



An in-depth interview method to explore the retrospective experiences of online classes: A Study among University Students

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Abstract

Over the past few years, worries about the quality of online learning in higher education have increased. There has not been much research done on the quality of online education. It has been extensively researched how educators and administrators feel about online learning. In this qualitative study, we questioned students from different universities in Pakistan. This study's goal was to understand better the requirements for online education programs, which predominantly use the Internet to offer instruction. The interview will be conducted through the "Whatsapp" video call; our respondents were thirty-five males and thirty-eight females. We interviewed seventy-three students. Materials on paper and online education data were gathered. They examined both the positive and negative aspects of students. They also learned what caused these occurrences. The interviews showed that students liked instructional interfaces that were flexible, inexpensive, based on electronic research, easy to find on the Internet, and well-designed. The students' bad experiences were caused by several things, such as slow teacher feedback, a lack of technical support, a lack of self-control and motivation, a feeling of isolation, repeated teaching methods, and poorly organized course material. The results can help teachers better comprehend how their students feel about online education.

Keywords: Online Learning, qualitative approach, students, Google doc

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Introduction

As a result of the growth and development of the Internet, more universities and other organizations are starting to provide online courses. Concerns regarding the caliber of online education are widespread. According to Shonfeld & Ronen (2015), computer-mediated communication has allowed distance learning and face-to-face instruction to coexist in online education. Dutton et al. (2019) list the following characteristics of online education: (a) a communication occurs via computers and the Web; (b) communication in the classroom is different; (c) learners' participation is different; (d) the social dynamic of the learning environment changes; and (e) prejudice and discrimination are lessened.

The Internet, streaming video, net-meeting, and other technologies have helped higher education. Online learning is available to many students who cannot attend traditional courses. Online learning is a standard part of the curriculum in many colleges today (HAJI, 2022). The terms "online education" and "asynchronous education" are also used interchangeably to describe this type of instruction. Online education, according to Kearsley, includes collaboration, connectedness, student-centeredness, roundedness, community, discovery, shared knowledge, multimodal experience, and authenticity. The Internet makes online learning practicable. Paulsen evaluated online education in 2002 and found that, unlike traditional classroom instruction, what a school does to people is divided between teachers and students (distinguishing it from self-study and private tutoring) (Shea, 2019).

Staff members, teachers, and students can connect and study using a computer network. Online courses and degrees are a standard teaching method in colleges and universities. 2003 saw the enrollment of Allen and Seaman at U.S. colleges and universities. They found that around 80% of the course material was derived from online sources. One of the early signs of celebrity is being well-known. The U.S. Department of Education surveyed online education programs (Yu & Xu, 2022). According to the Education Department's review of online courses, there are 1.6 million students enrolled (Abdelmalak, 2014). According to a 2003 study by Allen and Seaman, more than 1.6 million students took at least one online course in the fall of 2002. These students participated in every course for a total number of 578,000. In the fall of 2002, 11% of all students in the United States of America and 13% of students at institutions that offered online courses each took at least one course online.

Although 80% of college and university course content is available online, students in a recent study exhibited little interest in taking online classes. They did not like the ones they selected. One student expressed dissatisfaction, saying, "Not only do the courses cost more, but I always felt like I was lost in them" (Lee, 2013). "The online class was very boring, and I do not think the teacher helped me very much," said another (Shemtob, 2016). These students did not appear to be satisfied with their online pursuits. What took place? The teacher, how do students feel about the quality of online education in light of what they have seen? Are they satisfied with their online education? What types of educational options are available to students online? These problems have driven investigations and studies on the efficacy of online education. There have been concerns about the quality of online college courses due to their expanding availability (Dogra & Dutt, 2016). The need for defined standards for quality assurance, programs with lax or nonexistent quality standards, and the reality that different people have varied perceptions of what makes a great learning experience are just a few of the elements that raise concerns regarding the quality of online education (Kumi et al., 2016). Lee (2013), who presided over the House science subcommittee on fundamental research in May 2000, was worried about the caliber of online courses. Smith had little prior experience with online education. While online students may learn more facts than their traditional counterparts, they lack critical thinking abilities and may not converse as much. Concerns have been raised regarding using technology as a magic bullet to solve financial problems rather than a proven educational approach (Ángyán & et al., 2003)

Offering classes online is frequently seen as a "cash cow" or a way to avoid the expenses of maintaining climate-controlled classrooms and parking spaces while still being able to instruct a significant number of paying students (Bentata, 2020). Many critics of online education wonder if it can match the level of involvement between teachers and students in traditional classrooms (Dwyer et al., 2002). Others doubt the value of online education because they are concerned about the lecturers' qualifications (Abbiati et al., 2016).

