Original Article

Study of the Awareness, Accessibility and Effectiveness of Online Certification Platforms to the Youth in Securing Employment

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Abstract
As per the data of the department of youth affairs nearly 40 percent of India's population falls under the category of youth. With the changing dynamics of the Indian Economy there are vast employment opportunities available for youth. Apart from traditional methods of learning now the youth have various online platforms available for them to enhance their skills over and above the traditional knowledge. The question which arises further is regarding the awareness, accessibility and effectiveness of such online certification platforms to the youth. The study tries to assess the awareness, accessibility and effectiveness of such online certification platforms in specific areas of pune city. The study was conducted with the help of questionnaires circulated among the youth in the specific areas of pune city. The findings showed that the majority of the students are aware about the courses. They feel that the courses are accessible and will enhance their chances in securing the job. However, the majority of the respondents are still pursuing their studies and thus they are planning to apply later for the job. Even so they are completing the online certification courses which shows that they have an optimistic approach towards these courses. The study also has a scope of further study regarding the challenges faced by the respondents while completing the courses and also after completing courses while securing employment.
Keywords: *Online Certification Platforms, Online Courses, Job Opportunities.*

Introduction

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, online certification platforms such as SWAYAM,NPTEL, Coursera,Excelr, Udemy etc. have emerged as transformative tools for skill development, employment readiness, and lifelong learning. These platforms provide accessible, flexible, and cost-effective learning opportunities that empower youth to enhance their employability. However, the extent of awareness, accessibility, and effectiveness of these platforms in securing employment remains a crucial area of study. This research examines how well young individuals understand and utilize online certification platforms and whether they feel that these certifications translate into tangible employment opportunities. The study aligns with the broader theme of "Innovation for Inclusive Growth, Development, and Sustainability" by exploring how digital learning solutions bridge skill gaps and support sustainable growth.

This study aims to explore three key aspects:

a. **Awareness –** To what extent are young job seekers aware of online certification platforms?
b. **Accessibility –** Do they feel these platforms are user friendly?
c. **Effectiveness –** Do they feel that these certifications help secure employment and enhance their career growth?

(*Swayam Central*, n.d.), (*Coursera Plus | Unlimited Access to 10,000+ Online Courses*, n.d.)
(*Home :: NPTEL*, n.d.)

The paper on the topic 'Do online certifications improve job market outcomes? Evidence from an IT skills certification platform in India', shows that certified candidates have a 0.25 higher probability of finding employment after a computer programming exam. However, certification cannot replace education and does not predict long-term job market outcomes. The findings highlight the potential and limitations of certification in an educational market with highly variable university training.(Sengupta et al., 2023) The research paper on Impact of Online Learning Platforms on Student Engagement in India highlights increased access to education, particularly in remote areas. Students show high engagement due to platform convenience and interactive features. Challenges like the digital divide impact equitable access and engagement. Despite these challenges, online platforms have the potential to revolutionize education in India. Addressing accessibility barriers is crucial for maximizing engagement and ensuring inclusive learning.(Joshi, 2024) The research paper on A Study on the Impact of E-Education on Employment Opportunities, states that the rise of E-education, which uses electronic media like the internet and computers, has significantly impacted traditional education.

However, the success of E-education depends on factors like the quality of education, provider credibility, relevance to the job market, and learner motivation. The study concludes that E-education has the potential to bridge the gap between education and employment, especially in the digital age where technology is an integral part of the workforce.("(PDF) A Study on the Impact of E-Education on Employment Opportunities," 2024)

The news article in India Today states the impact of online courses on career change, professional upskilling. Online learning democratises quality education. It helps in upskilling, it makes quality education accessible and affordable for the youth from all backgrounds. The courses make the youth industry ready and give industry relevant outputs, which helps the youth in securing better job opportunities. (*What Is the Impact of Online Courses on Career Change, Professional Upskilling?*, 2023)

