ASSESSING LEARNERS' SATISFACTION WITH ZOOM-BASED COURSE DELIVERY

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Abstract: This study examines the satisfaction of postgraduate students in Sri Lanka with Zoom-based online teaching and assessment practices during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Faculty of Education at The Open University of Sri Lanka transitioned to online teaching using Zoom technology due to the pandemic. This study aimed to investigate students' satisfaction levels regarding the quality of online teaching using Zoom-based instruction. A survey research design with a quantitative approach was employed, and an online questionnaire was used to collect the data from the participants. Data was collected from 189 postgraduate students enrolled in the Master of Education, and Master of Education in Special Needs Education programs across Sinhala, Tamil, and English mediums. Closed-ended questions, Likert-type scale items, and open-ended questions were used to collect data, which was analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results indicate that students generally perceived Zoom-based instruction as effective and positive; however, some areas for improvement were identified, such as technical difficulties, course material, coverage, and communication. Additionally, students were satisfied with the assessment practices but had differing views on other aspects. Findings of the study provide valuable insights into improving online teaching quality and enhancing students' engagement in the learning process. Therefore, it is recommended to evaluate learners' satisfaction levels in the context of Zoom-based teaching and assessment for undergraduate programs, as well as other faculties' programs of the OUSL.

Keywords: Level of Satisfaction, Online Teaching, Zoom-Based Teaching

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INTRODUCTION

The outbreak of COVID-19 has caused significant disruptions to the education industry worldwide, resulting in the implementation of remote learning approaches by academic institutions (Nawastheen *et al.,* 2021). Zoom technology has become a popular choice for online teaching, including Open and Distance Learning (ODL) institutions such as the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL). The OUSL offers a wide range of programs from certificate to postgraduate levels. The Faculty of Education (FoE) is one of the most prominent faculties offering various programs for prospective and in-service teachers. The FoE's Master of Education programs are particularly renowned among teachers nationwide. The programs are available in English, Sinhala, and Tamil to cater to students from diverse linguistic backgrounds. With the COVID-19 pandemic hitting the country in 2020, the faculty transitioned from face-to-face to online teaching using Zoom technology. After more than a year of implementation, assessing learners' satisfaction with using Zoom technology is crucial. Evaluating students' Satisfaction with Zoom-based course delivery is essential in today's world of remote learning. With the pandemic forcing schools and universities to adopt online teaching strategies, it is crucial to understand how learners perceive this mode of instruction. By assessing learners' satisfaction, educators can gain insights into improving online teaching quality and enhancing student engagement in the learning process. This study aims to investigate learners' satisfaction with the quality of Zoom-based instruction and assessment practices.

Review of Literature

Online learning has become increasingly popular, particularly with the COVID-19 pandemic. Several studies have been conducted to evaluate the satisfaction of students and instructors with online courses. Guest et al., (2018) conducted a study that analyzed student satisfaction scores in response to online course delivery at a large Australian university. The study used a difference-in-differences estimator to assess the impact of transitioning from traditional face-to-face teaching to online delivery on student satisfaction. The study results showed that online course instructors were less popular than face-to-face courses and that converting a course from face-to-face to online tended to decrease student satisfaction. However, the difference in satisfaction between the two delivery modes was

insignificant. The study concluded that while online teaching may be considered less satisfying by students, educational administrators should also consider the advantages of online education. Qureshi et al. (2020) conducted a study on the satisfaction of mature undergraduate students with online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic in the United Kingdom. The study found that while students faced challenges such as weak internet connection and low digital competency, most found online teaching exciting and preferred it for its convenience, freedom, and autonomy. The study recommended that online teacher training for students is made more effective and that private higher education institutions address challenges such as weak internet connection and old devices.

