

Online Learning in Higher Education in the Backdrop of Covid-19: Pakistani Students' Perspectives

Nida Shahzad¹
Wajeeha Aurangzeb²

Abstract

This study explored the students' perspectives regarding online classes and the problems they have faced while attending online classes during crisis situation of Covid-19. Convergent parallel mix method design was adopted for this study and used online survey and structured interviews for data collection. The participants of the study were first semester social sciences students from two public universities of Rawalpindi city. Sample size for the survey was n=100 which was selected purposively and conveniently whereas, sample size for structured interviews was n=12. Results of the study indicated that higher educational institutes were not ready for this new approach of teaching as there was no proper access to learning management system (LMS). Most of the students were only receiving lectures in the form of power point slides or PDF whereas few teachers were using video lectures. Majority of the participants were not satisfied with this approach of teaching due to many problems including household chores, non-flexibility of online classes, electricity crisis, internet access and speed issues, lack of face to face interaction, explanation, understanding, and students' involvement. It is suggested that during this time, the institutes can improve their online LMS and make their staff ready for online classes.

Keywords: online classes, COVID-19, students' perspectives, students' problems, learning management system (LMS)

¹ MPhil. Scholar, National University of Modern Languages, Pakistan.
Email: nidashahzad61@gmail.com

² Associate Professor, National University of Modern Languages, Pakistan.
Email: waurangzeb@numl.edu.pk

Introduction

Online and distance education is very common in this era of technology because technology has reduced the distance among students, teachers and learning resources. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC's) are getting popular through which thousands of students with internet connections can get access to an online course and can improve their knowledge and skills (Ferrer, 2017; Williams et al., 2018). This system of teaching and learning is better because it makes learning accessible for students and they can get access to various online courses by sitting at their homes and at any time of the day or night (Jacobs, 2013; Shapiro et al., 2017). Within Pakistan, higher education is still considered as a neglecting sector (Mehmood, Chong & Hussain, 2018). Therefore, online education is also beneficial for any crisis situation if a person is unable to go outside, he or she can learn through online learning systems. Pakistan is a developing country and making efforts for improving the fields of education and technology but still the ICT systems in higher educational institutes of Pakistan is not up to date (Shahzad, 2017). Most of the teachers use lecture method for teaching students and use of ICT is only limited to showing a PowerPoint slides to students during lectures.

Online education can be a better alternate to in-class education in different crisis situations. Same as during the crisis of Covid-19 in year 2020 government of Pakistan has instructed to close all educational institutes (Kaleem, 2020). It was a mid of the march in which students' semester sessions were at their peak within the higher educational institutes, and students has also paid their educational fee. As an alternate to in-class education, Higher Education Commission (HEC) has suggested institutes to take Online classes of students instead of giving them long vacations. Whereas, institutes were not prepared for online teaching because, a well-established learning management system (LMS) with all of its features was required for making learning experiences interesting and engaging for students. After some day's students' started an online protest against online classes by mentioning a lot of problems they faced during online classes. That is why researcher wanted to conduct this study in order to know that which online learning techniques have been adopted by the teachers at higher educational institutes within Pakistan during this crisis situation. Moreover, to get the views of the students' regarding learning thorough online classes and to explore the problems faced by the students during learning through online classes.

Online education is an approach of teaching in which students are required to have a digital device (Computer, Laptop, Tablet, Smart

Phone) and an access to a strong internet connection because in this approach of teaching all of the learning resources are available online and students needs to put their efforts in order to get access to those learning materials. There are various ways of teaching online some teachers can use recorded lectures, screen captures or live video calling for teaching purpose. The most important thing is a learning management system through which teachers can share their learning resources and thousands of students can get access to those resources even at sitting at opposite corners of the world.

