ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Primary Education System of Lahore, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Background: The pandemic of Covid-19 impeded all socio-economical, pedagogic, and recreational activities. Pakistan is facing an intensified educational crisis due to previous educational differences, so the era of the pandemic has shown difficulties in the educational framework.
Aim: Awareness among parents and students to combat challenges of pandemic.
Method: The current study is based on random quantitatively study which gathered data from 300 respondents assembled from different areas of Lahore, Pakistan from June 2020 to July 2021. The responses were collected from students, teachers, and parents that how homeschooling compromises student's physical, psychological, and emotional health.
Results: About 76% of the students favoured traditional classes over online classes whereas only 20% of the students found the online session interactive. In the other section, only 15.33% of the teachers were satisfied by the online results and they complained about the poor performance and interaction with the students. Overall, 81.67% parents agreed that there is a decline in the physical activity of their children. The results of this study suggested that social distancing and the emerging challenges associated with Covid- 19 have entirely changed the education system that has caused number of problems for children, parents, and teachers in Pakistan.
Practical implication: This study highlights pros and cons of online study; such studies give students and teachers a way to prepare for future challenges.
Conclusion: Considering all outcomes of study, it is highlighted that policy-level interventions were needed, along with well-designed interactive courses. Hence, integrated approaches based on the mental as well as physical capabilities of the students must be executed, and e-tools must also be practiced in traditional classes to fill the gap of homeschooling.
Keywords: Covid-19, Homeschooling, Friendly Tool, Psychological Pressures, Policy-level Intervention

INTRODUCTION

The pandemic of COVID-19 has historically caused large-scale destruction of the education system, affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries around the world. The pandemic has created terrible disasters at an unprecedented rate, not only causing socio-economic chaos, but also destroying the education system, including a wide range of social organizations. Closing of schools and other educational places resulted serious impacts; 94% of the entire population of students and about 99% student's population were impacted in lower-income nations. The lockdown and staying at home have been set up as the required activity to straighten the bend and control the spread of disease[9]. Pakistan was amongst the first few countries in the world to impose lockdown as a result of COVID-19.In the framework of Pakistan; being a developing country the pandemic and its related measures has subjected many educations shortcomings and caused an extreme level of anxiety for students, parents as well as instructors. The government of Pakistan impose lockdown to prevent the educational crisis through the execution of home schooling. However, Pakistan basically deprives the digital literacy skills and foundation to make the homeschooling plan effective[24].

Students faced emotional and psychological distress at their living space and were unable to pay proper attention. The constant fear to meet the expectations of the instructors and technical constraints leads them in an unending cycle of distress, anxiety attacks and severe headaches. Moreover, the eye vision of the students was also compromised as they spent hours of the day in front of mobile or laptop screens. About 64% of the guardians were worried by the screen timing of their children[17].Students with unusual requirements confronting difficulties, such as hearing hindrance, flexibility failures or visual perception short coming, required extra planning meetings with the course so various caregivers and parents at home considered such necessities as obstructing the learning of the social eventuality of understudies. Lack of physical exercise also leads the negative behaviors of students, thereby affecting their overall behavior and emotional

health. Henceforth, the pandemic has abruptly changed the conventional methods of teaching with the modern tools of learning[17].

 in such hybrid situations reported more challenges than those in exclusively face-to-face instruction. It was found that about two-thirds of instructors said that the majority of their students were less prepared for grade-level work than they were at this time final year[22]. The communication gap between students and teachers during online learning was also considered a hindrance in developing technical skills in students and adopting online system[16].

Parents were concerned that a major change their kids have had to see is a sudden move from physical classes to online classes. The discipline that students' learn while preparing for school is locked in different activities, using different strategies to learn their subjects in the classroom, and it is difficult to maintain when teaching becomes remote[25]. A survey presented that the incredible larger part of Canadian guardians with kids between 4 to 11 years of age were worried about supporting their youngster's schooling and giving child care simultaneously as functioning life. It was revealed that parents found sudden closure of the schools extremely disturbing, and they were concerned around their children's routine. The closure of institutions, schools and other places of study affect more than 94% of student communities worldwide, which has changed every aspect of our lives[16].

The current study was carried out with the purpose to evaluate the education system in a mega city of Pakistan during the pandemic of COVID 19. The main objectives were to assess the opportunities and stresses faced by parents, students and teachers of kindergarten to grade five as this group was most dependent upon them for attending online classes which therefore contributed in additional stress and create awareness among them to combat challenges of pandemic[23].

METHODOLOGY

The cross sectional study was conducted in the era of unending pandemic when there is lack of attention given to psychological problems in Pakistan. The performance and activities of the home schooling from kindergarten to class 5 was based on a

questionnaire-based survey carried out from the population based in City Lahore.

