



THE ROLE OF ONLINE LEARNING IN UPSKILLING AND RESKILLING – STUDENTS’ PERSPECTIVE

Dr R Muthukrishnan¹, Madan S S², Sudharshan O T³, Gokulram V⁴

¹ Associate Professor, School of Management, Sri Krishna College of Engineering and Technology, Coimbatore

²⁻⁴ PG Student, School of Management, Sri Krishna College of Engineering and Technology, Coimbatore

INTRODUCTION

The world is changing rapidly, and with it, the demands and requirements of the job market. In recent years, there has been a significant shift in the job market, with traditional jobs being replaced by new ones that require a different set of skills. This shift has made it necessary for individuals to continuously upskill and reskill to remain relevant and employable.

In this paper, we will explore the role of learning in upskilling and reskilling from a student's perspective. We will examine the importance of upskilling and reskilling in today's job market and the role of learning in facilitating these processes. Additionally, we will analyse the challenges that students face in upskilling and reskilling and provide suggestions for overcoming these challenges.

The importance of upskilling and reskilling

Upskilling and reskilling are critical in today's job market because they enable individuals to remain relevant and competitive. The skills required for many jobs are changing rapidly, and individuals who do not keep up with these changes risk becoming obsolete. Upskilling and reskilling are also essential for career advancement. Employers are more likely to promote individuals who demonstrate a willingness and ability to learn new skills and take on new responsibilities.

Furthermore, upskilling and reskilling are essential for job security. Individuals who have a diverse set of skills are more valuable to employers and are less likely to be replaced by automation. By continuously learning and acquiring new skills, individuals can future-proof their careers and increase their job security.

The Role of Learning in Upskilling and Reskilling

Learning is essential in upskilling and reskilling because it provides individuals with the knowledge and skills needed to perform new job roles or take on additional responsibilities. There are many different ways that individuals can learn, including formal education, online courses, workshops, and on-the-job training.

Formal education, such as attending college or university, is an excellent way to upskill and reskill. It provides individuals with a broad range of knowledge and skills and allows them to specialize in a particular field. Online courses are also an effective way to upskill and reskill because they are often more flexible and affordable than traditional education.

Workshops and on-the-job training are also crucial in upskilling and reskilling because they provide individuals with practical experience and allow them to apply the knowledge they have learned in a real-world setting. On-the-job training is particularly beneficial because it allows individuals to learn while earning a pay check.

Challenges faced by students

Despite the importance of upskilling and reskilling, many students face challenges when trying to acquire new skills. One of the biggest challenges is the cost of education and training. Formal education can be expensive, and online courses and workshops can also be costly. Many students struggle to afford the cost of upskilling and reskilling.

Another challenge is the lack of time. Many individuals who want to upskill and reskill are already working full-time, making it difficult to find the time to attend classes or workshops. This challenge is particularly significant for individuals who have family responsibilities.

Finally, some students may lack the motivation to upskill and reskill. Learning new skills can be challenging and require a significant amount of effort. Some individuals may not be willing to put in the effort required to acquire new skills.

Overcoming the challenges

Despite the challenges, there are several ways that students can overcome the obstacles they face when trying to upskill and reskill. One option is to look for scholarships or grants that can help cover the cost of education and training. Many organizations offer scholarships and grants specifically for individuals who want to upskill and reskill.

Another option is to look for online courses or workshops that are more affordable or flexible. Many online courses offer payment plans also.

