

Online Education: Struggles, Challenges and Practical Suggestions. A Case Study of Female EFL Students in Government Girls Colleges Hyderabad.

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Research Article

Online Education: Struggles, Challenges and Practical Suggestions. A Case Study of Female EFL Students in Government Girls Colleges Hyderabad.

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Abstract

The current study aims at looking that what challenges and struggles female students face in EFL online education in Hyderabad girls colleges. To carry out this study, the researcher selected the 60 female students from four different government girls colleges of Hyderabad and 15 students from each college plus 8 female teachers were selected for the interviews. As, it is obvious fact that from last years, COVID-19 has demolished each and everything in the world including damaging the natural process of teaching and learning and posing this problem, education across the globe has shifted from offline to online system. This study has also been taken in that context. However, this study was the mixed method in nature. For quantitative part, 20 close-ended questions were asked from respondents by using Likert Scale. For doing analysis of quantitative part of the data, SPSS 26 version software has been utilized in which descriptive statistics has been done. The study concluded that female students who study in the government colleges of Hyderabad face lot of challenges and struggles too much; challenges such as, electricity issue, internet connection challenge, availability of the basic sources like gadgets, but some positives have also been noted in the findings like learners sense of attachment with online education, increasing interest towards the online tools, family's support, teachers serious role of providing and facilitating the learners as much as they can and so on. The researcher has some suggestions to the other scholars to look at online education from all angles by doing their more research on such topics because ground is much available and open to carry out research studies like these in their own respective context.

Keywords: Online Education, Challenges of Online Education, EFL, Online Education in Pakistan, Struggles of Girls in Online Classrooms

Introduction

Online education is one of the most popular slogan and means of teaching and learning process in today's era. As we all know that our emerging world is becoming highly enriched with technology and so many complex tools, innovations, and inventions have revolutionized the global educational structure in which traditional methods of teaching and learning have been replaced by modern means. Fundamentally, technology is the scientifically investigated, Analyzed, experienced, Applied and implemented collection of skills, techniques, procedures, Methods, and processes

which are carried out or tested in order to satisfy the needs in international market through scientific knowledge, goods, and services. The use of technology is continuously encouraged, preferred, merged day by day even though peoples are widely depending on technology. "Technology works as major catalyst for increasing learning of all types" it is not just limited to education, but all types of learning is accessible (Isernhagen, 1999).

Moreover, History witnesses one of the worst ever crisis in the shape of COV-19 which has shackled the overall world order of the universe. It has impacted each department life and brought educational crisis, showed political instability, created economic crisis, emerged religious unrest, led psychological dilemma, fueled inequality, locked people in their homes, escalated depression among people, posed situation of uncertainty etc. The COV-19 has posed very serious questions before us to think differently from our conventional teaching system that we were and are used to do, act, follow and execute. So, the COV-19 has made us sick from every perspective of life, but at the same time it has opened the doors of opportunities to the researchers and academicians to redefine the world order and give away an alternate way to fight such virus through their research studies and give some hope to people so that people may continue to survive in such hard times. COV-19 is a massive tragedy that all the people across the world feel it with equal intensity, so the actions are needed to carry out together to seize it from spreading and saving more live and save educational structure.

Online education is led with advanced apparatuses is alluded to utilizing a few terms, including distance, on the web, open, adaptable, mixed, and blended instruction to give some examples. Moreover, online education has got many names and emblems for example, blended learning courses, online learning courses, online learning projects (Saykılı, 2018; Tanhan, 2020). However, Online education has been widely used word that reflects all type of information, learning process, communication which solely taking place via online teaching and learning systems, in spite of the fact that distance education and electronic learning, online learning has been interchangeably used terms which ultimately fall in the area of online education (Lee, 2010: 278). Moreover, Online education has sort of nature that empowers learners, teachers, set the learning environment for learning and getting the set objectives and achieved the goals by using different sorts of online tools and resources (Saykılı, 2018). Thusly, Online education permits collaborations between/among students, facilitators, just as among students and instructive assets without requiring being on the web simultaneously. Online courses are generally educated on the web and require a web association during guidance. Distance education, then again, incorporates online training, and the courses are told on the web or disconnected where sharing of visual pictures and sound are transferred in framework to lead an instructive cycle. Truth be told, the term online education was for the most part liked in the examination. Along these lines, in the current investigation, online education is utilized to demonstrate all types of schooling with the exception of physical education.