Additionally, Areşan and Ţîru (2022) found that female respondents reported higher satisfaction with the teaching process in the online environment than male respondents. Baloran and Hernan (2021) found high course satisfaction and engagement with online learning delivery during the COVID-19 pandemic, with online course satisfaction significantly correlated with online student engagement. Croxton's (2014) literature review suggested that interactivity is important for satisfaction and persistence in online learning, with student-instructor interaction being a primary variable. Blundell, Castañeda, and Lee's (2020) study on faculty satisfaction with online teaching and learning identified instructor-student interaction, technology, and institutional support as key factors influencing satisfaction. The OFSS-R survey was also a valid and reliable measure of perceived faculty satisfaction in a fully online environment. Finally, Faize and Nawaz (2020) conducted a study on supporting university students in Islamabad (Pakistan) for online learning through a collaborative approach. The study identified problems faced by students during online learning, sought their suggestions for overcoming them, and modified existing instructional practices based on the feedback. The post-modification data revealed students' greater satisfaction with online learning, providing useful insight for making it a more productive medium for future learning. Kéri (2021) investigated student satisfaction with the applied teaching methodologies during online education of marketing-related classes at the examined university. Results showed that students were most satisfied with their teachers' competencies and preparedness, while they were least satisfied with online class quality. Elshami et al. (2021) conducted a study to identify factors that affect student and faculty satisfaction with online learning during the pandemic. Results showed that the highest satisfaction areas for students were communication and flexibility, whereas technical problems led to reduced student satisfaction. Study load and workload, enhancing engagement, and technical issues were the themes affecting student and faculty satisfaction. Adopting a combination of synchronous and asynchronous approaches, incorporating different applications to engage students, and providing timely feedback could increase student satisfaction. At the same time, institutional support and organizational policy could enhance faculty satisfaction. In sum, as the popularity of online learning continues to grow, studies have been conducted to evaluate the satisfaction of students and instructors with online courses. These studies have found that while online teaching may be considered less satisfying by

students, the advantages of online education should also be considered. Challenges such as weak internet connection and low digital competency are issues that need to be addressed to improve online teaching. The importance of interactivity and student-instructor interaction has been highlighted as key factors influencing satisfaction and persistence in online learning. Adopting a combination of synchronous and asynchronous approaches, incorporating different applications to engage students, and providing timely feedback could increase student satisfaction. At the same time, institutional support and organizational policy could enhance faculty satisfaction. Finally, modifications in instructional practices based on feedback effectively improve students' satisfaction with online learning.

METHODOLOGY

This study aimed to investigate students' satisfaction levels regarding the quality of online teaching using Zoom-based instruction. A survey research design with a quantitative approach was followed, and an online questionnaire was used to collect the data from the participants. Subject matter experts reviewed the questionnaire to ensure its validity and reliability. Purposive sampling was used to select 189 participants, including 77 students from Sinhala medium, 77 from Tamil medium, and 35 from English medium. The sample included 72.5% of students from the Master of Education programme and the rest from the Master Education in Special Needs Education programme. The online questionnaire included closed-ended questions and Likert-type scale items to measure the students' satisfaction levels regarding the quality of online teaching using Zoom-based instruction. The questionnaire covered different aspects of online teaching, including the quality of instruction, the effectiveness of communication, and the overall satisfaction levels of the students. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to analyze the data collected from the questionnaire.

Respondents' Distribution

Table 1 shows the distribution of the study respondents based on gender, age, medium, educational qualifications, and regional centres they enrolled on the programmes. The study sample consisted of 189 respondents, of which 69.3% were female and 30.7% were male. Regarding educational qualification, more than half of the respondents (53%) held a Bachelor of Arts degree, while 23.2% held a Bachelor of Education degree, 19.6% held a Bachelor of Science degree, and 4.2% held other degrees. Most respondents (72.5%) were enrolled in the Master of Education program, while 27.5% were enrolled in the Master of Education in Special Needs Education program. Most respondents fall in the age range of 30-49, with over half of the respondents between the ages of 30-39. The distribution of respondents' age suggests that they are mostly in the middle to late stages of their

careers or professional lives, as this age range typically corresponds to individuals who have gained a few years of experience in their respective fields.

