
FACTORS AFFECTING ONLINE LEARNING: PERCEPTIONS OF FUTURE PROFESSIONALS OF ALLAMA IQBAL OPEN UNIVERSITY IN PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

Covid-19 has shifted education system in whole world from traditional classroom learning to online learning or virtual learning. This research article aims to explore the factors affecting online learning from the perspective of future professional (B. ED or M. ED students) of Allama Iqbal Open University in Pakistan. The main focus of the article is to find what are the factors affecting online learning and how these factors affecting online learning process at AIOU students in Pakistan. The qualitative method was used for this study. The data was analyzed through thematic analysis. The results of the study indicate that, future professionals or students (B.Ed or M.Ed) are agree with this online learning but factors are affecting negatively and positively therefore they want some positive changes in LMS . Hence, in the end researcher has given some recommendations for the betterment of the online learning process at AIOU.

KEYWORDS

Online Learning, Covid-19, Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Future Professional, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

Education is the essences of any country. The term education defines different scholar in different ways, according to (Dictionary.com, 2020), the education is the process of acquiring knowledge, developing the power reasoning and judgment, and generally of preparing oneself or others intellectually for mature life. Similarly, Aristotle said that “Education is the process of training man to fulfill his aim by exercising all the faculties to the fullest extent as a member of society”, (examPlanning.com, 2020). Therefore, education is an essential component for the development of a Nation and the educated person can survive in this world in proper way. The covid-19 situation is alarm to all over the world that nothing is permanent, and we should spend our lives

in discipline way. We must have some alternatives in all the fields of life and in education as some institutions have started online learning system all over the world. But some institutions did not start due to lack of resources in Pakistan. Hence, this research will explore the perception of students Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) and Master of Education (M.Ed) or future professionals of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) about the online learning factors and how these factors are affecting in online learning.

Therefore, the impact of covid-19 has not affected only an individual life but also affected an organization such as offices, school, colleges, universities and etc. Similarly, Toquero (2020) says that with the help of online learning measures, schools, colleges, and universities had started to conduct online classes and to shut down their institute or campuses. Crawford, Butler-Henderson, Rudolph and Glowatz (2020) claims that this fast transformation is linked to numerous challenges and barriers. Moreover, Mailizar, Almanthari, Maulina, & Bruce (2020) recommended that student's opinion regarding e-learning challenges and opportunities must address that which factor are hindering students learning goals. Additionally, online learning quality should also explore says, (Basilaia and kvavadze, 2020). Hence, this study focuses on factors affecting online learning perceptions of future professional of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) in Pakistan.

As the covid-19 is the big challenge for all over the world and this is also affecting negatively in education sector. Therefore, to continue education system in this covid-19 all educational institution had started online classes. Different research studies have been conducted the effects of covid-19 in different institution. But this study will explore the perceptions of students of Allama Iqbal Open University about the online learning factors affecting during workshops in Pakistan. As Shehzadi, Nisar, Hussain, Basheer, Hameed, Chaudhry (2020) suggested that future studies should be on problem facing by university in online learning.

Therefore, this study focuses on "Factors affecting online learning: Perceptions of Future Professionals of Allama Iqbal Open University in Pakistan" and this area of research is first time in context of Pakistan. Further, the study (Shehzadi, et al., 2020) was based on quantitative method, and they used tool questionnaire. Hence, this study is based on qualitative method and interviews were conducted via telephone. Anwar & Adnan (2020) study was based on non-random sampling therefore this study based on random sampling techniques and the area of research is very selected students of (Future Professionals of AIOU in Pakistan).

Alhumaid, Ali, Waheed, Zahid, Hobes (2020) article about the Rawalpindi teacher's perception about the e-learning and this study will focus on Allama Iqbal Open

University (AIOU) students B.ED and M.ED or future professional perception about the online learning factors affecting in their studies.

LITERATURE REVIEW

As Pakistan is developing country and the sudden change in the whole world due to covid-19, all organizations are facing problems. Similarly educational institutions are also affecting negatively, as Pakistani universities have not any advance technology and now a days advance technology has become more important in every field especially in education said, (Akram, Anjum, Batool, 2020). According to Zahra, Gul, Iqbal, Ghafoor, Ambreen (2020) due to lack of resources Pakistan considered in developing countries.

