EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION OF MS TEAMS IN CONDUCTING WEBINAR: EVIDENCE FROM INTERNATIONAL ONLINE PROGRAM CONDUCTED IN OMAN

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ABSTRACT

The quick adoption of digital platforms in the education sector will always give credit to covid-19. The imposition of lock downs and closure of border as remedial measures forced educational institutes to shift to online platforms for their routine teaching and learning activities. The higher education institutes (HEIs) were found to be more dynamic, as they utilised their online presence in interacting with external members by way of other online activities predominantly webinars. The researchers suggest that online learning will remain to be a vital part of higher education and is going to stay along with other online activities like webinar as it is flexible, accessible, and convenient for the larger section of the students. This study examines the MS team's platform from the learner's perspective through technology acceptance model. The 320 responses were gathered from the participants of 22 countries who participated in one-week international webinar organised by two leading HEIs in Oman an online feedback form was analysed through PLS-SEM in SmartPLS 3.3.3. The study aimed to test the degree to which the participants were able to accept MS teams, a popular online learning platform in Oman, as a suitable webinar platform. The results indicate that MS teams is found to be a sufficiently good platform to conduct webinars however, it lags in terms of ease of use or user-friendliness. The study also confirms that attitude towards e-learning influences behavioural intention that subsequently influences the actual use of the platform.

Key words: Webinar, MS teams, Higher Education Institutes, PLS-SEM, Covid-19

1. INTRODUCTION

Covid 19 facilitated a quick adoption of digital platforms in the education sector. Online education is becoming more optimal form of learning as compared to traditional face to face teaching (Sharma and Gupta, 2021). Digital platform has seen even more dynamism in the higher education sector (Bhatt and Shiva, 2021). As a decent higher education system is considered as, "*one that maximises its returns (however defined) by creating knowledge and ensuring society, in its intrinsic delivery, is served by a populace with a variety of skills, educated at different yet complementary levels*" (Cremonini, *et al.*, 2014, p. 343). According to Ratten (2017), Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) play an important role in supporting economy and endorsing societal wellbeing. They are seen as a point of community building and socialising. The covid-19 led to implementation of serious restrictions, as part of preventive measures the borders were closed and lock down were imposed. The Higher Education Institutes (HEIs) were asked to have work from home policy, bringing extraordinary changes to teacher-learner relationship and behaviour (Ratten, 2020).

The pandemic came as a surprise for world including HEIs who were not prepared with strategies to handle the activities during the covid outbreak (Ratten, 2020). The Innovation that happened in the HEIs to complement the social behaviors in the online format during this period cannot be ignored. The HEIs were found to be more engaged in the community by taking advantage of of online learning that it can happen anywhere and anytime. As the universities need to keep imparting their roles to contribute and keep intact the social fabric

of community, various new terms were popularised during the pandemic. One such word is "*Webinar*" or *web-based seminar*, where HEIs in addition to their classes, were involved in utilising their online platform more efficiently by engaging the community through webinar, virtual conference, online workshop etc. HEIs are using several online platforms such as such as Hangout, skype, Zoom, Cisco Webex, Google meet, Go to webinar Et cetera for conducting webinars/ online classes or talks (Shrivastava, *et al.,* 2021; Richter, *et al.*, 2020). Microsoft's platform MS teams is gaining popularity among the HEIs in the middle east region specially, Oman. Prominent HEIs are using this platform as part of Microsoft office package that enables them to use official email, online MS office software like MS word, MS excel etc.

HEIs in Oman usually conduct such webinars as part of their knowledge sharing responsibility but the effectiveness from the learners' point of view needs to be checked as well. Ratten, (2020, p. 754) states, "*The impact of Covid-19 on the global education system has been profound and impacted all areas of teaching, research and service*." As Croxton (2014) says that one cannot ignore online learning as it is and will continue to play a crucial role in higher education. Practice of webinar and other online activities not only expected to stay but to increase as it is flexible, accessible, and convenient for the larger section of the student (Alawamleh, *et al.*, 2020; Nguyen, 2015). In context of acceptance of online education, there are limited studies from the perspective of learners (Shrivastava, *et al.*, 2021). Thus, it has been noted that from the perspective of online education, webinars didn't find much space in the body of literature, and the major studies have concentrated on the online teachings. Further, acceptance of online education has been checked majorly from the perspective of the teachers/instructors. As the acceptance of online education is crucial from the perspective of the learners as well, and a need to check the same is needed. In terms of online platforms, MS teams in the given context has not been discussed in the body of literature, as very limited studies are available on the HEIs in Oman. To fill these gaps, this study tries to deal with research questions like, what is the level of acceptance of MS teams from the learner's perspective? and, is MS teams an appropriate platform for conducting webinars?

