS, Political Science (4), IDOL's experts, editor, course writers of Political Science(3), Head of Department, Political Science, UOM(1), Dean of Arts faculty, UOM(1), and National experts of ODL (1).

1. Educational communication and academic interaction should be increased with learners.
2. Use of media in Distance courses.
3. Quality of B.A course should be developed through good material, PCP activity, and use of various media.
4. A consumer approach is required in implementation of distance courses.
5. Continuous assessment is required in learning process for learners.
6. A more experts, teachers should involve in development of courses.
7. One expert suggested that the academic autonomy will work for quality improvement.
8. Institute should adopt a flexible approach in new changes in system
9. Distance educationis part parcel of main stream of Mumbai University so Institute should be open and flexible to adopt good practices from conventional system
10. Frequently organize training programme for course writers, editors and counselors.
11. A participation of Academic Council of UOM is required in development of distance courses.
12. A feedback mechanism is required in Institute for further new changes in system.
13. Dean of Arts faculty has suggested that Institute take initiate for overall quality improvement of DE mode and adopt techno base delivery pattern to reach each and every learners.
14. The national expert of ODL system suggested on-line approach, coordination with main conventional system; new changes in administrative structure, education coordinate with new needs of economic and social life. Also he suggested a better coordination is

required between formal and non formal experts for development and quality improvement.

Conclusions:

1. Experience of both mode of education should be recombined to reconstruct the exiting harmonies to create-on-line courses, altogether different but relevant to the present state of dual mode universities like Mumbai University.

2. The conventional mode is main back up of distance mode so such type of similar research should required for quality measurement and improving present structure of both the mode.

3. Both the mode should reconstruct on-line base and there will easy access for distance learners as well as regular learner of Mumbai University.

4. The distance learners should get on-line access of study material and other academic services. For this the Institute take initiative and upgrade own structure as per new need of distance learners.

5. A response of book reading shows that distance learners are more dependent upon study material providing from Institute. So interactive distance learning material will helpful them and give this access on-line to them.

6. A more modification is required in present study material as per the norms of ODL. Institute should give a top priority for this work. Learners will enjoy their study, if they will get on-line material.

7. A minimum one or two Audio-Video programme on each course of is required. This access on-line will more helpful to them.

8. A Personal Contact Programme (PCP) is a traditional counseling way for distance learners. Convert this programme on-line format and this interaction will give new shape to counseling.

9. An effective academic communication is a major need of Institute. And this effective communication is possible after on-line infrastructure. So adopt new policies for better delivery of distance education.

10. A continuous assessment of distance leaner is also major need for quality improvement.

Mainly distance learners are scatters in different places so on-line process is only one way for implementing this assessment process.

11. Quality improvement of B.A. programmeis required and it should be done with all efforts under the guidance and support from University authorities and experts of ODL.

12. A skill and knowledge base B.A programme is a need of distance learners. So major changes are required in B.A programme as per present need of society and industry.

13. A present structure of B.A programme should be flexible and changes will be made as per new needs and requirements.

14. And utilize past experience of print media for reconverting into on-line new platform for distance learners.

15. The following model developed by the researcher can be useful in implementing in BA Programme at distance education university of Mumbai.

Recommendations:

It seems the quality of on-line courses is potentially indicating the need for involving the teachers of both-conventional and ODL, educational system of education for its quality achievement. Their ability to recombine observations and deduce correct or meaningful association should be such that it generates and develops the effective plot of 'On-line courses. Authors suggested one model on feedback base of learners for B.A Programme of distance education.

A PhD Thesis(Title: Macro and Micro Study of B. A Programme of Institute of Distance Education of University of Mumbai for Quality Improvement) by Sanjay B. Ratanaparakhi, YCMOU, Nashik October, 2012 Pawar-Panda(Ed.) 1995 :330,Higher Education in India-In search of Quality, AIU, India.
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Note :
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Existing ODL current items of feedback through students help to on-line courses development.

1.Planning
1. Main Policies
2. Educational Policies
3. Need of programme
4. Objectives of programme
5. Courses
6. Objectives of courses
7. Development Chart

2. Development
1. Development of print production
2. Development of A/V kits.
3. Educational Kits.
4. Training Activities

3. Production
1. Production of Print Media
2. Production of A/V.
3. Production of Educational Kits.

4. Delivery
1. Students Enrollment
2. Book and A/V kits delivery
3. Contact sessions
4. Information Delivery

5. Evaluation
1. Students Evaluations
2. Evaluation of Study Material
3. Examination
4. Evaluation process (CAP)
5. Examination Results

6. Revision
Revision of Programme
Revision of Courses
Review of Structure

Source : RatnaparakhiS.(2012),Macro and Micro Study of B. A. Programme of Institute of Distance Education of

University of Mumbai for Quality Improvement YCMOU,Nashik.