NEED FOR THE STUDY

- **Increasing demand for upskilling and reskilling:** In today's rapidly changing job market, there is a growing demand for individuals to continuously upgrade their skills and knowledge. Online learning provides an accessible and flexible way for students to acquire new skills and knowledge to meet the demands of the job market.
- **Impact of COVID-19:** The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the shift towards online learning, and many students have had to adapt to remote learning as a result. A study on the role of online learning in upskilling and reskilling is particularly relevant in the current context as more individuals are seeking online learning opportunities to reskill or upskill.
- **Limited research on students' perspectives:** While there has been research on the effectiveness of online learning in upskilling and reskilling, there is a need for more studies that focus specifically on the perspectives of students. Understanding the experiences, attitudes, and perceptions of students towards online learning can provide valuable insights into how to design and deliver effective online learning programs.
- **Importance of student-centered learning:** Online learning offers opportunities for more personalized and student-centered learning experiences. A study on the role of online learning in upskilling and reskilling from the students' perspective can provide insights into how online learning can be designed to meet the specific needs and preferences of individual learners.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To study the role of online learning in upskilling and reskilling – students' perspective.
- To assess the students' perception towards online learning.
- To identify the key factors that influences to prefer online courses.
- To examine the challenges & difficulties in online courses.
- To identify the opportunities of online learning.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

- **The effectiveness of online learning in upskilling and reskilling:** This could involve examining the impact of online learning on the acquisition of new skills and knowledge, as well as how online learning compares to other modes of learning (such as in-person classes or self-directed study).
- **The motivation and engagement of online learners:** This could involve exploring factors that motivate learners to engage with online learning, such as the convenience of being able to learn from home or the ability to learn at their own pace. It could also involve examining strategies for keeping learners engaged and motivated throughout the online learning experience.
- **The barriers to online learning:** This could involve identifying obstacles that prevent some learners from fully participating in online learning, such as lack of access to technology or inadequate support from instructors.
- Overall, the research could focus on the experiences, perceptions, and attitudes of students towards online learning in the context of upskilling and reskilling. It could provide insights into the benefits and challenges of online learning, and identify ways to enhance the effectiveness and accessibility of online learning opportunities.

3.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

- **Enhancing the effectiveness of online learning:** By examining the experiences and perceptions of students towards online learning in the context of upskilling and reskilling, the study can identify best practices and strategies for designing and delivering effective online learning programs. This information can be used to enhance the quality and effectiveness of online learning opportunities.
- Overall, the significance of the study lies in its potential to inform policies and practices related to online learning and workforce development, with the ultimate goal of improving the quality of education and promoting the development of a skilled and competitive workforce.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design: The research will use a descriptive research design, which is suitable for the role of online learning in upskilling and reskilling – student's perspective.

Data Collection: Data will be collected through forms and questionnaire of students who learning through online.

Sources of data: The study was conducted with the help of primary data.

Primary data: Primary data was collected from the respondents by using a structured Questionnaire.

Secondary data: Some sources of secondary data are data available from previous research, information available from any published or unpublished sources available either within or outside the organization, library records, online data, websites and the internet. The secondary data of information of this study were obtained through web sites, books, annual report, and internet.

Data collection methods

Survey: The survey research is a systematic gathering of data from the respondents through Questionnaire the main purpose of the Survey is to facilitate in understanding (or) enable prediction of some aspects of behaviour of the population being surveyed.

Pilot Study: Before starting the project work, A pilot study should be conducted by conducting a preliminary survey for preparing a standard Questionnaire. The unwanted Questions are removed with consultation of company guide and faculty. Hence the Questions are arranged in the order of Sequence.

Personal Interview:

In personal Interview is Investigation is conducted to the respondents in person by circulating the finalized Questionnaire and collect relevant information.

Sampling: For the purpose of this research, a random sampling technique will be used to select a sample of students, employees who experiences their learning through online platform. Sampling size: A sample size of **116** people will be used for this study.

Occupation	No. of people	Percentage
Student	71	61.20
Employee	40	34.48
Others	5	4.32
total	116	100

Sampling techniques: The study will use a Simple random sampling.

