



Impact of Online Education on Student's Attitudes during Covid-19 Situation at Post-Graduate Level in Pakistan

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Abstract

Covid-19 appeared to be a pandemic on a wide scale that impacted the entire world. This pandemic has disrupted every corner of life. Higher education institutions not only remain close in Pakistan but throughout the world, resulting in a lack of learning for learners of all levels, in particular, higher education (postgraduate level), which has had a direct effect on education, learners and teachers in terms of time, learning and economics. Online Teaching is proving to be an emerging form of teaching worldwide in the field of education. Established countries have chosen much earlier for this teaching form. Universities in Pakistan started Online Teaching for students under the leadership of HEC, which was an effort to compensate the loss on an experiment based. This research was conducted to understand the influence of online education on the actions and attitudes of English students. Mixed method techniques have been used. The research was conducted in public sector universities of Lahore, Punjab Province, Pakistan. A questionnaire was

distributed to the respondents by random and convenient sampling and a focus group interview was selected for the research. The engagement of the students was encouraging and their feedback was positive in this new area of teaching. To conclude, it cannot be an overstatement to say that online teaching can provide learners ease, happiness, and trust, and remove worry and frustration.

Key words: Online teaching, Covid-19, Student's behaviors, English Language learners

Introduction

The world has been revolutionized by the production of personal computers and laptops. A modern mode of communication has been offered to individuals by Instagram, Skype, Twitter, and Facebook(Chakraborty, Mittal, Gupta, Yadav, & Arora, 2021). With the aid of these services and software, people connect and express their opinions around the globe. Online programs for learners are provided by instructors and teachers(Adedoyin & Soykan, 2023). Online Teaching is a teaching method that is learned within and outside academic institutions through the use of computer/ Internet and the related technology(Paudel, 2021). Most commonly, interactive instructions for teaching actually happen in a virtual community(Nimavat et al., 2021). Learners and teachers need not arrive to the very same venue and come face to face with one another. In terms of time, position, or both, they are both completely separated(Peimani & Kamalipour, 2021). Activities have been carried out in this teaching and learning process. Because of the shift in people's priorities, the world is embracing this form of teaching. Online teaching can be a step towards providing learners with education on the doorstep, which can enhance the literacy rate(Qurat ul Ain Asif 2024). Factors may often cause this teaching method to be adopted. In managing time, teachers and students can support each other since they can determine the default schedule for the online course(Khan, Taj, Younas, Riaz, & Raza, 2024a).

Statement of problem

These are the times of COVID-19, and the ways of life, politics, schooling, engagement, etc. are changing almost the nations of the world. The primary message of all of these shifting styles is 'social distance and isolation,' that is the first and foremost cautionary treatment for the pandemic at present(Adedoyin & Soykan, 2023). According to the motto of social isolation, the levels of education are also changing. In additional words, learning has transformed its method to online or virtual from face to face. Learning the language of English has a minute different from other conventional methods of teachings. Like other types of education, it is also virtual. (Wenger, 1998)

There are issues with whether or not virtual or simulated English language learning would be beneficial. What will it be considered by students? Online learning can change or change the student's perceptions toward English as a second language, etc(Paudel, 2021; Rouf, Hossain, Habibullah, & Ahmed, 2024). The current research is all about English language learners' attitudes towards online learning. Learning a second language is often an active activity and has a good interaction with the learners. Values are very important to attitudes because they form the foundation of our attitudes(Qurat ul Ain Asif 2024). As these are founded on beliefs, we have all kinds of behaviours, whether positive or negative. If a student wishes to master and gives importance to the foreign language, it means that that language is given importance and priority by him or her. This reflects his or her positive approach to that language.(Jarvis, 1985; Khan et al., 2024a)

Significance of the research

For not only the world, but also for Pakistan, online education has converted into the part of the kit and needs of the time. This is in Pakistan's early stages. The new COVID-19 pandemic wave has disrupted nearly every pace of lifecycle around the world. It has extremely impacted advanced education, too. In developing countries, online education has already been used in. Currently, on an experimental basis, the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan is also moving into this structure to compensate the education loss. Because this is carried out on experimental basis, it could be difficult to introduce it in the universities(Rouf et al., 2024).

This research study is also part of this project chain. Govt. and other educational institutes have established online learning policies to be introduced at university level in the field of education. Nevertheless, the policies struggle to produce the desired results due to less awareness about ground realities. Several articles of research were done on different dimensions of online education, i.e. obstacles and effects of online teaching on the academic accomplishments of students, but analysis was done on student's attitude to online education(Khan, Taj, Younas, Riaz, & Raza, 2024b).

