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Problems and Challenges of Digital Learning in Rawalpindi and Islamabad during Covid-19

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Abstract: In wake of the recent Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, this study investigates how Pakistani higher education students think about online and distant learning courses Surveys of undergraduate and graduate students (n=700)were conducted to learn about their opinions about online education in Pakistan. The study's findings showed that in developing nations like Pakistan, where the great majority of students lack internet connection i.e., 86% due to technical and financial difficulties, online learning cannot produce the intended results. Other difficulties raised by college students included the instructor's lack of face-to-face engagement, response times, and the lack of typical classroom socialization. 81% of the university students were found unsatisfied from online learning.

INTRODUCTION

The catastrophic pandemic of the twenty-first century that caught everyone off guard was COVID-19. The World Health Organization announced a cluster of new corona virus cases on December 31 in Wuhan, China. The virus spread quickly over the world and quickly became a threat to global health due to its high contagiousness. Millions of people's daily lives have been impacted by this epidemic, either as a result of the virus itself or as a result of the fear of domestic and international limitations. This pandemic has resulted in enormous civil public health and financial issues around the world. The main COVID-19 incident in Pakistan was discovered on February 26, 2020, in Karachi, the country's most populous metropolis. The country is concerned about impending devastation due to the virus's rapid and continued spread. The Ministry of Federal Education of Pakistan issued an order suspending academic activities at all

schools, colleges, and institutions just two days after the COVID-19 Pandemic was declared. COVID-19 has undoubtedly had a significant impact on students, teachers, and educational organizations around the world, much like many other elements of daily life (Mailizar, Almanthari, Maulina, & Bruce, 2020). Due to the pandemic, educational institutions around the world had to close their doors so that students could adhere to social segregation policies (Toquero, 2020). That said, a smooth transition from a setting of traditional education to remote and virtual learning could not be accomplished over night. This quick transition is currently accompanied by a number of difficulties and difficulties (Crawford et al., 2020). But because there is no way to predict the ending of such pandemic. (Kaur, 2020). It wasn't the first time that activities associated with conventional education were postponed. Not only did the H1N1 Flu outbreak significantly affect education activities in 2009, but the SARS coronavirus (SARSCoV) also had a detrimental influence on traditional educational activities in a huge number of countries worldwide (Cauchemez et al., 2014). Similar to how Covid-19 forced academic professionals to reevaluate the conventional method of face-to-face learning, they began to consider distance learning as a practical option to fill the void left by the classroom for a period of three to four months, reducing the risk of infection for students before traditional activities are resumed (Kaur, 2020). Numerous colleges offer online courses, however there are two issues. Online education is ineffective in Pakistan since it might be effective in nations with advanced digital infrastructure (Basilaia&Kvavadze, 2020). As in Pakistan, a massivenumber of teachings, as well as administrative tasks at educational institutions, are carried out by hand (Salam et al., 2017). Online learning is hampered by a lack of quick, inexpensive, and dependable internet connections, especially for Pakistanis living in rural or underserved areas (Wains & Mahmood, 2008). Students who use smartphones to access the internet are unable to benefit from online learning because a substantial portion of the available online content is not available on smart phones. Today's youth is regarded as "digital-age learners" because of their technological capabilities and self-directed learning style. These digital-age youngsters have access to information and expertise outside of traditional school structures and procedures owing thanks to their iPhones, iPods, computer games, text messaging and social media profiles. According to recent studies, these students are less reliant on traditional educational institutions for acquisition of knowledge and considerably more self-sufficient, using their internet-based skills to aggregate data and information (Burkholder, 2013). As schools attempt to adapt and embrace this quickly changing environment, these changing student characteristics, as well as the greater presence of technology and digital resources, present significant obstacles. Access and resources, teacher training and development, as well as structures and delivery methods, must all be addressed while discussing the problems and challenges of digital learning.