Researcher personally observed that within Pakistan, internet access is not easy in backward areas of the country. Moreover, there is another issue of internet speed which most of the peoples within Pakistan are still facing. During the lock-down situation within Pakistan, researcher came to know that higher educational institutes has started online classes for students. Researcher observed that her sister and cousin sisters were not happy with this learning approach. For getting into the problem deeply, researcher contacted many of the juniors and students of other universities and also visited many of the social media pages of higher educational institutes within Pakistan. By observing all of this situation, researcher came to a conclusion that students are facing problems in learning through this online approach and they are trying to get rid of it. That is why researcher decided to explore all of the techniques, teachers are using for teaching students online as well as to get the views of the students regarding this new sudden approach of teaching. Moreover, researcher also investigated the problems faced by the students while using this online approach of teaching.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the current research study were to:

1. Explore online learning techniques adopted by teachers at higher education level during COVID-19 crisis in Rawalpindi Pakistan.
2. Investigate the views of Pakistani students regarding online learning at higher education level during COVID-19 crisis in Rawalpindi Pakistan.
3. Enlist the problems faced by Pakistani students in online classes at higher education level during COVID-19 crisis in Rawalpindi Pakistan.

Research Questions

For this research study following research question were under investigation:

- Q1: Which online learning techniques were adopted by the teachers at higher education level during COVID-19 crisis in Rawalpindi Pakistan?
- Q2: What are the views of Pakistani students regarding online learning at higher education level during COVID-19 crisis in Rawalpindi Pakistan?
- Q3: What problems were faced by Pakistani students in online classes at higher education level during COVID-19 crisis in Rawalpindi Pakistan?

Review of Related Literature

Online-learning is an alternate of in-class learning which is getting popular in most of the developed countries and having its significance in terms of improving learning of the students (Stephenson, 2018). Developing countries like Pakistan are also making efforts to improve its learning system by making technology-based amendments in education sector. Distance education by utilizing online means, has also been started in Pakistan at two of the institutes where many of the students from different geographical areas are getting education by sitting at their homes (Hussain, 2018; Shah, 2017). Still within Pakistan we are not having a well-developed technology-based education system at all higher education institutes. Whereas, Students have also highlighted the problems associated with e-learning systems in Pakistan. One of the research studies conducted by Qureshi et al., (2012) indicated the issues faced by students during e-learning in a developing country like Pakistan. Results of the study indicated that as per students' opinion, electricity crisis and language barriers were the most prominent issues they faced during e-learning. Furthermore, a research study conducted by Farid et al., (2014) also explored the barriers associated with e-learning. The results of the study highlighted that language related issues, lack of computer skills, lack of internet skills and accessibility of internet are the major challenges students have faced during e-learning. Moreover, a research study conducted by Hussain (2017) explored the students' perspectives regarding challenges they faced during e-learning in Pakistan. As per the results of the study, the challenges students faced during e-learning were lack of focus on studies, lack of concentration, lack of interest, excessive information on online sites, other entertaining stuff on internet, internet accessibility for every student and lack of face-to-face interaction. In addition to this, another research study was conducted to explore the challenges associated with Massive Open Online Courses (MOOC's) in Pakistan. The results of the study indicated

electricity crisis, internet connectivity issues, difficult to answer the queries of every student and lack of face to face interaction as the major challenges associated with MOOC's within Pakistan (Ahmed et al., 2017). Different researches in Pakistan has indicated the challenges associated with online learning specifically in Pakistan but these also highlighted the importance of online learning in improving students' learning and to make our educational system up to date.

With the outbreak of COVID-19 in the year 2020, the higher educational institutes, as per the suggestion of HEC, have started the online classes for students to compensate them during the time of crisis. The institutes were not ready for this sudden change in the approach of teaching which raised many problems for students. In this research study, researchers wanted to get the students perspectives regarding learning through online classes specifically during the crisis situation of Covid-19 because the researchers could not find a study to explore the perspective of students regarding online classes specifically in any crisis situation like COVID-19 within Pakistan. Whereas, it is not related to education field but medical field which is totally different from education filed (Rundle et al., 2020). Moreover, the available literature adopted quantitative methodology (Adnan & Anwar, 2020). It is necessary to work on this area of research for identifying the problems students faced in online learning system and for making effective plans to deal with such challenges.

