

Research Article

The Effects of Online Learning Transition During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Pakistan

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1. ABSTRACT

Amidst the global pandemic of Covid-19, online learning has been widely used around the country. Teachers' and student's experiences related to online learning has been explored in this study through online survey method. This was a novel experience for teachers and students as both the parties were not familiar with this mode of education. Hence, it was imperative to explore their experiences with online learning amidst a pandemic. The data for this study was collected from public and private universities of Faisalabad and Lahore. A total of 430 participants (N=100 teachers & N= 330 students) from Faisalabad and Lahore's colleges and universities were included in the study. The data was gathered using an online survey. The following areas were found to be crucial to the satisfaction of both teachers and students in online classes. Student-faculty contact, technical assistance, organized online classes and adaptations to enable practical classes were all incorporated in these areas. Since then, this research has focused on a dynamic phenomenon that includes several facets of online learning.

Keywords: Online learning, COVID-19, Teachers, Students, Learning Transition

1. INTRODUCTION

There has been an increase in the use of online learning and classes in several countries throughout the world. Education has become more accessible to everyone because to the internet. Pakistan's education industry has grown steadily throughout the years. Only recently has Pakistan's universities and colleges contemplated the introduction of online classes as an alternative to face-to-face classroom instruction, even though online and distant courses have been around for a long time. The Pakistani educational system has always relied heavily on the face-to-face classroom style. The acceptance of digital platforms of education has been hindered by the familiarity and simplicity of offline techniques and the lack of a need for online channels of learning. College and university students are now required to take online lectures in the aftermath of the current COVID-19 pandemic issue. Covid-19 has had a profound impact on education across the world, not only in Pakistan. Virtual classrooms have replaced traditional classrooms at universities in

Pakistan and around the world. Online learning in Pakistan is still in its infancy. Government colleges and universities in Pakistan are still adapting to this transition despite it being a mixed bag for private universities. In Pakistan, where so many students have difficulties in accessing the internet, technology can be both empowering and constraining. This, in turn, causes problems with online session attendance and engagement, which makes adapting online education channels a task. Face-to-face classes, on the other hand, allow faculty and students to get quick feedback on the quality of the lesson and the overall learning experience.

With the use of students' nonverbal cues, the instructor may alter their teaching strategy quickly in order to better meet each student's individual learning style. When opposed to internet channels, classroom environments offer a significant benefit in terms of gaining a better understanding of a student's understanding of the subjects being taught. In an online class, what would be taken for granted in person takes a bit more investigation and attention than it would in a traditional setting.

An important aspect of developing online teaching methods and learning is doing research on how to best design and organize online classrooms from both a student and instructor standpoint. As a result of previous studies, researchers understand that students are more satisfied with face-to-face learning than with online learning.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In a research by Fortune, Spielman, & Pangelinan, 156 students were surveyed in (2011). Students at a university in Northern California registered in either a face-to-face or online learning setting for a Tourism course. Both online and face-to-face classes had no statistically significant differences in learning preferences. Another study by Tratnik (2017) found a significant difference in student satisfaction when comparing face-to-face and online English language programs. Students who took a face-to-face course were more satisfied than those who took an online one.

Online classes are a relatively new addition to the education system in Pakistan, having not previously been a part of the standard curriculum. Finding out how students and faculty members at Pakistan's various institutions of higher education are reacting to online classes can aid educational professionals in determining how best to accommodate both professors and students. Because of this, educational organizations and management that are interested in offering online classes in the future need to learn more about how students and professors interact with online classes before they can put their newfound knowledge to good use.

One of the most noteworthy findings from the assessment of past studies (Young & Norgard, 2006; Bakia et.al, 2012; Prior et.al, 2016) was that while assessing online education, the student's viewpoint has taken precedence over the teacher's perspective. As a teacher, you have a critical role to play in determining whether or not online education is a good fit for you and your students. Teachers are also having a difficult time adapting to this new technique of teaching that has been introduced with the introduction of online programs. As a result, this study examines how students and teachers perceive online classes in comparison with traditional classrooms. Faisalabad and Lahore teachers and students

were the focus of the survey. Having Lahore as a technological hub might provide insight on how people see online education.