The research paper on the topic The impact of online degree programs on employment opportunities in contemporary India states that the global economy demands a skilled workforce, but there is a gap between the skills sought by employers and those possessed by the workforce. Online degree programs offer a transformative solution, providing accessible pathways for individuals to acquire the necessary skills. However, there is a research gap in understanding their effectiveness, particularly in India. This study evaluates the effectiveness of online degree programs in bridging the skills gap, preparing students for the workforce, and assessing the relevance of their curricula in meeting contemporary job market demands. The findings reveal that online degree programs play a significant role in closing the skills gap and fulfilling job market demands in India.("(PDF) The Impact of Online Degree Programs on Employment Opportunities in Contemporary India," 2024)
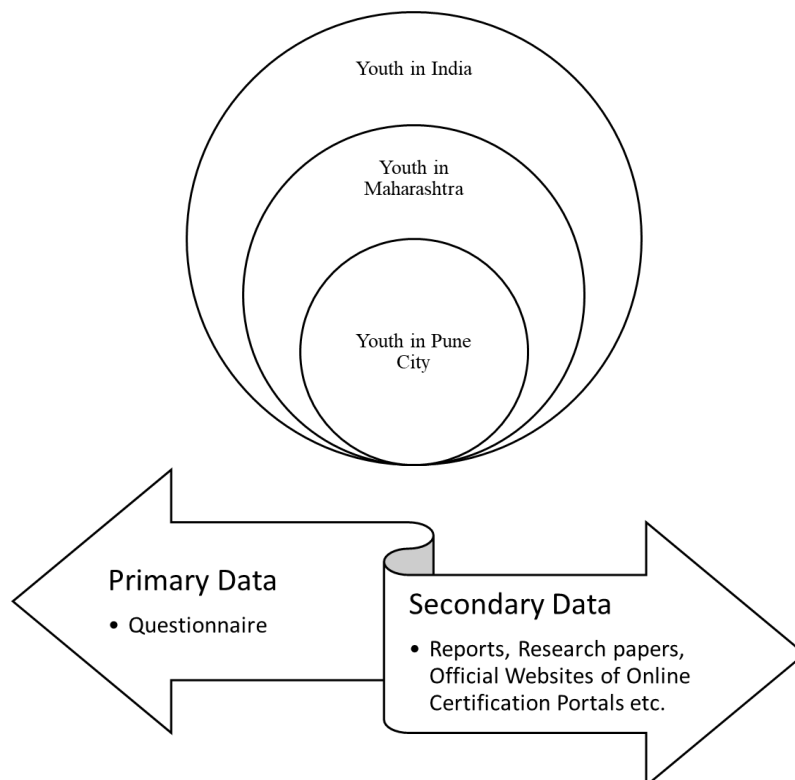
With industries increasingly prioritizing digital skills, online certifications play a key role in fostering innovation-driven, inclusive development. However, challenges such as digital divides, affordability, employer recognition, and skill relevance must be addressed to ensure that these platforms contribute meaningfully to youth employment and economic sustainability.

Objectives:
a. To Understand the Awareness of Online Certification platforms among youth.
b. To study the accessibility of Online Certification platforms to the youth.
c. To study the effectiveness of online certification platforms in securing employment.

Data & Methodology:
d. Population & Sample: Youth i.e. people falling in the age category of 15-29 years as per department of youth affairs, India. The Sampling method used is a Non Probability Quota Sampling Method. (*About Youth Department | Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports | Government of India*, n.d.)
e. Data Collection Method:Primary & Secondary Data
f. Research Design : Quantitative Research
g. Questionnaire: A questionnaire was prepared and circulated among the selected samples i.e. students of MES Garware College of Commerce, Pune through Google from and the results were analysed further.
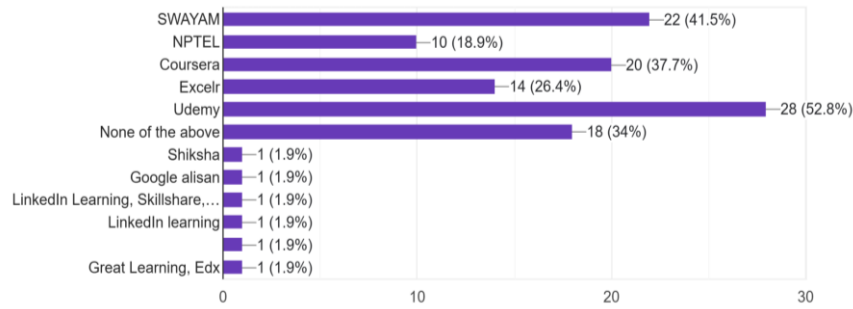

Result & Discussion:
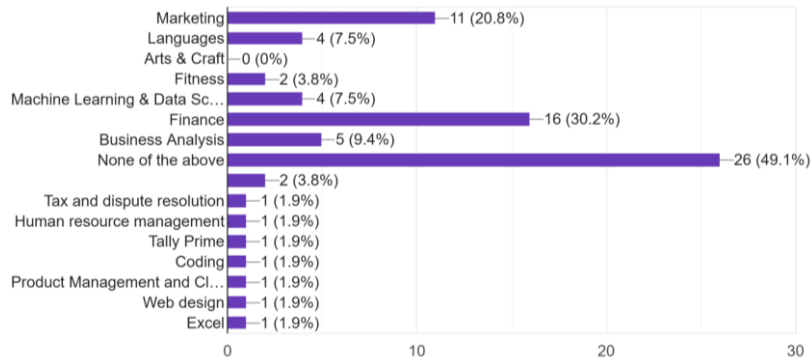The Results of the prepared questionnaire are as follows:

From given below, How many online learning platforms you have heard of?
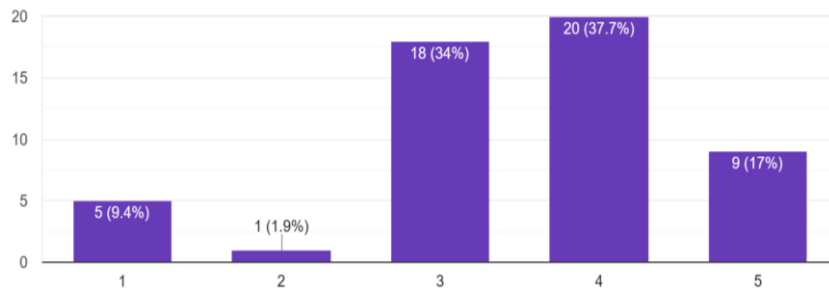53 responses

