

Exploring the E-learning experiences of students during Covid-19: a case study of the Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak, Pakistan

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Abstract

In Pakistan, E-Learning was never a part of the regular mode of education delivery in any institution. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, all educational institutes, including colleges and universities, now offer online learning programs. E-Learning is internet or web-based learning now widely used in Pakistan due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This study explores the experiences of university students during COVID-19, and the case study is of Khushal Khan Khattak University in district Karak of Pakistan. A descriptive qualitative design was used by using a purposive sampling technique. Data was collected using semi-structured, face-to-face in-depth interviews. Thematic analysis was used to devise different themes based on the interviews taken. The study results revealed six major themes: Difficult in accessing E-Learning, Reservations about the shift to E-Learning, Learning Issues, Personal views and issues, Completion and comprehension of coursework, and challenges related to E-Learning. The study concluded that the abrupt remote online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic had impacted students at all stages of education.

Keywords: Corona Virus, Corona pandemic, online learning, online learning program, online education, remote learning, university students, internet-based learning.

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1. Introduction

In December 2019, pneumonia of unknown origin was first declared in 2019 coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China. It was later named "COVID-19" and identified as a novel coronavirus, "severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2" (SARS-CoV2) was the name given to this disease by the International Committee on Virus Taxonomy (ICTV). Since the virus quickly spread not only in China but also globally, COVID-19 has been verified as a worldwide pandemic by the chief of WHO (World Health Organization), Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on March 12, 2020 (WHO, 2020a). Thailand was the first country outside China to report a case on January 13, 2020, and the disease spread rapidly globally (Sethi et al., 2020). COVID-19 wreaked havoc on Italy, with the highest death toll. COVID-19 was first identified in Pakistan on February 26, 2020, by the Ministry of Health, and it quickly spread. In 114 countries, more than 270 million cases have been registered, including 5.31 million deaths (WHO, 2020b).

According to the World Health Organization, Pakistan (2021) recorded 108,317 (+4,646) confirmed cases and 2,172 (+105) deaths from different provinces during May 2020. As the fear of a pandemic rises, the Government took serious steps to prevent a COVID-19 pandemic by forcing everyone to stay home (WHO, 2020c). Social and physical separation demands that everyone stays at home to avoid coronavirus transmission. Pakistani Minister of Education Shafqat Mahmood was unable to sit down after hearing that the students would not be able to get their education as usual due to the COVID-19 epidemic (Zhang et al., 2020). The Minister of Education changed the education system to E-Learning on March 18, following an earlier decision on March 13, 2020, to close educational institutions. The online course was only scheduled for two weeks, but nothing went as planned. Since March 2020, as the pandemic worsened, all students were required to start E-Learning (Aslam et al., 2020).

The situation, threatened by a pandemic in the aftermath of COVID-19, is triggering a series of social, political, and economic spheres. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected students at every stage of their studies. Around the world, educational institutions have either temporarily closed or enforced regional closures, affecting about 1.7 billion students (Shahzad et al., 2020). Various countries have implemented emergency policies that include the cessation of classes and closing instructional facilities to resume teaching programs from home using technology (Zhang et al., 2020; Rehman et al., 2021). Many universities worldwide have suspended or canceled all college events to reduce the number of students on campus and, therefore, the risk of the virus spread is reduced. Conversely, these interventions have more significant physical, medical, and social consequences for undergraduate and postgraduate students (Bhattacharya et al., 2020).

In Pakistan, the educational environment, such as how to give lectures and teach students, has been affected in various ways during the COVID-19 pandemic. Just like Artificial intelligence, technology has transformed the old way of learning into a new way of learning. E-learning has shown to be a highly useful technology for successfully supporting the teaching-learning process during a lockdown, particularly in the education sector. The Internet has evolved into one of the most essential learning platforms, allowing individuals worldwide to instantly get knowledge for free or at a minimal cost (Noor-Ul-Amin, 2013; Ahmed et al, 2021). Modern education has embraced E-Learning. The effectiveness of e-learning in satisfying the demands of modern learners has been demonstrated. The value of online learning platforms and artificial