There are a number of ways that online teaching may be improved, and these findings are summarized here in order to assist teachers and students alike realize how well this new approach is being taken by both parties so that educational facilitators and college/university administrators may better understand what adjustments are needed for online teaching in the future so that it can be combined with traditional classroom teaching methods. The results of this survey will assist in improving or strengthen online programs so that students and teachers alike have a better learning and teaching experience.

Although online programs are widely utilized, there have been relatively few studies to determine if they are effective for students and teachers alike. Thus, this study proposes to conduct an online survey for students and teachers from Faisalabad and Lahore Punjab, Pakistan, to analyze this phenomenon.

3. METHODOLOGY

Experimental research design was used to conduct the study. The sample was comprised of 100 college and university teachers as well as 330 students from public and private universities and colleges of Faisalabad and Lahore.

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

The author devised two brief surveys: one for teachers and one for students, for the purpose of this study. Students and professors were asked a series of questions concerning their perceptions and experiences with online education. Teacher perceptions of attending online classes were explored in a cross-section of four demographic questions and twenty-five items in the teacher survey. Online teaching has both advantages and disadvantages, and the teachers were asked to weigh in on both in two open-ended questions. There were four demographic questions and 22 questions concerning students' views on online education in the student survey. Two open-ended questions addressing the positives and negatives of online classes were retained. There were just two possible responses: agree or disagree.

PROCEDURE

In order to avoid collecting psychometric data, the survey did not employ any of the verified psychometric instruments available. The survey was performed online using Google forms because of the present COVID-19 scenario. The form was accessible online for two weeks beginning on August 2, 2020. It was decided to conduct the survey among those who were taking online programs at Faisalabad and Lahore universities, respectively. The survey was completed by 100 teachers and 330 students. It was found that only 23.2 percent (100 teachers) of the whole sample (330 students) completed the entire survey, whereas 76.8 percent (330 students) finished the survey. In order to participate in the survey, there were no monetary incentives. Respondents were informed of the survey's details. In order to participate, participants were required to fill out the survey. There was a response rate of 90%.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of Teachers (N=100)

Characteristics	f (%)	M(SD)
Age		30.88(6.96)
Gender		
Male	38 (38)	
Female	62 (62)	
Institute Type		
Public	44 (44)	
Private	56 (56)	
Area of Residence		
Rural	15 (15)	
Urban	85(85)	

Note. For gender: 1= Male, 2= Female; For Institute Type: 1= Public, 2= Private; For Area of Residence 1= Rural, 2= Urban.

Table 2 Demographic Characteristics of Students (N=330)

Characteristics	f (%)	M(SD)
Age		21.69 (1.70)
Gender		
Male	15 (4.2%)	
Female	316 (95.8%)	
Institute Type		
Public	312 (94.8)	
Private	18 (5.2)	
Area of Residence		
Rural	133 (40)	
Urban	197 (60)	

Note. For gender: 1= Male, 2= Female; For Institute Type: 1= Public, 2= Private; For Area of Residence 1= Rural, 2= Urban.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

One of the primary goals of the study was to acquire evaluative input from university students and faculty members regarding their experiences using online modes of education. The participant's data was analyzed using SPSS-21 software, and the results were presented in accordance with the American Psychological Association (APA) guidelines. Data was analyzed using a descriptive technique. Transcribed and coded answers to open-ended questions were analyzed to identify common responses. Responses were found to have a lot of the same content. This was followed by the conversion of frequency counts of often occurring replies into percentages. The precise findings of the survey are described in further depth in the section below.

5. RESULTS

In order to learn more about how teachers and students feel about the new online teaching model, we conducted a survey. The results of the survey were broken down into two categories: teacher and student perspectives on online education. For each, the

findings are presented in their own way. Online vs classroom format, individual characteristics, and students' factors were all assessed via the teacher's survey.