Therefore, Pakistan is the country who is facing more problems in educational institutions regarding advance technology. Shehzadi, et al., (2020), writes in their paper that the covid-19 is the situation where the educational systems has started e-learning system which has become a standard shift for all universities. Moreover, he elaborated that several issues universities are facing during to develop online learning system, (Shehzadi, et al., 2020).

Further, Shehzadi, et al., (2020) results show that, the leading element is the e-service quality of the paradigm shift. Rohail (2020) said, covid-19 has both negative and positive impact on world level. As due to covid-19 people are facing anxiety, violence, worried, and anxious on the other hand some other factors are affecting positively quality time with family, improved family relationship and faith healing etc. Technological advancement also playing a positive impact as students are taking online classes, (Rohail, 2020). Anwar et al (2020) claims that online learning in Pakistan cannot produced desired results because some factors affecting negatively in educational system such as: internet access, monetary issue and lack of face-to-face interaction. Further, the results show that 78.6% students were agreed that face-to-face interaction is necessary between students and instructor, (Anwar et al, 2020). Kaur (2020) writes in his article that when the Covid-19 emerged in Pakistan 2020 then all educational intuitions started online learning to facilitate their students. Basilaia et al, (2020) says that online learning can be more advanced in the digital countries, but Pakistan is not technologically advanced country therefore online learning cannot be more effective in Pakistan.

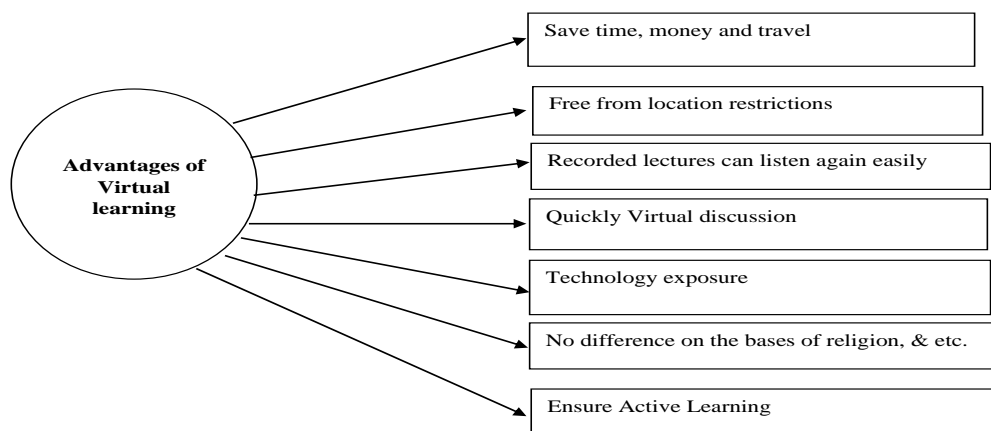
Wains & Mahmood (2008) says that lack of fast and reliable internet access is the biggest hinderance in the process of online learning. According to Anwar et al, (2020) educational institutions are focusing on sending content to the students instead of to make effective online teaching and delivery methods. Therefore, lack of resources, insufficient internet access and availability, and advanced technology are affecting