In addition, the experiments were performed at intermediate and secondary levels, but no systematic research effort was made at the undergraduate level. Since the undergraduate level is a critical level in academia and learners at this level are more inspired and enthusiastic to carry out real research work, it is therefore very important to identify their attitudes towards online education.

Objective of the research

The objective of this study is

- To find out the interest of students in online learning at the postgraduate level.
- To explore efficacy of online teaching and its effects on the attitudes of learners.

Research question

How does online Teaching influence the attitudes of the students?

Literature review

The administration and sharing of knowledge in the online learning environment is beset by a number of methodological and technological problems. The primary goals of the online learning process are management or administration, communication, and information sharing.

Technologies, programming software and other IT sources that govern the educational atmosphere, contributors and the validity of communication have been used for the online learning environment. (AHMAD RAZA, 2024; Gandolfi, 2021)

Teachers and students are connected via certain external or internal websites or management systems of learning by educational institutions. It relies on the availability of the assets that an institution has. For the fulfillment of the mission, there are many online applications; some are free and some are charged. The organizations use them accordingly, according to their specifications and budget. If current online requests flop to fulfill the specifications, then they should organize for the software engineers to make new ones.

These are all instruments in the interactive or online learning management system group(Qurat ul Ain Asif 2024). Both stakeholders in the process of learning and teaching, such as students and teachers, need to have adequate and appropriate training in this online learning management system. In addition, since these are the only sources of communication between stakeholders, online teaching applications must be assured in terms of their reliability and authenticity.(Gadre, Cudney, & Corns, 2011)

If these movements work, the entire teaching process online will immediately crash. In the interactive teaching method, all participants check in at the same time online, and the instructor or a single teacher delivers the lesson content in the form of lectures. The method by which data, discussions, actions to answer inquiries, etc. are carried out is of importance to both parties involved in this phase. All of this is called group-based collaborative education. All members effort here as a community of exercise, distribution shared topics of knowledge sharing and debate. (Wenger, 1998)

Effect of COVID-19 in education

Regardless of momentum of its growth, the world has been continually evolving and developing in almost every industry. There can be various variables, such as religious, geographical, environmental, pandemics and wars, etc., that cause evolution(Farooq, Rathore, & Mansoor, 2020). Teaching and knowledge, which we have not only scholarly get but also shared with others, are the foundation of all development. Education is a learning and teaching practice, in other words(Ullah, Ashraf, Ashraf, & Ahmed, 2021). There is a distinction between a normal kind of education and a formal one. This form of learning primarily includes teachers, institutions, and students(Akram, Aslam, Saleem, & Parveen, 2021).

The traditional teaching approach is known as face-to-face or conventional. There would be a schoolroom, a coach, and scholars right here. The educators explain the learners face-to-face with the instruction material given by the institution's direction in their real presence(Iqbal, Ashiq, Rehman, Rashid, & Tayyab, 2022). Pandemics, as described above, are essential evolutionary factors. (2009-2010) Swine Flu, (1918-1920) Spanish Flu, and (1346-1353) Black Death, and are the primary pandemics.(Gandolfi, 2021)

How old is the COVID-19? Many aspects of society, including government, business, education, and lifestyle, have changed as a result of the pandemic. The most prevalent pandemic of all, it has spread to nearly every country in the globe and continues to do so due to its power.(Mumtaz, Saqulain, & Mumtaz, 2021). The COVID-19 pandemic has affected almost every aspect of life, including schooling. Prior to this epidemic, face-to-face instruction was the standard method of teaching pupils. Students used to go to their separate educational institutions, such as colleges, universities, and schools.(Bao, Qu, Zhang, & Hogan, 2020)

where they received education while actively participating in class and were physically there with their teacher. When COVID-19 started to spread, the World Health Organization (WHO) advised that "social distancing" be used as the primary preventative strategy, in addition to other measures like wearing face masks, etc. Almost all organizations practiced social separation as a safeguard. Practically all the nations practiced 'lockdown' and stopped their firms. (AHMAD RAZA, 2024; Bao et al., 2020)

The majority of them embraced the virtual presence of their employees. The WHO took the children's plight very seriously and suggested that governments shut down their schools. To solve the issue quickly, the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) suggested interactive education systems. These systems use a variety of educational software and environments to enable teachers to provide lectures to their students remotely.(Gandolfi, 2021; Qurat ul Ain Asif 2024)