This study intends to study and offer an analyses of MS teams from the perspective of learners, through Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), a proven model for the acceptance of technology, in conducting webinars. The following paragraphs revolves around the discussion on theoretical background and hypothesis development considering relevant literatures wherein, TAM and its constructs in the present context has been captured. The literature on MS teams in terms of effectiveness, adoption and relevance have also been discussed, where effectiveness has is discussed in terms of communication, documentation, and resources. Adoption of MS teams has been discussed in terms of Covid-19 and blended learning, whereas, its relevance is discussed as the communication tool and need for the present and future requirements, due to the adoption and digitalisation of education. After the background, methodology and research framework is presented, followed by results and findings, where the measurement model assessment and structural model assessment have been performed and presented. A discussion section discussing the conclusions; theoretical and managerial implication; limitations of the study; and direction for the future studies have been proposed by the researchers.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND AND DEVELOPMENT OF HYPOTHESIS

The world wide web brings opportunities and innovations in the academic world. The web-based technology along with artificial intelligence are changing the way the education sector used to function in the past. With new technologies evolving each day, educators too need to learn and get trained in technology to abreast themselves with online education (Berge,2007). The changing technology requires training and retraining in pace with the changing technology (Berge, 2007). The curriculum and assessment too have been integrated in the education system through the digital platforms (Beller, 2013; Siddiq F. *et al.*, 2016; Bhatt and Shiva, 2020). The changing technology has evolved as a major issue for the educational institutes (Romeo, *et al.*, 2013; Berge,2007). Embracing a new technology requires series of

considerations, and hence, the model that can be utilised to analyse the learners' behavioural intention to use digital education tools is "*Technology Acceptance Model*", abbreviated as TAM (Yaakop,2015). Further in the study of Bhatt and Shiva (2020), this model has been used to empirically examine zoom software. In line of these arguments, the present study too utilises the TAM to check MS teams on the empirical parameters.

2.1. TAM and its constructs in the present context

TAM is used to estimate the user's acceptance and understand the casual relationships between beliefs, attitudes, and intentions. Davis (1989) propounded the technology acceptance model mainly for acceptance, usage, and adoption of information technology. Davis, *et al*., (1989), suggested the use of this model in the computer-based technologies as well. Since then, it is a widely accepted model in the arena of information technology, e-business, online education, and related areas (Bhatt and Shiva,2020). According to this model, four internal variables i.e., 'Perceived usefulness/beliefs'; 'Perceived ease of use'; 'Attitudes towards the use of IT (E-learning in this case)'; and 'Behavioral intention to use (IT/online platform)', leads to the dependent variable of the model i.e., actual use of IT. The definition of these constructs is given in Table 1.

This model was also designed to help find solutions to the factors that would lead to the acceptance of computer technology (Singh, *et al.,* 2020). Over the period of time, several researchers have come up with a Technological Acceptance Model that fits best the context of the proposed study region hence seeing a lot of different models.

2.1.1. Perceived Usefulness and Perceived Ease of Use

Under TAM, Perceived usefulness (PU) is associated with the way individual feels that using technology will increase the level of productivity. For instance, if students believe that using an online learning tool would enhance their educational performance, they would most possibly want to incorporate online learning in their learning process (Farahat, 2012). Based on the researches Farooq and College, (2021); Mohammad AlHamad, (2020); Mousa, *et al*., (2021), but not limited to, they provide evidence on the significance of perceived usefulness. In addition, theoretical research that summarizes the study, have focused on specific factors of perceived usefulness and associated the determinants like image, subjective norms, job relevance, output quality and demonstrability, that explains on how significant they are relating to perceived usefulness (Henderson and Milman, 2020). Furthermore, perceived usefulness is one of the important aspects of "attitudes towards online learning" and "behavior intentions", on this premise the hypothesis is proposed as:

H_1: Attitude towards e-learning through webinar is significantly influenced by MS teams' perceived usefulness.

Perceived ease of use (PE) is defined as how effortless it is for a person to use technology. The current research shows that PE is a student's perception on how easy or hard it is to learn online (Farahat, 2012). Higher education institutions diverting their systems online require the use of technology through establishment of platforms that could be used to disseminate information and knowledge to and from the lecturers and students. These platforms designs should be easy to use to allow easy navigation of resources (Singh *et al*., 2020).

When the technology is complicated, it affects the users' intentions to adopt it. Mohammad AlHamad, (2020) has highlighted in his study on UAE university students in context of e-learning acceptance revealed that PE is affected by systems accessibility and gets influenced by the potential productivity and behavioral intention to use e-learning tools. Following hypotheses is proposed to check this relationship in context of MS teams.

H_2: MS teams' Perceived usefulness gets significantly influenced by MS teams' perceived ease of use

H_3: Attitude towards e-learning through webinar is significantly influenced by MS teams' Perceived ease of use.

