Analysis of the impact of the hybrid teaching model in higher education with respect to B-School

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Abstract

B-schools are primarily known for cutting-edge education, they focus on skill development and competency building of students. The idea is to create future-ready individuals who can adapt themselves to the changing world. The pandemic has brought a paradigm shift in business as a whole. The challenge during these times was to reinforce changes in teaching and learning methods focusing on a hybrid teaching model. The objective of this paper is to understand the perception of the faculty members of B-School in Bangalore. The methodology used was a qualitative study using Focus Group Discussion. This study has tried to find out the impact of the Hybrid teaching model in B-schools with respect to the following parameters like quality of online teaching, usage of technology, employment issues, mindset and delivery mechanism of the faculty, flexibility in learning, and inclusion of industry experts. A Focus group of 50 members of faculty in B-Schools have been involved in this discussion to have their views and to get their suggestions for effective implementation of the hybrid teaching model. The outcome of this study is to align teaching-learning modalities in place, which might help in producing employable youth in the country. The study could identify important factors from FGD (Focus Group Discussion) conducted across the cross-sectional population from Bangalore B-School, which has reflected on the advantages and disadvantages of the hybrid teaching model. Finally, a model (A- Cube) has been developed, which can be tested further empirically, and this will give further opportunities for future work in the area of hybrid education models in the fast-changing world.

Keywords: B-schools, Hybrid Teaching Model, Teaching and learning styles, Employment issues

Introduction

Students from different parts of our country were admitted for management courses in several B-schools in Bangalore. B-schools are primarily known for cutting-edge education, they focus on skill development and competency building of students. After completion, most of them get placed in the corporate world based on their specializations. Covid 19 pandemic has forced the government to introduce lockdown. Students went back home as hostels and other facilities were not functional. During this period most of the B-schools in Bangalore adopted online teaching mode, which helped students to learn continuously from remote places. Though a lot of challenges and issues are associated with online classes, the potential of online learning could bring a lot of opportunities to adult learners, (OECD, 2020) This mode of teaching helped B-Schools to run their show. Faculty members started updating their teaching methods and tried to deliver their best. Over the period few students started joining physical classrooms as situations improved. But B-schools did not see a hundred percent attendance and needed to adopt a hybrid teaching mode. This study is trying to find out the impact of hybrid teaching models from faculty perspectives with respect to a few parameters like quality of online teaching, usage of technology, employment issues, mindset, and delivery mechanism of the faculty, flexibility in learning, and inclusion of industry experts.

Literature Review

Bell et al. (2014) in their paper mentioned Synchro modal classes where students at Michigan University started interacting through face-to-face and online discussions. This concept was adopted when the university introduced a hybrid Ph.D. program in 2010. This study considered all prior and previous efforts which influenced in the design of this model.

Bower et al. (2014) focus on blended classes using several technologies where students can take part physically and from remote places. This study collected inputs from a project involving seven case studies, partially funded by the Australian Government. It was found that teachers had to spend more time preparing for online classes as communication and split attention became major causes of concern.

Butz & Stansky (2017) explained that in a hybrid setting, psychological safety, autonomy, competence, and relatedness were required to enhance the intrinsic drive and welfare of the pupil. There was also a mention of more participation in a classroom session of online where the intervention used helped the students to be more confident and competent. This helped to

improvise the student's self-efficacy and thus enhanced their progress in the online session mode.

Coffman and Beck (2019) in their paper have tried to identify whether students could participate creatively in online classes. Data were collected to analyze different stages of discussion to understand explanations given by students. This study concluded that problem-based and project-based discussions helped to learn more in online classes.

Dhawan (2020) in her paper had focused on the SWOC (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges) analysis of online learning and highlighted its contribution during the crisis situation due to Covid 19. This article also had given importance to the development of education through different modes.

Lakhal et al. (2020) raised the expected need for a tutor in a hybrid medium, The primary goal for the teachers First of all, teachers with experience should have clarity in terms of the objectives of the course. This is very essential. The other challenge is basically the attention span of the students, during the session. If they are scrutinized and given feedback on their performance, there is a wider chance of learning abilities that will be outcome-based. On the contrary, if they are not observed and taken care of, there is a negative effect on the learning process. Subsequently, it is observed that if the Tutor enables her camera all the time in the session, it is indeed a good sign of dedication. Likewise, it is very disturbing to note that if the pupil is not adhering to the netiquette the entire session can boomerang for both parties. Finally, if the teacher receives no recognition for her online sessions it can be certainly damaging.