Since the school has a specific responsibility to prepare a thoroughly developed student with the necessary competences and qualifications, so the students must be ready to continue education in a highly developed information environment thus the construction of a digital learning environment in the educational system is the utmost demand of time.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In education institutions, digital media, which is basically an Internet-based tool that foster cooperation and sharing of information (Junco., et al 2012), can be utilized to improve student engagement and learning (Kabilan et al., 2010). Student engagement is typically linked to the accomplishment of beneficial learning outcomes, such as rational reflection and individual student growth, because it symbolizes the time and effort that students devote in collaborative and educational activities (Kuh, 1993; Kuh, 2001; Carini et al., 2006). The prevalence of digital media use and how it can effect socialization, collaboration, and knowledge creation are discussed in this review, followed by the linkages between student participation and student learning. Finally, instructors are given suggestions on how to incorporate digital media into course curriculum. Because of the rapid advancement of information and communication technology, digital media has been creatively integrated into modern teaching applications and systems.

The characteristics of student participation through internet as a means of enabling enhanced student performance will be explored in this research review, as well as the consequences for teachers with the using of digitalapproach into curricular content. Learner involvement refers to how much time and effort students put into social interactions as part of educational activities (Kuh, 2001).

Individuals who use digital technologies for academic purposes are more likely to contribute and participate in active, intellectual collaboration with other students, according to Nelson Laird and Kuh (2005). This cooperation shows that as individuals' interaction with technology grows, so does their engagement with education, resulting in a stronger bond between students, teachers, and curriculum content (Mehdinezhad, 2011). The learner can become much committed with the subject matter content when they participate in a community of learners, which promotes the accomplishment of popular learning objectives like critical thinking and individual student growth (Kuh, 1993, 2009; Carini et al., 2006; Kuh et al., 2008; Pike et al., 2011). As a result, student engagement via digital media can improve relationships, resulting in a social space that promotes greater subject learning.The use of media platforms has risen in recent years among people of all ages. According to the Pew Infotech and American Development Project, while 73 % of kids among the age of 12 and 17 use social networks, Youngstersin the range of 18 yr. and 29 yr.use it even more (83 %) (Lenhart et al., 2010; Madden and Zickuhr, 2011). Pre-adolescent kids do not appear to utilize digital media to the same extent as older pupils, owing to age limitations and restricted access to digital media (Lenhart et al., 2010). Two-thirds of online Adults utilize digital media, in addition to the amount of teens and young people who use it (Madden &Zickhur, 2011). In education institutions, digital networks has been used to encourage students to join, share, and study with other colleagues (Kabilan et al., 2010). Students use digital technologies on a frequent basis in both their personal and academic lives, according to Nelson Laird and Kuh (2005). Students, on the other hand, are more likely to use digital media than other course-related technology because they are already aware of the details and settings (Liu, 2010; Appel, 2012; Hurt et al., 2012). Most scholars nowadays believe that knowledge resides not just in mind of the individual, but also in interpersonal discourse and activities. These kinds of interactions encourage active engagement, which is an important part of student education (Hrastinski, 2009). Learners must build abilities in sharing knowledge and learning with others, both in person and via technology, such as digital media. According to Kabilan et al. (2010), students form community of learners by collaborating to facilitate learning. By fostering cooperation and communication, digital media can help to facilitate the formation of these learning communities. Furthermore, these interactions support the attainment of intended end results. (Yu et al., 2010).

In its consequence, digital approaches encourage cooperative erudition styles. which aids to the development of creative thinking (Shoshani and Braun, 2007). Student engagement and interactions with course material characterize collaborative learning. Because a low percentage of learners comes within the limits of a classroom, digital media allows students to broaden their environment for learning (Chen and Bryer, 2012; Friesen and Lowe, 2012; Wodzicki et al., 2012). Fewkes and McCabe (2012) said that that it is up to teachers to figure out how to incorporate contemporary digital media into their courses. Educators may utilize digital media to encourage students to study topic material in new ways, which will help them become more creative (Frye et al., 2010; Lamb and Johnson, 2010).