2.1.3 New Technology Anxiety

Technology can be an effective instrument in business operations when used correctly. Tech savvy users would appreciate the

technological advancement as it enhances and simplifies the operational activities. But unfortunately, it would be quite overwhelming for the users who aren't tech savvy (Sarker, *et al.*,2019). Henderson and Milman, (2020) highlighted that student who are new to e-learning may face difficulties in navigating through the technological tools hence it is of utmost importance that educators should take the time to explain the benefits of asynchronous online discussion where it will reduce the technological anxiety built. In research by Bhatt and Shiva (2020), the construct "new technology anxiety", was added as external variable to TAM and was tested validated empirically. The results supported the involvement of new technology anxiety in the context of online teaching via zoom. Henderson and Milman, (2020) explained that online education relies on students engaging with the learning management system. The authors further elaborate that the computer self-efficacy has been validated with TAM as one of the items for PE. In a study by Mousa *et al.*, (2021), suggested that attitude toward using the intended technology can predict PE and PU according to the TAM.

H_4: New technology anxiety related to MS teams has a significant impact on MS teams' Perceived ease of use

H_5: New technology anxiety related to MS teams has a significant impact on MS teams' Perceived usefulness

2.1.4 Behavioral Intentions and Attitude towards E-Learning

Behavioral intention (BI) is a construct that helps to determine the expression whether a student decides on whether or not to use the online learning tools (Farahat, 2012). Technology is a major tool in the implementation of online education. However, that is not the most part of it, behavior of students is also a key aspect on successfulness of online learning. Both faculty and students are meant to utilize the learning management system but depending on how well it is designed and easy to use, the motivation of both users to use the system would rely on its effectiveness but this can be resolved through training on how to use the technology (Henderson and Milman, 2020).

Granić and Marangunić, (2019) highlighted that PE and self-efficacy were the major determinants for behavioral intention e-learning usage. However, a study by Collazo *et al.,* (2014) found that perceived usability has significant effects on perceived usability but not self-efficacy. Farooq (2021) found that PE, PU and attitude towards e-learning has significant impact on BI.

H_6: Behavioral intention for MS teams is significantly influenced by attitude towards e-learning.

H_7: Actual Use of MS teams is significantly influenced by Behavioral intention for MS teams

2.2. MS Teams and related literature in terms of effectiveness, adoption, and relevance

Due to COVID-19 majority of higher education institutions moved from a physical to an online platform using Microsoft Teams, Google meets and zoom to teach students. These tools are online communication platforms that are used to send messages, files and communicate through a video call with a large group (Bsharat and Behak, 2020). Most of the platforms are new, this includes MS Teams which was released on 19 March 2020 (Mehta, *et al.*, 2020) because of COVID-19 these platforms and online teaching was adopted at its developing stage. At the same time, the capabilities that these platforms have gave them the ability to perform as a virtual classroom. This literature review will include the effectiveness, adoption, and relevance of MS Teams.

2.2.1. Effectiveness in terms of communication, documentation, and resources

2.2.1.a. Communication

One of the challenges that education has during COVID-19 is communication. As the pandemic prevented institutions from conducting a face-to-face class. Which lead to using a platform like MS Teams for lectures and instructions.

Many students are motivated using an online platform like MS Teams as it creates an environment that enables and enhances the student understanding in the courses that they are taking. As they learn and communicate with both their classmates and lecturer in a collaborative and flexible environment (Singh,

et al., 2020). This adoption proof that MS Teams have an effective result in helping the students to understand their courses more as they will have a different perspective in perceiving and understanding information from their classmates. In addition, the lecturer will be able to express and teach the students more as they become motivated and can collaborate in one space together.

Mehta *et al.* (2020) presented another example that MS Teams are being utilized through healthcare organizations in the context of learning. This includes virtual medical lessons, multidisciplinary meetings, messaging, and live broadcasts. These examples present the positive aspects of MS Teams for healthcare organizations with this the industry can grow by having each health institute educating their staff. At the same time, experts from all around the world can meet and discuss the development of the discipline and collaborate in its growth.

2.2.1.b. Documentation

There are other aspects in education that MS Team was able to develop. This was information sharing and contributing. The traditional method of sharing and contributing was through a physical copy or email but with MS Team the method of contribution and sharing evolved as individuals became able to share a file with any format instantly and they can edit them together simultaneously (Pal and Vanijja, 2020). This will give the students access to an immense amount of information including class materials. In addition, they will be able to work together in understanding their courses materials and assignments.

In educational institutions in Bangladesh, lecturers used online platforms to share and exchange a lot of documents that includes teaching materials, pre-recorded lectures, and PowerPoints which according to a survey conducted that 45% of students agreed on its usefulness (Sarker, *et al.,*2019). These documents will provide an excellent source of studying material that will assist the students in their studies

2.2.1.c. Resources

Resources considered as an important element for the growth and the development of the organization. In the medical industries in the United Kingdom, MS Team was utilized at a fast and large scale with a minimal cost (Mehta, *et al.,* 2020). This adoption allowed the medical institutions that lack the funding and resources to communicate with other organizations and it reduced the cost of different activities like educational sessions and data collection as it become easier to get these through communication in MS Teams.