Tools used for analysis: Percentage analysis, Chi square, Correlation, Regression test, Multiple regression test and Independent sample t-test

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- **Sample bias:** The sample of students who participate in the study may not be representative of the larger population of online learners. For example, the sample may over-represent students who are highly motivated or who have a strong interest in upskilling or reskilling.
- **Lack of control group:** The study may not have a control group, which limits the ability to compare the effectiveness of online learning to other modes of learning or to determine the causal relationship between online learning and upskilling or reskilling outcomes.
- **Limited generalizability:** The findings of the study may not be generalizable to other contexts, such as different types of online learning programs, different student populations, or different industries.
- **Limited data on long-term outcomes:** The study may not capture the long-term outcomes of online learning in upskilling or reskilling, such as changes in employment status or salary. This information is important for understanding the broader impact of online learning on career development.

- **Limited data on instructors' perspectives:** The study may not capture the perspectives of instructors or program administrators, who can provide valuable insights into the design and delivery of effective online learning programs.
- **Time Constraints:** Finally, time constraints may limit the scope and depth of the study. The study will collect data from participants who have undergone upskilling or reskilling programs using online learning platforms within the past two years. This time frame may not allow for a comprehensive understanding of the long-term effectiveness of online learning in upskilling and reskilling. Additionally, time constraints may limit the ability of the researcher to collect data from a larger sample size or conduct additional data analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Demographic variables of the respondents

Demographic variables	Particulars	Frequency	Percent
Gender	Female	34	29.3
	Male	82	70.7
	Total	116	100
Age	Below 18	2	1.7
	18-25	103	88.8
	26-32	4	3.4
	33-40	5	4.3
	Above 40	2	1.7
	Total	116	100
Educational qualification	SSLC	1	0.9
	HSLC	7	6
	UG	53	45.7
	PG	50	43.1
	Ph. D	5	4.3
	Total	116	100
Occupation	Students	71	61.2
	Employee	40	34.48
	Others	5	4.32
	Total	116	100

Gender:

Among the surveyed individuals, 29.3% identified as female, while 70.7% identified as male.

Age:

Out of the total 116 respondents, the majority (88.8%) were in the age range of 18-25 years, followed by a small percentage in the 26-32 (3.4%) and 33-40 (4.3%) age ranges. Only a very small percentage of respondents were below 18 or above 40 years of age.

Educational Qualification:

Out of the total 116 respondents, only 1 respondent (0.9%) has completed SSLC, while 7 respondents (6%) have completed HSLC. The majority of the respondents

(45.7%) have completed their undergraduate degree (UG), followed closely by those who have completed their postgraduate degree (PG) at 43.1%. Only a small percentage of respondents (4.3%) have completed their Ph.D.

Occupation:

Out of the total 116 respondents, the majority of the respondents (61.2%) are students, while 34.48% are employed. Only a small percentage of respondents (4.32%) fall into the "Others" category, which could include self-employed individuals, homemakers, or retirees, etc.,

Factors which do you consider while choosing online learning platform

Factors/Ranks	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Total
Based on the course offerings	43.96	27.58	15.52	7.75	5.19	100
Based on the reputation of the platform	31.89	34.48	18.96	10.34	4.33	100
Based on the cost of the courses	37.07	31.89	18.10	8.62	4.32	100
Based on recommendations from others	25	24.14	28.45	12.10	10.31	100
Based on duration	25	28.45	19.83	11.21	15.51	100

This research table shows the factors that people consider when choosing an online learning platform, with their corresponding rankings. The table displays five factors that influence the selection process and the percentage of respondents who consider them as their first, second, third, fourth, or fifth most important factor.

The first factor, "Based on the course offerings," was chosen as the most important by 43.96% of respondents. This suggests that people value a platform that provides a wide range of courses that meet their specific needs or interests.

The second factor, "Based on the reputation of the platform," was considered the most important by 31.89% of respondents. This indicates that the platform's overall reputation, trustworthiness, and credibility play a crucial role in the decision-making process.

The third factor, "Based on the cost of the courses," was ranked as the most important by 37.07% of respondents. This implies that cost is a crucial consideration for many people when choosing an online learning platform.