The learners can utilize digital media to investigate topic material in attempt to develop new information. For instance, digital media gives students the opportunity for developing authentic, new inventions using technologies such as blog posts, YouTube, and webinars (Frye et al., 2010; Lamb and Johnson, 2010). Students are able to reconcile individually with the use for when their requirements for creative thinkers are addressed through a collaborative learning environment, allowing innovative concepts to emerge (Garrett, 2011; Shoshani and Braun, 2007). When utilized in isolation, technology may not always help students learn. Students who write notes by hand get greater test scores than students who write notes on laptops, according to Aguilar-Roca et al., (2012).

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of the study are:

1. To identify the Problems faced by the university students in digital learning during covid-19.
2. To explore the challenges faced by the university students in digital learning during covid-19.
3. To suggest methods to overcome hurdlesconfronted by students from digital learning in the time of covid-19.

METHOD

Sample

The study region for the researchers was Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Finding the overall opinions of Pakistani higher education students toward required online and distance learning courses in the context of the Coronavirus was the main goal of this research project (COVID-19).700 students who were enrolled in higher education made up the study's sample. Undergraduate and graduate students were among the participants. B.S level students of Faculty of Social Sciences from universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad were presented the questionnaire. 4 Universities in Rawalpindi were selected and 4 Universities in Islamabad were selected.

Pilot Testing

A pilot investigation was made over a sample of 25 students from Rawalpindi universities and 25 students from Islamabad universities to check the validity and reliability of the questionnaire.

Survey

Students at Pakistan's Arid Agriculture University in Rawalpindi participated in a pilot survey test. Their feedback and recommendations served as the basis for the necessary modifications. Based on their suggestions and criticism, the necessary adjustments were implemented.

Data Analysis

The results of an online survey were converted into %ages and examined by the frequency of student responses

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RESULTS

Table 7: Digital Learning

Digital Learning	Frequency	%
Satisfied	133	19.0
Un Satisfied	567	81.0
Total	700	100

According to this analyzed data 19% of respondents answered that they were satisfied by digital learning during Covid-19 and 81% were unsatisfied by digital learning.

Table 8: Access to Good Quality Internet

Access to Good Internet	Frequency	%
Yes	601	86.0
No	99	14.0
Total	700	100.0

When researcher asked from respondents that did you have access to good quality internet, they replied various answer in the form of yes and no. From those answer researcher analyzed our most of youth had access to good quality internet.

Table 9: Understanding of Concepts

Did you learn via digital platform	Frequency	%
Understood concepts	127	18.0
Did not understand	573	82.0
Total	700	100.0

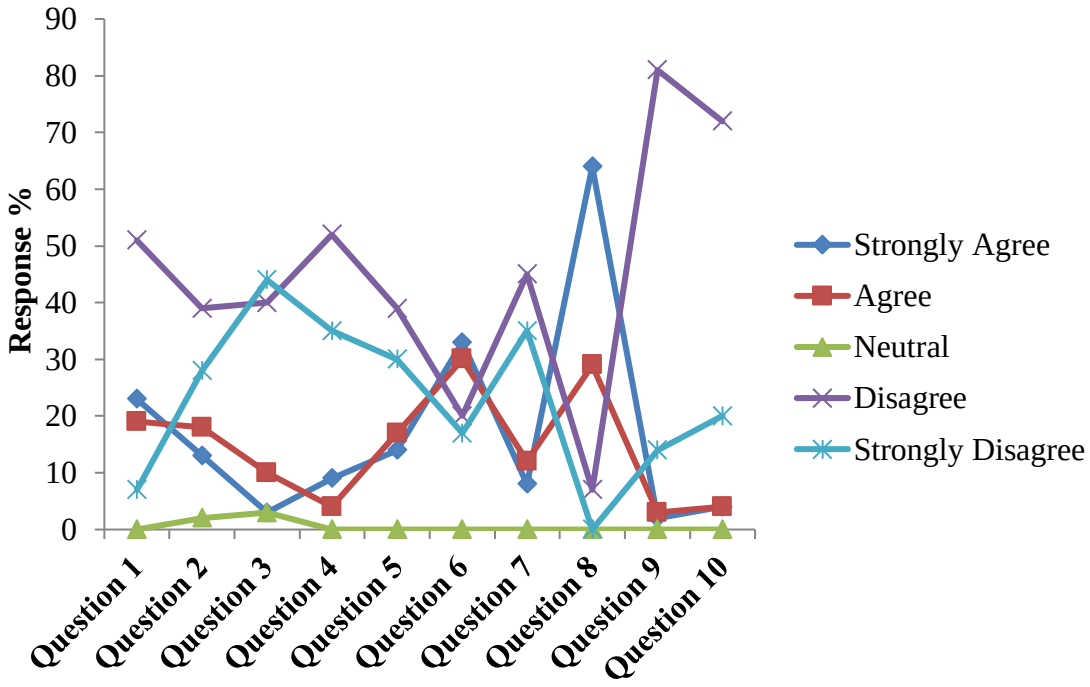
From asking question that did you learn via digital platform i.e., Zoom, Google meet etc, 18% understood the concepts, while 82% did not understand.

