Challenges in the usage of E-Assessment in Higher Education Institutions: Learners' Perspective

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Abstract
        This paper aimed to examine the perspectives of the learners of the higher educational institutions about the challenges they faced in the process of using e-assessment, so that an e-assessment can be made more effective by overcoming these challenges in the best possible ways. A sample size of altogether 188 U.G and P.G learners of Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad, India, was chosen. This was by using Stratified Random Sampling. Quantitative Survey method. Percentage was performed for data analysis. A 5-point Likert Scale consisting of 16 items was used to collect the data. This research's findings show that the learners faced challenges like poor infrastructure, device memory problem, time management, etc. And the most challenging part for the learners while using e-assessment was the interrupted internet connection.

Keywords: E-assessment, Higher Education, Challenges.

Introduction
        According to JISC (2007), "information and communications technologies (ICT) are employed for the presentation of assessment activities and the recording of responses" in "end-to-end computerized assessment processes." Students, instructors, institutions, and society at large are all involved in these processes.

        E-assessment can take many different forms, including computerized administrative processes, the digitization of paper-based systems, and online testing that evaluates problem-solving abilities and multiple-choice knowledge. According to Sitthisak et al., e-assessment includes using a computer to help with the assessment, such as via web-based assessment tools. Reju and Adesina highlight that end-to-end electronic assessment methods are included in e-assessment. Ping Soft's argument that the system's architecture comprises a comprehensive examination procedure that involves the proposition, writing papers, signing up, examining, batching, statistics, and analysis supports this. Additionally, JISC defined "e-assessment as the end-to-end electronic assessment, also referred to as e-assessment, online assessment, computer-assisted/mediated assessment, and computer-based assessment, which is the use of information technology in a variety of arrangements of assessment, such as educational assessment, to assess and/or gather information about the academic performance of a person or a group. E-assessment is the term for the numerous ways in which information technology is used to evaluate performance and monitor student learning. In order to address all the shortcomings of conventional pen-and-paper evaluation methodologies, the idea of e-assessment was put forth.

        The employment of web-specific evaluation tools leads to electronic assessment. It can be used to evaluate both practical abilities (using e-portfolios or simulation software) and theoretical knowledge (using e-testing software). It is also known as computer-based assessment or online assessment, and it uses information technology to evaluate students' academic progress. The ability to create computer-

based examinations that may be completed offline or even online is known as e-assessment. the use of ICT, specifically the Internet, for learning assessment, including the creation, delivery, and/or recording of replies. It also refers to on-demand testing, which is rapid and adaptable in nature in order to accommodate children who learn at varying paces. It involves digitizing test content for online testing, which spans from multiple-choice exams to interactive evaluations of problem-solving abilities. It also involves automating administrative processes related to assessment tasks. includes all of the assessment's Information and Communication Technology-supported components. It is a full-circle electronic evaluation. Computer-based testing is used. Additionally, it describes the use of electronic tools and resources to facilitate the design, delivery, and evaluation of student assessment activities. " Evaluation is crucial for the processes of learning and motivation. The types of assessment tasks we assign to our learners affect how they approach the learning task and the study strategies they employ. John Biggs, an expert on higher education John Biggs, state that "What and how students learn depends to a great extent on how they perceive they will be graded." (1999, p. 141). Given the significance of assessment for student learning, it is crucial to think very carefully about the best way to gauge the level of learning one wants their learners to attain. Assessment should integrate grading, learning, and incentives for your pupils. Examinations give higher education institutions the ability to determine whether the applicants will be able to handle the demands of the job.

Demographic Details

Objectives Of The Study

The main objective or principal objective of the study is to explore the challenges faced in using e-assessment from the perspective of learners in higher education at Maulana Azad National Urdu University, India. With the results obtained, this research will be able to know how to overcome those challenges.

Methodology

The data was collected through a survey of 188 undergraduate and post-graduate learners from Maulana Azad National Urdu University, India, who were chosen by stratified random sampling. The survey tool was prepared by the researchers which consisted of 16 items on a 5-point Likert scale. The researchers in their research have used the "Quantitative Survey Method". For this research problem, this method was the most appropriate one.

Quantitative research is a common way to collect numbers for a systematic inquiry. It is often used in research situations where it is important to use statistics to come to reliable conclusions.

Data Collection and Analysis

To know the challenges faced by the learners, the researchers used a 5-point Likert Scale with the rating parameters of strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree. There were 16 items given about the dimension of the challenge. Learners were asked about the challenges like lack of accessibility to computer devices, electricity issues, downloading question papers, phone memory problems, anxiety because of online exams, time management, etc.