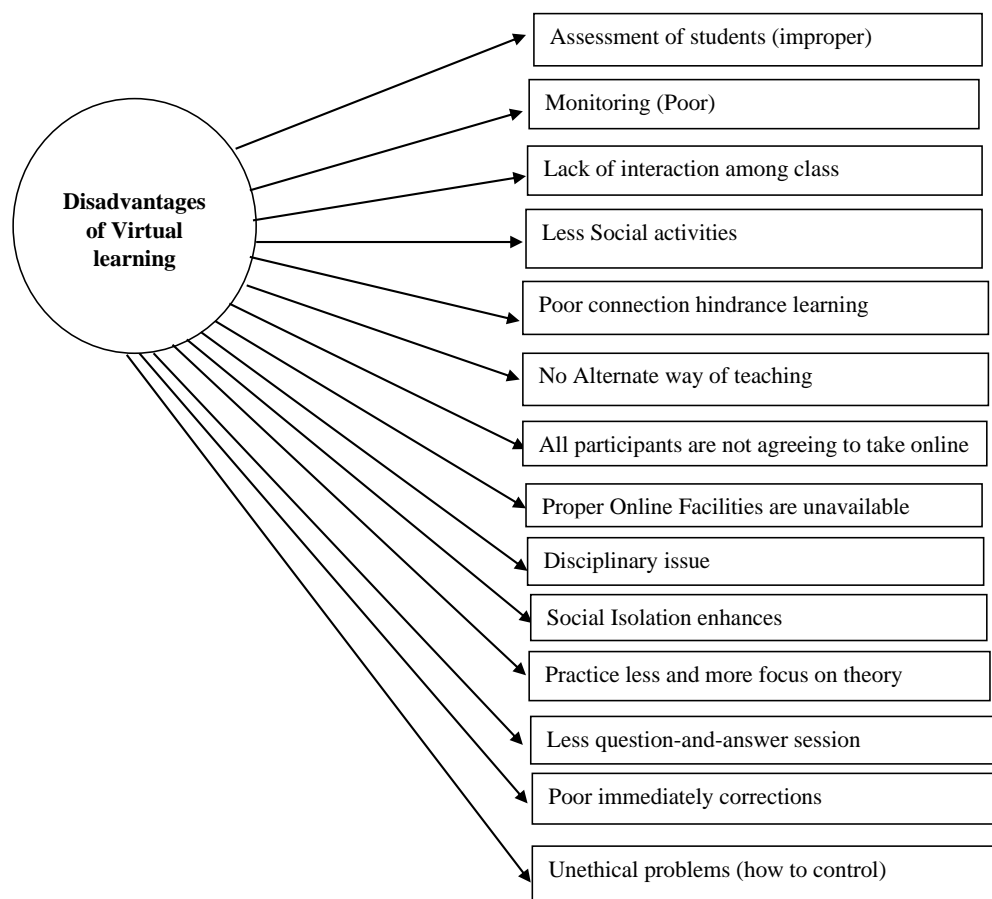
quality of education of an organization and students participation in learning capacity, said, (Zhong, 2020).

According to Ali (2020) immediately orders regarding the online learning in the Pakistan majority of the institution were discontinued online classes due to unavailability of learning and management system. Cucinotta and Vanelli (2020) states that, COVID-19, World health alert emergency enforced on 30th January 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO) as well as pandemic declared on 11 March 2020. Saqlain, Munir, Ahmed, Tahir and Kamran (2020) writes in their article that Federal Health Ministry of Pakistan confirmed first two cases of Covid-19 , in Pakistan Islamabad and Karachi 26 February 2020. According to Mailizar, et al, (2020), covid-19 has had serious impact on around the globe such, educational organizations, students, and instructor.

Pakistani universities have very few advance technologies to conduct online classes therefore institutions will face online learning challenges and opportunities as well, says (Mailizar et al., 2020). Shahzad, Hussain, Sadaf, Sarwar, Ghani, Saleem (2020). writes that the process of virtual teaching where all the students and instructor online at the same time, questioning and answering or discussion are practiced, and this practice known as group-based or collaborative learning process. Moreover, Shahzad et al, (2020) the results show that virtual teaching in Pakistan has some drawbacks. The main problems lack of technology, shortage of resources, and unavailability of proper internet connectivity. Moreover, as teachers and students are not use to online classes therefore, sometimes they feel disturbance in video and audio quality, (Shahzad et al, 2020). Further, Shahzad et al, (2020) writes in their article the advantages and disadvantages of virtual learning:

Theoretical Framework





As covid-19 spreaded all over the world in this situation all institution has started social distancing in all fields. Educational institution as they were taking face to face classes but after covid-19 they started online classes. According to Gandolfi (2020) in the situation of covid-19, social distancing is the primary precaution suggested by World Health Organization (WHO).