Research Methodology

For the current research study, the researchers used convergent parallel mix method design. It is a design in which researcher collect data by using both quantitative and qualitative means during the same phase of research process, analyse the two parts separately and do a combine interpretation of results (Creswell & Pablo-Clark, 2011). The current research study was exploratory in nature and researcher used both quantitative and qualitative approaches of data collection. Researchers used questionnaire for getting the responses of the participants regarding online classes in the crisis situation of COVID-19. Moreover, for making the research results more reliable, researcher also used structured interviews which were held online via Google Meet.

The population of the study was first semester students of social sciences department from two public universities in Rawalpindi city. Purposive and convenient sampling technique was used for selecting participants from two public sector universities in Rawalpindi city. Data were collected from two public universities based on convenience during

COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, the reason behind using purposive sampling technique is that researcher wanted to get data from those institutes having online classes during crisis situation of COVID-19. Moreover, because it was impossible for the researcher to go out of home for data collection, the researcher used convenient sampling technique and approached participants by using online channels including Facebook and WhatsApp. As researcher has used both questionnaire and structured interviews so the sample size for quantitative part of the study was $n=100$ (fifty participants from each university) whereas, the sample size for Qualitative part was $n=12$ (six participants from each university). The reason behind selecting less sample size for qualitative part was that researcher wanted to get in-depth responses by conducting structured interviews. Self-developed questionnaire was used in order to get the perspectives of the students regarding online classes during the crisis situation of Covid-19. Moreover, self-developed structured-interview guide was also used for getting the in-depth responses of the participants regarding online classes.

For analyzing the quantitative part of the data, researchers used descriptive statistics and calculated the percentages of the responses. In addition to this, for analyzing the qualitative part of the study, thematic analysis was done by following the open and axial coding. Moreover, researcher has first typed each of the recorded interview then done coding and generated themes out of it for further analysis.

Findings

The researcher has used descriptive analysis design for data analysis of quantitative part. The percentages of responses were calculated and analyzed the responses on the basis of those percentages. Detailed analysis of the quantitative part is described as under: Researcher explored which online learning systems or teaching tools, the teachers were using during crisis situation of COVID-19 in Pakistan. Details of the results are mentioned in Table. 1.

Table 1
Online Learning System/Software's Teachers are using during Covid-19 Crisis.

Software's/Online Teaching Tools	Zoom	Google Class	Whatsapp	PowerPoint/Pdf Lectures through Email
Percentages	12%	20%	20%	48%

As per the results mentioned in the above table it has been indicated that Majority of the teachers (48%) were using Email for sending lectures either in the form of PowerPoint slides or Pdf. Whereas, some of the teachers (20% each) were also using Google Classroom or WhatsApp for teaching students but very few (12%) of them were using Zoom or Skype for live video lectures. By analyzing the results, it has been highlighted that most of the teachers were sending written lectures to the students by using Emails and they were not using a Proper Learning Management System (LMS) for taking online classes. Researcher has collected data regarding the learning tools teachers were using in online classes during the crisis of Covid-19, details of the results are mentioned in Table. 2.

Table 2
Learning Tools Teachers Are Using in Online Classes during COVID-19 Crisis

Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
My teacher share Online videos for learning	35%	18%	47%
My teacher share PowerPoint slides for learning	68%	8%	24%
My teacher takes my class on Live Video call	33%	10%	57%

The table 2 indicated that most of the teachers (68%) were using PowerPoint slides for teaching students in the crisis situation of Covid-19. Whereas, some of the teachers (35%) were sharing Online/YouTube videos with students and Some of them (33%) were taking online classes by using Live video calling. It has been analyzed from the results that most of the teachers were sharing PowerPoint slides with students instead of taking a proper online class by utilizing LMS. This raised a question that either teachers are just providing the learning materials to the students or they are also explaining those learning materials properly for better understanding of students? The answer to this question is present in the Table. 3.