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Review Of Literature

Online Education

However, the first chapter revealed the detailed account of an introduction of this research study. This second chapter brings forth the relevant and latest literature review as for as online education is concerned including origin and brief history of online education especially in the context of Pakistan, problems of online education, advantages and disadvantages of online education, problems of online education in EFL classrooms faced by the students especially female students, need of online education in the COV-19 situation, shift of teaching and learning from traditional classes to the online classes, role of teachers, students, and management in handling online classes, state of online education in Pakistan, challenges of online classes faced by the females in EFL classrooms and much more. The next chapter will discuss the research methodology in detail which has been taken into account by the researcher for carrying this study.

Online Education is an effective way of teaching and can be more useful when teacher and student comes together to make learning relevant and to the point and understand one another, fundamentally focus on the alternative options, and fuse diverse mind sets and opportunities to do better together. Teachers can develop such potential outcomes by coming up with clear objectives of learning in that students must feel relax and get motivation to set priorities, uphold their standpoints, enhance their cognitive abilities, uplift their creative side, understand all sort of learning environment, expose their ideas, set their standards and lift their learning. Such a great tools of online learning and teaching has been come in the shape of online courses which were started from USA and then spread all over the world with great speed and expansion. In fact, online education has been widely progressing at all levels throughout the world and many online courses have been inducted and initiated by the schools, colleges, and universities to facilitates all the sort of learners. Some institutions offer completely online mood of teaching and somewhere blended type of learning is taking place and, in some institutions, still go with face to face classes. According to Pew Research Center (2011), in the year of 2010-11, 89% colleges and universities went and offered online courses whereas 50% courses went through mix method of teaching and learning mood. (Parker, Lenhart, and Moore, 2011).

In a study about future prospects of virtual education in Pakistan: opportunities and challenges by Hussain et.al (2019) rapid use of internet and communication technologies in every walk of life specially in education is discussed. There were two main objectives of this study; first objective was to understand the future opportunities of virtual education in Pakistan and the second objective was to identify the problem associated with the virtual learners in national perspective. The population of this study was students of Master of Business Administration. Monkey survey technique was adopted for data collection. The conclusion of this study reveals that virtual education can be a suitable mode of education due to its low cost, quality and with the slogan of quality education for everyone.

The study on the topic challenges of digital learning for distance universities' was directed by Sidra Noreen and Amtul Hafeez (.This investigation talks about how distance university of Pakistan are attempting to reshape their arrangement of teaching by changing towards advanced learning, the challenges In moving towards computerized learning for academics, and the organization of these university. The strategy for the investigation was subjective in nature dependent on phenomenological plan. The investigation was indicated to Allama Iqbal Open University and virtual university. The members of the examination were included 31 academics, 2 ICT chiefs, and 2 libraries in control. A semi-structured interview was led with the members.

Wang, Y. D. (2014). The investigation addresses an endeavor to imply test for social and technical elements to be recognized which can almost certainly prompt or impact learners discernment around the dependability of online course and coordinating elements into a socio-technical system which can be experimentally approved. Technology is playing such a crucial role in decreasing the ratio of unemployment due to technology lots of skilled and educated peoples become capable of to cope with their household's expenses. Furthermore, Technology has supplied the number of skills. While, through traditional teaching methods and techniques someone cannot acquire the skills as much as they need. Through those skills, which are supplied by technology to the people, the peoples are hired by organizations and those organizations are paying great salary to them. How much it is appreciable that technology is providing us great skills. Now days, topmost important way, or source of acquisition of knowledge and stabling currency with friendly environment within an Organization is only the Technology.