Face-to-face contact can be replaced by online bulletin boards, video conferences, and list serves (Boodman et al., 2020). Through cooperation, in-depth thinking, and problem-solving, students can learn using online education (KOBAYASHI, 2017). Online learning is a valuable way for instructors and students to exchange knowledge without prejudice because they cannot tell one another's gender, ethnicity, or physical characteristics. The term "quality" in this study refers to how closely a distance learning program offered online adheres to benchmark standards set by the Institute for Higher Education Policy in 2000. (Tartaglia, et al., 2015). These are the goals that a successful remote learning program must achieve (Reaves et al., 2021). A successful online course must have ten essential elements: content, pedagogy, motivation, feedback, coordination/organization, assessment, and evaluation. This study's goal was to understand better the requirements for online education programs, which predominantly use the Internet to offer instruction.

Methodology

This study's qualitative design combines observations, interviews, and written materials to tell the story of an event or circumstance rather than attempting to determine its cause (HAYAT, (2019). The interviews took place wherever the subjects felt most at ease, such as in their offices, dorm rooms, or the school library. "How do online education programs aid in knowledge acquisition? Unstructured interviews allow participants and researchers to ask and answer questions as they arise concerning events observed or not observed during observations. Taking part in monitoring "gives an account from the perspective of the researched issue. Interviews and document analysis allowed for a comprehensive picture of participants who are free to choose the time and location for observations. Everybody took a closer look. Some observations were conducted in the participants' homes, residence halls, workplaces, or the university library. Many field notes were made while watching; including information on the participants' study habits and locations. Sources of information included pictures, emails from participants, a printed representation of the classroom layout, assignments provided to participants, and the course plan. All participants sent in papers related to online education, such as the course outline, curriculum, exam questions, study guides, discussion postings, and emails. Most of the papers were duplicates of materials students had printed from the website for their course. The data were collected from different universities in Pakistan. We collected data from those students who used watt sap and attended online classes. The respondent was 15 male and 117 female, and interview data were collected on video watts app call. In the online reviews, all of the data was compiled and examined as a whole. The first observation was set up with the participants' consent to see how they performed in the online course. The participants were asked to return for a second observation a week later to determine whether their conduct had altered since they were informed of the research method. The first and second observations resulted in collecting a large amount of paper. Photographs of the participants in their online worlds were taken in real life. The online course's layout and design were also printed to keep track of them. At the same time, data was being acquired and evaluated. The researchers appended several codes to the transcripts of the observations and interviews (Zhong, 2022). Because it was flexible, inexpensive, straightforward, self-paced, enabled by technology, and easy to connect to, people enjoyed it. The negative aspects were slow instructor feedback, a lack of technical support, problems with motivation and self-

control, and a feeling of isolation. The following analysis issues were addressed through the collection of information and its investigation: (1) Explain it. How can students assess the quality of online education based on what they have learned from their own experiences?

Results

The study looked at how students perceived online learning based on their experiences and the circumstances that affected those experiences. The students were amazed by the Internet connection's versatility and simplicity. They also liked how affordable and accessible internet research was. Teachers' lengthy feedback turnaround times and inability to help them with technical students and other unfortunate students caused students to suffer. Students appreciated the lesson since they could work at their own pace and decide when to participate. They also enjoyed the course's organization, the fact that they could do research online, and the fact that they knew the lecturer. Students had unfavorable effects due to their loss of motivation and loneliness. Things that are good and beneficial Flexibility, the ability of the participants to alter their thinking was the key component that contributed to the positive experience. They liked not having to commute to university and choosing their hours for work and study. So that the students could pick the times they wanted to learn the material, the instructor made a schedule. The full-time parents and the employees both benefited greatly from this. When the teacher or other students did not make them study, the participants found online education to be pleasurable. They promised that classmates would not be a distraction. Nobody is peering over their shoulder, checking work, or forced to read. We are free to work at our own pace and are not required to pay attention to the instructor's lectures. Cost-effectiveness Despite having to pay a "Special class fee" in addition to the costs of their car, gas, books, and meals, all 33 participants agreed that online education offers good value for the money. They can save money by taking classes online rather than paying for those extra costs.