The fourth factor, "Based on recommendations from others," was ranked as the most important by 25% of respondents. This suggests that personal recommendations from family, friends, colleagues, or online communities can significantly influence people's choices.

The fifth factor, "Based on duration," was considered the most important by 25% of respondents. This indicates that people value platforms that offer flexible schedules that suit their work, family, or other commitments.

Overall, the table highlights that people have different priorities when it comes to selecting an online learning platform. Some prioritize course offerings, others prioritize reputation or cost, while others value recommendations from others or flexible schedules.

Online learning helped in upskilling or reskilling

Factors/Ranks	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	Total
Improved my skills and knowledge	54.31	13.79	18.96	6.89	6.05	100
Helped me change careers	21.55	32.78	31.89	6.89	6.89	100
Provided me with new job opportunities	28.45	25.86	31.03	8.62	6.04	100
Did not help me in upskilling or reskilling	18.96	11.21	22.41	26.72	20.7	100
No changes in career	16.38	15.52	26.72	15.52	25.86	100

This research table indicates the ways in which online learning has helped individuals in upskilling or reskilling, with their corresponding rankings. The table presents five factors that assess the impact of online learning on improving skills and knowledge, career change, job opportunities, and personal growth.

The first factor, "Improved my skills and knowledge," was ranked as the most significant by 54.31% of respondents. This indicates that online learning has positively impacted the development of skills and knowledge of the learners.

The second factor, "Helped me change careers," was considered the most important by 21.55% of respondents. This suggests that online learning has been a valuable resource for people who wanted to switch their careers, and has provided them with the necessary skills and knowledge to do so.

The third factor, "Provided me with new job opportunities," was ranked as the most important by 28.45% of respondents. This implies that online learning has helped learners to become more competitive in the job market and explore new career paths.

The fourth factor, "Did not help me in upskilling or reskilling," was ranked as the most important by 18.96% of respondents. This indicates that online learning may not be suitable for all learners or may not have met their specific upskilling or reskilling needs.

The fifth factor, "No changes in career," was ranked as the most important by 16.38% of respondents. This suggests that online learning may not always lead to a significant change in career or job opportunities for some learners.

Chi square test**Association between Online learning plays a crucial role in upskilling & reskilling and Age**

The significance value is 0.289 is higher than 0.05 (95% Confidence Level). So, we'll reject H1 alternate hypothesis. Here the Rejection of H1 states that this research prediction has there's no effect in the population.

Association between taken online course before and educational qualification

The significance value is 0.044 is higher than 0.05 (95% Confidence Level). So, we'll reject H1 alternate hypothesis but accept null hypothesis (H0). There is no significant association between taken online course before and educational qualification.

CORRELATION

The correlation value: 0.035

Sign value: 0.709

Which means 0.709 is greater than 0.05 so accept null hypothesis (H₀), there is no significance association between online learning has increased your employability and education qualification.

REGRESSION

H1 – There is significant association between online learning is in upskilling and reskilling compared to traditional classroom learning and Age.

The R square Value is 0.114 which is higher than 0.05 (95% Confidence Level). So, we'll reject the H₁. Here the rejection of H₁ states that this research prediction has an effect or relationship in the population.