Problems of Online Education in EFL Classrooms

Each mindful EFL expert makes an honest effort to meet his learners language needs and, in this way, improve their exhibition. In doing as such, educators utilize various methods and techniques to arrive at this objective. This can be viably done given that he gets a few reactions, for example criticism, from his students. As Wang (2006) states, 'feedback is the data about current execution that can be utilized to improve future execution. Feedback assumes an essential part in any instructive cycle particularly in online education since it can altogether improve both student's and instructor's presentation and demonstrate some critical parts of their exhibition which can be improved. Dignen (2014) contends that feedback is the main correspondence expertise, both outside and inside the class since it is around constantly; it is simply one more word for powerful tuning in; it is a chance to spur; it is fundamental to create implementation, and it is an approach to cause instructing and figuring out how to remain alert. Indeed, criticism ought to be an indivisible piece of any appraisal and course assessment. It very well may be done officially and casually. The proper criticism is looked for by an educator's organization to find the nature of instruction at a given establishment, while the casual feedback is typically gathered by a course instructor to recognize learners troubles during the time spent learning and at the same time consider his showing practices and approaches. Both should be possible either consistently or toward the finish of the semester. As Hyland (2006) claims, 'giving feedback to learners is regularly seen as one of the instructor's most significant responsibility, offering the sort of

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individual consideration that is generally seldom conceivable under study hall conditions.' Thus, the more successive and productive this criticism is, the more exhibition improvement should be possible. Moreover, Dudley-Evans and St John (1998) propose, educators should initially accentuate the positive highlights and afterward determine in detail those zones which need further improvement.

Problems of Online Education in Pakistan During COV-19

The COVID-19 pandemic isn't just a worldwide general wellbeing concern yet in addition a political, financial, social, strict, and instructive one. We can see breaks wherever on a superficial level and far more profound effects its spread. One of the more extensive deficiencies is the crack in the learning frameworks of more than one billion learners around the world. As per UNESCO, 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused most aggravations in the teaching frameworks of history and has influenced right around 1,6 billion students across the mainland's in excess of 190 nations. Terminations of schooling have influenced 94% of the country's learner populace, up to 99 percent of poor people and low-medium-income nations. Because of the financial repercussions of the pandemic alone, about 23,8 million extra children and children will exit school or not one year from now. This distinction, for instance, had hit an incredible \$148 billion yearly for low-pay nations and low-center - pay nations, and could now grow by dependent upon 33% (UNESCO, 2020). The awfulness of COVID-19 and the remarkable obliteration of education is a long way from being done. A plan for schools to resume presently can't seem to be affirmed in upwards of 100 nations, and states, pioneers, guardians, and adolescents all throughout the planet are grappling with when and how to handle the subsequent stage. The harm they never really individuals is a ton more awful. Presumably 465 million children who are given online classes can't get to them adequately on the grounds that they need admittance to the web. Families are in such critical waterways in a few spaces of South Asia and Africa numerous guardians are seeking after their children to part with their instructions and help their families at work or get hitched. The more extended the school is shut, the more this deplorable choice becomes. Save the Baby, a foundation, figures it may exit by around 10 m. Young ladies are more often than not (The Economist, 2020).

Research Methodology

Participants and The Process of Sampling

The sampling is most important ingredients of the research methodology. The researcher will use convenient sampling. The convenient sampling is defined a kind of nonprobability sampling in which people are sampled simply because they are convenient sources of data for researchers. 60 samples will be picked from the students for the quantitative part of the whereas 8 teachers will be taken for the semi-structure interviews. The participants of the study will be students and teachers. The students and teachers will be from the Government Girls (Zubeida) College. Hyderabad, Shah Latif Girls College, Qasimabad College, and Nazareth College.

Overview of Research Design

The present study is quantitative in nature. Close-ended Questionnaire having used Likert scale tool (Appendix A) have been utilized to obtain thoughts, understandings and ideas from students and teachers of government girls sector colleges in Hyderabad. As Creswell (2008) characterized that the quantitative method approach as a method for collecting, examining, and merger of quantitative data of the investigation interaction in bringing a report to understand the study at all levels clearly.

