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“Investigating Teachers’ Perceptions Regarding Online Assessment at Undergraduate Level”

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ABSTRACT

The pandemic of Covid-19 resulted in shifting towards remote education worldwide. Many research studies are being conducted regarding investigating perceptions of students about online assessment. However, there is limited research in exploring teachers’ perceptions about it. The current study aimed to provide in-depth reporting about the perceptions of undergraduate teachers of Pakistan’s higher educational institutions regarding online assessment practices during the pandemic. The sample size consisted of fifteen undergraduate level teachers of private universities in Lahore, Pakistan. The data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The results of the study revealed that participants encountered numerous challenges like technical problems, unstable internet connection, academic dishonesty among students while using technology as a means for assessing students online. They mostly held negative perceptions about online assessment. Teachers thought that online tests were not as effective as in-person tests. The outcomes also showed that students who took examinations online as opposed to those who did them in person showed different levels of academic accomplishment. The findings also indicated that the teachers mostly used formative, summative and diagnostic assessments for assessing students online. The recommendations of the study are about the participants’ views regarding suggesting various strategies for improving or changing the online modes of assessment. Moreover, the research study further recommended that teachers must be provided with proper training regarding how to conduct online assessments effectively so that unfair means cannot be used by students.

Introduction

Every life aspect has now been impacted today by technology and education is no exclusion. Developments in computer and online technology over the decades have resulted in the use of computer and online technology in many and different areas of education (Öz, 2014; Warner et al., 2021). The new advancement in technology has resulted in online teaching learning which currently has become the new trend of imparting education to students worldwide today, especially for higher education levels (Hichour, 2022). In the spring of 2020 Coronavirus outbreak (Covid-19) led educational institutions to shift their on-campus classes to online classes (Malik et al., 2023). Hence, the universities shifted their classes online. Thus, inspiring students to learn from home without bringing any pause to education. The sudden shift to classes online made students and teachers incapable and unprepared due to which educators and students faced different challenges managing online teaching, testing, and learning (Malik et al., 2022). However, it's only possible because of online teaching and learning for continuing education during the pandemic. However, the change from on-campus to online classes has caused problems and issues (Guangul et al., 2020). It has resulted in pressurizing teachers and students for the use of technologies and discovering impressive strategies of e-learning and teaching. It made clear how essential it is to

professionally grow and think about the effectiveness of e-assessing and teaching. The dilemma opens up doors to finer opportunities (Li & Lalani, 2020; Agarwal & Kaushik, 2020).

Assessment plays an essential role in any educational program. E-learning systems and technology advancements have today resulted in the demand for assessing students online by using this new educational technological system. Online Assessment is defined as a test conducted by utilizing technology for evaluating students' performances and giving students feedback on tests, exams, and quizzes. Weleschuk et al. (2019) in other words, defined online assessment as a means of assisting students for enhancing their learning ability in online settings. Following the Corona Virus outbreak, Pakistani higher educational institutions also shifted to remote teaching. Thus, online assessments take place for evaluating student's performance (Pace, 2020). However, online assessments appear to cause many hurdles for undergraduate teachers in Pakistan like technical problems while conducting assessments, academic dishonesty of students, etc. Previously, research was conducted for investigating teachers and students' perceptions about online teaching-learning. However, the current study targets to investigate the perceptions of Pakistani undergraduate teachers to draw attention to online assessment and the challenges faced by teachers while conducting assessments online

and how online platforms affect the outcomes of teaching and learning.

Due to the outbreak of Covid-19, it has been observed that teachers of higher education faced numerous difficulties i.e., high-tech problems, lacking knowledge for using E-teaching learning and testing and finding right platforms for online assessing. Teachers strived very hard to make classes and assessments online valid and effective. For undergraduate teachers, it has not been an easy task for selecting the right way to examine the performance of their students and justify their results. The main objective of this research was to investigate perception's types of assessment and the challenges encountered by teachers of private universities of Lahore, Pakistan regarding using online assessment as a mode for assessing undergraduate level students.

This study will be significant for highlighting the importance of adding or modifying some effective strategies for overcoming the hurdles teachers face in terms of assessing students online. Based on the data collected through teachers about their perceptions regarding online assessment, changes can be made by university administration and curriculum designers to get rid of the problems being reported by higher education teachers regarding online assessments. The research will be the new addition to the research portfolio on the topic investigating the teachers' perception regarding online assessment at undergraduate level in Pakistan. Higher education teachers

will benefit from the study as it will provide insight to the curriculum designers and university administration to bring some changes in the practices and types of assessments or introduce some new strategies or policies in terms of assessing students online which will thus make online assessment practice less challenging and more effective for the undergraduate teachers.