The administration took the continuity of education extremely seriously and embraced the concept and approach of virtual or online learning. In virtual teaching, professors and students are not physically present in the same room; instead, they connect via a variety of information technology (IT) tools while remaining remote (Rehman & Khan, 2021). The concept of virtual instruction is highly feasible in contemporary times. Furthermore, as several health administrations around the world have warned, it appears that this pandemic will not be ending anytime soon. Practically all the stakeholders, their families, students, and teachers, was impacted by the closing of the school. (Anwar, Khan, & Sultan, 2020; Gandolfi, 2021)

A searching question emerges here as to whether online education can be the finest alternative for conventional face-to-face instruction in terms of quality teaching and orientation outcomes? Only a small number of learning method criteria can be met by Virtual Instruction (Rehman & Khan, 2021). Education is not a mechanism that is narrow. In other difference of opinion, it doesn't facilitate students with the course outlines and examinations; as a substitute, it provides an atmosphere of struggle, creating chances for progress. Only by face-to-face instruction can these facets of education be accessed (Akram et al., 2021).

In addition, like a student and teacher interaction, there are various online teaching issues, lack of classroom setting, interaction between student and student, technological issues, IT equipment is not accessible to every student, relevant and proper training for teachers and students in virtual teaching and learning, classroom monitoring lack, inappropriate questioning response, etc. Due to these significant flaws, students' learning outcomes are negatively impacted by the closure of educational facilities and the absence of in-person instruction. (Anwar et al., 2020; Bao et al., 2020)

Schools are not simply structuring for learning and teaching classes, rather than hubs of social interactions in which they study about human attitudes equally through contact with each other and their course work. (Jarvis, 1985)

Research methodology

Mixed method techniques have been used. The research has been carried out both qualitatively and quantitatively. For this analysis, an experimental approach was used. The analysis of quantitative data involves studying the outcomes of different questions in a survey. In the data tables, the figures are normally displayed numerically and by percentage. Qualitative approaches have been used for the current analysis since this methodology offers greater opportunities to comprehend any ideology about which slight is understood. This approach is also used to generate deeper insights into subjects that are already well understood or to obtain detailed evidences that can be tough to analyse quantitatively.(Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000)

Papulation and Sampling

The research was conducted in Lahore, Punjab Province, Pakistan. The University of Punjab and the University of Education are two major public sector universities with multi-disciplinary histories. The research was performed at the University of Education Department of English. The sample of the study will consist of available students in relevant institutes. There was random and convenient sampling method has been adopted.

Instruments of data collection

A survey and focus group interview are the basic instruments for the research.

Based on fifteen objects, a questionnaire was created on five Likert-scale and closed-ended questions with (SD) strongly disagreed, (D) disagreed, (N) Neutral, (A) Agreed, (SA) Strongly Agreed (SA) choices. (Cohen et al., 2000)

Procedure for collecting data

By sending them via WhatsApp, a questionnaire was distributed to the respondents. Because of the wave of pandemic Corona Virus (COVID-19) among 60 participants by random and convenient sampling, there were no classes and universities closed.

Focus group interview was conducted through messenger and WhatsApp from the selected participants. Researcher himself is a big tool and researcher observed the data collected from the learners of English language.

Data analysis and discussion

Table 1. Questionnaire responses about online education

No.	Statement	SA	A	N	SD	D
1	Online learning is fun for students	17	16	9	9	9
2	In particular conditions, students are forced to learn through online instruction.	15	22	12	3	8
3	Online learning is problematic for students	17	27	7	4	5
4	Online education is better than teaching face to face	8	3	3	29	17
5	Only in specific conditions, online instruction can be useful.	10	27	14	3	6
6	In online teaching, the instructor is easily available for students.	9	9	14	10	18
7	Online Education satisfies the needs of language learning	5	10	9	9	27
8	Each student has the equal opportunity to hold online lectures.	7	21	6	12	14
9	The teacher's instructions are easy for students to understand in online learning.	7	11	10	8	24
10	Students are provided with relevant instruction for online learning.	9	21	10	5	15

All sixty students took part in research and answered the questionnaire.

26.7 percent students Strongly agreed about the statement in which they were asked that online learning is a fun. And also, 26.7 percent students agreed to the statement which is clearly shows that most of the students consider online education is an interesting way of learning. That's a positive attitude of learners towards online education. Remaining 15 percent strongly disagreed, 15 agreed and 16.7 percent students have a neutral point of view about the statement. Thus, online teaching is fun for learners.

Online learning is problematic for students, responding to this statement 45 percent students agreed and 23.7 percent strongly agreed that it is a problem for students which is a huge number of students.

Online education is better than teaching face to face, responding to this statement 46 percent students strongly disagreed and 17 percent disagreed that it is not better for students

which is a huge number of students. so, majority of students prefer face to face teaching over online education.

