Demystifying The Need For Online Mentorship Among University Students During Covid-19

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Abstract

The idea of traditional mentoring is out of date because of newly emerging technology. Due to university closures and a lack of effective communication channels, the current COVID-19 situation more strongly supports the inclusion of e-mentoring. Students were dealing with a variety of mental health issues such as stress, anxiety, and depression, as well as academic, social, emotional, and personal problems. The study investigates the need for e-mentoring among university students in Pakistan during covid-19. The study's sample size is 320 students, 160 male and 160 female, from eight universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Data was collected using a specially designed questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS 22. The findings revealed that both male and female students felt a need for mentoring in all aspects of their lives, but female students felt a greater need than male students. Based on the findings, it was suggested that universities develop a proper e-mentoring plan for this type of situation. Parents may also establish a good rapport with their children to avoid him from mental health issues.

Key words: mentor, mentee, mentoring, covid-19

INTRODUCTION

In Pakistan at higher education the universities were closed during the Covid-19 situation and students were confined to their homes during, moreover their parents were stressed as a result of the closure of their own workplaces. Many parents have lost their jobs. In this difficult situation, students are experiencing many ups and downs. They were presented with emotional, social, academic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal issues. They felt compelled to speak with someone about these concerns, so that they could get advice on how to deal with the situation. Although there is no formal mentoring programme in our country, when educational institutes are open, students seek assistance from their teachers and peers, who serve as mentors.

There is widespread agreement that mentoring improves academic achievement, career goals, and personal development Mentoring is a process in which a senior person serving as a mentor and a less experienced protégé develop a close relationship over time with the intention of improving the protégé's knowledge or receiving guidance. Mentoring can help one's own psycho-social development or professional successes as well as one's academic development are some advantages of mentoring (Bierema & Merriam, 2002). Mentoring is a two-way relationship where one person exchanges his experiences to enhance the knowledge of others and to enable him to solve his physical, social, emotional and spiritual problems. This process occurs when one person receives direction, advice and coaching

from another well experienced person. The two primary purposes of mentoring in career development are instrumental and psychosocial. A substitute for one-on-one mentoring is tele-mentoring, also known as "virtual mentoring," which makes use of the access to internet's resources. It is possible for mentees to access Web pages with resources like lists of potential mentors, chat rooms, and email addresses as well as information about mentoring (Kram & Isabella, 1985). According to (Bierema & Merriam, 2002) Despite the fact that there is little research directly comparing e-mentoring and traditional mentoring, the two approaches are thought to be similar. Thus according to (O'Neil & Gomez, 1996), when a face-to-face relationship would have been inconvenient, email or computer teleconference systems are used to support the mentoring relationship. In the same directions building on (Zey, 1984) definition, (Bierema & Merriam, 2002) made a definition of e mentoring that "a mutually satisfactory connection between a mentor and mentee that is computer-mediated and provides learning, providing guidance, trying to encourage, helping to promote, and modelling. This type of relationship is frequently boundary-free, participatory, and qualitatively distinct from conventional face-to-face mentoring". This type of relationship is frequently boundary-free, participatory, and qualitatively distinct from conventional face-to-face mentoring. There are two main factors that distinguish e mentoring from traditional face-to-face mentoring. One aspect is boundary free, in which an individual can access from anywhere regardless of his living location; and another is participatory, in which anyone can participate regardless of gender, religion, cast, or creed.

Students were confined to their homes during COVID-19 because universities were closed, and their parents were stressed as a result of the closure of their own workplaces. Many parents have lost their jobs. In this difficult situation, students are experiencing many ups and downs. They were presented with emotional, social, academic, intrapersonal, and interpersonal issues. They felt compelled to speak with someone about these concerns, so that they could get advice on how to deal with the situation. According to the (Hall-Lande, Eisenberg, Christenson, & Neumark-Sztainer, 2007) , for public health purposes, the situation has compelled social isolation, which may be risky for some young folks who have already been predisposed to mental health issues. Social isolation can lead to low self-esteem, mood disorders, abusive behavior, and suicidal ideation. Similarly in the present situation of covid-19, (Courtney, Watson, Battaglia, Mulsant, & Szatmari, 2020) stated that there are concerns about the pandemic's impact on school closures. It has a direct impact on daily operations and access to critical services provided by these facilities, such as meals and mental health care. Adolescents can become disoriented when dealing with issues such as anxiety and depression if they lack peer support, regular schedules, and school services.