Table 3
Explaining Learning Materials within Online Classes during Crisis of Covid-19.

Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
My teacher also explains online videos	29%	11%	60%
My teacher also explains the slides which she/he sent to me	58%	10%	32%
My teacher sent me a lot of lectures without explaining them	40%	11%	49%
My teacher explains learning materials on Voice notes	59%	17%	24%

The table 3 is indicating that as per participants' response only few of their teachers (29%) explained the online videos which they shared with them. Moreover, most of the students (58%) responded that their teachers also explained every slide which they shared with them. 59% of the students also responded that their teachers used WhatsApp Voice messages for explaining the learning materials. In addition to this, (49%) of the participants were disagreed with the statement that "My teacher sent me a lot of lectures without explaining them". By analyzing those results, it has been indicated that most of the teachers who were using PowerPoint slides were also explaining those slides by using WhatsApp voice messages. Whereas, the less percentage of teachers who were explaining the videos indicated that teachers were only sharing the videos with students without explaining them which is not enough for better understanding of the students. Furthermore, it has been also highlighted that the difference among the percentage of teachers who were explaining every learning material and who were not explaining every learning material they shared with students is less which means half of the teachers were explaining the learning materials they provided to the students and half of them were not explaining the learning materials which compelled students to do self-study. Researcher also explored the views of students regarding online classes they are taking in crisis situation of Covid-19; details of the results are mentioned in Table. 4.

Table 4
Views of the students Regarding Online Classes.

Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
My teacher is expert in using online tools for teaching	25%	27%	48%
I am satisfied with the online teaching tool my teacher is using	25%	12%	63%
I like to take online classes in this crisis situation	32%	5%	63%
I am learning a lot through online classes	24%	17%	59%
Online classes are improving my knowledge	28%	12%	60%
Online classes will help me in getting good grades	15%	14%	71%

The above table is indicating that majority of the participants (48%) were showed their disagreement towards the statement “My teacher is expert in using online tools for teaching”. In addition to this majority of the students’ (63%) responded that they were not satisfied with the online teaching tools their teachers were using during crisis of COVID-19. Moreover, (63%) of the participants also responded that they do not like to learn through online classes during this crisis situation. The participants (59%) also shared their response that they were not learning much through online classes and 60% of the participants also indicated that online classes are not improving their Knowledge. In addition to this, 71% of the participants were having an opinion that online classes will not help them in getting good grades. It has been analyzed from the above results that most of the students were having an opinion that their teachers are not much expert in utilizing the online tools for teaching because of which they were not satisfied with the online tools their teachers were using. Furthermore, it has also been analyzed that students were not liking this online approach of teaching because as per their opinion it is not improving their knowledge as well as learning, they were also having an opinion that this online approach of teaching will affect their grades negatively and they will be unable to get good grades in their exams. Researcher has also explored that in students’ opinion what are the benefits of online classes, details of the results are mentioned in Table 5.

Table 5
Benefits of Online Classes During Crisis of Covid-19.

Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Learning materials are always available in online classes	49%	21%	30%
I can get access to the learning materials any time	49%	16%	35%
Online classes are more comfortable	17%	17%	66%
Online classes/learning is cost effective	43%	20%	37%
Online classes make a student self-disciplined	25%	9%	66%
Online classes make a student responsible	22%	15%	63%

