



Perceptions of Private Primary School Teachers on Virtual Schooling during Covid-19: A Case Study from Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

During the Covid-19 epidemic, this research looked into the perspectives of private primary school instructors on virtual education. The qualitative research approach was used to undertake an exhaustive investigation of the perspectives on online training. There are numerous techniques for analyzing qualitative data, according to Saldana. In the light of the gathered data, online training affects instructional efficacy. Teachers' ICT and digital competency increased. Several teachers noted load-shedding and internet connectivity issues as barriers to online learning during the Covid-19 outbreak. The figures show that the participants overcome these challenges by utilizing their data. Participants also debated the advantages and disadvantages of online learning.

Keywords: Perception, Virtual Schooling, Covid-19

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Introduction

The Covid-19 outbreak has a broad impact, including education (Rasmitadila 2020). On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) labeled the situation a worldwide pandemic. Severe precautions are being made across the world to prevent the spread of Covid-19. There were 11,125,245 confirmed cases globally as of 5 July 2020, 203,836 new cases, and 528,204 deaths (WHO, 2020). The World Health Organization's (2019) stated requirements, which include social and physical distance, have made implementation challenging in any nation (Rasmitadila2020).

The government has ordered millions of instructors, researchers, and students to stay at home because COVID-19 was designated a global epidemic. Individuals were kept in their homes to assure their safety and protection against Covid-19 (Livingston et al., 2020). Face-to-face

teaching and learning were used but because of the Covid-19 pandemic, education has evolved away from face-to-face instruction and towards online, adaptive, and remote learning (Rasmitadila 2020). In response to COVID-19, the Pakistani government shuttered all educational institutions across the country on March 13, 2020 (Ali, 2020). All provinces' education ministries, as well as the Higher Education Commission (HEC), issued directions to higher education institutes to start online classes, restructure the teaching-learning process, and reschedule tests until the Covid-19 outbreak is gone (Ali, 2020).

Although educational regulatory authorities released guidelines for starting online classrooms and delaying assessments, primary school instructors found several obstacles and hurdles when attempting to implement this approach (Anwar, 2020). Teachers lack access to digital tools such as the Internet, mobile phones, and laptop computers.

Statement of the Problem

The Covid-19 pandemic had an impact on all parts of society, including education, over the world. Educational institutions in Pakistan, as well as elsewhere, have been shuttered. Due to the lengthy lockdown and confinement to the home, face-to-face teaching and learning were not possible. However, due to limited access to digital technology and a lack of expertise in the online teaching-learning process, elementary school teachers have faced several difficulties.

Purpose of the Study

The study's objectives are as follows:

1. To learn more about how private primary school teachers feel about virtual schooling during COVID-19.
2. To investigate the frequent issues that private primary school teachers have while implementing virtual education during the COVID-19 outbreak.

Research Questions

To conduct an in-depth examination of perceptions of online teaching during Covid-19, the following research questions were designed in light of the study's goals.

1. What are the feelings of private primary school instructors towards virtual schooling during Covid19?
2. What are the most prevalent challenges that private primary school instructors confront when teaching online during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Significance of the Study

This study examined the in-depth perspectives of private primary school instructors on virtual schooling during the Covid-19 outbreak. This study will also highlight the challenges and constraints that instructors face during the online teaching-learning procedure in Pakistan. Furthermore, the findings and recommendations of the study provide future planning for the online teaching-learning process. The research gaps will open up new opportunities for future projects in online

education research.

Literature Review

According to Kantnor (2015), online learning is a style of academic instruction in which digital technology is used and students receive an education at their leisure. Virtual learning's definition evolves. Virtual education is a structured process in which digital technology is constructed and established for ideas and information to be disseminated to audiences all over the world without regard for physical limits (Sun & Chen, 2016). Virtual education is the most used method of instruction in developed nations (Allen & Seaman, 2014).

Changes in the educational system will necessitate the use of distance learning or online learning. In the United States, the same terms and conditions apply. Online learning attempts with digital and remote learning options have been used to ensure that they are feasible and effective (Cardoso & Bastos 2018). In Finland, due to school closures, remote learning, virtual education settings and solutions, and, when necessary, free education has been used for distant teaching and student help (Rasmitadila 2020).

During the Covid-19 epidemic, the global education system transitioned from face-to-face to virtual schooling, leading to a slew of concerns such as inadequate digital technology skills, a lack of infrastructure, and connectivity issues (UNESCO, 2020). Load shedding and insufficient internet connectivity also contribute to poor learning outcomes and a lack of passion throughout the teaching-learning process (Noor et al., 2020).

Several tools are used for online education all over the world. Consider YouTube, WhatsApp, Google Zoom, and Skype (Luyt, 2013). Because of the inadequate virtual education framework, the online teaching-learning process encountered challenges while using these technologies. Pakistan is battling to make internet technologies available for virtual learning. During the Covid-19 outbreak, educational institutions in Pakistan were compelled to shut down and initiate the online teaching-learning process. The transition from traditional to online education was not without problems, and educational stakeholders confronted a number of them. (Anwar, 2020). Much study has been done to explore the difficulties and barriers encountered throughout the virtual teaching-learning process. According to several studies, the quality of virtual education has deteriorated due to a lack of technology, a lack of ICT command, a lack of organized virtual courses, and time management concerns (Blau et al., 2020).

