

# Perception of Management Students towards Blended Learning

Neha Singh<sup>1</sup> and Sakshi Malik<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>(Assistant Professor, KIET Group of Institutions, Ghaziabad, India)

<sup>2</sup>(MBA Student, KIET Group of Institutions, Ghaziabad, India)

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## **Abstract**

*Learning-it is present in all dimensions of life. Although everybody is learning something one way or the other, irrespective of their profession, age etc. ,it is a common belief that most of the learning is done in schools and colleges. With the advent of technology upgradation, learning is not confined to the classrooms only, meaning, the way of learning also offers variety now and one such type is Blended Learning. This way of learning is setting a new trend in the Education Industry and Management colleges are swearing by it. However, not much research has been done to know the perception of students towards the concept and its effectiveness for them. This paper provides an in-depth study of students cognition in Management colleges (India) regarding Blended Learning. Specifically, students were asked about how they feel this way of learning has changed their performance and also about their recent experiences of applying this method in their studies. The comments reflected positive as well as the negative aspect of Blended Learning. Some of the major findings showed that it is a positive and performance-driven concept which promises a better future for all the students if applied in an organised and proper manner. Hence, this study is a contribution towards addressing and highlighting the perception of Management students towards Blended Learning.*

**Keywords:** *Blended Learning, technology upgradation, Classroom Learning*

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## **Introduction**

Blended Learning as the name suggests, is the amalgamation of classical learning and modern learning ways. The concept came into vogue in as early as 2000. It is the process of coupling the e-learning along with the classroom instructions. From schools to colleges, Blended Learning is gaining popularity everywhere. The 'Teachers' have now become the 'Facilitators' as they empower the students with the skills and knowledge required to make efficient use of the online resources and their study time. As Blended Learning augments student's engagement in studies, offers some degree of control and flexibility in learning, it is widely used to teach and develop the management students into full fledged professionals. Blended Learning can be offered in various forms such as Online, Rotation, Flex, Personalized blend, Online lab, Self-blend, Face-to-face etc. to cater to an individual's need. With the increase in the use of smartphones, handheld devices and most importantly technology, the

learning experience for each student can be tailored and made to suit his or her needs, time frame and students can learn at their own pace. Although Blended Learning and Online Learning have so many features in common but they are not the same and therefore should not be mixed. Blended Learning covers Online Learning in it as it when mixed with the Traditional Learning paves the way for Blended Learning. Management colleges are taking full leverage of Blended Learning as it offers numerous benefits to Students as well as Teachers. It helps prepare students for their career battle by imparting autonomy, instilling a nature of self-advocacy, stimulating ownership, increasing their interest, facilitating better decision making, offering sense of responsibility, enhancing Research skills, helps in longer retention of the information etc. Except this, it also improves the teaching and is very cost-effective. Also, it welcomes innovation and provides the students a platform to connect globally.

Definitions of some famous Authors:

- The thoughtful integration of classroom face-to-face learning experiences with on-line experiences. **(Garrison and Kanuka, 2004)**
- **Bliuc et. al. 2007**, Blended learning describes learning activities that involve a systematic combination of co-present (face-to-face) interactions and technologically mediated interactions between students, teachers and learning resources
- Blended Learning is learning that is facilitated by the effective combination of different modes of delivery, models of teaching and styles of learning, and founded on transparent communication amongst all parties involved with a course. **(Heinze and Procter, 2004)**

## Review of Literature

Rotherham & Willingham (2000) in a study found that Blended Learning results in enhancement of student engagement and as a result student achievement.

Laura Hesse (University of Northern Iowa) conducted a study on “The effects of blended learning on K-12th grade students” and examined that along with the increase in student’s engagement, achievement and positive perception of learning, they are also able to inculcate some additional skills like ability to self-pace and self-direct.

Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) undertook project works (2006-2011) and found out that Blended Learning results in enhanced learning outcomes through personalised instructions, better learning experience, more opportunities, better access to resources and infrastructure, exposure to technologies and acquisition of contemporary literacy skills.

Boyle et. al. (2003) conducted a research on “Using Blended Learning to improve student success rates in learning to program” examined that when Blended Learning was introduced in higher education courses, it improved retention and students’ attainment.

Stockwell et. al. (2015) conducted a study on “Blended Learning improves Science Education” and found out that it was particularly beneficial in Science Education as students go beyond the boundaries of textbook models and get better understanding of scientific concepts.

Means et. al. (2013) conducted a study on “The effectiveness of online and blended learning: A meta-analysis of the empirical literature” in middle school to graduate programs and examined that Blended Learning results in better and high scores as compared to Face-to-face classes or online learning alone.

Paechter & Maier, 2010 found out that Blended Learning addresses difficulties in establishing emotional connect.

Holley and Oliver, 2010 said that in B-Learning some students experience barriers when they access online classroom.

