

University Students' Perceptions Regarding Online Learning In Punjab Pakistan: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

The study aimed at university students' views regarding online learning in Punjab. This study covered three areas including online learning management, interaction, and learning network. A total of 120 M.Phil. students were taken as a respondent from three universities of Punjab. A self-developed questionnaire was used for data collection and gathered data analyzed with the help of frequency, mean, standard deviation, and t test. The study findings reported that university students had multiple views about online learning in respect of management, interaction, and learning network. Where online learning provides various benefits, it also identifies problems that need to be covered in order to promote quality of online learning. The study makes invaluable contribution in the form of university students views about online mode of learning in Punjab, Pakistan. This study could guide universities in developing effective strategies for further strengthen the online learning quality as well as providing standard online learning to students.

Keywords: Perception, Online Learning, Modes of learning, Higher Education.

Introduction

Every sector of society benefits greatly from education. It promotes the growth of an organization and keeps the populace alive. The abilities and attributes of a country's educational administrators to elevate their institutions are crucial to determining its future. As a result, these administrators can create favorable conditions that will enable students to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary for the survival and progress of the country (Alexander et al., 2019). To fulfill societal goals, higher education institutions have to support the broader educational infrastructure (Sanyal, 2001). Higher education has to provide opportunities to cultivate critical thinking,

analytical reasoning, and up-to-date abilities. Pakistan's experts, agents, and pupils urgently want to promote workable conditions. In today's world, IT departments can play a vital role in goal attainment thanks to the extensive adoption of advanced management and education practices fostered through local collaboration (Rehman & Khan, 2021).

Several obstacles, including political, social, human, and technological, make it difficult for people in Pakistan to choose and effectively use online learning tools. Accepting new patterns of online learning innovations is hampered by current affairs. Furthermore, educators, students, and designers agree that ICT plays a significant part in success, but many are disappointed by its

application to a traditional method (Farid et al., 2015; Herwiana & Laili, 2022).

Moreover, Previous studies have examined various aspects of e-learning and online education, but most have focused on proactive online learning rather than the reactive implementation during unexpected events. Thus, it is crucial to acknowledge that this study defines "online education" as a response to the pandemic. With the pandemic persisting, there is an urgent need to investigate and document the triumphs and setbacks of online education for educators and students. Incorporating users' cultural backgrounds could enhance the development of efficient online pedagogical approaches. (Farooq et al., 2020).

The United States, Europe, and other technologically advanced nations have created the literature on this theme. Except for China, it is important to recognize that social and cultural factors differ greatly between industrialized and developing nations. Additionally, the cornerstone of remote education, the information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure, differs greatly between developed and poor countries. Therefore, additional research is required, especially in developing nations, to ensure that the conclusions can be widely understood and applied. The efficiency of online learning has been the subject of several studies carried out during the Pakistani epidemic (Ansar et al., 2020). Some studies have concentrated on a select few academic institutions or academic fields. The purpose of this study is to fill this information gap. This survey offers a systematic look at how students feel about online learning across a range of academic disciplines and institutions. It is the first survey to offer a comprehensive analysis of the subject. It is essential to examine the ongoing initiatives undertaken by university faculty in Pakistan to implement electronic media as a mode of instruction. To guarantee the consistent delivery of online learning programs for future

generations, it is also essential to identify potential hurdles. Therefore, this study aims to promote the implementation of successful online learning programs, the outcomes of this study will be helpful for university students, staff members, administrators, and professors in Pakistani educational institutions.

Objectives

1. To determine the students' perceptions regarding management of online through mode of learning.
2. To finding out student's future perceptions regarding online learning.
3. To provide recommendations for improving the standard of online leaning in the universities .

Hypotheses

H0₁ The hypothesis of this study is that there is no variation in university students' perceptions of online learning concerning management.

H0₂ This study's hypothesis is that there is no variation in university students' attitudes towards the interaction aspect of online learning.

H0₃ The hypothesis of this study is that there is no variation in university students' perceptions of online learning concerning learning networks.

Literature Review

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced universities worldwide to shift from traditional face-to-face teaching to online learning. This change has brought challenges and opportunities for higher education institutions, especially in developing countries like Pakistan, where online education was not commonly practiced before the pandemic. The purpose of this literature review is to investigate the perceptions of university students regarding online learning in Punjab, Pakistan. (Mukhtar et al., 2020). The COVID-19

epidemic has altered the educational landscape globally and compelled academic institutions to adopt online education. Online learning has become crucial to maintaining educational continuity throughout the pandemic (Almaiah et al., 2020). Online learning is becoming more crucial for students' education as the pandemic spreads, and institutions need to overcome these problems to offer high-quality education (Ozdamli & Simsek, 2020).