As all the educational organization has started virtual or online learning throughout the world therefore, Akram et al, (2020), research article about the level of acceptance online education the findings of the article shows that students are accepting online education, but they want more awareness and proper facilities regarding online education.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. The objective of this research study to explore the future professional perception about the factors affecting in online learning process, at Allama Iqbal Open University.
2. The objective of this research study to explore the future professional perception about the factors affecting in online learning process, at Allama Iqbal Open University, in Pakistan.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the factors affecting in online learning process at AIOU in Pakistan?
2. How these factors affecting in online learning process at AIOU in Pakistan?

RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS

1. Network Issue, Financial Issue, Noise Issue, Students Mike's speaker in offline Mood are affecting negtively in online learning process.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The qualitative method was used for this study. The research was done through semi-structured interview via telephone or mobile. The population was selected for this study the future professionals' students of Bechlror of Education (B. ED) and Master of Education (M. ED) those were taking online workshops at Allama Iqbal Open University in the month of July 2020 – Oct 2020 and random sampling technique was used. Total 27 questions were asked from the respondent.

The semi-structure interviews were conducted via phone or mobile for the purpose of data collection and the thematic data analysis was used for this study.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

The following themes were emerged about the factors affecting online learning system.

Theme#1. Proper Space

Theme#2. Network Issue

Theme#3. Website Issue

Theme#4. Net Issue

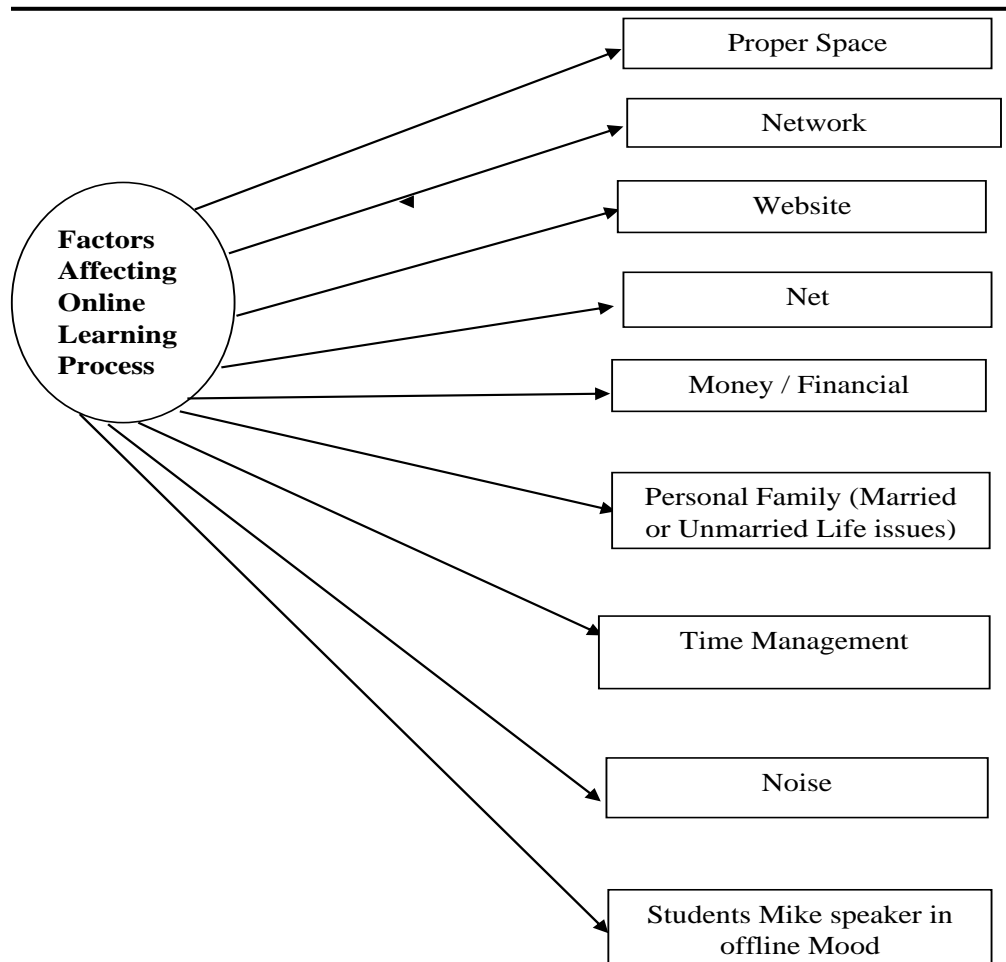
Theme#5. Money / Financial Issue

Theme#6. Personal Family Issues (Married or Unmarried Life Issues)