Data collection procedure: The questionnaire survey was achieved discretely from students, teachers as well as parents. The number of respondents were maximized by limiting the number of questions (30 closed form). A total of 300 responses were collected by students, teachers, and parents from June 2020 to June 2021. Moreover, preference in schooling style was also included in the survey. The survey was processed online by using Google forms targeting three set of audience.

Students: Any kid who was attending school from kindergarten to grade 5. This group of students was those who were actually dependent upon their parents for connecting and taking online classes and doing given homework. This section inquired of how the psychological as well physical health effects on students and then comparing their performance by evaluating both online and traditional classes.

Teachers: Any individual who was teaching to kindergarten to grade 5 in any public or private school system before and during covid pandemic. The section has inquired of how the teachers experienced the interaction with the students as well as results conducted from the online examination. Furthermore, teachers were also asked about the technical facilities provided by the institutions and what constraints they encountered during the online classes.

Parents: Any parentages having one kid or more attending school (from kindergarten to grade 5) before and during covid pandemic. They were asked about the facilities to their children and assessing the school work allocated to the students. Furthermore, how the parents noticed their kids falling behind in acquiring social skills through remote learning. The question on the kids' overall physical and mental health including eyesight and social behavior was also involved in this survey's section. Parents were also asked about financial pressure this pandemic put on them.

Data analysis procedure: The responses were analyzed, and the results were obtained in the form of pie charts, frequency tables, and histogram. The chi-square test was applied to ascertain visible difference between different groups. SPSS and $p<0.05$ was thought to be considerable.

RESULTS

Based on the situation of COVID, the responses were collected on line from different cities of Pakistan. The questionnaire of students ranging from kindergarten to class 5 was filled with the help of their parents. The average age of students lies between 4 to 11 years. The section of parents was filled by the parents themselves with the average age of parents lies 30-40 years. Whereas the teachers who took online classes was also given an opportunity to share their responses with the average age of teachers were about 35-40 years. The gender ratio of the respondents who fill the questionnaire was 56.7%for females and 41.3% for males.

The questionnaire of the students showed that about 76% of the students preferred physical classes over online classes whereas only 14% was satisfied with the online system. Among students only about 28.6% students were in favor that online classes save time while the rest ofthem59.7%was not infavor of home schooling. The students when asked about the psychological health about 71.7% students faced a disturbance in their mental health due to continuous work pressure and mental torture whereas 14% of the students enjoyed a sound health.

Students when asked about their involvement with their teachers reported that 66.7% students felt engaged with their teachers through online learning whereas 20% students find the session interacting.43.6% students complained that they face technical barriers by their teachers where as 33% of them did not face any technical constraints. It is noted that 82% did not find online classes effective whereas 10% students found them effective as shown in Table 1 and Figure 1.

The teachers when asked about the behavior of students reported that about 35.3% student showed good behavior, 34.3% students showed better behavior whereas 16.33% students showed bad behavior and 14% showed worst behavior. Whereas the working efficiency of the students asked by teacher was in a favor that 47.66% students showed worst performance, 24.7% students showed good performance. About 68% teachers were not satisfied with the online results of the students whereas 15.33% of them was satisfied and the remaining about 16% was neutral. When asked about the interaction with the students from teachers; 34.5% faced worst experience, 31% experience good interaction, whereas 34.3% have better experience of communication with students. About 69% of the teachers were not in a favor that online classes have positive impaction students whilethe16%wereina favor whereas the remaining13.66% were neutral. Results are shown in Table 2 and Fig 2.

It was noticed that 59.3% of the surveyed parents were unsatisfied with the online learning, 26.8% were somewhat satisfied whereas only 7.6% of them was satisfied with the system. Many parents also said that the online classes not only influence physical but only psychological health of the patients so when asked about the working hours of their kindergarten's children in front of mobile screen; 64.7% of the surveyed parents were unsatisfied, 11.33% were somehow satisfied whereas about 7.7% were satisfied. Lower income parents were more worried to provide proper technical facilities to their children. About 81.67% agreed that there was a decrease in physical activity of their children whereas 8% were not agreed and the remaining were neutral. The reported surveyed parents were also unsatisfied by the way the teachers convey the online lectures. About 71.33% parents agreed on the fact that the online classes are less structured as well as functional than traditional classes whereas 11.66% were disagree on that fact. Out of 100%; 55.67% of the surveyed parents were unsatisfied with the skill development in theirchildren,16.7% of them were somewhat satisfied whereas the 10%of them were satisfied. Results are shown in Table 3 and Fig 3.