Literature Review

Educational Assessment

Assessment, in In-class instruction and online instruction, is considered an important part of the process of teaching and learning (Maki & Shea, 2021). Assessment is defined as tests/exams being conducted for examining students' performance or knowledge about the content being taught to them throughout the course work. Assessment plays an essential role in educational programs. Referring to Nurfiqah & Yusuf (2021) assessment is ongoing practice that defines the different approaches of learning and teaching that instructors utilize in the classroom. By the end, these activities will result in an understanding of students' progress and the desired outcomes of learning. On the other hand, educators who prefer online assessment claim that it has more benefits than drawbacks. Online assessment makes it possible to give students' work real - time feedback, which can be difficult in classrooms with many students.

Assessment and its Types

An extremely important element in the whole process of education for

fulfilling the purpose of the teaching learning process is assessment. Klint (2020) stated that, through assessments teachers answer the questions like:

- What students are unable to comprehend and What they know?
- Where do students face difficulty or are struggling? Why are they struggling?
- What the educator should next teach? What should they modify for future lessons?
- Does our curriculum own space between assessment and expectation of learning?

For answering the above questions, different assessments that shows up in classroom include:

Formative assessment

It is used for the evaluation of knowledge of student’s side by side as they keep on learning. It is an on-going assessment taking place during the course study for monitoring the progress of learners. Examples of this type of assessment include using questioning and discussion to know if students can comprehend the content. Without the use of formative assessments teachers cannot recognize where the student is facing difficulty. Faculty need formative evaluation because it enables them to identify areas where students are having difficulty with the course material. This gives the professors the chance to modify the course appropriately. Hwang (2020) claimed formative assessment in online classrooms is a means of active learning and improving pupils’

learning. According to Black and William (2010) formative assessment has been an important part of classroom work raising achievement of students. It is “the activity that is undertaken by students and teachers for evaluating themselves which gives information as feedback for modifying activities of learning teaching”. Here in this assessment type, the teacher gathers comprehensive details for betterment of the lesson to meet the student’s needs.

Summative assessment

This type of assessment aims at evaluating the achievement of students and learning by term end, or year, or semester example final exams etc. (Promethean, 2017). Summative assessment, evaluates student success at term completion of a course, is another option for educational assessment. Its purpose is to evaluate learning. Oganje et al. (2018) recommended different modes based on experiences of pupils that included multiple-choice questions (MCQs), true/false, fill-in-the-blanks, e-portfolio, for assessment in online settings. Summative assessment is assessing course work, the validity of educational programs and educational research for identifying, and assessing the progress made at the end of a teaching programme or term. It enables the teacher to evaluate or summarize what the students have learnt.

Diagnostic assessment

This type of assessment usually occurs before the beginning

of lecture and is used to evaluate and reveal students' strengths and weaknesses. Lee (2015) stated this assessment enables the instructor to know how much information a student owns of a subject and this assessment also enables the teacher for discovering understanding level of students about the previous lecture for moving to a new one.

Interim assessment

This assessment is a periodic assignment which is used to evaluate the learning progress of students. It is like formative assessment. It's an evaluation of in-lecture to check the grasping of the content of the lesson by the students for moving to the next level (Tomlinson, 2000). Interim assessments are useful for helping to identify topics that students struggle to comprehend. These assessments occur between formative and summative evaluations.

Online assessment

In online teaching learning, online assessment, also referred to as e-assessment, is a method of online for evaluating' achievement or performance of students. This refers to testing students' knowledge using online platforms. Examples of online assessment include multiple choice questions, true/false, short answers, presentation, simulation, projects etc. Moving evaluation from the physical environment of the classroom to online is complicated (Guangul et al.,2020). This new technology advancement assessment enables

tutors to instantly see students' results and provide them with quick feedback. But technology is not always very trustworthy. Especially in countries that are developing like Pakistan where there are internet connectivity problems being told about. Moreover, educators report that the major drawback of assessing online is that it's a means for learners to cheat.