Theme#7. Time Management Issue

Theme#8. Noise Issue

Theme#9. Students Mike's speaker in offline Mood



These above-mentioned factors are affecting negatively in online learning process according to the results and finding of this study. Future professionals are not dissatisfied with online learning process, but they want proper system and cooperation from the side of authority.

DISCUSSION

Researchers or scholars have written many papers that deals about covid-19, and its impact throughout the world. This paper special focus on Pakistani university Allama Iqbal Open University online learning system and the precipion of future professional students of (Bechloar of Education and Master of Education). According to them there are lots of factors that affecting in online learning negtively and positively. According

to them, *Proper Space*, Majority of the respondent states that as they are living in combine family system, therefore they have no proper or separate room for online classes at their home. *Noise Issue*, according to respondent they said when they are taking online classes at their homes, they also faced different types of noises within home or out -side the home as well. *Network Issue*, Respondent said that they also faced network issue. During class time they are trying to connect but they can't login due to network issue to support this theme Anwar et al, (2020) show results that out of 126 higher education students 73% reported that they have proper access, 9.5 % says that they have no proper access and 17.5% says that they have limited internet access especially through mobile. Further the study shows the results 51.6% students stated that signals availability is the chief problem behind limited access of the internet, (Anwar et al, 2020). *Website Issue*, some respondent says that they have proper internet facility, but website don't run, sometimes during classes time they are just doing join the session, kill the session, again join the session, login, and logout and they feel waste of time and zero learning as well. Similarly, some respondent says that they received email ID and password, but the website or page don't open. *Net Issue*, according to some respondents they said as they were taking visiting classes that was easy or convenient for them because as they are living in rural areas net is not available therefore, if this lack of internet availability or net issue continue, how we will continue are studies? *Money/ Financial Issue*, Majority of the respondent says that our parents can't afford laptop, mobile, internet Wi-Fi, or packages, then how we take these classes? They are not dissatisfied from these classes, but they cannot afford unfortunately and to support this theme,

Anwar et al, (2020) states that 11.1% students reported that daily internet packages for online classes are too much expensive. *Personal Family Issues (Married or Unmarried Life Issues)*, According to some respondent they said to take online classes at home not an easy task, because they have other responsibilities as well as a mother, father, daughter, son, etc. But due to online classes they can save money as when they took visiting classes, they spent more money in auto rent or others. *Time Management Issue*, Respondents said that during online classes time management issue they are facing. For example, when they were taking visiting classes, the timing was fixed such as 3pm to 6pm, but in online classes morning, afternoon, evening and they are also doing jobs looking after home at the same time, therefore in this type of situation they can't manage time for online classes. But as AIOU has fixed timetable and shedual this is good for everyone. *Students Mike's speaker in offline Mood*, according to the respondents they said that when (students) they were taking online classes in the month of July 2020 to mid of august 2020, (students)they were feeling enjoying and they were learning more as compared to after mid of August 2020.

Now authority has locked students mike speaker therefore at first, (students) cannot

ask immediately any question, second if (students) want to more clarification (students) can't immediately, third mostly in chatting the main point or main question skip because students are too much worried about their attendance instead of concentration on lecture. Fourth to deliver lecture and also watch the chatting room for the resource's person at the same time it is not an easy task. Fifth, (students) feels that communication skills and confident level are decreasing because of student's mike locked.