In which category you have completed any online certification courses?
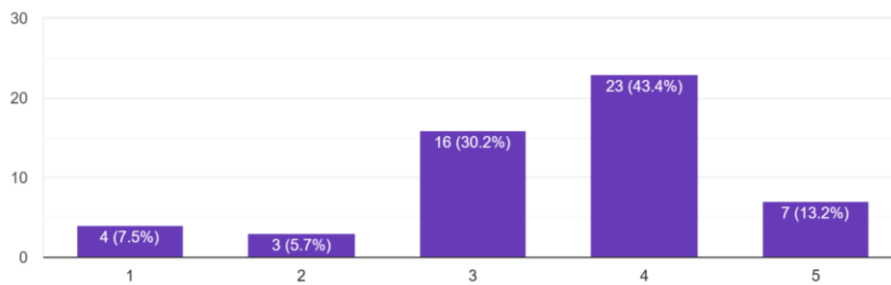53 responses

According to you, how far do you feel these online certification courses cater the needs of learners in India?
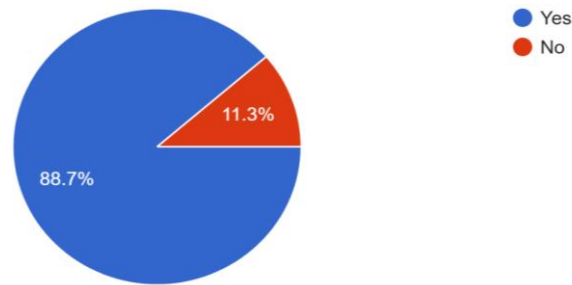53 responses

How would you rate the utility of such online certification courses platforms?
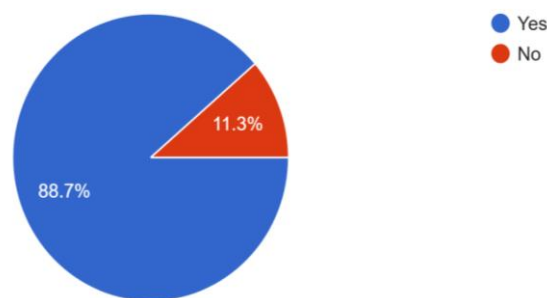53 responses

Do you feel these online certification platforms are user friendly?
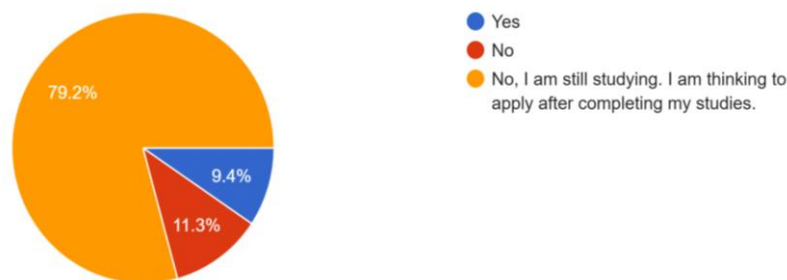53 responses

Do you feel completing such online certification will enhance your job opportunities?
53 responses

Have you secured any employment with the help of such online certification courses?
53 responses

The results obtained shows that the sample youth is well aware about various online certification platforms. On the scale of 1-5, majority of the sample youth have rated 4 to the utility and user friendliness of the online certification platforms.They do feel that these platforms are designed as per the changing needs of the learners. Also 88.7% of the sample feels that by completing such courses will enhance their job opportunities.

Conclusion:

We can see that the youth among the selected sample is well aware about various platforms like SWAYAM, NPTEL, Coursera, Excelr, Udemy, Shiksha, Google Alisan, LinkedIn Learning, Skillshare, Edx etc. Also they have completed courses in various areas like Marketing,Languages,Fitness,Machine Learning & Data Science, Finance,Business Analysis,Tax and dispute resolution,Human resource management,Tally Prime,Coding,Product Management and Cloud Computing,Web design,Excel etc. it shows that the youth is well aware about various online certification platforms and they are using the same for gaining new skills over and above their traditional education.

On the question regarding accessibility and usefulness of these courses, the majority of the sample feels that these platforms are useful in catering the needs of the youth. Also 43.4% of the youth rated 4 among 5 to the utility of these platforms to the youth. 88.7% of the youth says that these platforms are user friendly as well. From this it can be concluded that the sample feels that these platforms have accessibility.

Coming towards the effectiveness of these platforms in securing job opportunities, 88.7% of the sample feels that these courses will enhance their job opportunities.9.4% of the sample have secured employment with help of these courses but majority i.e. 79.2% of the sample is still pursuing their education and they are going to apply for the job after completing education.This indicates a proactive approach toward skill development, where students are equipping themselves with additional qualifications in anticipation of future employment opportunities. This shows that students are confident that they will secure employment with such courses. However further study can be conducted to address the existing challenges and credibility of such online certification platforms & to assess the difficulties which will be faced by the students while actually securing the jobs once they have completed their studies.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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