Higher Education Online Assessment

The usage of online assessments in today's world is increasing due to many causes. Numerous institutions enroll their students in the process of learning through online platforms (Mulyanti et al., 2020). Numerous researchers examined online assessment and its role in higher education. Educational institutes today are integrating the use of technology, especially at levels of higher education for improving the educational quality and providing a wide range of experiences to students for meeting the needs of the 21st century. According to educational technologists and experts, the learning of learners and their quality of experiences is improved through online or web-based assessment, in education (Bull, 1999; JISC, 2007; Bull &McKenna, 2004; Conole & Warburton, 2005; Sarýçoban, 2013). This reasoning has been inspired by the fact that computer education of computers today has become a compulsory need, especially for higher education. Assessment roles in higher education provide the learners with possibilities for

flourishing success and to showcase their strengths which are pertinent to academics. Moreover, the authors propose assessment as an essential tool of learning actively in higher education (Bonwell, 2010; McGinnis, 2018).

Online Assessment in Pakistan During Covid-19

COVID-19 incident led higher educational institutions faced numerous kinds of challenges in their learning and teaching activities. Most Pakistani universities had not experienced online education system before Covid-19. As result, online teaching and learning coined with Covid-19 pandemic. According to Bin Herzallah, (2021): "Education online was not applied until the pandemic of Corona Virus" (p. 78). Allen, Rowan and Singh (2020) stated workloads for teachers have been increased because of pandemic due to switching teaching learning and assessing into online education.

Some of the studies reported here describe teachers' perceptions and experiences regarding online assessments. Elzainy, El Sadik and Al Abdulmonem (2020) has conducted observational research about online assessment which reported satisfactory results of experiences of medical faculty regarding online assessments, but that can be achieved and possible only because of educational technological competencies. In contrast to this research, OECD (2020) raises questions about unfairness and cheating of students in online examinations and many other risks of technical problems.

Spivey and McMillan (2014) research suggested that e-assessments should be invigilated by teachers on campus. Amendola and Miceli (2018) worked on the strategy of peer assessment for assessing students online for increasing the efficacy of online assessment.

Research Objectives

The research study objectives were to:

- determine undergraduate teachers' perceptions of private universities about online assessment.
- examine the types of assessment used by private universities undergraduate teachers for assessing students online.
- identify the kind of challenges private universities undergraduate teachers face in terms of assessing students online.

Methodology

Research Design

The present study employed a qualitative research approach for investigating the perceptions of undergraduate teachers at private universities of Lahore, Pakistan regarding online assessment of undergraduate level students.

Research Instrument and Data Analysis Technique

A semi-structured interviewing strategy was used for gaining an insight into the perspectives of the undergraduate

teachers regarding their online assessment experiences.

Thematic Analysis was used to analyze the data. All the interviewees’ responses were carefully reviewed at least three times. They then were coded and various themes were identified which were subsequently refined through analysis.

Population, Sample, and Data Collection

The population of the study comprised undergraduate teachers of private universities of Lahore, Pakistan.

The sample for the present study consisted of fifteen undergraduate level teachers at private universities of Lahore, Pakistan. Three teachers from three different departments (Department of English Literature, Science & Mathematics) were selected for gathering data. The inclusion criteria for selection of sample were determined. The departments of English, Science and Math were targeted because these are the core subjects and taught in all universities.

Semi-structured interview method for data collection has been used for present research study. The credibility and dependability of the findings of the research was also ensured.

The study follows the three criteria of ethical consideration in research: seeking consent, maintaining confidentiality, and avoiding biases.

Research Findings

The findings of the research study are discussed below which arose out of the interview process and subsequent qualitative data analysis. The findings are divided into various themes and sub-themes that emerged from the thematic data analysis.

Perceptions of Teachers about Online Assessment; Online assessment perceived as a challenging mode

The teachers reported that online assessment was the only mode left to track the academic performance of students because of the pandemic crisis.

Almost all the respondents highlighted that they found the use of online assessment challenging, especially in terms of the outcome of practicality, validity, and reliability.

They reported a common problem which mostly the students faced. They were unable to sit for the examination because they had no electricity at the time of the exam. In fact, the majority of respondents claimed that giving online quizzes was not always very feasible due to a number of reasons of internet connectivity problems, technical problems and cheating among students in online settings.

For example, teacher Q asserted, “It was very stressful using technological platforms as a means for assessing the students because of academic dishonesty among students in online testing”.

Mostly teachers' responses appear to be negative regarding the use of online assessments and considers it to be a forceful shift just to cope out with the crisis of pandemic.