intelligence ideas is growing globally. Therefore, online learning (E-Learning) is a subset of technology-based learning, including blogs, learning portals, video conferencing, YouTube, smartphone applications, and many other free mixed-learning websites (Cai & Zhu, 2020; Nabi, 2022). In particular, the paradigm change assumes the transition from face-to-face to online teaching and how educators must respond to the current global environment through the online modality (Shahzad et al., 2020; Saeed et al., 2021). All this situation made a revolution that has occurred and is occurring frantically and suddenly. Since colleges and schools were closed, remote teaching grew in popularity. This instruction style is novel for both teachers and pupils (Rapanta et al., 2020). So, in this context, it is essential to explore the perception and experiences of students so that this mode of learning can be made effective.

The main objectives of the study are: (1) To explore the E-Learning process and experiences of the students during COVID-19; and (2) To know the perception of the students regarding the way universities manage to provide knowledge in the context of online learning during COVID-19. The research questions for the study are: (1) What are the students' experiences related to online modes of teaching and learning during COVID-19? and (2) What is the perception of the students about the way universities manage to provide knowledge in the context of exclusively online learning?

2. Literature review

Abbad et al., 2010 defined E-Learning as; "Any learning facilitated electronically is referred to as E-Learning." They narrowed the term to include learning that is aided using digital technology. Some studies have narrowed this concept to include any Internet or web-based learning. Due to the apparent significant increase in COVID-19 cases checked worldwide, the WHO Emergency Measures Commission declared the pandemic a "global health emergency" (McAlear, 2020). A pandemic is defined as outbreaks that spread from person to person by droplets or touch. People who have been infected with the coronavirus can infect others.

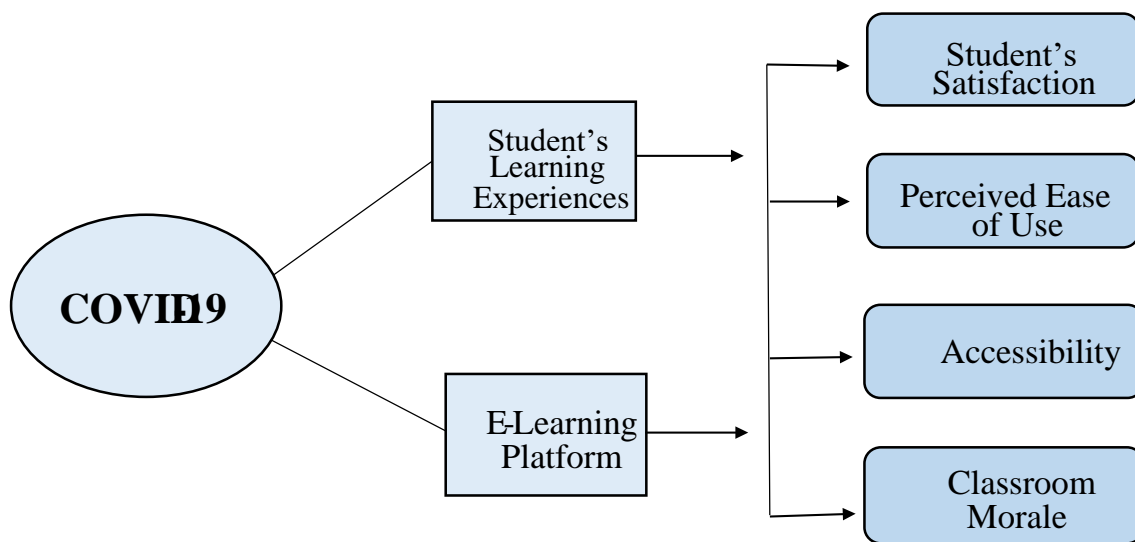
Moore (1997) articulates a theory of transactional distance, while Keegan (1993) explores theoretical principles of distance education with the student at the center of considerations (and thus has a focus on learning rather than teaching); from a different perspective, Holmes and Gardner (2006) work toward a theory of 'communal constructivism' that underpins their approach to E-Learning, and Jewitt (2008) considers learning as being informed multimodality. These many approaches to an e-learning theory need to be discussed further.