As per the above-mentioned table it has been indicated that most of the participants (49%) were agreed with the statement that “Learning materials are always available in online classes”. Same as (49%) of the participants also showed their agreement towards the statement “I can get access to the learning materials any time”. In Contrary to this, Majority of the students (66%) Showed their Disagreement towards the statement “Online classes are more comfortable” and (66%) of the participants also showed their disagreement towards the statement that “Online classes makes a student self-disciplined”. In addition to this (63%) of the participants also showed their disagreement towards a statement that “Online classes makes a student responsible”. Whereas, (43%) of the participants showed their agreement towards a statement that “Online learning/classes are cost effective”. By analyzing the results, it has been indicated that as per the views of the students’ Accessibility of the learning material everywhere and any time and Cost effectiveness of online learning/online classes are the major benefits of online classes. In contrary to this, as per their opinion online classes are not much comfortable nor they make students’ self-disciplined and responsible towards their learning. Researcher has also explored the problems faced by students in Online Classes during the crisis situation of COVID-19, details of the results are mentioned in Table 6.

Table 6
Problems Faced by Students in Online Classes During Crisis of Covid-19.

Statements	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
Online classes are not flexible	63%	10%	27%
Every student is not having an internet connection	92%	3%	5%
Facial interaction is less in online classes	91%	2%	7%
Students are unable to ask questions in online classes	55%	22%	23%
Internet speed also effect online classes and learning	93%	1%	6%
Our institute is not having a Proper LMS for online classes	82%	10%	8%
Our teachers are not having access to LMS	67%	21%	12%
Our teachers do not have enough online resources for teaching	62%	18%	20%
Practical subjects are difficult to understand online	86%	5%	9%
It takes a lot of time for downloading an online video	72%	14%	14%

As per the details mentioned in the above table it has been indicated that majority of the participants (63%) were agreed with the statement that “Online classes are not flexible” and (92%) of the participants also responded that “Every student is not having an internet connection”. In addition to this, (91%) of the participants also showed their agreement towards the statement “Facial interaction is less in online classes”. Moreover, (55%) of the participants responded that “Students are unable to ask questions in online classes” and (93%) of the participants also agreed with the statement that “Internet speed also effect online classes and learning”. Furthermore, majority of the participants (82%) were having an opinion that their institute is not having a proper LMS for online classes and (67%) of the participants also showed agreement with the statement that “Our teachers are not having access to LMS”. Results of the study also indicated that majority of the participants (62%) were agreed on the statement that “Our teachers do not have enough online resources for teaching” and (86%) of the participants also responded that practical subjects are difficult to understand in online classes. Majority of the respondents (72%) also showed their agreement towards the

statement that “It takes a lot of time for downloading an online video”. From the above mentioned results it has been indicated that as per the views of the students’ they have faced multiple problems related to online classes during crisis situation of Covid-19 in Pakistan which includes non-flexibility of online classes, Internet access issues, Internet speed, Lack of facial interaction, Students are unable to ask questions from teachers, Lack of Proper LMS, issues related to teachers’ access to LMS and online materials and Lack of understanding for practical subjects.

Qualitative Analysis

It has been analyzed from the responses of the interviews that teachers were not utilizing a proper LMS and the software or online learning tools they were using for online classes during crisis situation of COVID-19 were WhatsApp, Zoom, Email/Gmail, Voice Recordings, Skype, Pdf/Power point Lectures, Google Class. Majority of the participants responded that their teachers are using Google Class for sharing lectures in the form of pdf/PowerPoint files and taking assignments and quizzes. They also responded that some of their teachers also explain the learning materials either through mobile recording or WhatsApp Voice notes. Moreover, participants have also responded that very few of their teachers are sharing lectures in the form of videos (YouTube Videos) or audios but most of them are sharing documents or PowerPoint slides regarding lectures. From the interviews it has also been highlighted that all of the teachers were not using video calling software’s for teaching students due to which facial interaction among students and teachers was too less. One of the participants responded that:

“Our teachers are not using proper LMS but they are sharing a junk of lectures in the form of power point or Pdf by using Google Classroom....”