The current study is investigating teachers' perceptions of virtual instruction during the Covid-19 epidemic. A well-organized educational institution relies heavily on the competence of its professors. Educators are in charge of children's development and act as guardians for their future peers (Carrillo & Flores, 2020). During covid-19, teachers faced a variety of problems when teaching online, including lesson planning,

class control and organization, technological issues, student consideration, and a wide range of student expectations (Noor, 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance of preparing the education system to transition from traditional teaching-learning methodologies to online learning, and that future pandemics would necessitate planning (Noor, 2020).

Research Design

The study's participants were private elementary school instructors from a private school in Karachi. There were 10 primary school teachers at the school, but only five agreed to participate in this study. The participants for the study were chosen using the (Creswell et al., 2012) criterion of between 5 and 25 participants, which is deemed suitable for a case study like this. Because semi-structured interviews are the most effective approach for collecting data in qualitative research (David & Sutton, 2004), the data was collected over the phone on November 17, 2020. The interviews lasted between 9 and 20 minutes. All of the participants were volunteers, and their permission was obtained before the start of the interviews.

Data Analysis Procedure

There are numerous techniques for analyzing qualitative data, according to Saldana and Omasta (2016).

1. After recording, organize and transcribe the content from the participants.
2. Make codes for the information of the participants.
3. Create themes from the study questions.

As a result, the current study's findings were analyzed using the study standards that were supplied. All interviews were individually transcribed, with participant information categorized and themes produced based on study questions.

Table

Generated themes

Perception	Dimensions	No of
attributes	Participants	
Online Teaching's	Improvement in	03
Effects on	ICT skills	02
Classroom	Improvement in	
Performance	teaching skills	

Online Teaching	Lecture method	03
Lesson Planning	Snapshots	02
	&PPTs	05
	Audio & Video	01
	clips	
	Reading &	
	writing work	
Advantages of online teaching	Learning at home	01
	Learning during	02
	pandemic	
	Advancement in	02
	skills	
Disadvantages of online teaching	Lack of	01
	students	
	interest	
	Physical &	02
	mental	
	development	

	Misusing	02
	Digital devices	
Online Education in the Future	Face to face	04
	Online(difficult time)	02
	Combination	02
Problem- solving strategies for online education	Recording of l ecture	02
	Uploading of Videos	02
	Using own data	03
	Technical	01

Problems	Load	02
in online teaching	management	
	Wi-Fi	02
	connectivity	
	Signals issues	01

Findings of the Study

Online Teaching's Effects on Classroom Performance

Online education's efficacy has been jeopardized. In their comments, research participants mentioned several consequences for their teaching abilities. They stated they learned a lot about ICT because it was their first experience, such as how to produce PowerPoint slides, utilize Google Classroom, and use Zoom for online teaching. According to one reply, he had a terrific time and his kids learned a lot from the online session. He also said that this was the first time he had used online training in his teaching career.

"Yes, it is impacted because our environment is now unavailable. As a teacher, these things have not been accepted by pupils. I haven't embraced these things because I don't want to face students.

I couldn't tell whether the pupils were interested or not."

"As teachers, we must be aware of the technologies that are being used in the classroom; we must know how to use Zoom and Google Classroom, and we must create our own YouTube channel." We must prepare our PowerPoint presentations for online instruction. "I believe these are some of the effects of online education."

"I feel very fruitful in my teaching."

"I'm so happy because I prepare so many videos and get such a positive response from my students."

Online Teaching Lesson Planning

While teaching online, participants used a variety of instructional strategies. These strategies were chosen based on the topics and content they cover. Some participants used Google Classroom to offer lectures. Some students created PowerPoint presentations and brief video clips for online teaching. Several teachers stated that they instructed their students to open their books and read the text. One survey respondent stated that he created a short film using audio-video editing and then published it on YouTube and WhatsApp.

"I taught using both the lecture approach and videos. For online instruction, I employed both ways."

"I took a picture, then made PowerPoint slides, and uploaded them to

YouTube."

"I prepared my teaching materials through audio and video editing, which will be shown for 25 minutes. If there are any difficult words, they will also appear on the top of the screen during the class." During the lesson, I created some short video clips that illustrate the context of the learning material and then published them to YouTube; at the end of the class, 15 minutes were set out for questioning and answering."

"Because I'm a linguistics teacher, I sometimes use a direct teaching method and sometimes I prepare some slides."

Advantages of Online Education

There are several benefits to online education. One advantage of online teaching, according to respondents, is that students who do not want to attend the class can study at home through online learning. Someone suggested that if we wanted to offer a lesson, we could do it right now. If a student attends class on time, he or she may watch the video and learn whenever it is convenient for them. The primary benefit of online education is that students may remain engaged during the seven-month covid-19 pandemic.

"I believe there is one advantage over there." Students who may not choose to attend school can learn at home using internet resources."