Table1: Overall impact on students during the online classes

Variables	Frequency(N)			Percentage (%)			Chi Square Value
	Yes	No	Maybe	Yes	No	Maybe	
Before COVID-19, I was satisfied with the physical learning system.	228	42	30	76%	14%	10%	0.77
In general, I have found online lectures useful.	45	218	37	15%	72.66%	12.33%	0.02*
Did your overall Psychological health affected due to online learning?	215	42	43	71.67	14%	14.33%	0.13
Do you feel engaged with your teacher through online learning?	61	200	39	20.34	66.67%	13%	0.69
Did your ability to pursue your studies affected?	231	31	38	77%	10.33%	12.67%	0.00*

Table 2: Overall impression of online classes by the teachers

Variables	Gender	Good	Better	Worst	Chi square value
How was the behavior of the students during online classes?	Female	55	65	49	0.027
	Male	51	36	37	
	Prefer not to say	1	3	3	
Percentage (%)		35.66%	34.7%	29.67%	0.06*
How was the working efficiency of the students?	Female	128	23	19	
	Male	99	6	19	
	Prefer not to say	3	1	2	

Percentage (%)		76.67%	10%	13.33%	0.35	
How were the online results of the students?	Female	22	24	124		
	Male	23	25	76		
	Prefer not to say	1	1	4		
Percentage (%)		15.33%	16.67%	68%		
How was your interaction with the students?	Female	53	55	62	0.93	
	Male	38	46	40		
	Prefer not to say	2	2	2		
Percentage (%)		31%	34.33%	34.66%		
How helpful your institution has been offering you resources from the school?	Female	36	70	64	0.53	
	Male	35	41	48		
	Prefer not to say	1	3	2		
Percentage (%)		24%	37.67%	38.33%		

Table 3: Overall impression of online classes by the parents

Variables	Gender	Satisfied	Somewhat satisfied	Neutral	Unsatisfied	Chi square value
Parents are about their children's online learning?	Female	8	28	22	112	0.08
	Male	14	30	18	62	
	Uncertain	1	0	1	4	
Percentage (%)		7.67%	19.33%	13.67%	59.33%	
Parents are about their K5 children's working hours on mobile screen during online classes.	Female	8	15	23	124	0.01*
	Male	15	17	26	66	
	Uncertain	0	2	0	4	
Percentage (%)		7.67%	11.33%	16.33%	64.67%	
A lower income parentis to provide technical facilities to the students?	Female	9	30	2	129	0.03*
	Male	23	20	0	81	
	Uncertain	2	1	0	3	
Percentage (%)		11.33%	17%	0.667%	64.33%	
As a parent,how wouldyou rank the quality ofonline learning?	Female	11	30	33	96	0.11
	Male	14	28	29	53	
	Uncertain	3	0	3	2	
Percentage (%)		8.67%	19.33%	21.67%	50.33%	
Parents are about their kids falling behind in developing social skills.	Female	9	25	27	109	0.003*
	Male	21	24	26	53	
	Uncertain	0	1	0	5	
Percentage (%)		10%	16.66%	17.66%	55.66%	

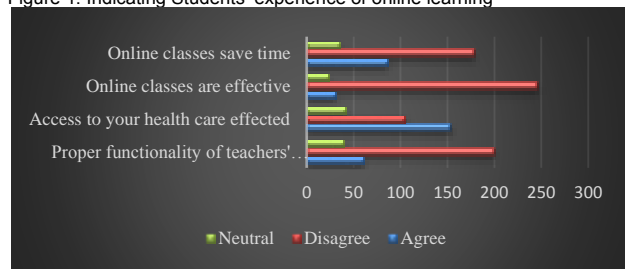Figure 1: Indicating Students 'experience of online learning

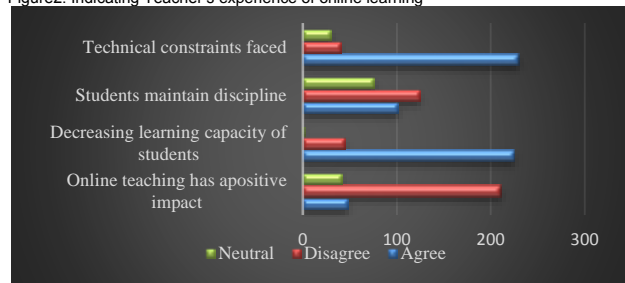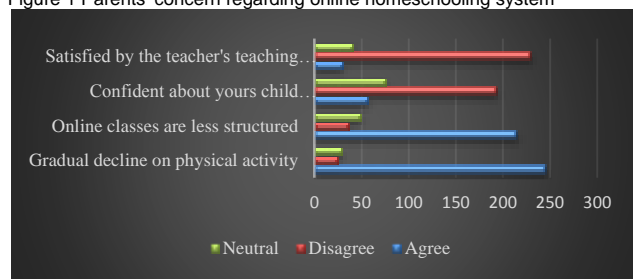Figure2: Indicating Teacher's experience of online learning