Students are viewed as self-motivated, active learners who gain knowledge and information through purposeful learning (Weinstein, 1994; 1998). This method examines the demands and challenges that online learners confront that are not present in traditional learning environments, such as how to deal with feelings of isolation and how to solve online technological difficulties on their own. In the paradigm, the learner is in the centre, surrounded by three dynamic components that explain learning success: skill, volition, and self-control.

Acceptance of E-Learning refers to the use of information and communication technology to adapt, assist, and facilitate the learning process. E-learning is defined as the use of various ICT tools such as computers, laptops, tablets, I-Pads, smartphones, the internet, local telecommunications, and other infrastructures, and content created with these tools, such as audio, video, animations, graphics, and many others for effective learning and to maximize

learners' performance levels. This facilitation can be improved by implementing appropriate and effective applications based on various e-learning theories and frameworks with models that consider different learning environments, such as in business, pedagogical use (education), research and development, corporate learning, personalized learning, and so on.

TAM (Technology Acceptance Model and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology) is the most widely used acceptance model (Davis et al., 1989).



Numerous research studies had been conducted on online E-learning during Covid 19 on Pakistani perspective. It's not possible to restate all of them, but a few of them can be quoted here. First, a descriptive cross-sectional study by Abbasi et al., (2020) was done at Liaquat College of Medicine and Dentistry. They had pinpointed the perceptions of students from 377 students. Their findings revealed that 76% of students use mobile devices for E-learning, while 75.7% have a negative attitude toward E-learning. The study concluded that considering its current success, the digital technology is yet to be adopted by Medical and Dental students for use in teaching in Pakistan. Students continue to choose face-to-face instruction over E-Learning.

Another cross-sectional and analytical study was conducted by Aziz et al. (2020) to investigate the impact of COVID-19 on the education of undergraduate medical students in Pakistan by assessing their responses to a survey. A sample size of 900 students was taken from different medical colleges in Pakistan. The results of this study revealed that 90.8% of participants accepted that COVID-19 had influenced their studies. During COVID-19, 96% of students took online courses, but more than half of them (52.8%) thought they were ineffective. Surprisingly, 91.5 percent of students polled said they had lost interest in their studies. This study concluded that COVID-19 has a significant effect on Pakistani students' medical education. It had a physical and emotional impact on them, as well as a great deal of anxiety over their educational future.

Similarly, a descriptive qualitative design guided by a phenomenological approach was used by Suliman et al (2021) to get the opportunities and challenges that undergraduate nursing students have while using OL (Online Learning) for the first time. About 18 undergraduate

nursing students from two institutions were recruited. The study concluded that Clinical interactions were challenged by abrupt distant online learning. This format was both challenging and beneficial.

Likewise, a qualitative study was conducted by Hussein et al (2020). The purpose of this qualitative study was to discover how undergraduate students felt about their emergency online learning experience during COVID-19. Students from two general English classes at a university in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, were required to write some semi-guided essays during the week preceding the final examinations for the second semester of the academic year 2019–20. The most frequently mentioned positive aspects of the emergency online learning experience were cost and time effectiveness, safety, convenience, and improved participation, while the most mentioned negative aspects were a distraction and reduced focus, heavy workload, technology and internet problems, and insufficient support from instructors and colleagues. The findings can help instructors and institutions better understand how students feel about online learning in unusual situations. Instructors, administrators, and policymakers can improve future online learning experiences by following a set of recommendations based on the interpretation of the participant's feedback.

3. Research methodology

As the study aimed to explore the personal experiences of the students with regard to the online mode of teaching and learning during COVID-19 so, the researcher decided to conduct qualitative research. This study mainly focused on the new rising university of Karak City, KP (Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak, KKKUK). In-depth interviews were taken with Khushal Khan Khattak University, Karak students. Each interview was conducted between 45-60 minutes. The sample of this study consists of 18 participants who were selected through purposive sampling. All students were selected without any restriction of gender, age, religion, or culture.