As in educational institutions in India MS Teams became a great opportunity for the institutions that lack the resources and funding. As they were able to benefit the students that were unable to attend due to their economical background and geographical location. At the same time, they increased their capacity as it wasn't possible because of the physical class limitation (Singh, *et al,* 2020). This will provide a great opportunity for these educational institutions to develop. The reason for this is that they are not bound by the limitation of their financial or resources situation.

In Bangladesh educational institutions, many students agreed that online resources have been a great support on their studies that includes pre-recorded lectures in MS Teams and class materials that are shared by lecturers (Sarker, *et al.,*2019). MS Teams and online resources that students are getting were limited before the adoption of it but now the resources and knowledge which students can obtain became limitless and they can develop on their studies.

The impact of MS Team is immense in the aspect of resources and cost but if the institute lack in providing or has the resource for experienced lecturer in online education this will result in lack of utilizing the use of the platform (Bsharat and Behak, 2020). The platform used is as much important as the individual using it. So, if the lecturer lacks the skills necessary to use MS Teams that will affect the teaching of the lesson, distribution of documents and information and communication as well which will affect the students learning and will consume time and finances from the educational institutions.

2.2.2 Adoption of MS teams in context of Covid-19 and Blended learning

2.2.2.a. Covid -19

Due to the spread of COVID-19 worldwide educational institutions were required to shift

to online sessions which became imperative to communicate through platforms like MS Teams. Which made this platform turns into a virtual classroom where the student is to learn and connect with their instructor and classmates (Pal and Vanijja, 2020) . For example, in Malaysia, during the lockdown, the instructors were able to share the document online which includes learning material and instructions by using different formats like PowerPoint, PDF and words through the tool that are connected to MS Teams which is OneDrive (Bsharat and Behak, 2020) with this the students had access to their studying material and information of the class in one place. This will provide the students with easy accessibility which will enhance their studying and learning process.

There is still a limitation in some cases regarding communication, and one of these is related to the internet connection. In Bangladesh even though there is a lot of individuals using platforms like MS Teams, but still face problems like disconnection and buffering due to poor or limited internet (Sarker, *et al.,*2019). These kinds of issues can cause a hindrance in terms of communication and learning from a lesson.

2.2.2.b. Blended learning:

Many institutions in Bangladesh are trying to adapt these platforms in their education to improve and enhance their learning system but for that to happen the educational institutions are planning to take a blended approach of learning to avoid a radical shift which might make adapting them difficult (Sarker, *et al.,*2019). To adopt a new system, the organization should take part in understanding and observe the difficulties that occur that's why taking the blended approach can assist them with overcoming these difficulties.

During the current pandemic time, a lot of institutions realized the importance of adopting blended learning and that to prevent any obstruction to the learning sessions due to emergencies and to deliver them in a creative and flexible way (Aguilera-Hermida, 2020). There is a lot of obstacles that the traditional teaching method will be able to face for example pandemics, emergencies, or natural disaster but with the blended and online method the educational institutions can overcome the barriers and the students can learn without any interruptions.

2.2.3. Relevance of MS teams

In the past, educational institutions had classes in the traditional face-to-face teaching method which required individuals to attend classes (Pal and Vanijja, 2020). At the same time, it requires both the resources and budget for the organization to facilitate the students (Pal and Vanijja, 2020). The traditional method is costly and requires effort from both the institutions and the students but at the same time it provides close interaction between the faculty and the students.

Currently, with many institutions still hesitant to take their sessions face to face they are providing online and blended classes methods. These involve using online platforms like MS Teams to teach students. The online method doesn't require the student to be physically available as the blended it requires the student to be partially available as the rest is online (Singh, *et al.,* 2020). These methods are done to avoid the spreading of COVID-19 and to take into consideration the safety and well-being of their students.

As for the future, MS Team and communication platforms have a promising future as they are still considered relatively new and developing. This is because academic learning is striving to improve. So, with COVID-19 occurring and institutions adopting these technologies they developed new abilities and skills which enhance and improved the way that lessons are being taught (Aguilera-Hermida, 2020). The future will focus on building an educational framework that is suitable for these platforms at the same time they will be able to perform at a higher standard and support traditional methods (Pal and Vanijja, 2020). This action will enhance and support the educational institutions by not only create a new method but improving the old traditional method by using these platforms.

3. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

This section intends to explain the research methods and the proposed research framework that is been utilized in the current study. The literatures reviewed as background of the study and hypotheses established, the

research framework (figure 1) is proposed that shows a structural relationship between the constructs. This model warrants to use Structural equation modelling (SEM) as it intends to check the relationship between constructs. As per Hair, *et al*. (2017), SEM analysis helps to identify the causal effect relationship among the constructs by harnessing the combination of factor analysis and multiple linear regressions.