Furthermore, many difficulties are associated with online learning, such as technological difficulties, a loss of motivation, and a lack of engagement with instructors and fellow students. According to research by Ali et al. (2021), Pakistani students need help with technical issues such as slow internet connectivity, limited computer hardware, and a lack of understanding of online learning platforms. Rahman et al.'s (2021) other study discovered that Pakistani pupils needed more engagement with their teachers and peers, which resulted in a lack of enthusiasm. The attitudes of university students in Pakistan regarding online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic were examined in a study by Khurram et al. (2021). According to the survey, students' attitudes toward online learning were inconsistent. While some students favored traditional face-to-face learning, others found it tough and preferred the convenience and flexibility of online learning. The study also discovered that variables including age, gender, and prior knowledge of online learning impacted students' judgments.

Several variables, including the standard of online learning platforms, instructor support, and materials availability, influence students' opinions of online learning. According to a study by Azeem et al. (2021), the effectiveness of online learning platforms, teacher support, and the accessibility of materials like e-books, videos, and online tests all had a favorable impact on students' opinions of online learning. The survey

also discovered that technical issues and a lack of engagement with teachers and classmates had a negative impact on students' impressions. By Muhammad Sohaib Aslam and Hafiz Muhammad Yasir Nadeem, "Perceptions of Pakistani University Students Toward Online Learning During COVID-19 Pandemic" (2021). In light of the COVID-19 pandemic, this study investigated how Pakistani university students felt about online education. A quantitative methodology and 350 students' data were gathered for the study. The study indicated that although students had favorable opinions of online learning, they also encountered difficulties like poor internet access, a lack of teacher involvement, and trouble managing their time. By Muhammad Tayyab Alam and Naeem Gul Gilal, "Online Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Study of Pakistani University Students' Perceptions and Practices" (2021). The study conducted to ascertain students' views about online learning in the period of Covid 19 pandemic. A mixed-methods technique was used in the study, which gathered information from 150 pupils. Students' attitudes toward online learning were favorable, although they encountered difficulties such as a lack of motivation, trouble comprehending the course material, and a lack of peer interaction. By Kausar Saeed and Hafiz Muhammad Yasir Nadeem, "University Students' Perceptions of Online Learning: A Case Study of a University in Pakistan" (2020). This study sought to discover how university students in Pakistan felt about online education. Data from 25 students were gathered through a qualitative methodology for the study. The survey discovered that although students had favorable opinions of online learning, they also encountered difficulties such as a lack of engagement with peers and teachers, technological difficulties, and trouble managing their time.

Moreover, regarding flexibility, accessibility, and convenience, Al-Qaysi and Abu-Alruz (2020)

discovered that Jordanian university students had favorable opinions of online learning during the COVID-19 epidemic. However, they also needed help with motivation, social engagement, and technical issues. Ali and Ali (2021), Omani university students' opinions of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic were mixed. While some expressed satisfaction with its adaptability and ability to be completed at one's own pace, others complained that there was no instructor support or face-to-face interaction. Kaur and Saini's findings from the year 2021, Indian university students preferred traditional classroom instruction to online instruction for various reasons, including the desire for interpersonal engagement, the need for teacher feedback, and the desire for hands-on experience. To sum up, Singh and Thurairajah (2021) discovered that Malaysian university students had positive perceptions of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, but they faced challenges related to connectivity, technology, and academic workload. They also expressed a desire for more interaction and engagement in online classes. Vázquez-Cano and Sevillano-García (2021) reported that Spanish university students had mixed perceptions of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, with some experiencing improved academic performance and satisfaction, while others

struggled with the lack of social interaction and motivation.

Research Methodology

The study investigates the perceptions of M.Phil. Students about online learning in Punjab. Therefore, quantitative research approach and survey method were used to collect data. The study population comprised M.Phil. Students from three universities: Emerson University Multan, University of Education, and Women University. These respondents were studied in social sciences, languages and sciences programs. The sample of 120 students, 40 from each, was taken with the help of a random sampling technique. The study's data collection used a five-point Likert scale questionnaire covering demographic information and items related to management, interaction, and online networks. A questionnaire was made valid and reliable by applying proper procedure. The data were collected by sending Google form questionnaires to university students. The gathered data were arranged and put into SPSS to tackle the study results. The descriptive statistics frequency, mean, standard deviation, and inferential statistics independent sample t-test were used for data analysis.

Data Analysis

Table 1: Perceptions of University Students about Online Learning in Terms of Management by Degree Level.

Mphil Level	Sample Size	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Language	40	3.8	0.9
Sciences	40	4.2	0.8
Social sciences	40	4.5	0.6

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F-Value	P-Value
Between Groups	5.965	2	2.983	23.285	0.000
Within Groups	7.083	117	0.030		
Total	13.048	119			

In this table, the source of variation column indicates whether the variation is due to differences between groups (between groups) or differences within groups (within groups). The sum of squares column indicates the total sum of squares for each source of variation. The degrees of freedom column indicates the degrees of freedom for each source of variation. The mean square column indicates the mean sum of squares for each source of variation. The F-value column

indicates the calculated F-value for the between groups variation. The p-value column indicates the probability of obtaining a result as extreme as the one observed, assuming that there is no difference between the groups. In this analysis, assuming a significance level of 0.05, the F-value is 23.285 and the p-value is less than 0.001, indicating that there is a statistically significant difference in perceptions of students about online learning management.