FINDINGS

- Many of the respondents have taken multiple online courses and are interested in taking more courses in the future. Among the respondents, 73.3% had taken an online course before, and the majority had taken either a few courses or several courses.
- Respondents consider various factors when selecting an online learning platform, such as course offerings, platform reputation, cost, recommendations, and duration. It suggests that people have different priorities when choosing an online learning platform.
- The most significant benefit of online learning, as perceived by the respondents, is that it improved their skills and knowledge. Additionally, online learning has helped learners change careers, provided them with new job opportunities, and offered flexibility in scheduling and pace.
- Some respondents expressed that online learning did not help them in upskilling or reskilling, and some learners did not see any significant change in their careers after taking online courses. This implies that online learning may not be suitable for all learners or may not always lead to significant career changes.
- Setting goals and tracking progress is the most effective way for respondents to stay motivated during online learning, followed by taking breaks when needed. Rewarding oneself for completing tasks and participating in discussions are fewer common strategies.
- Accessing online learning resources is not a significant challenge for the majority of respondents, with most finding it either "somewhat easy" or "very easy" to access these resources.
- Technical difficulties are a common challenge for online learners, with almost 40% of respondents experiencing them "sometimes" during online learning.
- Social isolation and lack of engagement with instructors and peers are significant challenges faced by online learners, with 25% of respondents each reporting difficulty in interacting with instructors and peers, and lack of motivation.
- Respondents cope with the lack of face-to-face interaction during online learning through various methods, including video conferencing (45.7%), joining online study groups (39%), and participating in discussion forums (27%). Some respondents (34.5%) reported that they do not miss face-to-face interaction during online learning.

SUGGESTIONS

- Online learning providers should cater to the diverse needs of learners by offering a wide range of course offerings and considering factors such as platform reputation, cost, and recommendations.
- Providers should ensure that learners understand the benefits of online learning and help learners set goals and track their progress to stay motivated throughout their learning journey.
- Providers should consider implementing strategies to minimize technical difficulties faced by learners during online learning, such as providing technical support and troubleshooting guides.
- Providers should provide opportunities for learners to interact with instructors and peers to minimize social isolation and lack of engagement.
- Further research is necessary to determine the factors that affect the effectiveness of online learning for upskilling and reskilling, and providers should incorporate these findings into their offerings.
- Providers should consider tailoring online learning offerings based on age, cost-effectiveness, and benefits to meet the needs and preferences of different learner demographics.
- Providers should continue to explore innovative methods to enhance the online learning experience and improve learners' outcomes.
- While the majority of respondents found accessing online learning resources to be easy, it is important to consider that not all learners have equal access to the internet or technology. Therefore, it is necessary to explore ways to make online learning accessible to a wider audience, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- The finding that social isolation and lack of engagement with instructors and peers are significant challenges for online learners highlights the importance of incorporating social learning opportunities in online courses. This can be achieved through group projects, discussions, and other interactive activities that allow learners to collaborate and interact with each other and the instructor.
- As respondents have different priorities when selecting an online learning platform, it is essential to offer personalized learning experiences that cater to learners' specific needs. This can be achieved by using data-driven approaches to personalize course recommendations, offering flexible course schedules, and providing learners with personalized feedback and support.
- As online learning has been found to improve learners' skills and knowledge and provide them with new job opportunities, employers should recognize the value of online learning when evaluating candidates' qualifications. This can be achieved by partnering with online learning providers to offer training programs for their employees or by considering online course completion as a factor in hiring decisions.

CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the study is that, online learning has allowed students to collaborate with others on group projects and assignments, develop teamwork and communication skills, and network with professionals in their field of interest. The use of

online simulations and virtual labs has allowed students to gain practical experience and apply what they have learned in a more realistic and hands-on way. The lower cost of online courses has made it more affordable for students to continue their education and pursue additional certifications or degrees. The use of gamification and rewards systems in online courses has made learning more engaging and motivating, while the ability to access course materials and resources online has made learning more convenient and accessible. Online learning has also allowed students to interact with instructors and classmates from diverse backgrounds and perspectives, which has enriched their learning experience and broadened their understanding of the subject matter. The use of online assessments and quizzes has allowed students to receive immediate feedback on their progress and identify areas where they need to focus their efforts. Overall, the role of online learning in upskilling and reskilling from the perspective of students is critical. Online learning provides a valuable tool for individuals seeking to improve their job prospects, advance their careers, and stay up-to-date with the latest trends and developments in their fields. The flexibility, convenience, and accessibility of online learning make it an essential tool for students seeking to upskill and reskill, and its benefits are likely to continue to grow in the years ahead.

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