

## Exploring the traditional learning and virtual learning among the students at university Level

Dildar Hussain<sup>1</sup>, Aqsa Irshad<sup>2</sup>

### Abstract

Higher education of any country is an important factor in the development of that country either economic, social, or technical. COVID-19, similar to various other parts of daily life, has had a significant influence on students, teachers, and organizations of academic institutions in the world. COVID-19 effected the institutions such as schools, colleges and universities around the world. This pandemic has shifted the mode of education of higher education from face to face or traditional classes to online classes. This online class is preferred by some of the students and teachers and some prefer the traditional classes. The purpose of the study was to identify the effectiveness of real life and virtual life at university level. Objectives of the study were to identify the student's opinion about real life and virtual life at university level. Design of the study based on qualitative research method. An interview schedule was used as an instrument of this research. All public universities of Sargodha were included in population. Simple convenient sampling technique was used in this research. The results showed that traditional teaching and learning is more preferred by students. This could be due to any reason such as lack of good internet, lack of knowledge about different online functions.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, Virtual learning, Higher Education, Traditional Class

### 1. Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) designated COVID-19 to be a global public health crisis of international concern on the 30th of January, 2020, according to the WHO (Cucinotta & Vanelli, 2020). According to the Federal Health Ministry in Islamabad and Karachi, the first two cases of COVID-19 in Pakistan were reported on February 26, 2020, and the Federal Health Ministry in Islamabad and Karachi confirmed the cases (Saqlain, Munir, Ahmed, Tahir, & Kamran, 2020). In Pakistan there were confirmed 165,62 cases of corona and 3,229 deaths due to corona by 19th June 2020 (Covid-19 Stats, 2020). Ali (2020) stated that due to this pandemic on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2020 all academic institutions were closed along with the universities. Higher education institutions were ordered by the Higher Education commission (HEC) to initiate distance learning modes and rearrange their exams and aid their students studying in higher education institutions consistently till the pandemic is not over (Ali, 2020). Covid-19 forced educational professionals to review the conventional method of face-to-face education and they took distance learning as a realistic and only

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<sup>1</sup> PST ,Government primary school Muhammad Shah [dildarshah136@gmail.com](mailto:dildarshah136@gmail.com)

<sup>2</sup> Visiting Lecturer, University of Education Lahore Jouharabad campus [aqsairshad.vf@ue.edu.pk](mailto:aqsairshad.vf@ue.edu.pk)

possible alternative to carry out the education negated for period of some months, in consequence decreasing the threats caused by Covid-19 until usual activities are recommenced (Kaur, 2020).

Virtual education is considered to be more successful in countries which are technologically much progressive (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020) due to this reason it not yet that much effective in Pakistan. Though, in Pakistan, different activities of teaching, learning an administrative as well are carried out physically in a great number of Pakistani Universities (Salam et al., 2017). Unavailability of high-speed, reasonable and steadfast internet connections obstruct the practice of virtual education particularly for people living in rural areas of Pakistan (Wains & Mahmood, 2008). According to Basilaia & Kvavadze (2020), most of the students do not have laptop or computers so they use the internet by the means of smartphones but are incapable to get whole benefit of virtual learning as a big chunk of technological functions are not reachable through mobiles.

## **2. Statement of the problem**

Because of the COVID-19 epidemic, our form of instruction has shifted from traditional to virtual. There are some significant differences between real life learning and virtual learning, researcher wanted to identify these differences therefore researcher chose the topic to examine the effectiveness of real life and virtual life among students at university level.

## **3. Research questions**

Through this study, the researcher hopes to provide answers to the following questions:

- 1- What is the students' opinion regarding real life and virtual life at university level?
- 2- What are the problems faced by students in virtual learning at university level?
- 3- Is there any effectiveness of real life and virtual life among students at university level?

## **4. Literature Review**

Virtual learning may be described as electronically delivered instruction through the Internet, intranets, or CD-ROM or DVD multimedia platforms (McCormick, C, 2004). Virtual learning can be applied in a number of ways, such as using individual self-paced research units, asynchronous collaborative sessions where participants communicate at various times. (Murphy, E., 2011).

Economic Times, (2020) said that employ of technology and system connectivity for teaching and learning is generally known as virtual learning. The transition of skills and information to a large number of recipients is often refers as the technology-enabled. Online teaching creates environments in which learners continually interact with the content and learn through practical practice and also responds to their understanding as new knowledge is created. (Palloff & Pratt, 2013). Today, information and communication technologies (ICT) have advanced. The famous one is the Internet. The use of the Internet was not only a networking tool, but also a component that involved both sides' developments in the use of technology in education (Means et al., 2013).