Table 3: Survey Items on Teacher's Perceptions of online Classes

Sr	Items	Responses	f (%)
1	Online classes are more effective than classroom mode	Agree Disagree	19 (19) 81 (81)
2	Online classes are more convenient than classroom method	Agree Disagree	32 (32) 68 (68)
3	There is lack of teacher student interaction in online classes	Agree Disagree	76 (76) 24 (24)
4	It is difficult to engage students in online classes.	Agree Disagree	77 (77) 23 (23)
5	Online classes are fun and interactive than classroom method	Agree Disagree	31 (31) 69 (69)
6	Teacher- students disconnect is felt low in online classes compared to classroom method	Agree Disagree	62 (62) 38 (38)
7	Online classes are not safe and secure method	Agree Disagree	58 (58) 42 (42)
8	Difficult to keep classes for longer duration during online classes	Agree Disagree	77 (77) 23 (23)
9	It is difficult to control group interaction during online classes	Agree Disagree	73 (73) 27 (27)
10	Online classes help me to use innovative teaching methods	Agree Disagree	67 (67) 33 (33)
11	Technical issues effect the flow and pace of online classes	Agree Disagree	83 (83) 17 (17)
12	Lack of computer skills makes it difficult for me to use the online teaching method effectively	Agree Disagree	51 (51) 49 (49)
13	There is lack of work satisfaction while taking online classes	Agree Disagree	60 (60) 40 (40)
14	Online classes make me conscious about my teaching skills	Agree Disagree	67 (67) 33 (33)
15	I feel lack of motivation to take online classes	Agree Disagree	49 (49) 51 (51)
16	I get easily distracted during online classes	Agree Disagree	53 (53) 47 (47)
17	Online classes trigger anxiety in me	Agree Disagree	52 (52) 48 (48)
18	I feel my skills as a teacher has improved through online teaching method	Agree Disagree	56 (56) 44 (44)
19	I am finding it difficult to adapt to the online teaching mode	Agree Disagree	70 (70) 30 (30)
20	Online teaching has boosted my confidence as a teacher	Agree Disagree	47 (47) 53 (53)
21	Students do not take online classes seriously	Agree Disagree	69 (69) 31 (31)

Sr	Items	Responses	f (%)
22	Students make lot more excuse for not attending online classes and the reliability of it cannot be assessed	Agree Disagree	80 (80) 20 (20)
23	Students show lack of interest and involvement during online classes	Agree Disagree	74 (74) 26 (26)

Note. 1= Agree, 2= Disagree.

Despite the fact that online classes were convenient since they could be attended from the comfort of their own homes, saving teachers time spent travelling, they were not considered successful by teachers. Teachers and students were reported to be disconnected, and there was a lack of connection, as well as a lack of capacity to connect the group due to technological difficulties. 58% of those surveyed thought that the medium of online education was not very secure. Teachers, on the other hand, agreed that this new option to provide courses via online channel has boosted their confidence and enabled them to experiment and apply novel teaching approaches. There was also a lack of contentment with one's job as a result of attending classes online. Others were concerned that they couldn't fully utilize the online platform due to their lack of computer proficiency. Teachers observed a lack of student enthusiasm and participation. When it comes to online classes, the primary problem they encountered was that students gave several excuses as to why they couldn't attend because of a variety of factors, such as a lack of connectivity, bad video and audio clarity, and so on. During the COVID-19 epidemic, educational technology apps are becoming increasingly popular. Teachers' favorite online platforms for online classes and homework assignments were also examined as part of the survey.

Technical concerns including bad connectivity, power outages, internet troubles, and poor video and audio quality were cited by a majority of respondents when inquired about the most common challenges they encountered when attending online classes. Teacher participation and engagement were cited as a major issue by the majority of teachers. Online students were noted to be making excuses and not taking their assignments seriously. Teachers, on the other hand, may get demotivated as a result of this. They also noted that attendance was low owing to causes such as students returning to their hometowns where connectivity challenges are prevalent, as well as a lack of enthusiasm from students to attend courses. In addition to the time and effort necessary to prepare presentations and other resources for online sessions, several professors felt that online teaching appeared too professional and lacked a personal touch and lacked spontaneity. As a result, it was difficult to determine whether or not pupils understood what they were being taught. There was also a problem with the capacity to monitor and supervise students' conduct, lack of job contentment, background diversions, time limitations in utilizing online apps, and a delay in initiating the session since students took a long time to join. Students also complained about the difficulty of taking practical classes online.