4. Results

In total, eighteen face-to-face in-depth interviews were conducted by students from Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak, each 60 minutes long, with a focus on the subjects and their experiences. Of these eighteen participants (n=18), there were eight female students and ten male students. Many of the students were men. Almost more than half of the students (61%, n= 11) lived out of the city (in villages). During the analysis, sub-themes were identified and categorized according to six major themes.

4.1. Theme 1: Approaching the E-Learning

During online sessions of E-learning, students were irritated because of the poor internet connection and limited bandwidth which results in the online sessions being inconvenient. When the internet connection is disrupted, they lose motivation in the classroom. Relevant excerpts from interviews are as follows:

Most of the time, I use Wi-Fi, but as the electricity issue is very high so, I also have to use mobile data, and I belong to the backward area where even the mobile signals do not work properly. Whenever I was taking a class, I would

get disconnected in the middle, and everything I have learned got disturbed because when I skip a single point, I don't understand anything further. (Participant 1)

Many of my fellows do not have access to the network. Also, the network at my workplace is poor; sometimes, when we have a lecture on the Zoom app, I cannot hear what the teacher or other colleagues' ideas. (Participant 3)

Online learning at my university is arranged through our WhatsApp group, which follows a set timetable. Whenever a lesson is due, the teacher logs in and sends a link for joining the class via the Microsoft Team app. The professor then provides us with a PDF version of the notes, along with a lecture video file. (Participant 5)

Most of the students also reported that their parents objected to the high cost of the internet package.

My mom is very upset about spending a lot of money using Internet packages since she has to pay for it every day. (Participant 17)

Most students stated that they do not have personal laptops or computers for doing assignments or presentations. They rather manage different tasks on smartphones. Relevant excerpts from interviews are as follows:

I have my personal mobile but no laptop or computer, making it very difficult to do papers and assignments. (Participant 1)

I do not have a laptop, and I do all the work on my mobile. If I had a laptop, it would be very easy to do assignments and exams. (Participant 5)

4.2. Theme 2: Reservations about the shift to E-Learning

Another theme identified is 'Reservations about the shift to E-Learning.' As discussed earlier, COVID-19 has brought many changes in every aspect of life, particularly education. To discuss this major theme in a broader way, it is further divided into subthemes as follows.

4.2.1. Views of coursework

In this sub-theme, the students were asked about the various learning resources presented by E-Learning, changes in the coursework, and the easy and tough subjects for them. Relevant excerpts from interviews are as follows:

I don't think that our coursework has changed in these online classes, but in my opinion, if more learning resources like the use of the board, more elaborated PowerPoint slides, etc., were presented, then it would be easy for all of us to understand any topic in a much better way. During online classes, I enjoyed one of our subjects that is 'Personality Theories-I', because it is a theoretical

subject and all about how human personality develops so I enjoyed that subject. (Participant 3)

During the class, the teacher used to present a slide and then record a lecture which I consider a beneficial way to learn a topic easily. Our course content remains the same. My favourite subjects that I enjoyed were 'Personality Theories-I' and 'Clinical Psychology' because of two reasons, firstly, both the subjects were interesting secondly, the teachers were also good and taught us in a proper way that enhance our interest more. The subject that worries me a lot was 'Computer' because the class is usually held at 2 pm and I used to miss it, and for this reason, I get low grades in this subject. (Participant 13)

4.2.2. Performance during the online course

Students were much concerned about their academic performance during the online system of education. They were asked about their grades and overall academic performance throughout lockdown. Most of the students were not happy with their academic performance. Relevant excerpts from interviews are as follows:

I am worried that if online lectures are extended, my performance will be badly affected as this leads to laziness, which will have a bad impact on my performance because it will take me longer to learn the subject. (Participant 4)

I have constant fear regarding my studies. I cannot perform well in these online classes. I have got a 3.80 GPA in my previous semester, but now it decreased to 3.40, overall, my academic performance was very bad. (Participant 9)

4.2.3. Communication with peers and instructor

When students have questions about some topic or concepts, the instructors are present to provide immediate feedback. The instructors effectively conveyed the instructions in an organized, clear, and concise manner, making learning easier for the students. The use of video conferencing affects students' feelings of connection to their instructors and encourages mutual social existence or participation in remote education. The following are extracts from the open-ended questions of the interview that support these claims:

I saw a significant lack of communication between the students and the instructor. I expected additional explanations for specific course topics at that time, but the teachers usually left such concerns unanswered, which might be due to miscommunication. I missed having direct conversations with my faculty and students as in normal campus classes. (Participant 7)

Some instructors were not experienced and not in the habit of checking their microphones before beginning their lectures, resulting in voice interruptions that irritated them. The instructor's voice was not always clear, and they did not always use the online software's necessary explanatory capabilities. It resulted in time wastage that may have been prevented. (Participant 10)

4.2.4. Views about in-campus activities

Beside the university's academic requirements, some students participate in these sponsored activities. All the sports program like football, volleyball, basketball, tennis, cricket, etc., that occurs during the sports week are included in this category. Students must commit to participating and spending time to engage in these activities. One of the newly inducted student opinions regarding in-campus activities:

Due to COVID-19, we are missing our extra curriculum activities like seminars and forthcoming inter-departmental sports week. (Participant 3)

4.3. Theme 3: Learning issues

To discuss this major theme in a broader way, it is further divided into sub-themes as follows.

4.3.1. Focusing and concentration during online class

As there were so many distractions and interruptions on both the instructor's and student's sides, some of the participants found it difficult to listen and grasp the lectures being presented. There are students that have a bad learning environment, which hinders their ability to concentrate and focus on their lectures during online sessions.

Since, as a female, my mother wants me to help her with household chores, she complains if I am on the phone or using my phone for a long period (for taking online classes). Sometimes, my mother called me for help even though I had an assignment to finish and turn in. Despite my explanations, she did not comprehend what I was doing on the phone for such an extended period. This is why staying at home, doing housework, and studying online is a bit of a challenge. (Participant 5)

4.3.2. Participation in class

During an interview, when students were asked about the 'dark screens' or the turning off the camera by students, some of them reported that it lowered the quality of instructor-student interactions. When the camera was switched off, the instructor missed affirmative nods from students. Similarly, the students were also likely to miss parts of the dialogue. One of the responses expresses it as.

Issues like delayed lecture downloads and weak web services severely hampered my involvement in any course. During online sessions, technical issues such as distorted sound were quite prevalent. I think these were some factors that hindered my participation in online classes. (Participant 6)

I have a negative perception of the online system of education. In comparison to the rest of the world, Pakistan lacks digital resources. Online classes are less engaging than face-to-face interactions due to internet disruptions and a lack of conceptual understanding. (Participant 11)

4.3.3. Instructor's schedules and response

Online lectures are seen as a stress by most students. They find it tedious and boring since they are forced to listen to the teacher's voice for over an hour. Most of them are also anxious because of internet issues. They get separated from the lecture and miss a portion of it. According to the students.

Some lectures lasted for a very long time, more than an hour. The teachers did not adhere to the scheduled time for the lectures. Some teachers arrived late to class and did not start on time. Throughout the day and sometimes even at night, lectures were held regularly, and we were not told the exact time of the class. (Participant 4)

4.4. Theme 4: Personal issues

Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, we could not make significant changes in our professional and personal lives. However, students also faced difficulties in managing both personal and educational issues. For sorting out educational issues at home, it is necessary to resolve their issues. In this theme, some personal issues are discussed in detail as follows.

4.4.1. Personal motivation

Some students stated that during the COVID-19 lockdown phase, they did not have any motivational problems, while some of them stated that they were able to create a more comfortable studying environment. The following are some of the responses of the students who believe that they had not encountered any concerns.