Violante, M. G., (2014). Studied that virtual learning environment usually offers resources such as review, correspondence, content updating, transfer of student work, student community management, questionnaires, monitoring tools, wikis, blogs, chats, forums, etc. Often these e-learning programs are also referred to LMS (Learning Management System) is sometimes referred to as CMS (Course Management System) and LCMS (Learning Content Management

System) among other terms. The next year (Violante, G., & Vezzetti, E, 2014). In online learning activities has described interaction, including the forms of interaction: learner-self, learner-learner, learner-instructor, learner-content, and learner. A mixture of ways of interaction between the subjects involved in the teaching and learning activities is the learners in the course: student-content. (Chou, Peng, & Chang, 2010).

In today's world, popular learning management systems (LMS) offer essential tools that enable interactive activities in the course, such as discussion forums, messaging, online assignment kinds, wiki style exercises, a virtual classroom, and so on. These tools also enable instructors to manage and regulate the student learning process, via the use of reports on the status of assignments submitted, degree of access data, and activity logs, which are primarily focused on the learning process of students. (2007) (Cole, J., and Foster, H., 2007).

Duderstadt, J. J., Atkins, (2002) said, educational materials are experienced through online learning content. And it has an influence on the lives of new-age learners, their teachers' lives, their families, the society and the institution. Online learning is a form of distance learning that has been part of the American education system for a long time and has become the largest field of distance learning.

Peters, O. (2002) studied that today's most common method of distance education is online learning. As described in the Steam post, online learning, also referred to as e-learning, is one of the forms of distance learning where the teacher and student can position themselves anywhere. Online learning offered an outstanding method of delivery of material unbound by time or place that allowed the instruction to be accessible at any time from. Moodley, K. (2015) explained that e-learning becomes the educational teacher training process, here are some advantages of e-learning as compared to traditional methods: e-learning is cheaper than traditional teaching methods because it does not require paper or pencil and can be done anywhere and anytime; e-learning is more versatile for students; and personal.

As Kukulska-Hulme (2012) points out, "time of change" has become a common refrain in the higher education discourse. The author emphasizes that technology-based developments in technology and services will change experiences and public preferences in terms of access to information and sharing.

### ***Role of teacher***

There are two distinct aspects between educating children online and educating adults in online classes. Young kids are open to learning everything, although in the situation of adult, it isn't really accurate either in traditional classes or online classes. Adults are often concerned for their advantages, so if teachers want to clarify something students begin thinking of the advantages from a certain topic, they just show an interest in that specific topic. It is the sole explanation for what reason pedagogy varies lightly from Andragogy. The word Pedagogy herein applies to the teaching technique for youngsters and the word Andragogy relates to the technique of teaching for adults. Then what a teacher is expected to do while teaching in universities is to create the value and advantages of that specific topic or section during the online classes. In majority of the scenarios student begin to have interest. The dilemma here is to enable the learners understand the importance of what they are studying, so teachers must serve as a reference for the scenario. Prior to explaining teaching strategies, we need to explain what the teacher's role should be in the online classes

1. University students require technical school skills to make it easier for them to get work.
2. Produce well balanced persons.

3. To produce individuals having intellectual development.

At this point the instructor's position is obvious, but the issue is really how? Is the educator a "manager" a psychologist, or a liberationist? Answer is that the teacher should be a blend of all these on certain problems, teachers ought to act reasonably here, and that is why educating is much more art than science in the traditional and online classes. The effective teacher mode is decided by subject, student, and it is very critical in what way students answer to the educator.

### **5. Role of Institutions in Online Learning:**

The purpose of a higher education institution in the online classes is to operate, and then all parts, management, teachers, and learners must carry out their assigned roles. Learners, nevertheless, are unable to perform their duties for self-advancement until those rights and liberties are permitted. The skills of learners will be useful to almost any college or university.

To encourage their participation in online classes Universities should:

- 1) Allow for further sharing of knowledge at different social and virtual platform
- 2) Collaborate with learners on different social media platform
- 3) Grant learners' authority of taking decision in certain parts of academic life and ultimate liability in few.

Learners must be considered being the "consumers" of educational facilities, on all educational concerns that affect them.

### ***Role of Students in Online Learning***

Student conduct standards and their role in online as well traditional class differ from university to university. They are required to at least behave closely with the university's principles and abide with community, national, and government regulations in virtual classes. Comprehensive information on student roles in online class have been issued by universities, and the information can be official or unofficial. These can come within professional norms or a code of ethics.