Table 2: To investigate the perceptions of universities students about online learning in terms of interaction.

Program	Sample Size	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Language	40	3.6	0.9
Sciences	40	4.3	0.8
Social Sciences	40	4.5	0.6

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-value
Between Groups	47.4	2	23.7	10.4	<0.001
Within Groups	203.6	117	1.74		
Total	251	119			

The ANOVA results indicate that there is a significant difference in the perceptions of university students regarding online learning in terms of interaction across the different levels of education ($F(2,117) = 10.4$, $p < 0.001$). The between-groups variation ($SS = 47.4$) is significantly larger than the within-groups variation ($SS = 203.6$), indicating that there are significant differences in the perceptions of the

students across the different levels of education. The p-value (<0.001) is less than the significance level ($\alpha=0.05$), which indicates that we can reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there are significant differences in the perceptions of university students regarding online learning in terms of interaction across the different levels of education.

Table 3: To ascertain the perceptions of universities students regarding online learning in terms of learning network.

Program	Sample Size	Mean Score	Standard Deviation
Language	40	3.4	0.9
Sciences	40	4.5	0.8
Social Sciences	40	4.7	0.6

Source of Variation	SS	df	MS	F	p-value
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Between Groups	29.9	2	14.9	6.5	0.002
Within Groups	293.5	117	2.51		
Total	323.4	119			

Regarding the learning network across the various levels of education, the ANOVA results show a significant difference in how university students perceive online learning ($F(2,117) = 6.5$, $p = 0.002$). There are notable disparities in the students' perceptions at the various educational levels, as shown by the between-groups variation ($SS = 29.9$), which is significantly bigger than the within-groups variation ($SS = 293.5$). The null hypothesis can be rejected because the p-value (0.002) is less than the significance level ($=0.05$), allowing us to conclude that there are significant differences in how university students perceive online learning in terms of the learning network at various levels of education.

Discussion

This study investigated how students view management, interaction, and learning networks related to online learning. The results of this study are crucial for comprehending the prospects and difficulties of online learning and creating practical plans for raising the standard of online instruction. This study offers insightful information regarding how university students view online learning networks, interaction, and management. This research suggests that for students to succeed in online courses, universities must create strategies that effectively manage online learning, offer chances for engagement and cooperation, and create strong learning networks. Our findings show that students' opinions on online learning management were divided. While some students valued the adaptability and convenience of online learning, others believed it was challenging to keep motivated and involved because there needed to be a face-to-face connection with peers and instructors. These results align with earlier

studies on online learning management, which have revealed that the main difficulties for online learners are time management and motivation (Kuo et al., 2014; Moore & Kearsley, 2012).

According to our study, online learners prefer opportunities for interaction and cooperation with peers and instructors. According to the students, online discussions and group projects were very beneficial for enhancing their understanding of the course material and developing their communication and critical thinking skills. These findings are consistent with past research on online learning interactions, which has shown the importance of giving online learners opportunities for cooperation and communication in fostering a sense of community and engagement (Swan, 2002; Palloff & Pratt, 2013). This study recommends that students value an effective learning network that gives them access to resources and support services. Access to online tutorials, libraries, and discussion boards was cited as crucial for improving students' learning experiences. These results are from earlier studies on online learning networks that have demonstrated the importance of a strong learning network for fostering engagement and enhancing student outcomes (Bernard et al., 2004; Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012).

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study investigated Punjab, Pakistan, university students' perceptions of management, interaction, and learning network concerning online learning. The results indicate that although online learning has many advantages, some difficulties must be resolved if the standard of online education is to be raised. Students' opinions on online learning management were divided. Some thought it was

flexible and convenient, while others said it was hard to keep motivated and involved because there needed to be a face-to-face connection with peers and instructors. Students liked opportunities for engagement and cooperation with instructors and classmates during online learning. These interactions helped them better understand the course material and improve their communication and critical thinking abilities. Concerning the online learning network, students valued having access to online resources, including tutorials, libraries, and discussion boards, because these tools helped to improve their learning process. Based on these results, we advise institutions in Punjab, Pakistan, to create efficient plans for overseeing online education, offering chances for conversation and teamwork, and creating robust learning networks to assist learners' success in online courses. Universities can assist students in learning time management strategies, maintaining motivation and engagement, and improving their communication and critical thinking abilities. Universities can also give students access to various online tools and services that can support them in achieving their academic objectives.

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