Table 1: Gender Details

| S. No.	Gender	Number of Learners	Percentage %
1.	Male	148	78.7
2.	Female	40	21.3
Total		188	100

Graph 1
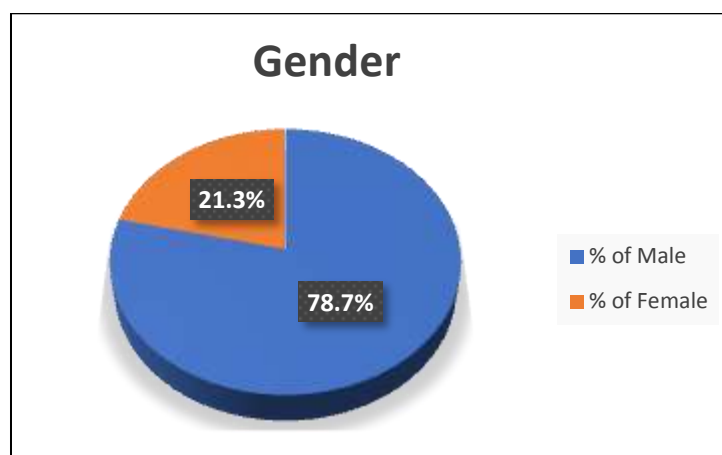
The above graph shows the percentage of male and female learner respondents in this research. There were altogether 188 respondents. Out of which 148 were male and 40 were female. Therefore, it made up 78.7% of male respondents and 21.3 % of female respondents.

Table 2: Course Details

S. No.	Course	No. of Learners	Percentage %
1.	U.G	100	53
2.	P.G	88	47
Total		188	100
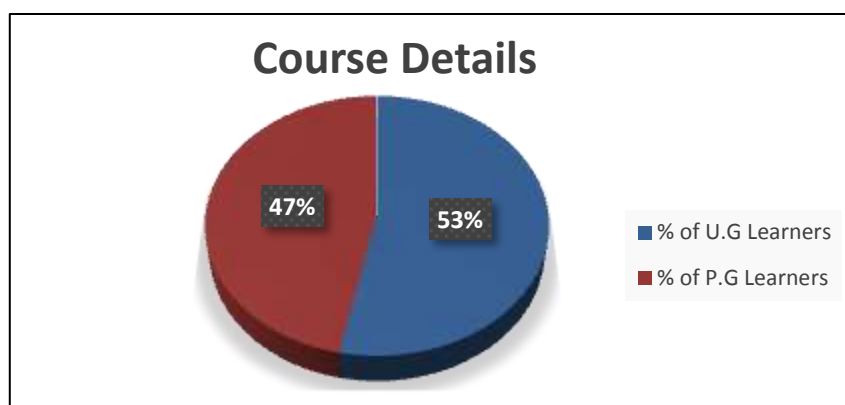
The above graph shows the educational courses of learner respondents to which they belong. Out of 188 respondents 53% i.e., 100 were from U.G courses and 47% i.e., 88 respondents were from P.G courses.

Table 3. Item wise Students' perceptions of "challenges they face in E-assessment".

Measurement: (Strongly Disagree=1), (Disagree=2), (Neutral=3), (Agree=4), (Strongly Agree=5)						
Sl. No	Challenges	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Being inexperienced with computer usage or with an online assessment process is a challenge.	8.5%	8.5%	23.4%	46.8%	12.8%
2.	I experienced a lack of accessibility to computers/devices/gadgets	3.7	19.1	21.8	46.3	9
3.	I have experienced an interrupted internet connection.	1.6	9.6	13.8	56.4	18.6

| 4.	I was unable to afford a data pack for online exams.	6.9	25	23.4	33.5	11.2
5.	I have experienced poor connectivity connection.	2.1	13.3	18.1	44.2	22.3
6.	I had poor technical infrastructure.	4.8	23.9	26.1	35.1	10.1
7.	I faced a problem while downloading the question paper.	8.5	26.1	14.4	39.8	11.2
8.	I faced difficulty in uploading answer scripts.	6.4	19.1	12.8	40.4	21.3
9.	I had a phone memory problem.	9	21.8	13.3	39.9	16
10.	I felt the anxiety of not being able to attempt all the questions due to the online process.	4.8	21.3	20.7	43.6	9.6
11.	I had less chance of interaction with the subject teacher for clarifying any doubts in the question paper.	4.8	16.5	16.5	46.2	16
12.	There was a lack of complete concentration on writing the exam as there is no proper exam environment when it's taken from the home	4.8	17	16	46.2	16
13.	I feared scoring less due to a lack of concentration in the exam.	3.7	19.1	15.4	43.7	18.1
14.	For me, time management is not very easy during online exams.	2.1	17	19.2	43.6	18.1
15.	I had more focus on uploading the answer script and submission, rather than writing the exam.	8.5	19.7	22.3	36.7	12.8
16.	I felt fearful about whether my answer script has been submitted online or not.	3.7	8.5	18.6	47.4	21.8