Table 1:

Distribution of the Respondents

Category	Respondent	f	(%)
Programme:	M.Ed	137	72.5
	M.Ed SNE	52	27.5
Gender	Female	131	69.3
	Male	58	30.7
Medium	Sinhala	77	40.7
	Tamil	77	40.7
	English	35	18.5
Age group	20-29	14	7.9
	30-39	105	55.6
	40-49	65	34.4
	50-59	5	2.6
Qualification	B.A	100	53
	B.Ed	44	23.3
	B.Sc	37	19.6
	Other	08	4.2
Centres	Colombo	138	73.0
	Kandy	28	14.8
	Jaffna	23	12.2

The respondents were registered across three centres, with 73% registered in Colombo, 14.8% registered in Kandy, and 12.2% registered in Jaffna. In terms of the medium of instruction, the data showed that 18.5% of the respondents were enrolled in English medium programs, while 40.7% reported in Sinhala programs and 40.7% reported in Tamil programs. These findings provide valuable insights into the respondents' demographic characteristics and the sample's program preferences. In addition, the data suggest a gender imbalance, with more females than males participating in the study. Moreover, the data show that a Bachelor of Arts is the most common educational qualification among respondents. Most respondents enrolled in the Master of Education programme, which may indicate a high demand for this program in the region.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Satisfaction towards Zoom-based teaching.

The data collected in this study aimed to assess students' satisfaction levels regarding the quality of online teaching using Zoom-based instruction. Therefore, the responses were collected using a Likert scale, ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 5 (totally agree) for eight questions. Specifically, the Likert scale values were as follows: 1 = Totally disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither disagree nor agree, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Totally agree.

Table 2 shows students' responses for the items related to their satisfaction towards zoom-based teaching. Overall, the results show that students positively perceive Zoom-based instruction. The majority of respondents either agreed or totally agreed that Zoom-based instruction was effective in facilitating their learning (77.2%), that they were satisfied with the level of engagement during instruction (70.3%) and that the instructor was knowledgeable and able to answer their questions (81%). In addition, respondents were also generally satisfied with the organization and structure of Zoom-based instruction (76.7%) and the instructor's ability to use Zoom features effectively (81%). However, some areas for improvement were identified. For example, a significant proportion of respondents either disagreed or totally disagreed that Zoom-based instruction adequately covered the course material (34.4%) and that they had encountered technical difficulties that affected the quality of Zoom-based instruction (44%). Additionally, a relatively high percentage of respondents were neutral regarding their satisfaction with the instructor's ability to communicate effectively during Zoom-based instruction (48.1%).

Table 2:

Level of Satisfaction towards Zoom-based teaching.

Item	1	2	3	4	5
1. Zoom-based instruction is effective in facilitating my learning.	2.1	2.1	18.5	46	31.2
2. I am satisfied with the level of engagement during Zoom-based instruction.	3.2	4.2	22.2	40.7	29.6
3. The lecturer is knowledgeable and able to answer my questions during Zoom-based instruction.	1.6	6.3	11.3	34.4	46.6
4. I am satisfied with the organization and structure of Zoom-based instruction.	3.6	4.8	15.9	41.8	34.9
5. Zoom-based instruction adequately covers the course material.	3.2	6.9	25.4	37	27.5
6. I am satisfied with the instructor's ability to effectively use Zoom features during instruction (**e.g.,** screen sharing, breakout rooms, chat).	2.1	4.2	12.7	30.7	50.3
7. I have encountered technical difficulties that have always affected the quality of Zoom-based instruction.	6.3	22.8	27.0	30.2	13.8
8. I am satisfied with the instructor's ability to communicate effectively during Zoom-based instruction.	2.1	5.3	16.4	44.4	31.7

These results suggest that while Zoom-based instruction has been effective for most students, there are still areas for improvement. For example, instructors could consider methods to ensure that course material is adequately covered and address technical difficulties that arise during instruction to minimize their impact on students. Moreover, instructors should consider techniques to improve communication with students during Zoom-based instruction to ensure students receive the most from the course.