Through structured interviews researcher also explored that either students are satisfied with the online learning tools their teachers are using or not and what are the reasons for their satisfaction and non-satisfaction. By analyzing the responses of the participants, it has been indicated that students were not satisfied with the online learning tools their teachers were using during crisis situation of COVID-19 and as per their opinion they are not satisfied because in this sudden situation of COVID-19, teachers and institutes were not well-equipped to arrange

online classes for students and these online classes are not proper classes because every teacher is not having access to LMS and they are using random online tools for teaching. Participants also responded that there is no face to face interaction with teachers due to which it is difficult to understand concepts. Moreover, they also responded that they are not satisfied because such kind of improper online classes are waste of time and are not effective for learning because students understanding during these classes is null or zero. In addition to this, participants also responded that their involvement is less in these online classes as they are not able to discuss their queries with their teachers because they apply privacy within the groups where no one can ask questions. Participants also responded that they are not satisfied with these online classes because their teachers are only sharing a lot of lectures without explaining and asked them to do prepare it by their own selves for quizzes and assignments this compel students to do rote memorization instead of actual concept clarity. Participants were also having a point of view that in practical subjects like: Mathematics, Statistics and Lab based subjects it is difficult for students to understand those subjects through self-study or by watching online videos until their teacher would not explain it to them properly and in detail. Furthermore, almost all of the participants were responded that they are not understanding anything from online classes because in Pakistan electricity and internet issues are very common, internet connection is not much stronger and every student is not having an access to it due to which they are getting shorter on their attendance as well as understanding which will affect their grades negatively. One of the respondent said that:

“I am not satisfied with these online classes because teachers are not explaining anything and compel us to do self-study which is not helping us in understanding the concepts Properly.”

In contrary to this, some of the participants also responded that they are not fully satisfied with these online classes but “something is better than nothing” and they also responded that their teachers are putting enough efforts to find the appropriate and easy online tool which every student can use properly. It is also a first time and sudden experience for teachers but they are struggling to find the best possible ways to teach students and making their concepts clear but it is not that easy because we are not used to this system and it will take time for both teachers and students’ to getting used to this approach of teaching. One of the participants responded that:

“Something is better than nothing and online classes are better to save our time during this crisis.”

Another Respondent said that:

“I am happy that my teachers are putting extra efforts to help me out in my studies, but it will take time to get things normal.”

Researchers has also explored the views of students regarding benefits of Online classes during this Crisis situation of COVID-19. As per the responses of the participants, within online classes, all lectures were available online due to which they can get access to lectures and online learning materials any time and from anywhere which is very helpful for them. Moreover, some of the students were also having the point of view that online classes are the best alternate during this crisis situation of Covid-19 because instead of sitting at home, wasting time and fee they are taking online classes which not only saving their time but also helping them in getting in-touch with education or studies. In addition to this, students also responded that because of these online classes, they will be able to complete their degree within the required time. One of the participants responded that:

“It is new for us and our teachers to use Technology in classes but during this crisis situation it will save our time and we will be able to complete our degree within time.”

Researchers has also investigated the participants’ point of view about what problems they have faced while taking online classes during crisis situation of COVID-19. As per the responses of the participants, most of the participants were having the point of view that it is difficult to understand content and concepts in online classes because sometimes signals are weak and the disturbance in the home environment also divert their focus and attention from the content due to which they do not understand things properly. Furthermore, as per the opinion of the participants, it has also been analyzed that within online classes, communication problem is a major issue and some of the participants also said that their teachers are not taking proper online classes, they are just sending them the notes or lectures without explaining them and ask them to do independent learning which is not enough for conceptual understanding. One of the participants said that:

“I am unable to understand the content in online classes because I am unable to pay my full attention on content due to poor signals and noisy home environment.”

In addition to this, participants also responded that the major problems associated with online classes were electricity issues and the students' who went back to their homes in backward areas they are not having proper internet connection due to which they are not only facing content completion issues but also their attendance is getting short in online classes which is making them upset. Moreover, participants also highlighted that internet within Pakistan is still not much powerful and accessible for every student due to which they are facing many problems during online classes and they are afraid about their bad performance during exams because they are not understanding the concepts or content. One of the participant said that:

“Internet problem is the major issue due to which students take tension even some students in my observation are suffering from depression and anxiety because they have paid high fee and are unable to attend classes and their class fellow are going to complete the whole syllabus.”

