RP9

Student Feedback on Evaluation of Online Presentations as the Summative Assessment of an Undergraduate Course at the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna

T.A.D. Sewwandi*[1], W.M.C.J. Wijekoon[2], G.Y. Jayasinghe[3] and N.S.B.M. Atapattu[4]

[1]*Department of Agricultural Economics, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, Mapalana, Kamburupitiya,*
[2]*Department of Soil Science, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, Mapalana, Kamburupitiya,*
[3]*Department of Agricultural Engineering, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, Mapalana, Kamburupitiya,*
[4]*Department of Animal Science, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, Mapalana, Kamburupitiya,*

Corresponding author:sdinusha18@gmail.com

Abstract

Covid-19 pandemic has made a range of hitherto less-known educational methods including online evaluation, an essential component of the teaching-learning process. However, online evaluation conditions are not yet optimized to meet the educational and socio-economic situations of the country. In this regard, online evaluation experiences can play a critical role. This study firstly discusses the steps taken to optimize the online evaluation conditions used for the online presentation assessment and subsequently, student feedback on the above assessment experience. Online evaluation of the student presentations of the final year industrial training programme of the undergraduates (n=125) following three BSc programmes at the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna were conducted. Students were given a questionnaire containing a series of statements and asked to give their feedback on a five-point Likert scale. The questionnaire was administered using a Google Form. The comparative analysis was conducted using descriptive statistical methods, the Chi-square test, and Wilcoxon Signed-Rank. Students gave significantly positive responses for 8 of the 12 statements. They were; easiness, easy to follow guidelines, systematic nature, interaction with evaluation panel, answering via zoom, conveying specific skills, playing online presentations less anxious than conventional presentations. Significantly negative responses were received for two statements; 1) difficulties due to the use of electronic devices for a long time and 2) anxiousness about the technical problems that may occur during the sessions. Students strongly agreed that they are competent with using online tools. Females showed significantly higher competency levels for online software tools than males. More students preferred online presentation-evaluation (54.3%) than conventional face-to-

face presentation-evaluation (36.3) %, while others noticed no difference between the two methods. Students' views on their online presentation-evaluation experience were that there is a conducive environment for the assessment adopted. Students preferred online rather than conventional mode for presentation evaluation.

Keywords: Effectiveness, Online Assessment, Presentation, Feedback, Undergraduate

Introduction

The educational institutions were compelled to make sudden modifications in their teaching-learning strategies in response to social distancing guidelines imposed due to the global Covid-19 pandemic. According to Moore and Anderson (2003), online programs have become widely and generally accepted in many countries. The online evaluation is a digital-based assessment that facilitates diversified ways to measure the students' performance. Kuzma (2011), highlighted human capabilities, real-time contact, immediate feedback, peer and instructor support as major concerns of online presentation evaluation. Pros and cons associated with online evaluation from different perspectives have been reported (Taylor, 2002). Since online evaluations take place outside the classroom, students may become distracted and unable to recall or complete the assignment without considering the quality of performance during the evaluation (Laubsch, 2006). In general, academics and participants focus mainly on delivery skills and extra-linguistic features (body language, interactive skills, and eye contact) in evaluating presentations. In online evaluation the above aspects may receive lesser attention. According to Anderson et al. (2005), there may also be technical problems during online learning activities. Some questions remain as to whether the responses of the teachers and students are satisfactory as compared to the traditional presentation evaluation (Dommeyer et al., 2002).

Since online assessments are relatively new to Sri Lankan Universities, both students and teachers are facing difficulties in optimizing the conditions for online assessments. Particularly, the use of online assessments at the summative level is not widely accepted or promoted and thus practiced. Required adjustments for effective online assessments should be introduced taking the scientific analysis of feedback of students and assessors' experience on such assessments into account. Recently, the Industrial Placement Committee of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna conducted a summative level, online presentation-evaluation for the undergraduates of three-degree programmes. The objective of this study was to analyze the student feedback and the conditions that were arranged for the above assessment, with the view of optimizing online assessments.