Theoretical subjects were simpler for them to grasp, but when it came to practical courses like design, accounting, and arithmetic, they suffered. As part of their survey, instructors were also asked to describe the advantages of online teaching. The vast majority of students found online programs to be flexible, accessible, approachable, and able to be planned to fit their schedules. Some 47% said that they have been better in their job as a

teacher because of online teaching; they've become better with technology; they've learned new teaching approaches; and they've gained more confidence. It was also found to be more organized and less disruptive than face-to-face classes. Innovative tools such as screen share can be used, which encourage the use of graphs and videos in teaching. The content of the classes can be preserved for future reference and use, instead of attending the course again for students who managed to miss the class.

Students were asked to complete a survey that included questions on online vs. classroom learning and about their own experiences while taking classes online. According to the study results, 84.5percent of students said they preferred classroom coaching over online classes. 15.5 percent of students said they favored online classes.

Table 4: Survey Items on Student's Perceptions of online Classes (N=330)

Sr	Items	Responses	f (%)
1	Online classes are more effective than classroom mode	Agree Disagree	51 (15.5) 279 (84.5)
2	Online classes are more convenient than classroom method	Agree Disagree	271 (82.1) 59 (17.9)
3	There is lack of teacher student interaction in online classes	Agree Disagree	69 (20.9) 261 (79.1)
4	Quality of discussion is low in online classes	Agree Disagree	260 (78.8) 70 (21.2)
5	Learning and knowledge transfer happens more in online classes	Agree Disagree	64 (19.1) 266 (80.6)
6	Teacher- students disconnect is felt low in online classes compared to classroom method	Agree Disagree	247(74.8) 83 (25.2)
7	Online classes are less structured than classroom mode	Agree Disagree	137 (41.5) 193 (58.5)
8	Online classes save time	Agree Disagree	316 (95.8) 14 (3.9)
9	Technical issues disrupt the flow and pace of online classes	Agree Disagree	269 (81.5) 61 (18.5)
10	It is difficult to clarify doubts in online classes compared to classroom mode	Agree Disagree	214 (64.8) 116 (35.2)
11	Lack of computer skills makes me uncomfortable during online classes	Agree Disagree	98 (29.7) 232 (70.3)
12	I feel more comfortable to participate in online class discussions compared to classroom	Agree Disagree	243 (73.6) 87 (26.4)
13	I find it difficult to understand and follow online classes	Agree Disagree	142 (43.0) 188 (57.0)
14	I feel less anxious in online classes	Agree Disagree	276 (83.9) 54 (16.1)
15	I get easily distracted and have difficulty concentrating during online classes	Agree Disagree	270 (81.8) 60 (18.2)

Sr	Items	Responses	f (%)
16	I feel lazy and disinterested during online classes	Agree Disagree	246 (74.5) 84 (25.5)
17	Online classes trigger anxiety in me	Agree Disagree	96 (29.1) 234 (70.9)
18	I do not feel motivated to participate in online class discussions	Agree Disagree	231(70) 99 (30)
19	I am finding it difficult to adapt to the online class mode	Agree Disagree	259 (79.5) 71 (20.5)
20	Online classes are far better than class method.	Agree Disagree	52 (16) 278 (84)

Note. 1= Agree, 2= Disagree

Table 4 shows that students think online classes are of lower quality, as can be demonstrated by examining the data. Ineffectiveness of online classrooms has been blamed on several things, including: technological difficulties, a dearth of organization, disruptions to class flow, difficulties in clearing up questions, and students' lack of desire and enthusiasm. This generation is well-versed in technology, however a majority of those surveyed said that they were uneasy about using internet channels due to a lack of computer abilities. In addition, students were asked two open-ended questions regarding the advantages and disadvantages of taking classes online. Majority (81.5 percent of the sample) mentioned technical issues such as poor network access; power failures; broadband challenges; poor video and audio quality; app difficulties; having got disconnected between those classes; and difficulty logging back in again as the most common problems they encountered in online classes. Eighty-eight percent of students found it hard to focus in online classes because of distractions at home and the lack of a structured learning environment. Because they can't do both housework and college work at the same time, many say that living at home makes online classes more difficult. Online education might be difficult for some students because they don't have a supportive home environment or because they are dealing with family concerns. When it came to practical subjects and concepts, 70% said that online classes were hard to understand and follow since there was no fixed framework or time plan to follow. According to them, there are too many classes planned on the same day that made it hard for them all to stay attentive and active. They are exhausted and overwhelmed by the amount of information they have to process. Online classrooms are less interactive, students and professors don't communicate, and participation is difficult, according to most students.