Online assignment completion the third benefit was that participants could undertake online research. The online library was used for research by a graduate student. "We sought research aid from the library. Online databases are accessible, and we can contact the librarian if we have any issues. We can borrow a book or article if the library does not have a book or article. All students can access online databases and indexes. The internet is easy to use. Fourth, the poll found that using the Internet was straightforward. If access to a computer and the Internet is simple for students, they will participate in online classes more frequently. They did not need to drive to campus or school because they could access their online class from their homes or dorms. Online students may be eligible for discounts on Internet access. The user interface for the online course is user-friendly. Students were able to find the knowledge they needed with the aid of a well-designed online course. Participants used two different kinds of course materials. In one online course, WebCT and Blackboard were both utilized. As a result, this study used two different kinds of interfaces. Fifteen students made remarks about how intuitive the overall design of the class was. The homepage has a lot of connections and information, and everything on it is easy to find and use. Fifty-eight users praised the way the course material managed test grading by itself. Another advantage of the course was the software's capacity to grade assignments automatically. The level of comfort or familiarity with the teacher was an intriguing study finding. Ten students said, "They feel good about this class because they know the teacher extremely well. "They think so because they already knew how the teacher acted and how he taught." when asked if that increased their perception of the caliber of the online course. The instructor was not prompt in responding to issues and how they got an error. People thought that teachers' slowness in giving feedback was the main cause of students' unfavorable impressions of the quality of online education. Students look forward to their teachers giving them fast feedback on their discussions, their performance on tests or exams, and the homework they turn in. "The teacher does not quickly

point out your faults. we have not received any responses to date. we think the way the teacher provides feedback needs to be dramatically altered." Students also expect the teacher to return their emails and voicemails promptly. Students also expect the teachers to return their emails and voicemails promptly.

We could not get in touch with them since we did not know how to." The average wait time for students to hear back from teachers was one day or longer. They usually respond in a day or two, so we have to wait. The record of discussion postings from one class showed that only the first and second weeks of the semester saw students to student messages. The students published their initial reactions on January 19. On January 19, the instructor published the initial response. On January 29, the instructor finally posted another response. At this point, 33 communications, or roughly one-third of the 89 messages sent in Chapter 1, had already been dispatched. In 89 messages, the teacher sent none of the 33 texts. Why the student felt angry about not getting feedback makes sense. When their teachers did not respond, students got irate, dejected, and less motivated. This misunderstanding crushed motivation, and we almost dropped the course. "It was easy for us to get angry when we did not understand something." "They probably teach regular classes all day, so they will not have time to read or respond to emails until after the day's work is over. The instructor was not available to help with technological problems. Students need help when they encounter technology problems.

When the teacher was not present to help with technology, bad experiences were stated since the teacher was the first person that sprang to mind. According to one participant, many students do not know much about computers or technology. She continued by saying that neither did their peers. She found it difficult even to bring up her concerns about contemporary technology in conversation. "Some problems or gray areas are difficult to describe. It can sometimes be difficult for the teacher to understand what the student is trying to say or express. She continued, "I have to ask my tech-savvy friends for help on how to send and type messages. They said, "A mini-lesson on how to do something would be great." We could benefit from a WebCT session or training before class. Being unable to move and take care of oneself. Although online education gave students freedom and convenience, they still had to be responsible for their learning. Students must be able to retain self-control and put forth the effort to succeed in online courses, despite being free and simple to use. A student may forget when assignments are due or even when tests are when they are unable to control their emotions. One student missed the deadline for turning in one of his tests. He frequently had to ask the teacher for additional test attempts.

The fact that he was unable to communicate with the teacher, however, just made matters worse. Ten participants said, "You have to be highly self-motivated and concentrated." we get bored easily, so we put things off until the last minute." "Independence and freedom can get you in trouble." It is quite easy to put off doing a task. "You do not have a set time to do your work, so it is easy to get off track and lose focus." The student added, "If we were in a traditional class, at least we could talk to my classmates and remind each other about tests and assignments." Participants in this study engaged in tasks like housework, child care, school attendance, and other activities. They did not engage in person, so they periodically forgot they were taking online classes. we sometimes forget to do our homework. However, the participants recognized that self-control and drive were required: "If we had spent some time studying for the test, we would not have gotten such a bad grade." Additionally, he realized he was wasting too much time on pointless pursuits like phone calls and trips. Our phone conversation was too lengthy (we talked for 30 minutes or more). "We had to go on too many interviews this year, so we had to travel too much." a sense of isolation. In this study, those who learned online reported feeling lonely for various reasons. Lack of connection or communication between the teacher and the students, as well as between the students themselves, was one contributing reason. "You cannot often talk to the teacher face-to-face, if at all." they will not be able to talk to other students, unfortunately. We feel like we are nowhere and live on a lonely island," he continued. The online class participant felt

incredibly alone as a result of this. As a result, neither the instructor nor the students' classmates know them. "Right now, I have no idea who my classmates are or how many are. Despite the teacher's phone number being published on the class page, they have never been able to contact her." Less-evolving methods of instruction