### ***Curriculum in Online classes Higher Education of Pakistan:***

According to Agarwal (2008), steps have been taken at national level to carry out education changes and the curriculum has been reformed thereby, however the required education goals still have not been accomplished. Isani (2001), mentioned that in the Higher Education of Pakistan, most of the universities have outdated curriculum. Moreover, students are still forced to cram the material rather than having an understanding of their subject matter. Furthermore, teachers are not well trained to deliver that curriculum. Teacher in universities should be trained in theory, practical and research to make his or her students competent. Likewise, in most of the Higher Education studies students are required to do a research project universities and Higher Education Commission should make surety of its quality and contribution in the relevant filed.

However, due to COVID-19 curriculum for the online classes have been shortened because of the time constraints. Students in online classes with theoretical subjects were able to cover the curriculum objective. However, students with practical were compensated with different online assessments, and assignments so not to postpone their courses.

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***Assessment in Online Classes of Higher Education Pakistan***

Assessment is indeed a broad concept for educational outcomes and for learner's judgment, and often encompasses quantitative classification. In the Universities of Pakistan students are assessed through different assessment approaches during the online classes. Numerous assessments are used for the final appraisal of university students in their virtual classes.

In Pakistan, in accordance with COVID-19 programs under HEC, universities have developed assessment protocols to assess students virtually. To answer the specifications of this current pandemic, the evaluation framework has been updated. In the universities of Pakistan along with the usual end-of-the-year assessments, on-going tests are also carried out during the semester in the virtual classes. Last but not the least, similar to curriculum the assessment criteria in the online classes vary from university to university and campus to campus.

***Real and Virtual Learning in Higher Education:***

COVID-19 has had a significant influence on the lives of students, instructors, and organizations associated with academic institutions all across the world, just as it has on many other elements of daily life. For educational institutions across the world, including schools, colleges, and universities, COVID-19 has a profound influence.

People were able to comply with social distancing measures because to COVID-19, which forced institutions such as schools, colleges, and universities throughout the globe to lock their doors. Having said that, it is possible to transition easily from an environment of formal education to an environment of online education all at once (Crawford, Butler-Henderson, Rudolph, & Glowatz, 2020).

Classes are a well-established educational medium in which teaching style and organization have been developed through many centuries of experience. There are various advantages to face-to-face training that cannot be found in its online equivalent. Traditional classroom learning delivers real-time, face-to-face training and stimulates the development of inventive inquiries in the students. It also enables for better responsiveness from teachers and more flexibility in material delivery. Traditional classroom instruction is a well-established mode of instruction. Some pupils are resistant to change and have a negative attitude toward online learning. These students may be technophobes, preferring to sit in a classroom and take notes rather than sitting in front of a computer and absorbing new information.

Students may benefit from recognized faculty as well as research libraries while pursuing their study on campus. Students may depend on administrators to assist them in course selection as well as to make suggestions for professors. The typical classroom experience provides students with valuable auxiliary tools that help them do better in the classroom. The classroom context gives additional opportunities for incentive, encouragement, and guidance. Even if a student expresses a desire to drop out within the first few weeks of class, the teacher and other students may be able to persuade him or her otherwise.

Although a large number of colleges offer online courses, there are still two difficulties to contend with. First and foremost, there is very little information available from a global perspective regarding the impact and efficacy of online education (McPherson & Bacow, 2015). Second, because to the wide range of learning objectives that drive our educational and learning objectives, the capacity to successfully teach students digitally is predicted to differ from person to person (Liguori & Winkler, 2020). In technologically developed nations, virtual education can be successful (Basilaia & Kvavadze (2020), due to this it is not that much successful in Pakistan. Though, a considerable number of activities of educational institutions, are carried out physically in Pakistan, (Salam et al.,2017). Inaccessible of easy, inexpensive and secure internet connectivity obstruct the practice of virtual education, particularly for

people living in villages of Pakistan. (Wains & Mahmood, 2008).

Since a large chunk of online data is not available through smartphones, students who use the internet via mobile phones may not make full use of online learning. The sudden shift to e-learning has become an indicator of institutional versatility (Wu, 2020), with many educational organizations concentrating specifically on moving instructional information to the virtual environment. Nevertheless, that was a warning of the scarcity of funding in educational settings and the socioeconomic marginalization of learners, where inadequate accessibility to the internet and connectivity and the absence of advanced technologies impacted institutions acceptance and the willingness of learners to engage in online education (Zhong, 2020).