"The advantage of online teaching is that first and foremost, the contents that we want to cover within the time constraints are quite simple to create; for example, if we want to make a lecture of 25 minutes, we can do so quite easily."`

"The first advantage of online teaching is that if any student forgets anything during online teaching, I upload my teaching material to YouTube for that student, and he can watch the video at any time."

"The one advantage of online teaching is that students have been connected with education for the last 7 months during Covid-19."

"The advantage of online teaching is that students can get an education from the comfort of their own homes if they do not want to go to school."

Disadvantages of Online Teaching

There are several drawbacks to online education. Participants in the study provided a variety of responses. According to one of the participants, online education has an impact on student's physical and mental development. They argued that, unlike face-to-face education, which kept them busy all day with various tasks, online education did not. According to one comment, if a student misses his class at the beginning, he will not make it up until the conclusion. According to one participant, pupils took advantage of online instruction. They began watching a movie as if he had never been seen at home.

"Students have lost their discipline and punctuality." They did not grow since they did not engage in physical or mental activity."

"Through face-to-face teaching, a student is engaged in learning all day." He engages in various physical and cerebral exercises, but only if someone is observing him online; otherwise, he watches videos on

another mobile or tablet throughout the class."

"The biggest disadvantage of online teaching is that if a student disconnects, he will miss this class forever."

Online Education in the Future

Participants were asked if they preferred in-person or online instruction. Their replies differ depending on the things they teach and their perspective. The participants agreed that face-to-face teaching is the conventional and correct type of teaching, and thus they will choose face-to-face teaching; nevertheless, several participants remarked that online education is also effective in tough situations such as the current one. One participant stated that he will favor both ways of schooling in the future.

"In my subject, I believe that face-to-face instruction is necessary."

"In the future, I will prefer face-to-face teaching because it allows you to see your student's behavior and expressions, whereas online teaching is blank, and you can't tell whether your student is interested or not."

"In the future, I will prefer a hybrid of the two methods."

"In the future, I will prefer face-to-face instruction, but in certain situations, such as Covid-19, I will also prefer online instruction."

"We teach better through face-to-face teaching, but this is the age of online teaching, so we must use online sources to avoid future difficulties."

Problem-solving strategies for online education

Throughout their online training on the COVID-19 pandemic, the participants paid heavy attention to load shedding, Wi-Fi connectivity, and signal difficulties.

"I encountered numerous connectivity issues, including load shedding, load management issues, and Wi-Fi connectivity issues."

"I experienced load shading issues, particularly during heavy rains, when the light went out and net connectivity issues began from the student side, even in school."

"I had no problems using my mobile phone, but when teaching online from school, we use a school internet connection, so I had signal issues."

Solutions for Online Teaching Issues

Each participant had a unique reaction to the difficulties they encountered when learning online. Participants stated that they used their data when the school's internet was unavailable. Several participants reported calling their schools' software engineers to handle any internet-related concerns while taking an online course.

"I recorded my lecture and uploaded it to YouTube so students could watch and listen to it whenever they wanted."

"I use our data packages when the school internet is down due to load shedding." If students have problems with their internet connections, we record the lecture and publish it to YouTube."

"I used my own data packages because our school's internet was down."

"Because we had no other option, I used my own mobile data packages for online teaching during connectivity issues."

Discussion

The effectiveness of online education has been harmed. The research respondents cited a variety of implications for their teaching skills in their remarks. They noted that while it was their first experience, they learned a lot about ICT, such as how to create PowerPoint slides, use Google Classroom, and use Zoom for online education. One respondent stated that he thoroughly enjoyed the experience and that his students gained a lot from the online session. He also mentioned that this was the first time he had used online training in his teaching career.

Recommendations

The study's findings revealed how instructors evaluated virtual education during the COVID-19 outbreak. The following recommendations are given to researchers and educational stakeholders based on the findings.

- I. More studies should be conducted to determine how instructors perceive online learning.
- II. Educational stakeholders and planners must address the researcher's concerns about internet connectivity.
- III. Online apps and resources should be taught to teachers and students.
- IV. Online education should be available in Pakistani public schools.
- V. Internet connectivity and load-shedding difficulties must be resolved to fulfill future demand for online education.

Conclusion

This study looked at the advantages of online learning for private primary school teachers utilizing the Covid-19 system. It has been observed that load shedding and internet-related difficulties have impeded instructors' ability to train pupils. It is also stated that because the lecturers utilized their own data sets and filmed their lectures, they were able to fix these concerns. A few participants also highlighted the benefits and drawbacks of online learning, such as flexibility, improved ICT skills, students' poor emotional and physical development, and improper usage of electronic gadgets.

Limitations of the Study

The research has certain drawbacks. Because the study only contained data related to schools and its participants were in elementary school, conclusions cannot be generalized. Because of the restrictions of Covid-19, the interviews had to be conducted over the phone. As a result, it's conceivable that participants didn't answer every question on purpose, and the researcher overlooked certain concerns with online training. Similarly, several areas are still growing due to time constraints, leaving voids for further investigation.

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