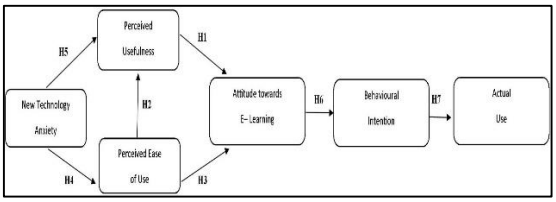

Figure 1: Proposed conceptual framework

Table 1: Construct Definition adopted for the purpose of this study

Construct	Definition	Authors
Attitude towards usage (e-learning)	"The evaluating effect of positive or negative feeling of individuals in performing a particular behaviour", i.e., usage of MS teams in the present context	Bhatt & Shiva, 2020; P.74.
Perceived usefulness	"The degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance"	Davis, 1989; P.320
Perceived ease of use	"The degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort"	Davis, 1989; P:320.
New Technology Anxiety	"an individual apprehension, or even fear, of using, or simply considering using, technology in general".	Venkatesh, 2000
Behavioural Intention to use	"A measure of the strength of one's intention to perform a specific behaviour", i.e., usage of MS teams in the present context	Davis *et al.*, 1989; p.984
Actual Use	Actual use of a technology for a person.	Scherer *et al.*, 2018

Since webinars are not restricted by the national boundaries, this research is based on the feedback from 320 respondents from 22 countries who participated in a seven-day international webinar organised by University of Buraimi and Modern College of Business and Science, Oman. The platform through which the said webinar was conducted was MS Teams. To be fair in terms privacy and research ethics of this research, the participants were informed about utilisation of their responses for research purposes, and the alternate option of sending their queries and concerns were given email ids of the researchers. The respondents included faculty/teaching staff from various higher education institutes, students, and officials working in academic institutions were distributed online feedback form that has been utilised for this study. The data gathered was analysed through reflective modelling via smartPLS 3.3.3. i.e., popular multivariate analytical tool that has wider acceptance (Hair *et al.*, 2019). For minimum sample size determination, G*Power (version 3.1.9.7) was utilised (Faul *et al.*, 2007; 2009) that suggested the sample size to be 89 (actual sample administered being 320), the same is given under figure 2.

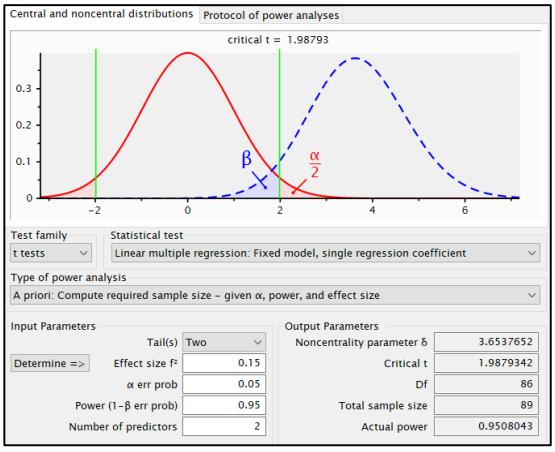

Figure 2: G* Power Analysis
Source: Authors' Calculations

The research instrument consisting of thirty items to assess six constructs as shown in the proposed model were adopted from literature with necessary modifications as given in table 2. A seven-point Likert scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree) was utilised for the measurement of each item. 62% of the respondents were faculty/staff of university or colleges whereas, 38% were students at higher education institutes, in total representation of 22 countries i.e.,

Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Canada, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iceland, Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Nepal, Nigeria, Sudan, Pakistan, Qatar, United Arab Emirates, Tunisia, United States of America, Oman, & India was captured in this study.

4. RESULTS AND FINDINGS

The PLS-SEM in SmartPLS is considered as a dynamic software that provides increased flexibility and is a widely used multivariate analytical method (Ringle *et al.*, 2015; Hair *et al.*, 2022; Hair *et al.*, 2019; Richter *et al.*,2016; Rigdon, 2016; Hair *et al.*, 2020). The model assessment is done considering the factor load, reliability, and validity of the constructs for the purpose of this study.

Cronbach's Alpha; rho A; and Composite Reliability (CR) were utilised to check reliability and convergent validity of the constructs, all the values were found to be above the threshold of 0.7 signifying that the data is reliable (Hair *et al.*, 2017; 2020). AVE (Average Variance Extracted) is used to check the convergent validity that was also found greater than 0.50 for the constructs (Hair *et al.*, 2022; Hair *et al.*, 2019). All these values are explained in detail under table 2 and qualify the required threshold.

Fornell and Larcker (1981) suggested Fornell and Larcker Criterion to check discriminant validity which under the root of AVE was diagonally higher than the inter-item

Table 2: Reflective model assessments-Quality criteria

Construct/Items	Factor Load	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Attitude towards E Learning (AT)		0.880	0.882	0.926	0.806
ATU3	0.885				
ATU4	0.902				
ATU5	0.907				
Actual Use (AU)		0.909	0.916	0.932	0.733
AU1	0.866				
AU2	0.803				
AU3	0.836				
AU4	0.896				
AU5	0.877				
Behavioural Intention (BI)		0.859	0.860	0.934	0.876
BI1	0.939				
BI3	0.934				
New Technology Anxiety (NT)		0.843	0.868	0.926	0.863
NTA3	0.914				
NTA4	0.944				
Perceived Ease of Use (PE)		0.910	0.912	0.933	0.736
PES1	0.854				
PES2	0.867				
PES3	0.881				
PES4	0.833				
PES6	0.854				
Perceived Usefulness (PU)		0.915	0.916	0.936	0.745
PUS1	0.842				
PUS2	0.879				
PUS3	0.847				
PUS4	0.878				
PUS5	0.871				

