

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

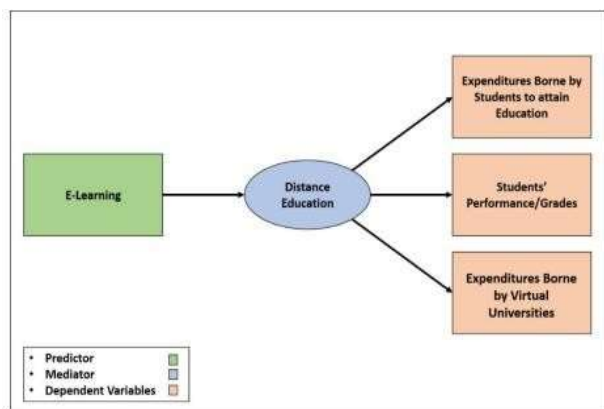
Standards of online teaching & learning in Pakistan

DR. MAMOONA MUHAMMAD ANWAR

*Lecturer, School of Health Sciences (SHS)**University of Management and Technology**C-II, Johar Town, Lahore, Pakistan.**Tel: +92 42 111 300 200 Ext: 6020**Website: www.umat.edu.pk Email: mamoona.anwar@umat.edu.pk*

Dear Editor,

Due to the pandemic COVID-19 both teachers & learners have to move to e-learning/online system from physical classrooms which put both to a challenging situation. The major difficulty students faced was the lack of interaction as most of the teachers were convenient with audio interaction, further active participation & comprehension was quite poor as in physical classrooms. Online assessments such as open book tests made academic dishonesty scenarios quite easy for students¹. Communication is the backbone of any teaching-learning process; a study at undergraduate level at the University of Malak and emphasize communication/language as a barrier in e-learning as if teachers voice is not comprehensive enough due to the poor connectivity issues in remote areas or if their accent is not understandable for learners or the use of complex terms & lastly the absence of non-verbal communication such as body language². E-learning has its own benefits as well as drawbacks. We can overcome most of the barriers faced by both learners & teachers by conducting webinars, teacher training programs as well as by the availability of smooth internet connection both for learners & teachers. Government can also play a major role by providing free laptops & connectivity devices to all those who can't afford³. A study conducted on medical undergraduate students of Dow International University Karachi that emphasize the impact of online learning of medical students. All the clinical rotations needed to be cancelled due to this pandemic that affects negatively on the clinical skills & on the development of student-patient interaction/relationship. Students can improve their online learning satisfaction by learning technology & learners can become more productive with professional faculty training programs⁴. A few students find online learning as robotic teaching because of the less/no eye contact & physical interaction among learners & teachers.



As it was a haphazard transition from physical class rooms to the google/zoom class rooms so both the teachers & students as well as the administration were not prepared/trained. In contrast E-learning enhanced self-governed learning among students⁵. Many educational institutes found no proper strategy to put all the learning content to any possible online platform thus the

instructor's motivation becomes the key role for the improvement of students satisfaction towards online learning. With proper methods of evaluation students becomes more enthusiastic towards online learning by engaging their interpersonal creative skills for educational purposes⁶. Students must have capabilities & a strong approach towards different technologies such as LMS – learning management system to adapt & maximally utilize the learning technologies to improve their grades, this was explained by the TAM model (Technology acceptance model) as technology compatibility & online learning are interrelated with each other⁷.

Likewise many countries Pakistan has adopted e-learning /online learning/ODL –open distance learning that is useful to educate the majority of population with financial issues or those who don't have enough time to attend regular classes (work professionals) or those resides in remote areas. Virtual University of Pakistan provides online distance learning opportunities while Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad engaged fully in distance learning; both offering HEC recognized programs. Comsats Institute of Information Technology has offered blended/hybrid mode of education as distance learning & on campus learning opportunities. Introduction to free massive open online course (MOOCs) by any Pakistani university will make Pakistan feels proud at both national & international levels & that will be beneficial for the community⁹.

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