Instrument

Main instruments which were used for this study closed ended questionnaire. Quantitative part of the data were analyzed by using SPSS Software 24 version. Before the process of conducting data from the respondents, respondents were given the consent form which highlighted the interest and wish of respondents to take part in this study then this research study started exponentially. The initial part of the contained questionnaire segment asked about respondent's name, age, gender, division/degree, college name. Respondents were given the 60 close ended questions which were objective in nature by using Likert scale that had five options such as, agree, disagree, neutral, strongly agree, strongly disagree. Due to the timing and COV-19, problems, colleges were gone to online classes therefore, the data were collected through online from the participants by using google document by fetching the link which were shared with all the participants. This was not done by researcher herself but with the consent and approval from supervisor, data were collected in that particular manner.

The following Table No: 01 is giving an extensive portrayal of the test questions with their sources.

Structure of the Close Ended Questionnaire

S No	Question	Sources
01	The instructions are clearly communicated about the course topics in online EFL classrooms.	Ben
02	The instructions are clearly communicated about the course goals in online EFL classrooms.	Arbaugh, Marti
03	The teacher provide clear instructions on how to participate in course learning activities in online EFL classrooms.	Cleveland- Innes,
04	The teacher clearly communicate important due dates/time frames for learning activities in online EFL classrooms.	Sebastian Diaz,
05	The teacher is helpful in identifying areas of agreement and disagreement on course topics that helped me to learn in online EFL classrooms.	Randy Garrison,
06	The teacher provides feedback that helps me in understanding my strengths and weaknesses in online EFL classrooms.	Phil Ice, Jennifer
07	The teacher provides feedback in a timely fashion in online EFL classrooms.	Richardson, Peter Shea

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08	Online or web-based communication is an excellent medium for social interaction in EFL classrooms.	& Karen Swan (2010)
09	I feel comfortable conversing through the online medium.	
10	I feel comfortable participating in the course discussions of EFL.	
11	I feel comfortable interacting with other course participants in online EFL classrooms.	
12	I feel comfortable disagreeing with other course participants while still maintaining a sense of trust in online EFL classrooms.	
13	I feel that my point of view is acknowledged by other course participants in online EFL classrooms.	
14	Online discussions regarding EFL helps me to develop a sense of collaboration.	
15	Online Learning activities of EFL help me to construct explanations/solutions.	
16	I have suitable gadgets (laptop/computer/mobile) available for taking my online class.	Created by researcher by herself
17	I have internet facility for taking my online class.	
18	I have alternative options in case of electricity issues.	
19	I get support while taking online class from my family.	
20	My family values my privacy during online class.	

Guiding Research Questions

R1: What are the challenges faced by EFL learners in Online Education?

R2: How EFL learners cope up with Online Education?

Data Analysis Procedure

The collected data of questionnaire were analyzed by using SPSS Software 26 version in which frequency distribution, descriptive statistics, descriptive ratio was done.

Data Analysis

Demographic data

Age group of the respondents who participated in this research study. However, the respondents were from 1st year and intermediate students and therefore their age group were kept from 15 to 16, 16 to 17, and 17 to above respectively. Majority of the respondents were from age group 16 to 17 and less were from 15 to 16 years. However, all the participants who took part in the research study were female students because this study only focuses on the female problems and challenges in the online education. Total no of participants were 60 and all 60 students were females. Data was collected from four different girls colleges of Hyderabad such as Zubeida Girls college, Shah

Latif girls college, Qasimabad girls college, Nazareth girls college. 15 respondents were selected for data collection from each college in order to give equal chance to all college girls to share their problems and challenges they face in online education. There various sections of the respondents in which they are enrolled currently in their classes. Three common sections are common at college level like pre-medical group, pre-engineering group, and commerce or art group. Most of the participants were from pre-medical section and a smaller number of participants were from pre-engineering respectively. This current study only studies at college level therefore education level of students were kept 1st year and intermediate students equally. 30 respondents were chosen from 1st year and 30 respondents were picked from intermediate level.