Figure 1 Parents' concern regarding online homeschooling system

DISCUSSION

The outcomes implied that during the beginning of the 1st lockdown teachers, parents and students acknowledged the way that home schooling was effective however with the progression of time parents began seeing the decrease in the actual performance of the children. Current study suggested that social distancing and the emerging challenges associated with Covid 19 have entirely changed the education system that has caused number of problems for children, parents, and teachers in Pakistan. Many reports on the psychological health of students enlighten the fact that the online homeschooling prompts fear, anxiety as well as depression[21]. It was seen that the overall psychological health affected due to online learning. About 71.66% of students in Pakistan face continuous work pressure, thereby consuming their thinking ability which impacted their mental as well as physical health. Their incorrect postures during online lectures lead to muscle spasms, headache, and dizziness[8].

Conversely, in accordance with previous studies personal, psychological, and organizational components determines effective teacher participation in changes with the system[9]. According to the proposed results the teachers were unable to prove their stance effectively to their students due to lack of technical facilities provided by their working place. About 76.66% of teachers complained about technical limitations and lack of experience, lack of soft skills and information about the use of technology, which created a complicated situation for students to deal with challenges[1].

In the past studies many findings revealed that the noticeable distress factor of their children was the loss of interest in their studies due to online system[12]. Children were cocooned in their limited places to minimize the likely threat of the virus whereas research suggested that the probability of corona in children is less than adults. The continuous trauma of the virus and the escalating death rate conceded their mental ability. Several parents complained about the weak vision of their children because they spend most time in front of portable screen[5]. About 64.67% of the parents were unsatisfied about their children's working hours on mobile screen during online classes. Almost every educational institution all over the world happened to a

sudden stop causing undesirable impact on students' routine, attitude, and future[20].

According to our research, about 80% of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the way teachers deliver online lectures. Parents further reported that non-punctual classes disrupted their children's sleep cycle, and they were unable to engage in any activities for the rest of the day. As per the results of the parents, we tracked down that 77% of the students were suspected to have passionate issues, and second-rate students were viewed as more powerless. Past studies have shown raised anxiety levels of teachers and parents with the students in elementary schools. Thus, further examination is needed to decide if the more elevated levels of tension uncovered in the study are identified with home schooling[14].

CONCLUSION& RECOMMENDATIONS

The Covid 19 pandemic is global outbreak which has been spread worldwide affecting various countries. Territories all around the globe cautioned the people to take care responsibly. Education was considered to be the most suffering sector, so the home schooling system was innovative idea to entertain the students. This system was thought to be acceptable in the beginning of the lockdown but with the passage of time various concerns were roused by the parents regarding physical as well as psychological health of their children such as lack in physical activity, poor eyesight, and anxiety attacks. On the other hand, the students always face difficulty in communicating with their teachers and they also experience mental pressure due to lack of informative strategy for online instructing and proper guidance.

The teachers were also not contended as they did not see any spark during interactive sessions, also poor results were seen in the academic performance of the students. Under the current circumstances, education systems around the globe, need to fund the executive progress of teachers, distinctly in the areas of ICT and effective teaching methods. The use of consumer-friendly tools is another domain of R&D. The lesson learned from the corona virus pandemic is that teachers and students should concentrate on using various online education tools. After the corona virus pandemic, teachers and students should be encouraged to continue using such online tools after they resume teaching, and teaching or learning tools should be improved.

To effectively engage the students in class communication, guardians can accomplish more than giving the legitimate tool. Parents can take note of their youngsters' deficiencies and give feedbacks to instructors so the encouraging impact can be assessed, with important changes made, and surprisingly individual coaching relegated. There are a few different ways which parents can assist students with being engaged in class. Rather than advising the youngsters to concentrate hard, guardians can set example for them by hard working at home and taking an interest in classes with their kids. The school going rhythm can be preceded at home by means, for example, arranging a study room that is like the classroom, possessing students wearing school uniforms before classes, and going into the study room as though entering the classroom. For instructors to viably screen students, online meetings can be utilized as enhancements to the recorded live transmissions. With the camera on, students and instructors can see each other similar to what they do in the classrooms. Subsequently, it is pivotal to lessen students screen time to relieve the negative immediate and aberrant impacts. One approach to accomplish this is to have a couple of classes a day as could really be expected and school work should be possible in the manually handwritten manner rather than on PCs or cell-phones. It is recommended that suitable eye-protection measures should be made common in growing children. However, integrated approaches based on the mental capabilities of the students must be executed. The online teaching can be made productive as well as interactional by using user-friendly tools not, not only in online classes, but this system needs to be common also in traditional classes

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