Note: NTA1; NTA2; ATU1; ATU2; TA1; BI2; BI4; and BI5 were dropped from analysis due to low factor load

Source: Authors' Calculations

4.1. Measurement Model Assessment

As part of model assessment, firstly the factor loading of each variable was checked that needs to be above .708 (Bhatt and Shiva,2020).

correlation values. The type of the model is reflective where every construct is distinct from each other and therefore the study is best

suited for conducting final analysis as explained in Table 3.

Table 3: Discriminant Validity- Fornel-Larckel Criterion

	AU	AT	BI	NT	PE	PU
AU	**0.856**					
AT	0.760	**0.898**				
BI	0.837	0.825	**0.936**			
NT	-0.221	-0.082	-0.175	**0.929**		
PE	0.768	0.698	0.708	-0.264	**0.858**	
PU	0.722	0.692	0.686	-0.198	0.852	**0.863**

Note: NT: New technology anxiety; AU: Actual Use; PU: Perceived usefulness; PE: Perceived ease of use; AT: Attitude towards E-Learning; BI: Behavioural Intention.
Source: Authors' Calculations

Another tool to check discriminant validity is HTMT method (Henseler *et al*.,2015), was used to further validate the constructs. The HTMT was found to be less than 1 for all the constructs that is acceptable subject to further analysis. The more conservative criterion being 0.85 (Henseler *et al*.,2015; Voorhees et al.,2016) and on a liberal note it can be upto 0.90 (Gold et al, 2001) the same can be seen in Table 4. Since the HTMT values were more than 0.90 for BI and AU (0.939); BI and AT (0.947); and PU and PE (0.928), $HTMT_{inference}$ was checked through the complete bootstrapping of the model at 5000 subsamples (Hair *et al.,* 2020) that is required to be less than 1.0 at confidence interval (CI) at 2.5% and 97.5%. The values gathered were 0.884 (at 2.5%) and 0.981 (at 97.5%) for BI and AU; 0.904(at 2.5%) and 0.985(at 97.5%) for BI and AT; and 0.872(at 2.5%) and 0.965 (at 97.5%) for PU and PE, respectively conforming the unique quality of every construct on the liberal side i.e., less than 1 (Henseler *et al*.,2015).

Table 4: Discriminant Validity- HTMT ratio

	AU	AT	BI	NT	PE
AU					
AT	0.839				
BI	**0.939**	**0.947**			
NT	0.255	0.093	0.211		
PE	0.839	0.773	0.799	0.299	
PU	0.780	0.765	0.771	0.221	**0.928**

Note: NT: New technology anxiety; AU: Actual Use; PU: Perceived usefulness; PE: Perceived ease of use; AT: Attitude towards E-Learning; BI: Behavioural Intention;
Source: Authors' Calculations

4.2. Structural Model Assessment

The predictive relevance and relationship between constructs can be assessed through structural model assessment (Hair *et al*., 2017). Once the reliability and the validity are established, it becomes essential to check the multi-collinearity issues, for this VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) is utilised that should be less than 3.33 on a conservative side (Diamantopoulous *et al*. 2008), however, VIF value less than 5 conforms that there is no collinearity issue among predictor variables (Kock and Lynn, 2012). All outer VIF values for the present model was found to be less than 3.33, that meets with the conservative criteria as per Diamantopoulous *et al.* (2008). Once the collinearity issue is addressed the significance and relevance of the path coefficient is checked (Shiva *et al.,* 2020). The regression coefficient for the tested model is given in Figure 3.

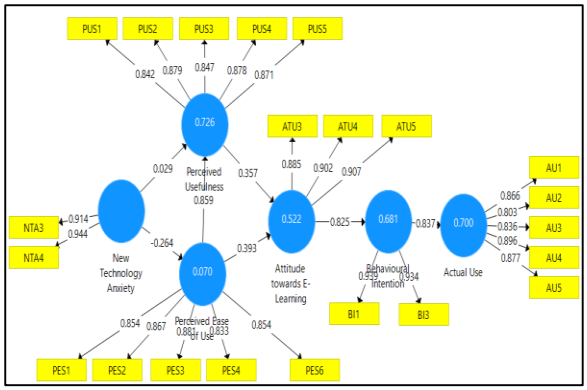

Figure 3: Structural Equation Model

The coefficient of determination is reported through R^2. It basically measures the variance in each of the endogenous construct and represents the model's explanatory power (Hair *et al.*,2017), higher the R^2 signifies higher explanatory power of a construct. According to Rasoolimanesh *et al.* (2017), R^2 equal to or greater than 0.20 is high in social or behavioural sciences-based research. The acceptable value of R^2 may vary depending on the context and sometimes the lower values can also be considered as acceptable (Bhatt and Shiva,2020), the R^2 for the present study ranged between 52.2% to 72.6% for all the endogenous constructs except perceived ease of use at 7%., Table 6, gives the snapshot for the R^2 and adjusted R^2 for the constructs in the model. To test the hypotheses and check the predictive power of the model, bootstrapping and blindfolding tools in smartPLS were used. The bootstrapping was done with subsamples as 5000 as per the recommendation of (Hair *et al.*, 2020).