Another participant also responded that:

“Everyone have no access to WiFi and internet packages are expensive and it's an economic burden for both students and their parents.”

Moreover, participants also responded that they are less involved in online classes because their teachers are not compromising with them, they are not allowed to ask questions and their teachers are giving them a lot of assignments and quizzes without explaining the content which compels them to do rote memorization for getting good grades in quizzes. One of the participants said that:

“It's totally crap and students are just forced on spoon feeding. Teachers provides bundle of learning material to students just for cramming them without comprehending and it's a wastage of time for both students and teachers.”

Some of the participants also highlighted that they are not able to use the software their teachers are using, sometimes their mobiles get hanged due to which they lose their attention. Furthermore, they also said that they are not used to this informal environment of learning that is why lack of facial interaction is also a major problem due to which they are not able to concentrate on the subject matter. Students also claimed that in this informal environment they are unable to discuss their problems with their teachers freely. Moreover, majority of the participants were having the view that this approach of teaching is not suitable for Pakistan because it requires a proper setup but within such sudden crisis situations our teachers are unable to use proper LMS or even they are not having an access to LMS which is creating many problems for students. They also said that it is difficult to cover practical subjects online which requires lab work or also subjects like Mathematics, Statistics etc. which needs real life demonstration.

One of the participants said that:

“This online system is not suitable for sudden crisis situations because we are not having proper technology-based learning systems in every higher educational institute of Pakistan.”

Researchers has also asked respondents to suggest any alternate to online classes during this crisis situation of Covid-19. Most of the participants suggested that educational institutes can consider these months as semester break and postpone the semester to the next session. Furthermore, they also suggested that universities can take extra semester with fee compensation to reduce the fee burden of their parents. In contrary to this, some of the participants said there is no other alternate to online classes because they do not know when the institutes will open again that is why institutes may continue online classes to save their time and money.

Discussion and Cross Analysis

The approaches of teaching and learning has now transformed, and various components of technology has become the part of these modern approaches which are beneficial for improving students' knowledge and skills. Online learning is also one of the forms of innovative teaching

approach which is trending these days and it can be easily predicted that it will be the need of the future generation too. This approach is significant in terms of providing knowledge and skills to students across the world anytime and anywhere which indicates that it can also be used during any crisis situation but for making this approach successful institutes must need a proper LMS and teachers are also required to have enough expertise to use it effectively. For this study researcher has explored students' perspectives regarding the online classes which their institutes have started during the crisis situation of COVID-19 in Pakistan. Moreover, the problems they have faced while taking online classes during this crisis situation and also explored students' opinions regarding the alternate to these online classes during this crisis situation of COVID-19.

As per the results of the study it has been indicated that during this sudden crisis teacher were not using proper LMS for arranging online classes for students but they were sending PowerPoint slides or Pdf files to students through Gmail/Email and they were also using Google classrooms for sending notes and taking quizzes and assignments. In contrary to this, very few teachers were using Zoom or Skype for arranging live online classes for students. These results of the study were unique because within Pakistan there is no evidence for arranging online classes during any crisis situation before Covid-19.

It has been also indicated that students were not satisfied with the online tools their teachers were using because teachers were giving them a lot of lectures and were not explaining the lectures either live or in recorded form by utilizing WhatsApp or another software. Whereas, most of teachers were asking students to do self-study without involving any facial interaction which is not enough for students' concepts clarity and understanding and students were afraid of getting poor grades in exams. Moreover, there is a controversy among the students regarding asking questions from teachers' majority of the students said that they are not allowed to ask questions from their teachers but some of them said that their teachers are putting extra efforts in explaining the content and answer all of their queries regarding the content. In addition to this, the reasons of students' dissatisfaction from online classes were lack of LMS in higher education institutes, lack of teachers' access to LMS, in appropriate selection of online tools for teaching, electricity crisis,