The majority of the respondents agreed (46.8%) that they were inexperienced with computer usage or with an online assessment process. 12.8% strongly agreed with it And 23.4% were neutral. 46.3% of learners agreed that they lacked access to computers/devices/gadgets. 9% of the learners strongly agreed and 21.8% remained neutral. A whopping 56.4% of the learners had interrupted internet connection. 18.6% strongly agreed and 13.8% were neutral about this.33.5% of learners felt the data pack was expensive and unaffordable. 25% disagreed with this and 23.4% remained neutral. To the statement, the learner's problems in downloading of question paper 39.8% agreed, 26.1% disagreed and 14.4 % remained neutral.

A large number of learners i.e., 40.4% faced difficulty in uploading answer scripts. Whereas 21.3% strongly agreed with it and 19.15% disagreed. 39.9% faced the problem of phone memory. 43.6% had anxiety about not being able to attempt all the questions due to the online process.21.3% disagreed and 20.7% remained neutral. Can't concentrate on writing the paper as there is no proper exam environment if it's taken from the home. To this 46.2% agreed,16% strongly agreed and 17% disagreed. Fear of scoring less due to lack of concentration in the exam. To this, 43.7% agreed, 19.1% disagreed and 18.1% strongly agreed. Time management is not very easy for 43.6% of learners while giving the exam online.19.2% remained neutral to this.18.1% strongly agreed. 36.7% had more focus on uploading the answer script and submission, rather than writing the exam. 22.3% remained neutral and 19.7 disagreed with this. More participants i.e., 47.4% fear whether the answer script has been submitted or not. 21.8% strongly agreed and 18.6% remained neutral.

Table 4: Learners' perceptions of "challenges they face in e-assessment"

No. of students	No. of items	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Neutral 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5
188	16	5%	18%	19%	44%	14%

Graph 3
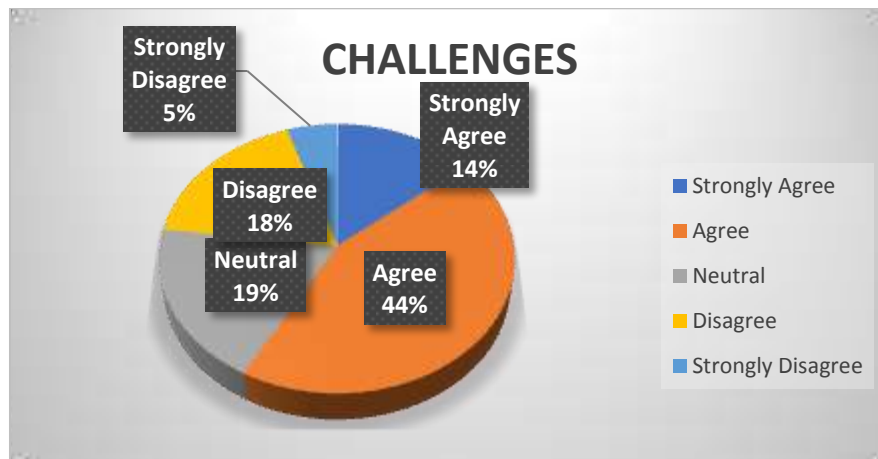
The above distribution shows the percentage of learners' perspectives for the dimension "challenges faced by the learners in the usage of e-assessment in HEIs". Learners who were neutral about the overall statements of this dimension were 19% those who agreed were 44% and those who disagreed were 18%. The two extremes, strongly disagree were 5%, and strongly agree 14%.

Conclusion:

With the increasing use of technology and online examinations at higher education Colleges and universities in India, this research has examined the challenges faced in online examinations by the learners in higher education institutions and identified several factors to be considered to overcome these challenges for the successful implementation of electronic examinations (E- Exams) from the perspective of U.G and P.G learners of MANUU. Participants perceived online examinations as having many challenges over traditional, paper-based ones, including anxiety, lack of concentration and efficiency in terms of time, internet connectivity, device memory, and costs, which are the barrier to the successful implementation of e-assessment. Thus, the effectiveness of e-assessment can be achieved by designing it properly in terms of validity, reliability, security, and flexibility, to obtain the required learning outcomes. From the results obtained, it can be concluded that support from the institution is very important, which includes training for the learners on how to effectively use e-assessment. Learners must be provided with a conducive exam environment. Necessary financial support should also be provided. Improvised infrastructure and trained academic staff with technical and pedagogical support to be provided for the effective e-assessment in higher educational institutions.

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