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A STUDY OF NEED ASSESSMENT FOR E-LEARNING CLASSROOMS AT SECONDARY SCHOOL LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this research was to identify the existing resources of IT for e-learning and required capacity building measures in public schools for survival regarding change management and future needs of the institute for academic development. Data were collected through a rating scale from SST computers working in Public High Schools in Faisalabad District. Questionnaire items were required to rate on two raters i.e. existing and required. Rating scale was consisted of 1 to 5 for each option. Data were analyzed through SPSS. Main findings of the study have been reflected that need assessment has not been carried out before launching the project of e-learning based classrooms. Target groups have not been identified. Access of the learners to the IT labs is limited. In this study it has been recommended that IT lab staff should be provided. E-assessment should be introduced. Students should be provided access to the IT labs. Video conferencing should be introduced in the school system. Collaborative classrooms should be introduced. Detailed findings and recommendations will be shared in the conference.

INTRODUCTION

With the technological advancement and paradigm shift towards E-learning new modes of education have derived the policy makers to propose new infrastructure for survival, adaptation and update. In this concern government of the Punjab has launched different projects to create e-learning based environment through collaboration with information technology board and Punjab text book board. E-learn Punjab is the project through which conceptual development and demonstration oriented animations have been provided for the learners. Computer labs with internet facility have been provided to all the schools. The focus of present study is to assess the needs of secondary school level learners in public schools of the Punjab.

The focus of need assessment is to indicate gaps between existing and required state of phenomenon. Need assessment studies are used to plan launch and implement the project efficiently and effectively. The needs of direct beneficiaries are perceived through the process of focus group discussion and creating a road map to achieve the desired objectives. Need assessment studies are conducted to engage the audience effectively, meet the expectations of the stake holders properly, increase the knowledge about the phenomenon, and stream line the practices through evidence based behavior. Mays N and Pope C (2000) pp 50-52 as stated by the same need assessment studies are conducted through following mechanism

1. Data collection and data analysis about the needs of stake holders
2. Identification process of performance gaps
3. Developing performance based objectives
4. Developing performance assessment mechanism
5. Designing SOP's and outcomes

Teaching learning process is one of the potentially focused area where technology has dominated and changed the learning culture. (Donnelly, 2007) has stated that E-learning has increased efficiency of schools, colleges and universities through technology based instructional design (pp-56). Efficiency in TLP require learners to have access to content faster and easier—and computers with its associated software can certainly deliver learner oriented instructions and information fatly, covering through IT in all areas of curriculum without any discrimination of age or

ability level (Westwood, 2008). Kinshuk (2004) revealed that use of e-learning has positive steps in improving students' performance, flexibility, learning, speed, interactivity, and versatility in an autonomous way. Reeves (2008) evaluate computer-based learning by several reasons for idealistic environment.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Multi-dimensional blended learning has changed learning culture and learning management system. coursera.com, Moocs.com, Moodle's .com and online academic supports have forced academicians to manage the change through HRM and infrastructure .the purpose of this study was to conduct need assessment regarding existing and required resources for E-learning in public secondary schools.

Objectives of Study

1. To explore utilization of E-learning sources available in the institutes
2. To identify the needs and problems of the direct beneficiaries.
3. To identify gaps in capacity building measures (CBM) for E-learning in public schools

Significance of the study

The phenomenon of e-learning being the new field of the study still needed to focus the aspects of curriculum, development, implementation, and evaluation of the program which will be fulfilled through this study. It will be a pioneer study to sensitize the phenomenon in aspects of experts hiring and competency development of learner. This study will further enhance to discover the new aspects of e-learning resources utilization in school sector.

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

A questionnaire containing 14 facets and seventy items was developed on five-point rating scales. Further 3 open ended question were also included in the last of questionnaire. Questionnaire focused following areas

1. Curriculum

2. Human Recourses (HR)
3. Computer infrastructure
4. Internet services
5. Access
6. Equity
7. Maintenance
8. Financing
9. Assessment
10. Planning
11. Managerial aspect
12. Participant
13. Evaluation
14. Supervision

Along with the questionnaire and interview schedule was developed covering the same ideas was also prepared for the computer experts working in these labs and heads of the schools where these labs were established.

Population of the Study

Population of this study was consisted of head-teachers and IT teachers of public secondary schools in Faisalabad District.

High schools

Statistics for High schools of district Faisalabad

High for District Faisalabad	Male	Female	Total
Schools	203	236	439
Enrollment	156455	155681	312136
Teachers	4204	4540	8744

Sample of the Study

The sample of this study was consisted of 44 schools from the district under study.

Tool was validated through expert opinion. Tool was presented to the educationists and modified as per directions so that validation of the tool ensured as per requirement of the study. Reliability of the tool was calculated using Cronbach Alpha.

Interview Schedule

An interview schedule was developed consisted of 20 open ended items. The interview was conducted by the researchers through a briefing about the significance, CBM, and utilization of available IT resources at school. Interview schedule further covered the aspects of Curriculum: Human Recourses (HR), Computer infrastructure, Internet services, Access, Equity, Maintenance, Financing, Assessment, Planning, Managerial aspect, Participant, Evaluation, and Supervision.

DATA ANALYSIS

Data was analyzed using ANOVA among different factors of planning, management, financing, HRM, teacher competency and evaluation.

Findings

On the basis of analysis following findings were made

1. Need assessment was not carried out before launching the e-learning project in public schools under government of the Punjab.
2. Curriculum for the trainers and stake holders was not proper
3. Target groups were not properly identified in the e-learning project.
4. Supervision mechanism was not properly carried out through experts of the organizations working in the field of e-learning.
5. Learners' access was not ensured in the e-learning project.
6. Infrastructure was needed improvement and maintenance.
7. There was lack of coordination between district and provincial level organizational hierarchy.
8. Maintenance MOU's were not signed.
9. Internet sources were not ensured.

10. Budget was not allocated for maintenance and repair.

11. Competent HR were not available.

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