## **6. Methodology**

This study was qualitative in nature. The survey was conducted to collect the data from university students regarding virtual and real-life learning. Survey research design was used. The survey was comprised of 14 questions.

### ***Population of the study***

Population of the study comprises all students who are currently studying in universities through online classes.

### ***Sample of the study***

Sample of the research consisted of 30 students from the department of Education, Botany, Zoology, Islamic Studies, and Chemistry, from the University of Sargodha.

### ***Instrument of the study***

Structured Interview was used to collect the perception of university students regarding virtual and real life.

### ***Data collection***

The perception of students was collected through structured interviews.

Q1: In which way of learning content or material of any subject is covered more? (real or virtual)

In this regard most of the students said that content in traditional classes is covered more as in virtual classes some content of the curriculum is left due to connection problems or time constraint.

Q2: In which classes students have better communication with peers or class fellows? (Traditional classes or online classes)

Most of the students answered that they had better communication with their class fellows and they could easily interact in traditional face to face class. Moreover, if they had ambiguity in the lesson, they could take help easily in face-to-face class but that was not easy in online classes.

Q3: In which classes' communication between teachers and students is better? (Online or traditional classes)

Number of students said that in traditional class they could easily ask their teacher and answer as well. However, in online classes it's a bit hard as most of the students start talking at one time even with several reminders by the teacher.

Q4: In which type of classes' attention to the lecture is paid more? (Online classes or Traditional classes)

Mostly students said that they are unable to pay attention in online classes as they are interrupted by the family members. In traditional classes they could pay more attention due to the environment built around them.

Q5: In which classes practical understanding of subject is much better? (Online classes or Traditional classes)

Number of students said that practical understanding is impossible in online classes even with the use of various videos and tutorials. Practical understanding is only possible in the face-to-face classes.

Q6: Internal assessments (Quizzes, tests, mid, finals) are better to be taken in which classes? (Online classes or traditional classes)

Most of the students said that it's better to give quizzes, tests and mid-terms in traditional classes as in online classes they face many problems such as unable to save answers, unable to open the paper. In traditional classes they do not find any problem in the conduction of paper.

## **7. Findings**

Findings of the interview showed that most of the students were in favor of traditional class regarding communication between teachers and students, attention to the lecture paid, discipline of the class maintained, getting practical understanding of subject, clarity of confusing content, better to give internal assessments(Quizzes, tests, mid, finals), longer duration to search sources related to a topic or subject, more motivated to learn, more confident in expressing their thoughts, beliefs and opinions, grades or marks attained better, education is more enjoyable in traditional class. However, overall, less time is taken in online class and more in traditional class.

## **8. Discussion**

During the COVID-19 lockdown period, the purpose of this report was to investigate the perceptions of teachers and students on the online teaching-learning process. The purpose of this qualitative study was to evaluate the perceptions of teachers and students in the context of a university setting. While analyzing teachers' and students' impressions of the new trend, new insights are brought to the foreground. The results of the this study revealed that the majority of students preferred traditional classes in terms of communication between teachers and students, paying attention to the lecture, maintaining discipline in the class, gaining practical understanding of the subject, clarity of confusing content, better to give internal assessments (quizzes, tests, midterms, and finals), longer duration to search for sources related to a topic or subject, being more motivated to learn, and being more confident in expressing themselves in front of others. Overall, however, online classes require less time than traditional classes and require more time than online classes.

## **9. Conclusion**

Higher Education is an important stage in the academic life of student. It is the last step in the life of students before they step in their professional life. COVID-19 pandemic has hit every aspect of life and so it has affected the educational institutions as well. It has changed the mode of education from traditional face to face classes to online classes. Online classes are conducted to give students learning experience as they used to in traditional class. The purpose of this study was to determine the perception of students regarding virtual and online learning. The results showed that traditional teaching and learning is more preferred by students. This could

be due to any reason such as lack of good internet, lack of knowledge about different online functions. The present study's findings imply that student views are relevant for educational institutions considering using online modes of instruction in the future.

### **10. Recommendation**

In the light of the results, it is suggested that providing sufficient technological training to teachers about skills and different techniques to attend online class. Moreover, it is suggested that researcher conduct research on same topic with bigger sample and population size.

In addition, future research should be conducted to know why students prefer specific mode of learning either traditional or online. Future research can be done to find out what are they ways to improve the online learning for the university students

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