Table 5 discusses that SEM analysis and hypotheses, that suggests that behavioural intention (β=0.837, p<0.000) has a significant influence on actual use, this also supports the hypothesis H7. The attitude towards e-learning (β=0.825, p<0.001) has a significant impact on Behavioural intention (H6). Similarly, the hypothesis H1, H2, H3 and H4 are also supported in the empirical assessment. The New Technology Anxiety (β=0.029) was not found to have a significant impact on perceived usefulness.

Table 5: Hypotheses Testing using PLS structural model for the proposed model

Hypothesis	Beta (β)	Mean	T Statistics	CI (2.5%)	CI (97.5%)	Decision
H_1: PU -> AT	0.357	0.358	4.017***	0.192	0.537	Supported
H_2: PE -> PU	0.859	0.860	33.449***	0.805	0.906	Supported
H_3: PE -> AT	0.393	0.392	4.184***	0.201	0.565	Supported
H_4: NT -> PE	-0.264	-0.266	6.163***	-0.349	-0.175	Supported
H_5: NT -> PU	0.029	0.025	1.132	-0.201	0.565	Not Supported
H_6: AT -> BI	0.825	0.826	37.989***	0.778	0.865	Supported
H_7: BI -> AU	0.837	0.837	31.645***	0.783	0.884	Supported

Note: ***significant at 0.000

Note: CI: Confidence Intervals; NT: New technology anxiety; AU: Actual Use; PU: Perceived usefulness; PE: Perceived ease of use; AT: Attitude towards E-Learning; BI: Behavioural Intention;
Source: Authors' Calculations

Table 6: Predictive Power of the Model

	R Square	R Square Adjusted	Q Square
AU	0.700	0.699	0.593
AT	0.522	0.519	0.576
BI	0.681	0.680	0.521
NT	-	-	0.493
PE	0.070	0.067	0.594
PU	0.726	0.724	0.611

Note: AU: Actual Use; AT: Attitude towards E-Learning; BI: Behavioural Intention; NT: New technology anxiety; PE: Perceived ease of use; PU: Perceived usefulness
Source: Authors' Calculations

The predictive power of the model is assessed by processing the Stone-Geisser's Q^2 cross-validated redundancy. For obtaining the Q^2, blindfolding was performed with omission distance of 7 as prescribed by Chin (2010) & Hair *et al*., (2016). The predictive relevance of the model as measured through Q^2 is presented in table 6, that shows that the model has a strong predictive power, in other words, the model has a higher generalizability.

5. DISCUSSION

In terms of acceptance of technology, it should be understood at the first place, that the HEIs were not prepared to shift to online teaching, it was because of the covid-19, that higher education institutes were forced to shift online, so was the case with the learners or students as well. Croxton (2014) predicted that online learning will remain as a vital element of higher education and is going to stay along with other online activities, the same becomes the premise for the present study as well i.e., in context of webinar. It is evident from multiple studies that online teaching and learning is going to continue even after the Covid-19 period, for some HEIs it will be in the form of blended learning whereas for others it will be purely online learning. In the same premise, the way world has embraced the concept of webinars, online conference, virtual meets etc, is also expected to continue for the variety of benefits it offers. Webinars have emerged as a cost-effective solution to the traditional seminars as there is virtually no cost involved in terms of facilities, transportation and to an extend associated staff cost (Cavanaugh, 2009). From the learners' point of view, webinars offer versatility in participation, accessibility and convenience and attracts larger section of learners (Alawamleh, *et al*., 2020; Nguyen, 2015).

Through the empirical analysis of the proposed model, it can be said that perceived usefulness and behavioural intentions are the two main constructs of the TAM model in context of conducting webinars via MS teams. The new technology anxiety was found to have a negative impact on the perceived ease of use and an insignificant impact on perceived usefulness. This can be translated as, that the learners feel that the platform MS teams is useful platform, however, it lags in terms of ease of use or user-friendliness. However, hypothesis testing for H_2 suggests that perceived ease of use (PE) has a significant impact on Perceived usefulness. This indicates that MS teams needs to work towards making the platform more user-friendly and easier to use. The findings also confirms that attitude towards e-learning influences behavioural intention that subsequently influences the actual use of the platform. The results of the study support usage of TAM model in the arena of online teaching-learning platform as proposed by Bhatt and Shiva (2020).

