

Impact of Online Classes on Academic Performance of University Students During Covid-19

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Abstract

The COVID-19 virus has changed whole system of the world; in education sector, institutions have switched their physical classes to online classes. Though online classes provide students with the opportunity of self-study but it is uncomfortable for many students and has a negative impact on student's academic performance. Along with academic performance, academic integrity is questioned due to online classes. Therefore, the current study aimed to find out the impact of online classes (independent variable) on Baluchistan University students' academic performance. A total of 500 university students from five different universities of Baluchistan have been selected to respond the questionnaire online. Results show that online classes have direct effect on academic performance.

Keywords: Online classes, academic performance, academic integrity, COVID-19

Introduction

Since March 2020, whole world was disturbed due to pandemic of COVID-19 but its effect is more strong on education sector. Higher education is struggling to cover the loss of students by shifting the traditional physical classes to online classes (Khattar, Jain & Quadri, 2020). As students have to take their online classes from different locations, which direct students to adjust to new conditions like environmental, technological, and psychosocial aspects. Online classes have affected student academic performance and academic integrity. There are different reasons of poor academic performance of students. Many institutions are not equipped fully with modern technology; there is an internet speed issue, and there are many students who do not have laptops, mobiles and internet facility at home (Asikhia, 2010). First challenge for the students is to arrange laptops, mobiles and internet facility for online classes. Second challenge is for teachers, who have to engage students in online classes which is somewhat difficult as compared to physical classes

(Realyvásquez, Maldonado, Arredondo, Baez-Lopez, Carrillo & Hernández, 2020).

Now a day, the most powerful online networking tool is social media. Social media has been entered into the social and economic life of people. Technological advancements forced learners to contribute as a co-producer of knowledge by introducing the term social media which indicates websites and online applications that allow users to take benefit from different features of social media such as communicating, sharing, collaborating, publishing etc (Irfan et al., 2017). For online classes, there are many online tools available such as Zoom, WhatsApp, Google classroom, and social networks (Mahdy, 2020).

Balochistan is a backward province in all means. Different universities have started online classes during lockdown but unfortunately students in that specific region have less or no access to internet. As many students of Balochistan Universities are from remote areas. So, they faced a lot of problems in continuing their education as they did not have internet facility, electrical devices facility, electricity issues and bad weather conditions (Tareen & Jabeen, 2019).

Higher education is an important sector which contributes to knowledge and research. The importance of online marketing for higher education institutions become a necessity of the time. To establish successful online presence, university should support both traditional and online marketing strategies (Irfan et al., 2018; Irfan et al., 2020). It is primary objective of HEIs to provide an efficient method of online classes which helps to improve students' knowledge, motivation, creativity, and maintain interest in studies. Also, there is a lot of mental workload on students in online classes as the method and speed of teaching online are fast. All this information has shown that student's academic performance was badly affected due to online classes as a result students showed less interest in studies and tried to solve their online assessments by doing cheating. Online cheating badly affects the academic integrity which is a big challenge for the HEIs (Mahdy, 2020). .

Therefore, the primary aim of the current research was to find out the impact of online classes on the academic performance of university students of Balochistan during COVID-19 lockdown. Therefore, following is the research question:

RQ: What is the impact of online classes on academic performance of university students during COVID-19?

Literature Review

Impact of online classes on student's academic performance is studied by different researchers. For instance, from the study of Gonzalez et al. (2020) a positive relationship is found between COVID-19 and learning performance of students in the Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. In the same way, college students' behaviour towards online classes in Pakistan is researched by Adnan and Anwar (2020). Similarly Bibi et al., (2018) also investigate the impact of latest technology and social media on the personal communication on youth of Balochistan. Moreover, Demuyakor (2020) found that "positive relationship in the satisfaction level of Ghanaian international students in higher educational institutions is positive in China during the COVID-19 pandemic". In addition, Haider and Al-Salman (2020) found that 50% of students are of the view that "face-to-face communication" considerably enhances their educational accomplishment, and 50% of them are of the view that the coursework through online learning leads to misunderstanding, dissatisfaction, and bad performance.

Furthermore, Sintema (2020) considered the "effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on academic performance on students of secondary schools in Zambia". From his study, it is found that students' percentage decreases during COVID-19. From all these researches, it is concluded that in the COVID-19 lockdown period, students' academic performance is highly affected by the shift in classes; from physical to online classes (Mahdy, 2020).