The isolation was also exacerbated by the identical teaching style used in the online course. Two respondents to this question said that the only method they interacted with and connected with them was through message boards. "We just spoke to each other on the discussion board. The teacher has not responded to our email. We did not use the chat area at any point throughout this lecture. it will be much better." The resources the teacher created for the lesson were also dull for the students to learn. Only printed materials, if we can meet in the chat room, were used in the graduate-level course. Using pictures and audio files as teaching tools is also common among college students in music appreciation. The following comparison was made in the boring classroom: "Every aspect is recorded. If we could use a variety of resources, including audio and video or even allow us to rent a DVD and create a report on it, we would feel more secure in my learning." Extended syllabus for the objective constructed online course. If the course interface is badly made, it will be difficult for students to find the necessary information. Participants in the study did not generally like online learning. They learned that the online coursework they took did not meet IHEP benchmark requirements. Students must configure an online course before starting. The course's goals, contents, and other details are explained to the students. Students can access various library materials, including a "virtual library." In addition to informational programs, students can access technical and proctoring needs, training, technical assistance, student service employees, and a complaint system. Each participant appreciated accessing the library's online resources. The participants voiced their displeasure at how long it took to obtain feedback, their sense of helplessness, and the absence of orientation for their online classes. Their online education was not fun. Last words on the subject of online education, students were polled. This goal was successfully attained by the qualitative methodologies used in this study. Data that we could not gather using quantitative approaches were obtained through interviews, observations, and the review of historical records. In general, positive events outnumber bad ones for online students. The accessibility of electronic research, the well-designed course structure, the low cost of online classes, the ease of connecting to the Internet, and the ease of utilizing the online class interface all contributed

Lack of technological support, a lack of drive and self-control, a feeling of isolation, uninspiring teaching methods, and poorly organized course material. Most of the studies that were looked at came up with comparable results. Academics (Weller 2004),(Editorial. 2019); (Editorial,2020); (Bahari,2020) contend that online education is advantageous since it is reflective, adaptive, and easy to access. This study showed a connection between instructor expertise and student learning. If the online student is comfortable with the online instructor, they may feel more at ease. That makes us wonder if teachers starting in the classroom should teach online courses. Online training for senior teachers and first-year students may be the subject of further study.

When asked about the quality of their online education, participants gave it an average rating. They either did not think it was perfect or did not enjoy it, which suggests that they did not like it. Their personalities could influence their feeling of learning responsibility. Online students may need to adjust if they lack initiative, talk on the phone constantly, or are not proactive and supportive. The pupils' silence made the study participants feel isolated, perplexed, and frustrated. Online students were troubled and bewildered by the disorganized nature of the course material. The lecturer is the only person who can help online students with technical problems; teachers cannot do so. Students who were only exposed to books and discussion forums did not learn much. They finished their assignments and turned them in but learned nothing new. The authors concluded that the most critical factor is the caliber of online education. This purpose is to make them more accountable when they "face" the students. That is not to argue that administrators

should not work to guarantee high-quality online education. Employing qualified professors, supporting online education, and helping with management, finances, and marketing are all things administrators should do. Three southern institutions and the students who attended them were the subjects of this research. The sampling method was convenience sampling. The results might have been different if the sampling method had been different. A larger sample size, more universities and colleges, and a group of identical students may be used in future studies.

The thirty-three students in this study were enrolled in different universities in Pakistan, whereas this study was also limited to telephonic interviews. Another limitation of this study was that participants were only from public universities. All these limitations may be addressed in future studies for rigorous information regarding online learning. Researchers also found a gap in the literature that there was no mixed-method study regarding online learning, so it is also an orientation for such studies.

Conclusion

As a result of the growth and development of the Internet, more universities and other organizations are starting to provide online courses. Online education includes collaboration, connectedness, student-centeredness, roundedness, shared knowledge, multimodal experience, and authenticity. Students in a recent study exhibited little interest in taking online classes. One student expressed dissatisfaction, saying, "Not only do the courses cost more, but I always felt like I was lost in them." Offering classes online is frequently seen as a "cash cow." This study's goal was to understand better the requirements for online education programs, which predominantly use the Internet to offer instruction. A successful online course must have ten essential elements: content, pedagogy, motivation, feedback, coordination/organization, assessment, and evaluation. Students can learn through cooperation, in-depth thinking, and problem-solving through online education. Students' computer skills have an impact on how well they learn. Organizations that accredit higher education have also looked at the quality of online education—asked 22 students about their experiences with asynchronous online learning. Some participants reported that writing their responses made them reflect more profoundly than voicing their answers.

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