Methodology

The primary data was collected using a pre-tested Google questionnaire. Students who participated in an online presentation-evaluation session of the Industrial Training (a 2/6 credit course for separate degrees) were the respondents of this study. The purposive sampling method was used to collect data from 125 undergraduates. The sample included 88 BSc. in Agricultural Resource Management & Technology, 24 BSc in Agribusiness Management, and 13 BSc in Green Technology undergraduates following their respective programmes.

The online assessment conditions were as follows.

1. Students were provided with instructions to prepare and submit documents and video recording of the presentation

2. Guidelines to effectively engage in online presentation evaluation were provided to both evaluators and students.

3. Students were informed about the current progress of the presentations using the presentation status update mechanism (Google Excel Sheet)

4. Introduced contingency plan to minimize disturbances during the evaluation

The questionnaire consists of four main parts. The first part was to identify participants' demographic features, the second part to examine their competency level for online software tools, the third part to identify predominant issues encountered during the online presentation evaluation program and finally, open-ended questions to explore their suggestions on the internet based evaluation. The fundamental issues experienced during the online presentation evaluation were analyzed under four major aspects; convenience of the evaluation, technical complications, importance of personal interaction, and presentation skills, and extra-linguistic features. Under these principal aspects, students were requested to give their feedback regarding compatibility, preparedness, immediate feedback, student-instructor interaction, technical errors, distractions, presentation delivery skills on a Five-Point Likert Scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. A Google form was sent to all the undergraduates (137) who have participated in the online evaluation. However, 125 undergraduates responded to the Google form displaying a 91% of response rate for the survey.

The data were analyzed using SPSS statistical software. The descriptive statistics were used to demonstrate the undergraduates' socio-economic features, and the Wilcoxon Signed-Rank test was conducted to analyze the weight of the effect of each factor for the online evaluation during the

presentations. A Chi-square test was conducted to expose the relationship between undergraduates'
socioeconomic characteristics with the principal causes of their choice.

Results and Discussion

The response rate for the survey was 91 %. The majority of participants, 68.5 %, were females. The
Wilcoxon Signed Rank Test was used to assess undergraduates' satisfaction with the availability of
resources and interpersonal interactions, both of which are necessary for doing online presentation-
assessment efficiently. The results revealed that, availability of good network connection (P<0.001),
speed of connection (P<0.001), essential electronic devices (E.g. Laptop, Wi-Fi, etc.) (P<0.001),
digital software tools (Zoom, PowerPoint, etc.) (P<0.001) and personal relationship with academic
staff (P<0.001) were significant and undergraduates were highly satisfied with the current status of
digital infrastructure facilities and personal engagements that benefited them during the online
presentation evaluation programme. Further, the level of competency for online tools was compared
with participants' gender. The results of the mean comparison disclosed that the level of competency
of females (mean = 20.25) for digital tools was higher than male (mean= 18.85). Thorpe (2002) also
revealed that more women than men were likely to complete online evaluations when compared with
the traditional evaluation methods. However, the Chi-square Test revealed that there is no significant
association between gender and their preference for the way of conducting presentation evaluation (p=
0.696, α>0.05).

Table 1 illustrates the test results regarding undergraduates' level of agreement for each attribute on
the online presentation-evaluation that they participated in.

**Table 1: The identified preliminary attributes which are significant for an effective on-line
presentation evaluation**

Factor	Statement	Mean value	Test value	P-value	Comment
1. Convenience of the evaluation	The online evaluation procedure was easy	1.29*	9.39	0.000	**Strongly Agree**
	Easy to follow the guidelines	1.21*	9.22	0.000	**Strongly Agree**
	Online evaluation was systematic	1.18*	5.07	0.000	**Strongly Agree**
	I faced difficulties due to the use of electronic (headphones/screens etc.) devices for a long time	1.18*	7.751	0.000	**Strongly Agree**

Table 1: The identified preliminary attributes which are significant for an effective on-line presentation evaluation