2. Students' level of satisfaction with the assessment practices during Zoom-based teaching.

Table 3 illustrates students' satisfaction with assessment practices during online teaching. Based on the provided data analysis, the following observation can be drawn: Firstly, most students agree or agree that the assessments used during Zoom-based instruction accurately assess their learning (66.7%) and are satisfied with the feedback provided on their assessments (63%). Additionally, a significant proportion of students agree that the assessments used are challenging but fair (59.8%) and are satisfied with the grading process for assessments (67.2%).

Secondly, many students have differing views on some of the assessment-related statements. For instance, around one-third of students have a weak opinion on whether the assessments are challenging but fair (30.2%) or whether sufficient time is allocated to complete assessments (14.8%). Thirdly, a minority of students encounter technical difficulties that affect their ability to complete assessments (25.6% disagree or totally disagree). Moreover, a small proportion of students disagree or

totally disagree that they are satisfied with the support provided by instructors during assessments (10.6%).

Table 3:

Level of Satisfaction with assessment practices during online teaching.

Item	1	2	3	4	5
The assessments used during Zoom-based instruction accurately assess my learning.	2.6	9.0	21.7	39.2	27.5
I am satisfied with the feedback provided on my assessments during Zoom-based instruction.	2.1	9.5	24.3	36.5	27.5
The assessments used during Zoom-based instruction are challenging but fair.	2.6	7.4	30.2	43.4	16.4
I am satisfied with the format of the assessments used during Zoom-based instruction.	1.6	5.3	27.0	43.0	22.8
I have encountered technical difficulties that have affected my ability to complete assessments during Zoom-based instruction.	8.5	14.8	33.9	31.2	11.6
I am satisfied with the grading process for assessments during Zoom-based instruction.	2.6	6.3	23.8	45.0	22.2
Sufficient time is allocated to complete assessments during Zoom-based instruction.	2.0	12.2	14.8	41.3	29.6
I am satisfied with the instructors' support during Zoom-based instruction assessments.	3.2	7.4	15.3	40.7	33.3

The data analysis suggests that most students are satisfied with the assessment practices used during Zoom-based instruction. However, there is room for improvement in areas such as supporting students during assessments and addressing technical issues that may arise. Additionally, it may be beneficial for instructors to provide more guidance on the format of the assessments to address the proportion of students who do not have a strong opinion on this matter.

In addition, the survey included a few open-ended questions to assess postgraduate students' Satisfaction with Zoom-based teaching and their perceptions of its drawbacks. Analysis of the responses revealed several recurring themes. Students expressed a need for more interactivity, better time management, increased flexibility, access to relevant materials, immediate feedback, integration of technology, and more group work. They valued engaging and convenient Zoom-based teaching

with well-prepared lecturers who manage their time effectively. Additionally, students appreciated the integration of technology and immediate feedback from the lecturers.

Several categories emerged regarding the drawbacks of Zoom-based online teaching for postgraduate students. The most commonly cited were technical issues, lack of interaction and communication, learning environment, length of sessions, subject matter coverage, and limited practical experience. However, some students found the online format suited their learning style and saved them time and money on travel. Overall, while many students appreciated the convenience and flexibility of online learning, others found it challenging to stay motivated and engaged without direct interaction and support.

CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly affected the education sector worldwide, leading to the adoption of remote learning strategies such as Zoom technology. The Open University of Sri Lanka's Faculty of Education has shifted entirely to Zoom-based education and learning for all programs. Assessing learners' satisfaction with using Zoom technology is critical in today's world of remote learning, where it is necessary to understand how learners perceive this mode of instruction. Several studies have evaluated the satisfaction of students and instructors with online courses and found that while online teaching may be considered less satisfying by students, the advantages of online education should also be considered. The importance of interactivity, student-instructor interaction, and timely feedback have been highlighted as key factors influencing satisfaction and persistence in online learning. Modifications in feedback-based instructional practices effectively improve students' satisfaction with online learning. This study aimed to investigate students' satisfaction levels regarding the quality of online teaching using Zoom-based instruction. A survey research design was used, and the results suggest that most learners were satisfied with the quality of Zoom-based instruction and assessment practices. Overall, assessing learners' satisfaction with Zoom-based course delivery is crucial for improving the quality of online teaching and enhancing student engagement in the learning process.

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