Perceptions of Teachers about Online Instruction: ensuring continuity through challenging times

University roles in continuing education during the crisis of pandemic were highly appreciated by all respondents. Overall, the feeling of continuity of instruction was satisfactory, and they recognized that change towards online mode was helpful for continuity of instruction.

For example, the teacher I stated, "I think online assessment was a needed transition in teaching. It provides an arrangement and sequence between assessment distance education".

Moreover, teacher O expressed, "Technological platforms for learning, teaching and assessing have been very helpful for continuing the mode of education without bringing any pause to students' education".

However, on the other hand the perceptions regarding online assessment and its effectiveness educators were of the view that online assessment was essential and supportive during the time of crisis.

Use of Different Types of Online Assessment; commonly used online (summative, formative and diagnostic) assessments

Five different types of assessments: diagnostic, formative, summative, interim and online were focused on the interviews. When the teachers were asked about the different assessment types they used in online classrooms, respondents reported that they use different kinds of online assessments.

Most of the teachers reported that they used formative assessments, diagnostic assessments along with summative assessments as a mode to evaluate their students' performance during their sessions online while the remaining three teachers reported that they evaluated their students' performance based on projects, oral presentations, and open-book examination.

Teacher P mentioned, "I designed different kinds of assessment and did not specifically rely on one specific mode of assessment because of enhancing the fairness of the process of assessment".

Surprisingly, none of the teachers reported the use of interim assessment. Respondents relied heavily on using different kinds of assessments for the assessing of students online to make sure that learning of students is evaluated appropriately.

They used different activities for monitoring progress of students during their session online including asking questions orally, assigning project-based activities, online quizzes, designing multiple choice questions, designing short and long questions based on comprehension

and other graded assessments. They further added that they provided students with continuous written, oral and feedback.

Challenges of Online Assessment

The results of the study further reveal that teachers faced numerous challenges while assessing online. Some of the major challenges include internet accessibility, poor connectivity, academic dishonesty and lack of knowledge and skills about the use of technology.

This category regarding challenges of conducting assessments online is divided into five subthemes.

Adapting online assessment

All the teachers are facing numerous challenges regarding their perceptions about online assessment and the data.

Most teachers reveal that they were given training, as their first ever experience to get along with the environment online yet they struggle to adapt with it since switching off from traditional to a virtual mode makes the whole learning and teaching experience wholly different.

Teacher B, for example, stressed, "One big challenge is to be adapting to this new model of education because of using it for the very first time as a means for assessing students academically."

Non-availability of resources

In this modern era of technology where technological use

is increasing rapidly, there is no definite proof that everybody, including both the teachers and students, owns the resources.

Resources, for example: technology, accessibility to available technology, technical support, electricity power breakdown and time. Resources thus become one of the challenges for using technology in the classroom.

Participants mentioned that some of their students did not own cellphones or laptops and that MS Teams required high usage of data which ultimately negatively affected delivery of lessons and online assessment.

For example, teacher S reported, "When conducting online tests numerous challenges appear like electricity power breakdown, technical problems or poor internet connectivity at the students end which makes this mode of assessment less effective".

Lack of technology and skills

Technology can only be implemented effectively when there is appropriate knowledge and skill about it.

Some teachers reported that they themselves and students were not trained to use technological platforms like MS Teams, ZOOM and had poor technological skills.

Teacher U revealed, "It was very stressful for me to conduct an online test for the first time because I am not the kind of person who is

very efficient in handling and using technology”.

Since teachers reported that they were not given proper training regarding

the proper use of this new mode which became a barrier to effectively use this as a means of assessing students online.

Technological hurdles

All the teachers mentioned technical problems as the biggest hurdle for conducting online assessments.

The first biggest challenge that was raised by all the interviewees was “the poor unstable internet connection and power breakdown.” which thus led to the failure of conducting online assessments properly. This challenge was widely covered in the literature.

Academic dishonesty

Almost all the teachers considered academic dishonesty as one of the biggest challenges they encountered while conducting online assessments.

All teachers highlighted the fact that students cheat in traditional classrooms, so they will not miss the golden opportunity when the test is being conducted online. Moreover, the participants agreed on online test quality because according to them, it’s an excellent opportunity for students to cheat and excel.

The other challenges include the insufficient student response to evaluation online. This supports the

challenge claimed by respondents about the poor connectivity.

Thus, lacking trust in online assessment is probably one of the reasons behind cheating, which is amongst one of the main challenges of online assessment.

Teacher A mentioned, “when students take a test using online assessment, there’s high chances of cheating because of having access to various resources such as notes, internet, books etc.”