Factor	Statement	Mean value	Test value	P-value	Comment
2. Technical complications	I faced difficulties in uploading the video recording	0.01	0.182	0.856	Not Significant
	I faced difficulties in uploading the other documents (final report and the logbook)	-0.40*	-3.69	0.000	**Strongly Disagree**
	I was anxious about the technical problems that may occur during the sessions	0.31*	3.36	0.001	**Agree**
	I experienced distractions due to personal engagements	-0.02	-0.410	0.682	Not Significant
3. Personal interaction	I could effectively interact with the evaluation panel	0.96*	8.28	0.000	**Agree**
	It was easy to answer the questions in the Q/A session via zoom	1.09*	8.51	0.000	**Strongly Agree**
4. Presentation skills	I could effectively highlight my specific skills (Presentation skills, vocal balance, confidence, etc.) compared to live presentations	0.47*	4.83	0.000	**Agree**
	Playing a video recording made me feel less anxious than a live presentation	0.70*	6.16	0.000	**Agree**

Wilcoxon Signed Ranks Test: Significant Level is 0.05
Cronbach's Alpha: 0.748

Encouragingly, students either strongly agreed or agreed with many positive statements indicating that situations existed, and those arranged which mentioned under the methodology section have created a conducive environment for an effective online presentation-evaluation session. Some concerns were noted for a few statements that came under technical complications. Some of them were beyond the control of both students and the test administrators. Understandably, students agreed on the statement "I was anxious about the technical problems that may occur during the sessions". Hara & Kling (2000) exemplified potential problems of e-learning that have been identified as learner isolation, anxiety, confusion, and learner frustration due to constant exposure to digital tools. Particular attention should be paid to the students' agreement on the statement "I faced difficulties due to the use of electronic

(headphones/screens etc.) devices for a long time". It seems that distractions due to personal engagements have also affected some students. Further studies are needed to determine the ways, particularly the optimum duration for this type of online assessment.

The Wilcoxon Signed-Rank Test revealed that undergraduates are highly satisfied with the online presentation-evaluation process with an associated significance level of 0 .000(α<0.05). The undergraduates prefer online presentation evaluation (54.03%) over the conventional method (36.29%). Layne et al. (1999) have demonstrated that traditional presentation evaluation and online presentation evaluation were not significantly different. Comparably, the Chi-Square test revealed that there was no significant relationship between the gender and undergraduates' preference for traditional or online evaluation methods (p =0.418, α>0.05). There was no significant relationship between the degree programs and undergraduates' preference for traditional or online presentation evaluation methods (p= 0.175, α>0.05).

Conclusions

Based on the feedback given by the students, essential features associated with the convenience of the evaluation, technical problems, personal interactions, presentation delivery skills, and extra-linguistic features were conducive to conduct online presentations evaluation effectively. Female students were found to be more competent in using online tools. Interestingly, undergraduates also prefer online presentation evaluation over the traditional method. Students' main concerns were their anxiousness ahead of online assessments and distractions they experience due to the use of the device for a long duration. Awareness programs and arrangements for a contingency plan for the students who might experience unexpected technical errors were among the students' suggestions for more effective online presentation evaluations.

References

Anderson, T. and Dron, J. (2011) Three generations of distance education pedagogy, *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning,* 12(3), p80-97.

Anderson, T. (2003) Modes of interaction in distance education: Recent developments and research questions, *Handbook of distance education*, p129-144.

Chaney, B.H., Eddy, J.M., Dorman, S.M., Glessner, L.L., Green, B.L. and Lara-Alecio, R. (2009) A primer on quality indicators of distance education, *Health Promotion Practice*,10(2), p222-231.

Dommeyer, C.J., Baum, P., Chapman, K.S. and Hanna, R.W. (2002) Attitudes of business faculty towards two methods of collecting teaching evaluations: Paper vs. online, *Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education*, 27(5), p455-462.

Hara, N. (2000) Student distress in a web-based distance education course, *Information, Communication and Society,* 3(4), p557-579.

Kuzma, J. (2011) Using online technology to enhance student presentation skills, *Worcester Journal of Teaching and Learning*, 5.

Laubsch, P. (2006) Online and In-person Evaluations: A Literature Review and Exploratory Comparison, *MERLOT Journal of Online Learning and Teaching*, 2(2), p62-73.

Layne, J.E. and Nelson, M.E. (1999) The effects of progressive resistance training on bone density: a review, *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise*, 31(1), p25-30.

Taylor, R.W. (2002) Pros and cons of online learning–a faculty perspective, *Journal of European Industrial Training.*

Thorpe, M. (2002) Rethinking learner support: The challenge of collaborative online learning, *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-Learning*, 17(2), p105-119.