Vonderwell, 2003 found out that Blended Learning lacks in immediate responses of students, results in a loss of their group identity and sense of classroom community.

De La Varreet. al. (2011) in their research found out that some students were even less participative as Blended Learning lacks in immediate teacher feedback so it makes some students passive.

## **Objectives of the Study**

- To study the perception of Management students towards the recent trend of Blended Learning.
- The study also gives insight of the benefits of implementing B-Learning and progress made by it in the recent past years.
- The study also reflects the negative side of Blended Learning.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Research approach and Research Design-**

A Descriptive Research was conducted to fulfil the main purpose of the study and to collect the Data and hence Qualitative techniques have been used to conduct the study.

### **Population Universe and Sampling –**

The Research was conducted in various management colleges of India. Simple Random sampling method has been used to choose the sample of 300 respondents based on their willingness to participate. Students of BBA as well as MBA were approached.

### **Data Collection Method-**

Although more emphasis was laid down on primary data collection methods to collect the data but secondary data collection methods were also a part of the study. Personal Interviews were the main source of Data Collection which were conducted in a semi structured manner. A questionnaire was prepared which mainly included open ended questions and it was presented to the respondents during the interview. The Researcher while collecting secondary Data browsed several websites, reviewed papers and articles etc.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

According to the previous researches done in this field, Blended Learning has proved to be positive as well as negative. According to some studies it has resulted in better performance, active engagement of students, longer retention of concepts, encouragement of creative ideas in class and enhancement of technical skills etc. while some studies shows the negative side of it, that is, it lacks in immediate response on the part of teachers and students both, fails in establishing emotional connect and some students also faces Technical barriers.

Now, analysis of the collected data:

1. Do you know the meaning of the term Blended Learning?
  - Yes
  - No
2. Which is your course of study?
  - BBA
  - MBA
3. What way of teaching is used in your college?
  - Classroom instructions alone
  - Blended Learning

4. Which learning method do you prefer? Why?
  - Classroom instructions alone
  - Blended Learning
5. Why Blended Learning should be used in Management colleges?
6. Do you think it is equally good for non-management graduates too?
  - Yes
  - No

## Findings

In the study, the perception of Management students towards Blended Learning and its effectiveness has been drawn. Following are the findings:

### In favour:

1. Blended Learning has been given due weightage in Management colleges. Every college wants to maximize the learning experience of their students and blended learning has been proved and considered very effective.
2. It results in active engagement of students in studies as well as other activities as the students get to try different-different things and the feeling of boredom or doing tasks in a similarly continuous way is eliminated.
3. It allows the students to learn at their own pace and comfort.
4. B-Learning helps the students to retain the concepts for a longer time as compared to Face-to-face classes or online learning alone.
5. It results in enhancement of additional skills such as Technical skills, Thinking ability etc. which are always looked in a management student by the employer. Students also learn managing things on their own.
6. Blended Learning results in better performance of students and encourages more creative ideas in a class. It improves the decision making of students.
7. It can be personalised and tailored according to the needs of the students as the way of learning is different for each student. Hence, each student can learn in his or her own way with this.
8. It saves time of teachers and students both and gives students 24\*7 availability and opportunity to learn and enhance themselves.
9. It makes the learning process creative and makes classroom more attractive.

## **Against:**

1. If a Teacher is not well versed with the technology then it reduces the performance on their part and as a result their real knowledge doesn't come out in the class.
2. It often creates barriers when students access the curriculum online as not everyone knows the know-how of online tools.
3. Being management students our job is to manage people which requires making emotional connect with them but Blended Learning lacks in establishing socio-emotional connect.
4. There is no immediate feedback which makes some students passive or uninterested.
5. Colleges don't actually use this concept for its concerned purpose or for the benefits of students, they use it to flaunt and attract students at the time of admission as it also improves the infrastructure of the colleges.

## **Conclusion**

The concept of Blended Learning is surely reaching out to almost all the management colleges but it isn't reaching out to the minds of all the students. It does not ensure effective learning for all. Just like it is a mix of classroom instructions and Online Learning, it is also a mix of its own pros and cons. For some, it has proved to be quite fruitful while for some others it is not that much productive and is quite ambiguous. In the author's opinion, Blended Learning possesses a lot of potential and it can be very successful for all if applied in an apt manner.

## **Limitations of the study**

- The study was restricted to a particular domain of study that is management.
- The Sampling technique which has been used here has its own limitations.
- The researcher has collected the data from 300 respondents only and the population size is huge.
- Different people have different perceptions and hence human behaviour may lead to biasness

## **Future scope of the study**

- The study can be taken up in other educational courses as well in which the same concept has been applied.
- The scope of study can be increased, it can be pursued in other parts of world too.
- The same study should be conducted after some time again to know whether the perception of students has changed or not and whether it has made certain changes or improvements in the performance of students or not.

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