As a result, they found the online classes to be less dynamic, lacking in social interaction, and lacking in a friendly environment. 74.5% of those surveyed said they had no desire or drive to attend online programs. There is a perception among students that online classes render them less committed to their studies and that they simply show up for the sake of being there. Other problems mentioned were a lack of resources. For students who hail from less financially secure families, the online programs raised their costs by regularly recharging their data, which made them feel pressured. The next issue was that students from economically challenged backgrounds were not able to access online resources and tools, which again adds to the price burden of purchasing a smartphone.

In online classes, students complain that teachers do not present well, they go over the curriculum, and they feel overwhelmed by the amount of material they get. There were also complaints of security issues when utilizing internet apps. Lastly, students complained of several health ailments as a result of taking online classes. Mobile phone use and earbuds have been linked to eye strain, ear discomfort, back aches and headache, according to them. They were physically and psychologically exhausted. Students reported feeling a lot of stress as a result of the continual pressure to complete schoolwork. Their perception was that they weren't learning anything. According to most people, the time-saving benefits of online classes outweighed any negatives, since they could be completed from the comfort of their own homes, allowing them to avoid the hassle of travelling. Faster syllabus completion and recording of class sessions were also cited as favorable aspects. You might watch these recorded classes as many times as necessary to understand the material. Classes may be taken from any location, at any time, allowing for more convenience. Among the other factors, there was less noise from classmates and less nervousness in asking questions and doubts.

6. DISCUSSION

In terms of social presence, engagement, satisfaction, and overall quality, face-to-face learning was shown to be superior to online learning. Online classes, although being claimed to save time, were viewed as less successful by teachers and students than classroom learning. It was determined that technical support was vital to student satisfaction with online programs. Yang and Cornelius (2004) found comparable results in their investigation. When teachers were unavailable to assist students with technological issues, students expressed dissatisfaction with their courses. Technically challenged students also complained about the lack of support they received (Zeng & Perris, 2004). When it comes to student satisfaction with online classes, technological challenges were determined to be the most important factor. This is consistent with findings from earlier research. College administrators may use the findings here to determine how to expand and extend technical support to all students and professors, thereby enhancing their experiences and improving the effectiveness of the programs.

Also similar with prior study (O'Malley & McGraw, 1999), the current survey revealed that students who enroll for online classes initially believe that online courses do not provide as much learning opportunity as face-to-face courses. As a result, the learning process suffers. There was also a comparable study done by Zeng and Perris (2004). Because of this, educational institutions must offer students the chance to practice using the medium before enrolling them in online programs. According to the findings of this study, educational institutions that want to use online teaching in the future should consider the opinions of students and teachers. There are certain drawbacks to this study, though. Many students and professors attending online programs may be underrepresented in the limited sample size. Some of the individuals may have taken the exam in an effort to appear more desirable in the eyes of their peers, which may have affected their behavior.

7. CONCLUSION

Pakistan's higher education is now constrained by a lack of clarity about the regulation of online educational outlets. A teacher or student's level of comfort with an online class's design, organization, level of student-teacher contact, quality and quantity of class content, and technological assistance all play a factor in deciding the success as well as failure of an online education program. For this reason, teachers and students alike need to be made more aware of the ease and accessibility of accessing internet resources. Students' poor performance in school can be attributed to their dissatisfaction with the way classes are organized and conducted. Improving online class quality with various service providers and assistance from different schools and institutions will help make online education more successful and widely accepted throughout Pakistan. Teachers and students alike have voiced their worries about the current state of online education and have proposed that additional research and study be performed to give more precise information to facilitate improvements in course design and approach. University and college administrators should focus on creating an organized and user-friendly atmosphere for online learning, one that is available to everyone without imposing a financial strain on students and professors. In addition, it has been determined that proper technological training for teachers on how to conduct online classes is a prerequisite for effective adoption of online classrooms.

However, even if the sample size is small, the results might shed light on the common challenges that professors and students experience in online classrooms. Understanding how students and teachers perceive the online style of higher education in Pakistan would aid in developing efficient ways for taking online classes. There was a lot of agreement between students and faculty when it came to their impressions of online teaching. Both people's views reflected and bolstered one another.

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