Students are provided with relevant instruction for online learning. Most of the learners are in favour of this statement as 35 percent students agreed to this while 25 percent students disagree also and 13 percent are neutral about it.

The teacher's instructions are easy for students to understand in online learning. Responding to it 40 percent students disagreed to this statement while 18.3 percent students agreed and 18.3 percent are neutral about it. It shows that in online education its difficult for students to understand the instruction given by teachers.

Online instruction can be useful only in specific conditions. 45 percent students agreed to it and 15 percent students strongly agreed while 25 percent has a neutral view.

Each student has the equal opportunity to hold online lectures. Majority are in favour of this statement. 35 percent students agreed while 23.3 percent students disagree also and 11.7 percent are neutral about it. it is stated that online education provides equal opportunities for all.

Online Education satisfies the needs of language learning. Responding to it 45 percent students disagreed to this statement while 16.7 percent students agreed and 16.7 percent are neutral about it.

In online teaching, the instructor is easily available for students. 30 percent students disagreed and 15 percent agreed while 25 percent have a neutral view about the statement. It means for most of the students the availability of instructors is not satisfactory in online education.

In particular conditions, students are forced to learn through online instruction. 36.7 percent students agreed to this statement 23.3 percent strongly agreed to it while 13.3 percent disagreed to this statement.

In the focused group interview section when students were asked that are you afraid of online learning? Most of the students claim that yes, they are afraid because of some factors. Most of the factors are technical like internet issues, camera shyness but others factors like family issues and time are also there.

Do you think students don't pay proper attention in online education? Most of the students responding yes to this question. They said there are many other activities that divert them from learning like some other applications.

Question answering activity is performed easily in the online learning. Is it really useful to engage students? Most of the students responding yes to this question.

“It's really helpful to engage students because they didn't speak in front of faces of students. But some students said that it is not so.”

How online education changes the attitudes of the learners? Commenting on this statement students have neutral view that it modifies both positive and negative attitudes.

“Online learning modifies the student’s attitudes. Students can not able to have full concentration and they may face internet issues. They do not remain serious during online lecture. They usually do not attend the lecture and become lazy too.”

Conclusion

The study findings indicate that Virtual Teaching (VT) brings a positive shift in the students’ attitude. Under COVID-19 conditions, students are dedicated and inspired to their studies, and they welcome online Teaching. Online teaching is preferred by a significant proportion of students as it is a fresh but happy experience for them.

With online teaching, they seem passionate about learning. While studying and attending lectures via online teaching, they express their comfort. According to them, teachers are readily available, they can ask questions by voice or text messages, and the teacher responds to them at the place where the online class or later in his free time is being conducted.

Additionally, by speaking with their teacher and other classmates, they can set up a time that works for them for the online course. In this manner, the greatest number of students who are unable to attend conventional or in-person lectures can swiftly attend all of them and, if they are recorded, can watch the lectures on video. In this manner, most students can benefit from attending the lectures.

Online education also allows students to save time and cash as well. Because they don't have to drive far or pay for lodging, students can save time in both distant places and other cities. Students are welcome to remain with their family and relatives. In conclusion, it is not hyperbole to argue that online instruction can relieve anxiety and frustration while offering students comfort, joy, and trust.

Meanwhile, on the other hand, it also has some disadvantages. However, they have expressed worries about the lack of facilities in the Pakistani environment, including the lack of resources, technology, and internet connectivity.

Teachers and students are both novices when it comes to using technology. Students may receive an introduction and instruction on how to use technology. But with time, these absences can be overcome. The majority of students believe that the teaching-learning process should always continue, and that using technology in this process can be a significant step forward in the present as well as the future.

Recommendation

The following recommendations on the change, supportive and constructive function of online teaching have been drawn up in the light of all the above results and discussion.

- This has been noted that the globe has practically, for some reason, opted for online teaching. In Pakistan, however, it has elected only for the demand circumstance under the COVID-19 pandemic situation, that's why It's advisable that Pakistan's Government, HEC and other educationist institutes are making holistic strategy to incorporate online teaching not only at the higher level of education, but also at primary, secondary and the higher level of secondary education.
- On a high priority, online teaching would be used practically.
- The Internet and relevant state-of-the-art technologies used in online teaching should be offered to schools, colleges and universities.
- Students and teachers should be provided requisite preparation for active learning with respect to online teaching.
- Computers and other equipment used in online teaching would also be made simpler for students.
- In the world, e-teaching and learning are trends, so successful strategies to promote Pakistan should be created.
- The government should provide financial resources in Pakistan for its implementation.
- For the promotion and understanding of students and teachers, seminars should be held.

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