Table 10: Problems faced in digital learning during Covid-19

Problems faced in Digital Learning	Frequency	%
Yes	629	89.0
No	71	11.0
Total	700	100.0

In this table data which is analyzed by SPSS software 24.0 of variable, most of our youth replied or responded that yes they faced problems in digital learning during Covid-19. 11% said no they did not face any problem during Covid-19 and 80 % said they faced problems in digital learning during Covid 19.

Sr.	Questions	% of Respondents				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	I am pretty good at using the computer.	23	19	0	51	7
2	I am comfortable communicating electronically.	13	18	2	39	28
3	Learning is the same in class and at home on the Internet	3	10	3	40	44
4	learnings online classesmotivate rather in regular course.	9	4	0	52	35
5	Complete class courses can be delivered online	14	17	0	39	30
6	I can discuss with other students during Internet activities outside of class.	33	30	0	20	17
7	I admit group learning of online classes activities.	8	12	0	45	35
8	face-to-face interaction the teacher is mandatory	64	29	0	7	0
9	Online assignments are same as physical assignments.	2	3	0	81	14
10	Online assignments make students learn same as physical assignments.	4	4	0	72	20



DISCUSSION

The questionnaire was created with the aim of gathering data regarding the effectiveness of various online tools and technologies, students' preferred learning styles, and other factors that might have an effect on the teaching-learning process. The standards were developed based on the various learner types, advantages, and difficulties of online learning. Answering questions 1-3 will reveal the student's favorite style of learning. Questions 4–7 are posed to learn more about the numerous difficulties students face when learning online. the effectiveness of the teaching and evaluation medium is assessed in questions 8 through 10. Since the majority of students take online courses from home, this style was chosen since it would be well-liked by college students from many universities. Many students were not satisfied with online learning during COVID-19, according to studies done on students in two major cities. The majority of the questions in the poll were eagerly answered by the students who participated. This study looked into whether the ongoing epidemic has an effect on how students behave when learning online in asynchronous settings. The increase of daily COVID-19 confirmed cases during the lockdown days up until the pandemic's peak was shown to be correlated with students' online learning practices.

. According to studies, online learning among students and the emergence of pandemics are related with each other. Second, the findings provide new insight into how students proceed with their education in asynchronous online courses as the pandemic continues to spread throughout the outside world. Teachers can observe asynchronous remote courses, which give scholars more control over their literacy and inflexibility with their time, and dissect the backend database records to more understand scholars' literacy

responses during the epidemic when they try to convert physical courses into coetaneous remote literacy to maintain educational conditioning.

CONCLUSION

The physical learning approach used by all educational institutions throughout the world was impacted by COVID-19. Online learning was accepted by academic institutions' top management as a means of continuing education.In underdeveloped nations like Pakistan, where the vast majority of students are unable to access reliable internet service due to technical as well as budgetary constraints, online learning cannot deliver positive results. The majority of pupils are skeptical of online and digital learning. The main difficulties Pakistani students pursuing higher education experienced included a lack of internet access, improper engagement and contact with classmates and professors, and inadequate technology. Taking lessons online for students might be beneficial if all these problems are resolved.

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