Even though I was discouraged and nervous due to the lockdown phase, I did not delay any of the assignments that needed to be done. I also managed my time at home and converted it into an advantage. So as far as my motivation is concerned, there was no such thing as a lack of motivation. (Participant 16)

It was an unknown period and a process that we did not know how to handle; time seemed to go slower at first. After then, I created a proper schedule and motivated myself from both great and minor perspectives. The pace of time began to speed up. (Participant 16)

4.4.2. Personal preferences

Regarding personal preferences of the students regarding teaching and learning, some responses are as follows:

Even though I was able to orient myself with E-Learning. Still, I was missing the instructor's body language, their writing on a board, and eye-to-eye contact. Therefore, I will always prefer In-Campus education. (Participant 3)

Unfortunately, during E-Learning, I missed group-based activities, critical discussions with instructors and other class fellows which are the real art of

physical education system. Therefore, to me in-campus education is preferable.
(Participant 3)

4.4.3. Availability of proper setting for workplace

As far as E-Learning is concerned during lockdown, the most common obstacle was distraction and noise at home. For example, especially, students in the joint family system and those belongs to nuclear families having small houses, were facing the difficulties to isolate themselves for online sessions. Moreover, the home internet connection was also too slow. According to the words of one student.

I wish I had more space and peace at home so I could focus. Usually, my small brothers pounding on the door and shouting constantly due to which I was unable to focus on my online classes. (Participant 6)

A lot of the time, I didn't have an appropriate space in the house where I could take my online lessons and I didn't feel comfortable watching online lectures in my home. (Participant 13)

4.4.4. Time management

The ability to manage their time was a worry for several of the pupils. The online course included a lot of communication, which caused problems. Because of their perceptions of their own talents, their experiences were shaped. In general, participants said that time management was a major issue, and that online sessions had saved them time and increased their performance. Following are some examples of this:

A lot of courses were scheduled in one day. To be honest, I didn't have enough time to take all of them. The majority of the lectures included a large amount of information that had to be covered in a short amount of time, and some of the instructors were not dedicated to the lecture time. It seemed like we were sitting in a classroom all day for no reason. (Participant 2)

I felt some of the classes were lengthier as compared to other. Some lectures were not held on a proper scheduled timings and we have to arrange them later. So, I found it difficult and challenging to pick and continue with the flow. (Participant 14)

Due to the class hours, I experienced some issues. I was unable to manage my personal and class timings at home. The courses were not explained. I had a lot of questions that remained unanswered. During this period, I was constantly questioning myself that: "will there be online tests or homework?", and "will the final term continue in the same manner as the first?" (Participant 16)

4.5. Theme 5: Completion and comprehension of coursework

Teaching faculty was worried about not only the completion of coursework but also about their student's evaluation procedure as well. On the other hand, to students all this E-Learning

system was totally a new platform. So, they were also worried about their studies, completion of assigned tasks and comprehension of the coursework to achieve good grades. So, in this theme we will cover the following sub-themes.

4.5.1. Increase in workload

Student's tasks and workload gradually increased during online classes. Students were given so many tasks and assignments that they could not complete them all in a limited time, forcing them to cram the requirements just before the deadline. According to the results of this research study, learning activities provided in E-Learning module are considered as the least appreciated feature.

I have a lot of experiences related to the online classes. I have faced a lot of problem during this stage like lack of crucial explanations of the course, excessive burden of assignments and other activities, teaching too much in a single class as well as the learning environment. (Participant 3)

Particularly, in these online classes, I believe that one of the assignments given to us was very tough as the conclusion of this activity was based on the data to be collected from the participants. Therefore, during lockdown data collection was not possible and I typically don't understand what my instructor wants. (Participant 3)

4.5.2. Exam taking procedures

Students were asked about the procedures followed by the university for taking exams. They revealed that the method adopted for taking exams was not fair and satisfactory, having more opportunity to cheat and copy materials. Similarly, they also complained about the lengthy and sometimes tough exam questions, time limit, and exam dishonesty/cheating. Fifteen of eighteen responded experienced the same situation to the ones in the following excerpts.

I found the 2-hour time limit to be rather difficult. These particular two hours were very stressful for me. As these timings were not only for the completion of my paper but we also have to submit it within these timings. Sometimes, the internet connection got disrupted due to which I could not submit on time. (Participant 3)

I believe that if we had given some extra time for the submission of paper, then it would be easy for all of us. But I have heard that other students in our university were granted even 12 hours for completion and submission of paper. It would be better that if we could have that much time too. (Participant 3)

4.5.3. Scheduled quizzes or exams

All the students complained about the huge number of assignments, tests, and the lack of cooperation from teaching faculty. Many of them tried to cope up with technological issues because of their serious concerns of failing their tests and exams. Most of the students stated

that for overcoming their technological issues they get help from their fellow students, internet and to some extent from their teaching staff.