According to recent reports, since the pandemic started, there has been a significant rise in mental health issues like anxiety and stress as well as psychological distress (Riehm et al., 2020). During the pandemic, young people are especially vulnerable to adverse mental health consequences (Oosterhoff, Palmer, Wilson, & Shook, 2020). E-mentoring, also referred to as online or virtual youth mentoring, is a relatively new field that has gained popularity as a result of the widespread use of digital media by teenagers and the expansion of that medium (Rideout, 2015). A mentor can use Skype to provide feedback and reflection after watching a video of the mentee's performance and uploading it to Messenger and WhatsApp (Gregory & Salmon, 2013). According to a systematic review study (Pacheco et al., 2017) conducted in Brazil in 2017, approximately 50% of medical students reported mental stress, which results in

dissatisfaction with the vocation, mental anguish, and compromised academic performance in the absence of coping mechanisms. According to the (Jacobs, Doyle, & Ryan, 2015) numerous studies on students' experiences with peer groups and online mentoring have found that they are very satisfied with both.

Therefore, during covid-19 an urgent need felt by the students to activate and also shift the mentoring programme to an E-mentoring programme. The study in hand is to assess the need of mentoring by university students during covid-19.

Research objectives: 1: To assess university students' need for online mentoring during the covid-19 pandemic.
2. To compare male and female university students' need for online mentoring during the covid-19 pandemic.

Research question: Do Pakistani university students need online mentoring to help them deal with the problems they are having with the Covid-19 pandemic?

Research methodology

The research study was descriptive in nature, with a cross-sectional and quantitative design. Using a survey questionnaire method, data was gathered. The population of the study consisted of all (18) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa general public sector universities. Multistage sampling technique was used to select the sample of the study. First, a cluster sample was used to divide the population into seven divisions. Eight universities were chosen from among these seven divisions, two from each division. Through systematic sample random technique, 40 students from each university were included in the sample. Total 320 students (160 male and 160 female) were chosen to participate in the study as respondents. The researcher developed a questionnaire to collect data. The questionnaire was validated by experts for language improvement. Prior to administering the questionnaire, pilot testing was conducted to improve the instrument's reliability and validity. SPSS 22 was used to calculate Cronbach's Alpha (.803) to confirm the questionnaire's reliability. Moreover, SPSS 22 was also used to analyze the data.

Data analysis

: **Table 1 Students' Need of Mentoring During COVID-19**

Statement	Gender	SD	DA	N	A	SA	Total	S.D	Mean	Mean Difference	X^2	P
I desire I had somebody in my life with whom I could discuss issues relating to my studies during COVID-19.	M	21	29	12	94	2	160	1.154	3.18	-.188	7.378	.117
	%	6.6	9.1	3.8	29.4	0.6	50%					
	F	16	25	14	96	11	160	1.136	3.37			
	%	5.0	7.8	4.4	30.0	3.4	50%					
	Total	37	54	26	190	13	320	**3.28**	**1.147**			
	%	11.6	16.9	8.1	59.4	4.1	100%					
I desire I had somebody with whom I could discuss the issues related to Covid-19 pandemic.	M	20	34	22	81	2	160	1.130	3.08	-.069	5.564	.234
	%	6.3	10.6	6.9	25.3	0.6	50%					
	F	22	32	16	82	9	160	1.212	3.14			
	%	6.9	10.0	5.0	25.6	2.8	50%					
	Total	42	66	38	163	11	320	**3.11**	**1.171**			
	%	13.1	20.6	11.9	50.9	3.4	100%					