All above factors positively and negatively are affecting in online learning. Therefore, to support the above all themes, (Shehzadi et al, 2020), says that Universities must focus and improve quality e-learning services and ICT is the key element to enhance student e-learning, (Shehzadi et al, 2020). According to Anwar et al, (2020) says that ineffective technology among the students and resource persons are the major challenges faced by higher education students of Pakistan. Further, the study also indicates that, online learning is less effective as compared to traditional classroom and the foremost factors behind this are lack of internet access, technical and monetary issues as well, (Anwar et al, 2020). Moreover, Anwar et al, (2020) suggest that students must also need to have a sound computer and technological skills from their online programs. Shahzad et al, (2020) writes in their article that, online teaching is not fulfill all requirement of the learning process as traditional teaching do. Some aspects such as: opportunities learning growth development, environment competition, cannot be achieve through online teaching.

Therefore, Teaching means not only to cover course outline and to conduct exams, but its beyond that such as to enhance students' skills, to produce inner qualities such as: confidence, listening, speaking, or communication skills. Lindzon (2020) says that online learning outcomes are producing negative impact. Bansal (2020) describe that through online learning, learning activities do not continue very productive outcomes because very few students are learning through this means. Schools, Colleges and universities are not only buildings to cover content instead they build up human behavior by interacting with one another.

Alhumaid et al, (2020) article about the Rawalpindi teacher's perceptions about the e-learning and they accept the e-learning in this pandemic. But this study from the side of the students or future professional of AIOU claims that online learning or e-learning is not full supporting in Pakistani institutions due to less technology, improper net facilities, no proper space for taking online class at home due to combine family system, learning process is less effective as well.

Alhumaid et al, (2020) suggested that Pakistani institutions needs more infrastructure support to continue virtual learning in such type of pandemic. Similarly, Almaiah,

Khasawneh, Althunibat (2020), writes the reasons of e-learning system failures such as: Technological challenges, lack of technical support, teachers lacking technology , financial support issue , e-learning system quality factors, (the quality of e-learning effects students' performance, and to achieve the performance goal e-learning system should improve). Therefore, all above mentioned factors are not limited but other factors also explore this study such as: Proper Space, Network Issue, Website Issue, Net Issue, Money / Financial Issue, Personal Family Issues (Married or Unmarried Life Issue), Time Management Issue, Noise Issue, Students Mike's speaker in offline Mood.

CONCLUSION

This study conclude that factors affecting online learning from the perspective of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) future professionals or (B.ED or M.ED students). The findings of the study revealed that online learning is affecting positivity and negatively therefore students of AIOU are agree with this online learning but they want some changes and proper facilities. Quick virtual discussion between students and instructor is the one and foremost advantage of e-learning system, but due to students mike off or in silent mode, students and instructor can not avail this opportunity. Therefore, authority should remove students specially B.ED and M.ED from the silent mood in virtual learning because they are going to become future professionals or teachers as well. Without verbal communication skills and on the bases of written skills how authority or anyone can evaluate an individual capacity towards learning? As second advantage of virtual learning is ensure active participation, as students mike are off or in silent mood, without verbal participation from the side of the students how the instructor can assess or ensure active participation? on the bases of written skills to assess learner active participation is not sufficient especially for the students of B.ED and M.ED or future professional. Therefore, authority should take serious step and make more advance (Learning Management System) LMS, where students and instructor both can verbal active participation in this virtual or online learning.

The participants of this study are taken from the AIOU future professionals (students B. ED or M. ED) and for future study participants can be taken from other universities and comparative study can also be done.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study recommended that the participants of this study are going to become future professionals then authority should take steps to improve technology especially remove the students from the silent mode and allowed them to participate through verbal communication and to enhance their communication skills and improve confidence level as well. Second, if the authority removes the students from silent

mode then resource person or instructor, they can also evaluate quick assessment during online lecture or class it will increase quality of education or will become effective learning skills. To support the above recommendations, Shahzadi et al, (2020) results show that, online learning can encourage to the students if the universities provide better or quality e-services. As Nsamba (2019) explain that the quality of e-services directly affects to the loyalty of e-learning learners. Similarly, Macpherson and Bacow (2015) approximately hundred institutions are providing online courses, but two main problems remain same, First the effectiveness of online classes and second successfully to achieve the learning goals says, (Liguori and Winkler, 2020).

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