This study attempts to check MS teams in context of conducting webinars. The results can also be applied on the online teaching and other activities conducted through MS teams. The HEIs who use Microsoft products in their education system, usually buy it as a package that offers them access to all the Microsoft products including MS teams, thus, MS teams as a platform comes as part of the package, thus, it often becomes cost effective for the HEIs as they don't need to buy a separate platform for conducting online meetings or classes. As a software, MS teams offers more dynamism in terms of sharing of resources, discussion session/forums beyond synchronous sessions etc, that sufficiently makes sense for regular online teaching where the instructor and the students need to interact with each other for a semester or relatively for a longer duration, whereas, when organising webinars, the learners are available with the HEIs for a short course or session, that if doesn't have a requirement for assignments or assessments, there are less chances that the other features of MS teams could get utilised. On the other hand, Zoom, has emerged as a popular online platform for conducting webinars in addition to Cisco WebEx, Google meet, Go to webinar Etc (Richter et al., 2020). Based on these results, MS teams is found to be a sufficiently good platform to conduct webinars considering the other features it has, however, if Microsoft can improve its user friendliness, the platform would become better. The HEIs thus, can continue using MS teams for conducting online sessions like webinars, virtual conferences, talks etc.

Limitations of the Study

This study was based on the feedback from the participants of international summer research capacity development program that

as a nature of program had participation from different countries and of different profile of people including educators and students. Most of the participants were educators (faculty and staff) who might have received training for using such platforms (Ratten,2020). Feedback of the students seems to be not represented well. If a study is conducted only on students who are attending such programs, the results might get changed. Further, the researchers had no control on the geographic representation of the responses as the participants from 22 countries were also not equally represented in the overall responses gathered. This study is focused on Higher Education sector; thus, the results may not be generalised to primary or higher secondary education sector.

Direction for Future Researches

It is expected that the pace at which new features are added to the existing technologies, and the way newer IT solutions evolving, TAM will continue to be a guiding model for the new developments. Thus, the future studies can continue to adopt and test TAM in the arena of online education and activities. However, the future studies can adopt "Modified TAM" or "Unified Theory of Acceptance and use of Technology" i.e., UTAUT (Venkatesh, *et al.,* 2003; Venkatesh and Davis, 2000). A focused study on the demographic variable like region, profession, and educational qualification would be also suggested, to bring about better recommendations from the policy and governance point of view.

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Annexure 1: Questionnaire

Variable Code	Statement	Likert Scale of 7	Citation
A. Perceived usefulness			Davis, 1989; Davis et al., 1989
PUS1	Using the MS teams for this online program improved my understanding of the program conducted	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
PUS2	The MS teams is useful in interacting with the resource persons in a better way	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
PUS3	It is useful for the organisers to manage large audience with less efforts	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
PUS4	It was useful in term of viewing and accessing the content of the program	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
PUS5	The platform is useful in serving the purpose of a webinar & online programs involving large audience	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
B. Perceived Ease of use			Davis, 1989; Davis et al., 1989
PES1	I feel it's easy to get equipped with MS teams in less time	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
PES2	The software is easy to install and get started	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
PES3	The MS teams platform is user-friendly	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
PES4	It is easy to manage larger audience with MS teams	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
PES5	I found it easy to adopt and use for myself	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
PES6	It is easy to log in, join a session or connect	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
C. New Technology Anxiety			Venkatesh, 2000
NTA1	I was worried as MS teams was a new platform for me	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
NTA2	I had concerns whether I will be able to use this platform or not	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
NTA3	I feel, other platform like zoom would have been better for such program	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
NTA4	I wonder would propose to the organisers not to use this platform for future programs	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
D. Attitude towards use			Bhatt & Shiva, 2020; Ajzen&Fishbein, 2000; Davis et al., 1989
ATU1	I feel MS teams is a very good platform to conduct such programs	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
ATU2	Using this platform has changed my perception about this platform	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
ATU3	I feel it adds value to webinar and online programs	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
ATU4	I feel, I have developed an orientation to use this platform for my use as well	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
ATU5	It has a positive influence on me on using the Microsoft product	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
E. Behavioural intention			Davis et al., 1989; Bhatt & Shiva, 2020
BI1	I will prefer to attend programs/Webinars conducted via MS teams	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
BI2	I would recommend to conduct online programs/Webinars through MS teams to	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	

	others		
BI3	I would prefer MS teams, if I have to present something as a resource person or presenter.	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
BI4	I feel there are many additional features of MS teams that needs to be explored	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
BI5	I will attend the programs organised through MS teams	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
F. Actual Use			Scherer R., Siddiq F. &Tondeur J., 2018; Bhatt & Shiva, 2020
AU1	The present version of Ms teams is user-friendly	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
AU2	I faced no problem in joining the session	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
AU3	I faced no problem in attending session via MS teams	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
AU4	I found MS teams a very dynamic platform for Webinars	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	
AU5	I liked the appearance of the platform	Strongly Agree- 7 Strongly Disagree- 1	

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