internet access and speed issues and in appropriate approach for practical subjects which requires lab work or demonstration. In contrary to this, some of the participants were not fully satisfied with online classes but having an opinion that something is better than nothing and this alternate is good for saving their time and educational fee during this crisis situation of COVID-19. The results of the study were unique because researchers explored the students' satisfaction regarding online classes specifically within the crisis situation of COVID-19 and in the past, there was no such incident happened in Pakistan when sudden online classes has been started in higher education institutes of Pakistan. In general, Memon et al., (2019) conducted a comparative study of online learning management in Pakistan and results of the study indicated that 80% of the participants were not aware about online LMS tools which is quite similar to this study.

It is also extracted from the results that in participants' opinion the major benefits for online classes during Covid-19 were accessibility of learning materials, time flexibility, cost effectiveness, no wastage of educational time, degree completion within time and no wastage of educational fee. Hussain (2017) also indicated cost effectiveness and time flexibility as one of the major benefits of Online Classes within Pakistan but these results were not generated during any crisis situation like COVID-19.

From the results of the study, it is also indicated that the problems students have faced while taking online classes during crisis situation of Covid-19, were non-flexibility of online classes, internet access issues, internet speed issues, electricity crisis, lack of facial interaction, lack of teachers' explanation, lack of proper LMS and issues related to teachers' access to LMS and online materials, lack of understanding, lack of involvement, excessive rote memorization and lack of questioning from teachers. Same as Ahmed et al., (2017), Farid et al., (2014), Qureshi et al., (2012) indicated electricity crisis and internet access or speed issues as major problems of online classes within Pakistan. In addition to this, Hussain (2017) also indicated lack of students' concentration and lack of face-to-face interaction within online classes as major problems students highlighted while taking online classes in Pakistan. Ahmed et al., (2017) also indicated that difficulty to answer the queries of every student are also a major problem indicated by students while taking online classes

within Pakistan, but these results were not generated during any crisis situation like COVID-19.

By reviewing the results of the study, it has been indicated that as per students' opinion, the best alternate to online classes is semester break with fee compensation during this crisis of COVID-19. These results of the study were unique because within Pakistan, there is no evidence for arranging online classes during any crisis situation before COVID-19.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In this study, researchers explored students' perspectives regarding taking online classes during pandemic of Covid-19 in Pakistan. It is indicated that most of the students were not satisfied with this approach of teaching because as per their opinion their institute is not having a proper LMS due to which their teachers are just sending them a lot of lectures through Gmail or Google classroom without explaining which leads towards lack of involvement and lack of understanding on the part of students. Furthermore, students have indicated various problems they have faced while taking online classes most common of them were access to internet, internet speed issues, electricity crisis and lack of content explanation. It has been suggested by participants to stop online classes and consider the current time period as semester break with fee compensation until institutes might improve LMS for rearranging online classes in effective way.

For the current research study, there are certain limitations; researcher was only able to collect data from the respondents who were available online because due to lockdown, researcher was unable to go outside home for data collection. Moreover, researcher has approached students of different semesters and different departments conveniently. Number of participants was limited due to pandemic situation and closure of universities. It is recommended to improve the LMS at university level for managing online classes regularly and effectively. Moreover, future researchers may conduct this sort of study at different universities of country for planning more effective strategies of teaching and learning. This study might be helpful for the authorities to take a decision regarding continuity of online classes. Moreover, it will also help curriculum planners to look into the problems students are facing in online classes and decide how can they overcome these problems in

future. This study is also significant for teachers because by considering the student's problems they can make amendments in their online teaching techniques in order to improve the learning of the students. Furthermore, this study will also contribute within an existing literature because as per HEC repository data no research study has been conducted to get the perspectives of the students regarding online classes in crisis situation of Covid-19 in Pakistan.

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