During the first two weeks, I was feeling helpless. I had no idea how to use the E-learning platform until one of my class fellow guided and briefed me step by step. It gives me some satisfaction and courage to be adjusted with new system. (Participant 3)

I believe that the number of assignments and activities given to us must be reduced. Moreover, the assignment should only be followed to the instructor's lecture. Out of course content activities should be discouraged so that the students only focused and prepared themselves for exams. (Participant 3)

4.5.4. Grading

In the university, online grading is a relatively a recent trend. Online examination, the evaluation technology and methods, were not prevalent at most of the institutions before the pandemic. As a result, almost all the participants agreed that teachers should evaluate students throughout the semester by schedule face-to-face examinations at the end of the semester, while maintaining social distance, or it might be possible to use the same online mode by strict and organized way to minimize cheating.

It is possible to take quizzes or tests by using some apps. Such apps help to avoid cheating as each questions take specific time to be solved and submitted. (Participant 3)

I am confused about the grading system of online exams. Each and every student is getting same marks (rather high marks). I don't know how is this possible for every student in class to be on the same patch. (Participant 3)

Most of the students were not satisfied with the results as almost everybody was getting high marks in the exams. There was no differentiation among average, good and best students because results were not based on preparation level rather student gets help from the net and other fellows. Moreover, the students also revealed they were not aware of their mistakes as their instructor did not discuss with them.

4.6. Theme 6: Challenges/ issues

There were a lot of challenges like technological issues and accessibility issues. However, they were lessening over a period of a time.

4.6.1. Technological issues

In this study, all participants used their mobile phones for online education. Some of the participants who discussed their online learning experiences said they encountered issues with their devices. Furthermore, they stated, they have difficulty logging into some sites, as well as installing some program necessary for online learning.

According to a study, anxiety has a detrimental impact on student performance and academic achievements.

Technical challenges such as slow internet access and communication software failures affected me throughout the course. First and foremost, we had a problem with the fact that most of our teachers had no prior experience teaching online. Every day, time was wasted due to technological difficulties. (Participant 3)

Some professors did not check their microphones before beginning their lectures, resulting in voice interruptions that caused additional trouble and trouble. (Participant 4)

My phone does not support the PDF app thus I haven't finished the homework yet. (Participant 6)

4.6.2. Accessibility issues

In agreement with Selwyn and Stirling (2016), Mpungose (2019) believes that access to online resources increases the effectiveness of E-Learning is only feasible if students have access to internet resources such as email and other software programs; learning management systems; and social media sites. Everything from internet access to using online tools is included in this. According to the following claims, participants had a variety of technical difficulties during online sessions:

During online lectures, the internet would frequently drop out on me, making it difficult for me to maintain pace with the teacher's lectures. (Participant 15)

In this regard, it is advised that teachers be sensitive to this uncontrollable circumstance of internet disruption. Students can revisit the learning discussions at their own pace and comfort by documenting and recording the session. In the digital world, instructors and social presence are valued. It has an impact on student learning and motivation to complete the course. When conducting synchronous online discussion, the capacity of the teacher to offer immediate feedback and direct directions is also a consideration to consider. So, it is evident from the response of the participants (male & female students of KKKUK) that the girls were pro to the household chores, so they were feeling less boredom as compared to the boys during COVID-19 lockdown. However, at the same time they were having comprehension problem during E-Learning sessions because of having paucity of knowledge about using different E-Learning application. Comparing boys to the girls, boys were having more passion to the in-campus classes because of active participation in extra-curriculum activities and to interact with their fellows.

After evaluating the perception of students regarding E-Learning program, some issues were identified which were common to both genders. These included like electricity issue (faced mainly by the students belonging to remote areas), internet connectivity (mostly faced by the students belonging to remote areas), unavailability of space at home especially at joint family system, poor time management, over-burdened classes and all the students preferred physical classes over E-Learning.