Another teacher claimed, “controlling misconduct of students is difficult especially in online mode of education because of the absence of monitoring the students physically”.

The online assessment should result in supporting the prevention of academic dishonesty by designing creative and new ways to assess students.

All the teachers claimed that they do not trust students who report having a poor internet connection. For them, those students make excuses for missing classes.

Main Findings

The main findings of the research study for investigating the perceptions of undergraduate teachers at private universities of Lahore, Pakistan regarding online assessment of undergraduate level were:

- The teachers found the use of online assessment challenging, especially in

terms of the outcome of practicality, validity, and reliability.

- However, the teachers were of the view that online assessment was essential and supportive during the time of crisis.
- The teachers used different kinds of online assessments. Most of the teachers used formative assessments, diagnostic assessments along with summative assessments for assessing students online.
- Moreover, teachers faced numerous challenges while assessing online. Some of the major challenges include internet accessibility, poor connectivity, academic dishonesty, lack of knowledge and skills about the use of technology, electricity power breakdown and time. Resources thus become one of the challenges for using technology in the classroom.
- Lack of proper training regarding the proper use of this new mode became a barrier to effectively use this as a means of assessing students online.

The findings of this research study further highlighted the need for effective strategies for overcoming the hurdles teachers face in terms of assessing students online thus resulting in making online assessment practice less challenging and more effective for the undergraduate teachers in Pakistan.

Discussion and Conclusion

The main objective of the present research study was to investigate perceptions, types of assessment and the challenges encountered by teachers at private universities of Lahore, Pakistan regarding using online assessment as a mode for assessing undergraduate level students.

Based on our first research question about the perspectives of undergraduate teachers at private universities about online assessment, most of the participants considered the use of online mode as a challenge especially when the purpose is to evaluate students’ performance. Similarly, Alruwais et al. (2018), highlighted in his research study that it was a challenge both for teachers and students to adapt to this mode of assessment. In contrast Elzainy, El Sadik and Al Abdulmonem (2020) conducted observational research about online assessment which reported satisfactory results of experiences of medical faculty regarding online assessments, but that can be achieved and possible only because of educational technological competencies. Most of the the teachers’ perspectives of the present study appeared to be negative regarding the use of online assessments. This finding also is aligned with the Yulianto and Mujtahin (2021) study who also reported underlying negative perceptions of teachers regarding using online assessment during pandemic crisis. However, on the other hand the analysis regarding online assessment and its

effectiveness the results of the present research study revealed that teachers felt that online assessment was essential and supportive during the time of pandemic.

The second research question was about examining the types of assessment that teachers use for assessing students online. Most of the participants of this research study reported that they evaluated students' academic performance by using different kinds of assessments. They used different activities and kinds of assessments. The respondents answered that they mostly used formative, diagnostic and summative online assessments as a mode for assessing students online which included asking questions orally, assigning project-based activities, online quizzes, designing multiple choice questions, designing short and long questions based on comprehension and other graded assessments etc. These findings are consistent with those of Mirza (2021), research study who conducted similar research in Lebanon where the teachers also reported the use of different kinds of assessment for online assessing of students. According to Abduh (2021) research study on investigating perceptions of teachers about the methods of assessment used in full-time e-testing during COVID-19 in Saudi Arabia in online assessment context. The results indicated the teachers were unfavorable toward e-assessment. According to Khan & Khan (2019), developing exams by using a mixed approach: writing, objective, subjective, and speaking are some of the tips for maintaining

and justifying the validity of testing online. Most of the teachers in this research study reported that mostly they used formative assessments, diagnostic assessments along with summative assessments. Similarly, Hichour (2022), conducted research on experiences of teachers using online assessment in Algerian universities. He reported that mostly summative and formative assessments were used to assess the students. However, none of the teachers supported the use of interim assessment and very few teachers responded to the use of diagnostic assessment. Surprisingly, no teacher claimed the use of interim assessment in an online setting. According to Tomlinson (2000), this evaluation leads to differentiated instruction and feedback. Unfortunately, according to respondents, in online assessment this was not the case, where they responded that they were not sure who was back on the screen. Thus, most of the participants did not consider this assessment as an appropriate method in evaluating learning of students in online classes.