Linda Flynn-Wilson (2021) identified that a synchronous hybrid learning model has ensured that the students become more competent and industry ready if a bunch of courses is delivered rather than a couple of courses.

In the need to bring a positive change between the tutor and the pupil in the hybrid mode of learning. Olt (2018) pointed out the practice of calling out them by using their names and engaging the pupils in an open forum of discussion. furthermore, to make online pupils feel good and participative, instructors have to be very prompt in using different pedagogy and methodology of teaching. Rogers et al. (2003) referred to the different approaches on the online platform which could give a different experience altogether.

Raes et al. (2020) argues that the first setup in which a few students were moved to another campus, the so-called Remote Classroom Setting, and 2) secondly yet another setup where quite a few pupils were attending from a different venue of their choice, the 'Hybrid Virtual Classroom". Raes et al. (2022) identifies the different variable affecting the teaching-learning process in a newer ambiance, from a tutor and pupil's perspective. It was mainly identified as two hybrid learning methods in that study. Quantitative and qualitative approaches were integrated to comprehend pupil and tutor experiences in hybrid teaching. The study identified that there were not many significant differences between online and offline learning. However, the physical presence of a pupil certainly made a huge impact because teaching needs a proactive approach from both parties involved.

In fact, there was no deliberation on the different educational approaches used across, be it flipped classrooms, blended learning, hybrid learning, or vicarious learning which was the most sought-after one. Majorly, the hybrid model was a topic of academic interest for many years, some twenty years back (see, for instance, Rogers et al., 2003), the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic have simply changed the entire perspective towards it. Thus, making them the inevitable option to thrive and sustain. The changing dynamics in the world will always fall back on such strategies, no matter what the technology is the learning should continue hence the hybrid model will stay forever.

Shi et al. (2021) described that the engagement between the tutors and the students explicitly led to better genitive influence, explicit motivation, and intrinsic motivation to perform better thus enhancing interaction among instructors and all.

It shows that in this context the hybrid approach holds a better promise, obviously looking at the state of affairs as of now, there is a need to analyze the hybrid teaching model in-depth. Consequently, to make the instructors essentially metamorphize from the conventional onsite model to the hybrid one, there were quite a few studies carried out. Also, there were many studies aiming at identifying both the advantages/disadvantages of the hybrid approach and the different protocols to be followed while implementing hybrid teaching and learning techniques in education.

Objectives

The objective is to:

1. To understand the perception and experiences of the faculty members of B-School in Bangalore towards a hybrid teaching model.

2. To analyze factors for implementing hybrid teaching models from a faculty point of view.

3. To prioritize factors based on the importance given by faculty members.

4. To develop a feasible model which would enhance the teaching-learning process.

Methodology

This study is based on focus group discussions. The interactions with fifty faculty members of different B-schools to understand their perception of the hybrid teaching model and also a systematic literature review was conducted to understand the concepts and identify the research gap.

The methodology used was a qualitative study. An attempt was made to find out the impact of the Hybrid teaching model in B-schools with respect to the following parameters:

I) quality of online teaching

ii) usage of technology

iii) employment issues

iv) mindset and delivery mechanism of the faculty

v) flexibility in learning

vi) Inclusion of industry experts.

This discussion was to have their views about the effective implementation of the hybrid teaching model and the learnability quotient of the students. As there is a constant change in the volatile world of today.

Results

Here we find that the results mentioned with respect to the details obtained from the qualitative research process. Firstly, the experiences and perceptions of teachers who were a part of hybrid teaching & learning studies mentioned the issues, challenges, and other solution-centric approaches that could be followed in the hybrid teaching model.

The following experiences were shared by the teaching faculty involved in the hybrid model. The basis lies between teachers' and students' conversations and interactions which is the most critical perspective, especially while being online. Thus, a strategy following interactive teaching and learning setup is very productive for both. However, in a hybrid setting, this is not easy because, instead of one target population, there are manifold populations and they will be using different communication channels, media, and tools. Bower et al. (2014) highlight a study in which different interactive learning activities were implemented in a hybrid setting.

The simulation used were polling, game theory, evaluation, quizzes, gamification, break-out rooms, simulations, inventory, case discussions, video reviews, etc. They concluded that all could be enacted in a variety of subjects and domains and that a wide range of technologies could be used, including video conferencing, web conferencing, and virtual worlds.