5. Discussion

Over the world, almost in every mode of life (including social, political, educational institutes, labour, and economic spheres), COVID-19 has left its mark. Pakistan is also affected by the pandemic. In order to avoid the transmission of the coronavirus, the notion of social and physical separation requires everyone to stay home. The Pakistan Minister of Education transformed the educational system to online learning on March 18, 2019, after an earlier decision to close down all the educational institutes on March 13, 2019. During the pandemic phase, E-Learning has had a significant influence on all nations throughout the world. Almost all nations have deployed online learning systems, both online by using web apps, TV, and radio, and offline, via printed books, modules, etc., within a few months after the commencement of the COVID-19 pandemic. Shifting from face-to-face classes to new online classes in Pakistan has impacted instructors, students, and parents.

This qualitative case study aims to explore the student's views and perceptions about E-Learning and how the university managed to provide quality education to students during the COVID-19 lockdown. The research question associated with this study is what are the students' experiences related to online teaching and learning during COVID-19? Moreover, what are the perceptions of the students about the way universities managed to provide knowledge in the context of exclusively online learning? In order to answer these research questions, this qualitative study is comprised of six major themes: (a) Difficult in accessing E-Learning, (b) Reservations about the shift to E-Learning, (c) Learning Issues, (d)

Personal views and issues (e) Completion and comprehension of coursework (f) Challenges/ Issues. Some factors relate primarily to the students, interaction with instructors and peers, and some to technological issues. These factors combine, making the E-Learning environment stressful and tedious with less understanding of the lectures.

In the context of COVID-19, the current study explores the experiences of Khushal Khan Khattak University Karak (KKKUK) students with E-Learning and proposed different issues faced by the student while taking online classes. In Pakistan's higher education setting, E-Learning was a new phenomenon and was rarely or never used before the COVID-19 pandemic. Here, only physical education or on-campus classes are preferred. Participants discussed many elements that affected their behaviour, attitudes, and perception while using the E-Learning platform. The literature revealed that 75% has a negative impact of E-Learning on students (Abbasi et al., 2020). At the same time, other participants who favoured E-Learning were motivated by the benefits of gaining the content knowledge more quickly than they could on campus.

Besides academic work, students must participate in other on-campus activities they missed during the lockdown. The literature on extracurricular activities implies that engagement improves students' motivation. Extracurricular activities have a favourable influence on student success by teaching pupils' discipline and a strong work ethic.

Participants in this study had no experience with information or communication technology when faced with an emergency outbreak of COVID-19. However, they still actively participated in online physical education classes, playing the role of Pakistani representatives as best they could and making positive efforts. Finally, it is critical to identify distinct scenarios

of online education based on the experiences of students and teachers in order to promote the universality of the experience and accompanying courses, particularly in the E-Learning platform, and their relevance.

6. Conclusions

As articulated in the preceding chapter, this study's primary objective is to ascertain university students' experiences pertaining to E-Learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of the conclusion is to provide answers to the research questions. Face-to-face interviews are used to collect the information. The COVID-19 outbreak surprised the entire globe and afflicted people of all ages. Most educational institutions worldwide were forced to close within a few weeks, and in-person education was replaced with online education. This sudden change put much pressure on everyone engaged in the educational process, but it also allowed instructors and students the chance to check out online learning for themselves. The pandemic has demonstrated the need to prepare for a high-quality education despite upheavals and tragedies adequately. As a result, as Bozkurt (2020) underlines, the focus should be on what we would do to avoid repeating our mistakes in the future rather than what we did during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Based on student feedback, this research study suggests to academic administrators:

- Invest in online education to maintain academic continuity, especially during difficult circumstances.
- Provide in-depth training for instructors that covers the fundamental technological tools and the more complicated materials.
- Introduce instructors to unified knowledge frameworks that allow technology, pedagogy, and resources to be seamlessly integrated.
- To assist students in dealing with their conduct's psychological and educational implications by creating support communities.
- Additionally, the research study advises instructors who teach emergency online courses to:
- Create channels for student-instructor and student–student interaction. This contact will reduce students' isolation while increasing their interest and confidence in academic topics.
- Foster the principles of dedication, adaptability, honesty, and self-reliance in students to help them develop self-directed learning and time management skills.

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