Statement		1	2	3	4	5	Total					
I desire I had somebody with whom I could share my emotional struggles during the COVID-19 pandemic.	M	17	29	17	91	2	160	1.099	3.23	-.125	6.732	.151
	%	5.3	9.1	5.3	28.4	0.6	50%					
	F	14	29	15	95	11	160	1.123	3.35			
	%	4.4	9.1	4.7	29.7	3.4	50%					
	Total	31	58	32	186	13	320	**3.29**	**1.111**			
	%	9.7	18.2	10.0	58.1	4.1	100%					
I desire I had somebody with whom I could have discussed issues pertaining to my social life during the pandemic.	M	24	30	21	78	4	160	1.182	3.07	-.281	11.363	.023
	%	7.5	9.4	6.6	24.4	1.3	50%					
	F	18	24	21	81	19	160	1.204	3.35			
	%	5.6	7.5	6.6	25.3	5.9	50%					
	Total	42	54	42	159	23	320	**3.21**	**1.199**			
	%	13.1	16.9	13.1	49.7	7.2	100%					
I desire I had somebody with whom I could have discussed the pandemic-related mental health issues (such as stress, anxiety, and depression).	M	16	32	15	92	1	160	1.090	3.21	-.175	10.179	.038
	%	5.0	10.0	4.7	28.8	0.3	50%					
	F	14	26	16	96	12	160	1.116	3.39			
	%	4.4	8.1	5.0	30.0	3.8	50%					
	Total	30	58	31	188	13	320	**3.30**	**1.105**			
	%	9.4	18.1	9.7	58.8	4.1	100%					

Df=558

Analysis of table

Analysis of the table 1 reveals that both male and female participants agree on the need and importance of mentoring during covid-19.

1. Participants from both genders agree that it is a good idea to discuss study-related uncertainties during the Covid-19 pandemic, but women are more likely to agree or strongly agree with this statement and are less likely to disagree. Male and female students' opinions on the statement varied significantly (Mean difference=-.188, $x2$=7.378, df=4 and p value are.117). A significant variance in mean difference is discovered. It appears that female students had a greater need for mentoring than male students in this issue because universities were closed due to Covid-19, whereas male students had fewer needs for mentoring. Some students did not believe they required mentoring in this area.

2. Both male and female participants agreed on the importance of mentoring to discuss Covid-19 pandemic issues, but females scored higher on the agree and strongly agree scale and had a lower percentage of no responses, so they made up the majority of this statement. Male and female students' responses to the statement differed significantly (Mean difference = -.069, $x2$ = 5.564, df = 4, and p value =.234). The mean difference varies significantly. Female students appear to have a greater need for mentoring than male students in relation to the COVID-19 related issues, according to the data. Some students did not believe that mentoring was necessary in this situation.

3. Both male and female participants agree that mentoring is required to discuss emotional issues during the COVID-19 pandemic, but females are more likely

than males to agree and strongly agree with this statement, and they are also less likely to disagree. Male and female students' responses to the statement differed significantly (Mean difference=.125, df=4, x2=6.732, and p value is.151). The mean difference varies significantly. Because universities were closed as a result of COVID-19, it appears that female students required more mentoring than male students in terms of emotional issues. Some students did not believe that mentoring was necessary in this situation.

4.   Participants of both genders agreed on the need for mentoring to discuss social problems during the pandemic, but women scored higher at the agree and strongly agree scales and lower on the disagree scale, accounting for the majority of this statement. Male and female students' responses to the statement differed significantly (Mean difference = -.281, df=4 x2 = 11.363, and p value =.023). The mean difference varies significantly. Given that universities were closed due to COVID-

19 and students were unsure how to discuss their social life related issues, Men seem to need mentoring less than women do, and vice versa for the male students. Some students did not consider mentoring necessary in this regard.

5.   Both male and female participants agree that mentoring is necessary to discuss their mental health issues (such as stress, anxiety, and depression) during the pandemic, but females are more likely than males to agree and strongly agree with this statement, and less likely to disagree. Male and female students' responses to the statement differed significantly (Mean difference= -.175, df-4, x2= 10.179, and p value is.038). The mean difference varies significantly. It implies that because they exhibit more signs of anxiety, stress, and depression as a result of Covid-19, females may have a greater need for mentoring in this area than males do. The mentoring needs of the male students are lower. Some students did not consider mentoring necessary in this regard.