The most glaring concerns were mentioned by the tutors as communication-related issues (reflecting and dealing with audio discussions) and cognitive overload created by the demands of dealing with two cohorts of pupils at one stretch (maintaining and balancing the act of creating an understanding between the remote and direct student dealing, coping with the Groupware technology, troubleshooting the technical glitches for remote students, scrutinizing the feelings/behaviours and the perceptions of both the category of student populations).

The following concerns were highlighted during the FGD: primarily the quality of education as the hybrid teaching has a different pedagogy used in different scenarios the degree of retention can be identified as a major problem. The curriculum and the syllabi which focus on the course outcomes and program objectives will not be met because of the constant juggling.

Secondly, the usage of technology during online sessions is the blind man buff, not aware of whether the objectives of the session are meant, and once back to square one the attention span of the students also becomes yet another issue.

Thirdly the mindset and delivery mechanism of the faculty, and the challenges of shuffling on and off also deter the motivation levels of the faculty. The zone from known to unknown relates to the perspectives of the student learnability and delivery of the faculty. There are certain courses that strictly need an offline presence and it cannot be just discussed on a zoom call. And this consequently leads to the loss of job-preparedness of the student and enhancement of employability skills which is ultimately the crucial factor.

The benefits of the hybrid teaching model might be also getting any SME from any part of the globe into the zoom platform and thus helping in building the industry-academia connect. Of course, the other thing is the flexibility of learning from the confines of the four walls of the home front.

The studies found that the hybrid teaching model has its own challenges according to the FDG conducted with the faculty members. 78 % of them have pointed out the issues connected to quality teaching online and suddenly shifting to offline. 55 % have referred to the usage of Technology which has been a constant problem due to simultaneous usage. 75% of the faculty have raised their concerns over employability issues. According to them, the impact of online teaching will never enhance the job-related qualities of a student. The consistent approach will be just an eye wash. Finally, the mindset and delivery mechanism of the faculty. This is where the majority of them have discussed the inefficiency of individuals due to the on-and-off mode of teaching.

The following model has been developed based on the above observations:
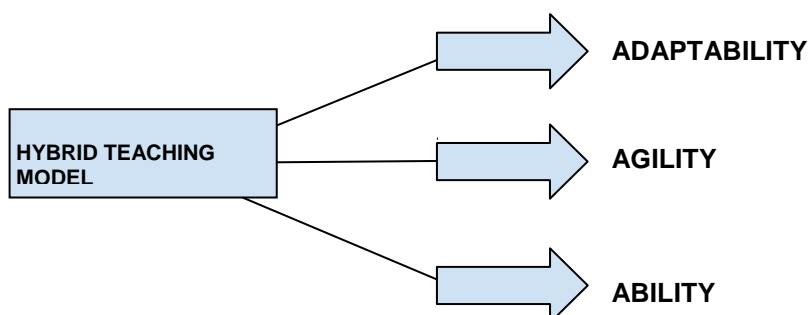
Fig :1 *THE A- CUBE (A3) MODEL (Author's Contribution)*

The A -CUBE model is based on the experiences of faculty with the B-schools, and they believe that it is mandatory to follow the three A's if the hybrid model can be used successfully in the future. The first A stands for "adaptability ". Being adaptable to the changing environment and opting for new technology is important. As there is an unprecedented change all around being a faculty it is mandatory to be adaptable. The second A is agility being agile is the watchword. Taking challenges as and when needed and being open to introducing new pedagogy, methodology and andrology is even more crucial in the volatile world of learning. The third and final A is the ability to cater to the demands of the changing job market and ensure skill development, in hybrid teaching is the need of the hour.

Conclusion

There is a huge scope for a hybrid teaching model in B-school provided faculty and students are ready to accept this changing environment, work on challenges and keep an eye on the requirements of the Job market. The study reported in this paper can guide to future research in this area and it is believed that empirical research can add more value to this qualitative study.

The demand for hybrid mode will remain one of the most sought-after mediums because of the volatility in the ecosystem. The need for flexible learning has indeed become a universal truth. Of course, there could be a change in terms of the andragogy, pedagogy, and methodology that has to be switched, time and again however in the long run the concept of the hybrid model will become a heuristic approach. Flexibility in learning is not a choice but an option. Different learning platforms are created to enable that there is a learner-centric approach. The need to connect, collaborate and communicate with the digital natives of the contemporary era is followed by most of the leading institutes in the current times. Thus, the attempt to study different perspectives of the teaching-learning model becomes a great topic for researchers. The scope of the paper is to identify new variables that can be added and experimented in the future. Also, the discussed model can be hypothetically tested to identify the corelation between the hybrid model of teaching-learning methods.

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