Different authors found the reasons of bad academic performance of students in online classes, such as discomfort to sit continuously for online classes, internet availability and speed issue and even some students reported headache problem during online classes. According to Cochran Hameen et al.(2020) reason for students bad academic performance is the students' health and the interior environment. Bhatti et al., (2018) establish the link of academic performance of graduate students with personality. Similarly, Zhong et al. (2019) found the bad weather condition, lighting issues and noise to be responsible for bad performance of the students (Realyvásquez et al., 2020).

Methodology

This study uses cross-sectional study design. A total of 500 participants were selected randomly from five universities of Balochistan. An online survey was formulated and emailed to 500 participants. The purpose of the survey is defined at the start of the questionnaire. The questionnaire is in the appendix. There are two parts of questionnaire: The first part discusses the demographic characteristics of respondents which include (gender, age, residence, program level). The second part discusses the impact of online classes on academic performance by adapting the measurement scale of Gruber, Fuß, Voss & Gläser-Zikuda (2010). To measure the impact of online classes on the academic performance, 5-Point Likert Scale was used as follow (Highly satisfied = 5 points; significantly satisfied = 4 points; fairly satisfied = 3 points; slightly satisfied = 2 points; not satisfied = 1 point).

Overall 450 responses were received out of which 50 responses were not included due to incompatible data. The rest of 400 responses were evaluated. Of the 400 participants, 194 (48.5%) were females, and 206 (51.5%) were males. The range of students' age was from 19 to 30 years. The majority of the participants cover undergraduate students (80.7%, $n = 320$) while 20% ($n = 80$) of students were postgraduate. About 44.75% ($n = 179$) students were living in cities while 55.25% ($n = 221$) were living in rural areas. From these responses, it is evaluated that 97% of the students were affected by the online classes during lockdown.

The present data showed that the 60% of the students are not satisfied and their academic performance is greatly affected by COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. Nearly 20% were significantly satisfied with the online classes, 12% were fairly satisfied with the online classes, and 5% were slightly satisfied. Whereas, only 3% of participants reported that lockdown had no effect on their academic performance or they are highly satisfied with the online classes.

From the result of this research it is obvious that the academic performance of Balochistan university students is affected by different variables due to which their satisfaction level is different. From the data, it is revealed that 25% of students faced problems in online education due to non-availability of internet, 30% of the students faced internet issues with regards to its cost and speed, 30% of the students did not have the electronic devices for online education, and 15% faced lack of interaction between students and teachers. Moreover, some environmental factors are

also responsible for the bad academic performance during lockdown such as bad weather condition, load shedding, having difficulty in finding proper place to sit to take online classes.

The research results in this study shows that online classes are positively related to the academic performance of students.

Conclusion

From this study, it is concluded that COVID-19 pandemic affected badly students' education. Due to COVID-19, physical classes shifted to online classes. Many students of Balochistan faced different problems like weather conditions, lighting issue, internet issues etc that badly affected their academic performance. Although online class provided the opportunity to students with flexibility of more time to learn and self-study but online classes in Balochistan especially the remote areas have many issues like environmental problems, internet problem and availability of electronic devices. All such problems create lack of interest in studies that affect students' academic performance. It is recommended that government should make policy in which universities can provide students with electronic devices. Fastest internet service must be provided even in rural areas. Teaching methods must be improved in online classes, so that students can take interest and get engage in studies. For future studies, it is recommended that teachers' perception about the impact of online classes must be studied.

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Appendix Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

I am conducting a research survey on the “impact of online classes on Balouchistan university students academic performance during COVID-19” .Please spare some time out of your busy schedule to complete the following questionnaire. I hereby assure you that data collected will be kept highly confidential and will be only utilized for academic purposes.Thanking you for your participation

Part A		
Name (Optional): _____		
Name of your University	University of Balouchistan Sardar Bahadur Khan Women University (SBKWU) Balochistan University of Information Technology (BUIITS) Al-Hamd Islamic University Balochistan University of Engineering and Technology	
Circle your gender:	M	F
Residence:	City	Rural
Program Level:	Undergrad	Postgrad
Part B		
Tick the option that best describe your overall satisfaction with your university services by using the scale 1 to 5		

not satisfied		slightly satisfied		fairly satisfied		Significantly satisfied		Highly satisfied		
1		2		3		4		5		
						1	2	3	4	5
1	Overall, I am satisfied with the University online classes.									
2	Overall, I am satisfied with the lectures provided online.									
3	Overall, I am satisfied with the teacher-student engagement in online classes.									
4	Overall, I am satisfied with the computer and internet facilities.									
5	Overall, I am satisfied with the presentation of information by lecturers online.									
6	Overall, I am satisfied with the online assessments.									
7	Overall, I am satisfied with the courses offered online.									
8	Overall, I am satisfied with my decision to study online.									