Table 2 Levels of needs of mentoring during Covid-19

| Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low need level	89	27.8
Medium need level	108	33.8
High need level	123	38.4
Total	320	100.0

Table 2 shows the overall positions of respondents in various levels of mentoring. 27.8% were found to be in low need, 33.8% were found to be in medium need, and very high percentages were found to be in high need.

Table 3   Gender base Levels of needs of mentoring during Covid-19

Level	Male	Female	Total
Low need level	49	40	89
	15.3%	12.5%	27.8%

Medium need level	55	53	108
	17.2%	16.6%	33.8%
High need level	56	67	123
	17.5%	20.9%	38.4%
Total	160	160	320
	50.0%	50.0%	100.0%

Gender base Levels of needs of mentoring during Covid-19
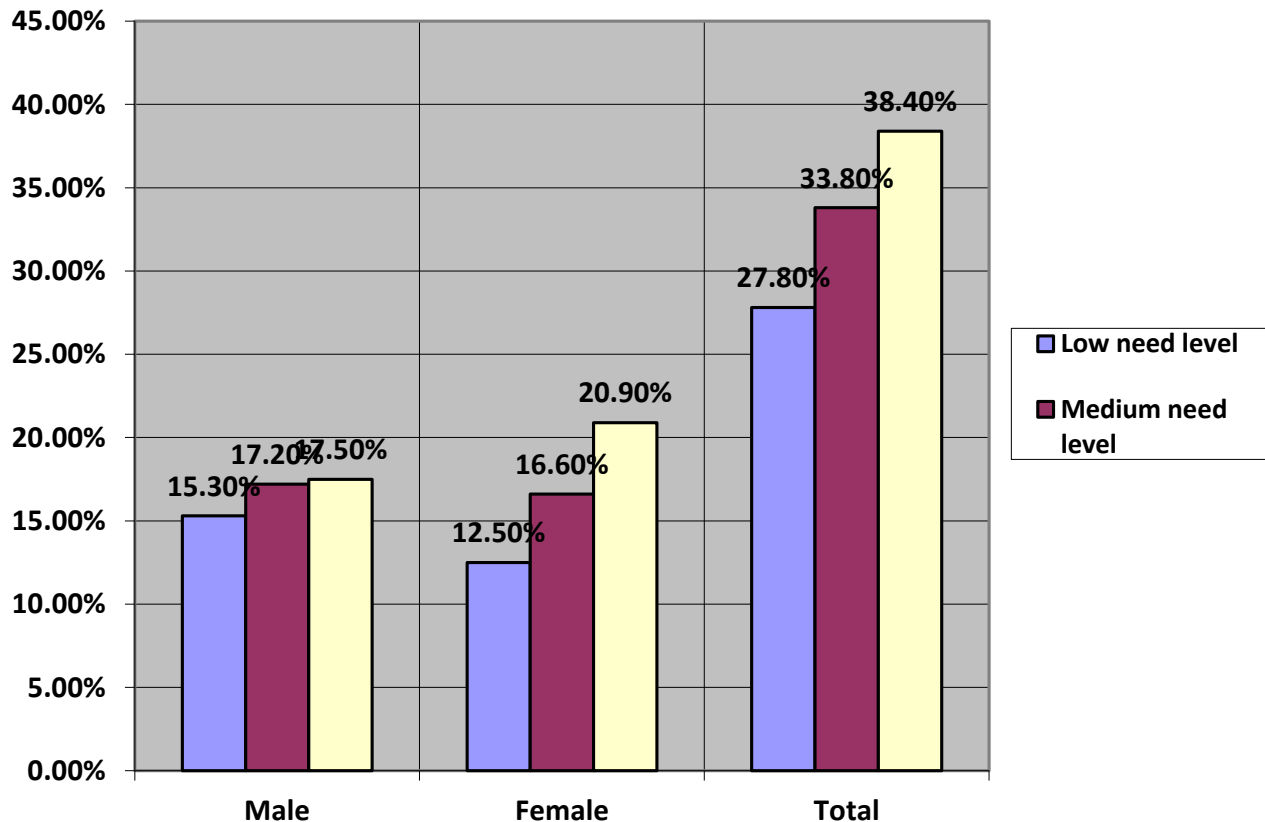
1. 1. According to table 3, both male and female participants agreed on the importance of mentoring during COVID-19 for various issues. The table shows how respondents self-reported the need for mentoring during the Covid-19 pandemic at various levels. (Male 15.3% reported a low level of mentoring need, 17.2% reported a medium level of mentoring need, and 17.5% reported a high level of mentoring need.) (Female 12.5% reported a low level of mentoring need, 16.6% reported a moderate level of mentoring need, and 20.9% reported a high level of mentoring need). Furthermore, both genders overall responded at a low level of 27.8, a medium level of 33.8, and a high level of 38.4. Females made up the majority of the students, with a higher percentage of responses in the category of high level mentoring need and a lower percentage in the category of low level mentoring need. As a result, it appears that female students required more mentoring than male students for the statements than vice versa.