Discussion about the Research Question 01

Challenges faced by EFL learners in Online Education

The very first research question is about challenges faced by the EFL learners in online education in which ten items were derived and took the data from the 60 participants from four different girls college of Hyderabad. The overall data revealed that the learners are facing lot of challenges in online education in EFL classes. However, the instructors are doing everything to rectify those challenges and solve them on the immediate basis so that the learners and their learning should take place smoothly in the pandemic time of COVID-19 which has halted each and everything across the world. When students were asked about the course topics presentation is smooth or not then majority of the participants gave positive responses and relatively 70% responses were coming in the favor and only #0% ratio showed some reservations including the neutral responses. As for as the goals of online is concerned, the participants revealed their massive satisfaction and relatively 80% participants agreed and just 20% disagreed. Most of the learners are well satisfied with positive behavior of the instructors because learners observe and say that instructors in online are very much cooperative and tell us everything earlier like topics, course activities, dates, timings, tasks, feedback and so on. Instructors are always endorsing the learners point of view and go according to the will and wish of learners. In one of the item, when respondents were asked about teachers agreement and disagreement about anything in the class then majority of the participants showed the positive responses that instructors usually cooperate with them on each and everything in the EFL classes.

Moreover, the responses were looked happy with timely feedback that they received from the instructors. This sounds that instructors are quite serious and responsible with their job and know exactly their role to play. In the response of question about interaction through online, the participants presented very positive intent and gave almost positive responses. Almost, 90% respondents found online learning the best model and medium for doing and enhancing interaction withing the class. in the end, there are obvious challenges which the learners face in online education but the collective role of everyone really brings some positive results, especially, instructors play their due roles to cope up with those challenges and facilitate the learners and same thing has been seen and noted in this research question too.

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4.6. Discussion about the Research Question 02

EFL Learners struggles to cope up with Online Education

Nothing comes free of cost and nothing is achieved without putting the great length of efforts by the individuals in their life. Everything, in this universe, demand and require some sort of hard work to get things done. It depends on the will power of individuals that how they utilize their natural strengths to obtain success. Each one of us is well aware about the destruction that COVID-19 brought in the world relatively in every section of life including effecting natural environment of teaching and learning and compelled the whole to shift their physical educational system into online education and it and is surprisingly challenging to adapt the online education channel, especially countries like Pakistan because our countries technological system is not that much developed, so, it was bit difficult for all of us particularly for teacher and student to go with online education. But education system has to run in any condition in any environment. This study also aims to deal with challenges and struggles that learners and teachers face in online education.

Moreover, when the participants were asked about how they feel when they interact, speak, participate, ask questions from teacher and their fellows, most of the answers were surprising because participants have got used with online education and understand quite well to work by keeping any type of pressure aside. Subsequently, it is the positive sign that learners try to familiarize themselves with modern approaches of teaching and learning and clearly understand the immense value of such tools which help them to shape their learning and enhance their language skills. One of the point where participants showed strong is the collaboration with the peers in which each participants almost showed and said that collaboration is the key factor that drives wheels of success in EFL classes. Meanwhile, some of the participants cried for not having proper facility of internet connection, electricity issue, issue of expenditures, which are quite certain and obvious because in our country, these issues are faced by majority of the people either in the class or outside the class. but current government is doing and utilizing every source to fix these issues as soon as possible. While asking the question regarding family cooperation, majority of the participants displayed the positive responses that their families really help and support them whenever they take online classes. In some cases, few families have yet some reservations about online education, but huge number of families find online education as the best alternative and replacement of physical classes. Overall, this can be concluded that learners genuinely go through some struggling periods while taking online education in their hands but comparatively, some positive responses have been noted as for as online education is concerned because of each individual play their role to deal with such challenges.

Conclusion

The present study found out some of the key and important findings regarding challenges and struggles of online classes especially by the female college students. However, 60 participants were taking part in the study which were selected by using convenient sampling method from four

different girls college of Hyderabad in that 15 students from each college plus 8 female teachers were also chosen for the semi-structure Interview since this study is using mixed method approach/design. Data was collected by using google software because of physical unavailability of the students due to the Covid-19 closure of the educational institutions across the country. Collected data was analysed by using SPSS software version 26 in descriptive statistics were taken into consideration for the quantitative part and semi-structure Interviews were analysed by employing Saldana's model of analyzing the qualitative data.

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