Table 4   Independent Samples Test for comparing male and female students about the need of mentoring during covid-19

Std. Deviation

Respondents	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Male	160	15.7625	4.38334	.34653
Female	160	16.6000	4.16665	.32940

According to table 4, both male and female participants agreed on the importance of mentoring during COVID-19 for various issues. The table shows how respondents self-reported the need for mentoring during the Covid-19 pandemic at various levels. Male 15.625% SD 4.38334 SEM.34653 Female 16.600% SD 4.16665 SEM.32940

Table 5 T test for statistical comparison of groups

Needs	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means					95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	F	Sig	T	Df	Sig (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
Equal variances assumed	.802	.371	-1.75	318	.081	-.83750	.47811	-1.778	.103
Equal variances not assumed			-1.75	317.186	.081	-.83750	.47811	-1.778	.103

We can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the mean score for male and female students is significantly different because p is.371 is greater than our chosen significance level = 0.05. We can conclude the following based on the findings:
Male and female students had significantly different mean scores (t.47811=-.83750 p >.05). Male students' average score was -1.778 lower than female students' average score. It means that female students needed more mentoring during the pandemic than male students.

Discussion, Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

In Pakistan although there is no proper mentoring system but here teachers and peer groups may serve the role of mentor informally. Regarding informal mentoring practices in Pakistan, (Liaqat, Naz, & Nasreen, 2020) findings were also encouraging. Their study demonstrates that mentoring occurs, but it does so informally and often without systematic procedure. (Butler,

2001) reported similar findings, stating that a mentoring relationship is frequently built on conventional and informal features. For the university students a mentor serves as a support system and a source of learning. A knowledgeable mentor can assist a mentee in improving their academic performance. Mentoring is motivated by a desire to expand one's knowledge and learning. E-mentoring needs to be better managed, which calls for affordable technology and instruction on how to use the internet's resources safely (Fransson, 2016) . During covid-19 universities were closed, students were facing mental related issues like anxiety, stress and depression. The researchers felt to analyze the need of e-mentoring during covid-19 situation. Findings of the study revealed that both male and female participants agreed on the importance of mentoring during COVID-19 for various issues. The table shows how respondents self-reported the need for mentoring durin the Covid-19 pandemic at various levels. (Male 15.3% reported a low level of mentoring need, 17.2% reported a medium level of mentoring need, and 17.5% reported a high level of mentoring need.) (Female 12.5% reported a low level of mentoring need, 16.6% reported a moderate level of mentoring need, and 20.9% reported a high level of mentoring need). Furthermore, both genders overall responded at a low level of 27.8, a medium level of 33.8, and a high level of 38.4. Based on the findings, it was concluded that the majority of students felt the need for mentoring during covid-19 and that female students felt the need for mentoring more during covid-19. Based on the findings, it is suggested that universities establish appropriate mentoring programmes during this type of situation. Family members must pay attention to their children, establish mutual relationships with them, and assist them in educational, personal, and academic matters.

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