Third research question of the present study which was about the kind of challenges teachers face in terms of assessing students online. The majority of the teachers responded that they faced numerous challenges in conducting online classes as compared to on campus classes. Though some teachers revealed how they were trained how to conduct online classes, even then, they found it hard to adapt to the new mode of education. They also said that it was their first experience

teaching online and this complete shift from traditional to a virtual mode made the whole learning and teaching experience very different. The results of the present study revealed that the teachers faced numerous challenges when assessing the students online. Among some of the biggest challenges included technical problems like poor internet connectivity, lack of knowledge to use technology and to control academic dishonesty. These findings are consistent with those of Mirza (2021), a research study who conducted similar research in Lebanon and reported similar findings. He reported that the main challenge included tackling the problems of power breakdown and poor internet connection due to poor infrastructure of the country. There are some research studies which have shed light on the challenges faced by teachers in online assessment. For instance, the findings of the research study in Iranian EFL context goes through various problems like need of technological support, teacher resources, students and teachers' online competence, and the constraints of learners in using technology (Hedayati & Marandi, 2014; Marandi, 2010). Moreover, Mirza (2021), in his study in the context of Lebanon, highlighted that institutes of higher education neglected in providing effective training to teachers and clear guidelines for assessing students using online assessments. According to our research study most of the teachers were also not provided with proper training in using technology as a means of assessing and lacked

requisite IT knowledge and skills. Similarly, Arif (2020), conducted a study and the findings showed that teachers faced many challenges when assessing online such as misconception of the given instruction and internet connectivity. The study also showed that teachers came up with some strategies to deal with the problems related to the process of teaching and learning online. According to the findings of our research study, the major factors that affected the use of online assessment was the unstable internet connection and speed. Agarwal & Kaushik (2020) also highlighted in his research that high speed internet connection is required for conducting online assessment and lack of this facility makes the online assessment process difficult especially in countries like Pakistan. Moreover, all participants of the present research study were of the same perspective that students indulged in academic dishonesty in online assessments and did not miss any chance when they were taking online assessments. Similarly, a study was conducted by Hichour (2022) who pointed out cheating as one of the biggest challenges in testing online. Farhana et al., (2020) & Khan et al., (2021) research study pointed out since teachers were not familiar with online assessment and students were participating in cheating in online settings. Moreover, in the recent study by Reedy et al. (2021), highlighted that teacher felt cheating was easier in online testing for students. Teachers in Kearns' study (2012), for example, stated different challenges for assessing their

students online like; handling the learners with poor time management skills; being pressed of learning the use of new technologies fast and with restricted support; and to keep assembling data from different kinds of assessments and giving constant remarks or feedback. According to our research study findings students score more in online assessments as compared to their academic performance on campus. Moreover, the teachers had another answer that most students score well in online assessment probably because of cheating and using unfair means in online settings. This finding is consistent with those of Elizondo-Montemayor (2004) who stated that online assessment was considered a good mode for students to cheat.

In conclusion, according to the findings of the present research study the teachers preferred the traditional mode of assessment more as compared to online assessment because of the numerous challenges they encountered in conducting online assessments. Based on the results it is concluded that due to numerous challenges faced by teachers while conducting online assessment of undergraduate students, universities' teachers in Pakistan have developed negative opinions towards online assessment. Time restraints, the perspectives of lecturers towards using online platforms, lack of self-discipline among students, and lack of healthy relationships with teachers were analyzed as weaknesses. The considered threats to online assessment included power

breakdown, internet connectivity challenges, the lack of availability to digital resources for some students, and plagiarism and academic dishonesty. For reflecting performances of students' online assessment has to be revised and educators themselves need to equip with essential knowledge regarding blended learning. The findings of this research study highlight the need for professional development programs for teaching so that digital literacy skills of teachers could be enhanced to effectively use online assessment tools. For ensuring the fairness and validity of online assessments it is essential to implement various effective measures to prevent academic dishonesty and plagiarism among students. The institutes should provide free access to software like Grammarly, Turnitin etc. for fair assessments. Venues have been opened for online assessment with a wholly new experience through this research study for teachers and learners. This research study exposes numerous significant findings that are associated with assessment. Using a virtual environment for online assessment comes with benefits and drawbacks. When supporting online assessment, it is necessary for policymakers of e-learning, educators, and students, to recognize the potential advantages and challenges for encouraging online assessment. This research study is however preliminary, it presents a well-grounded overview of teachers perceptions regarding online assessment of Pakistan's higher educational institutes.

The present research highlights the need for further research to determine or explore the effectiveness of different online assessment methods and strategies in the context of Pakistani universities. Clearly, more researchers are invited to contribute for future research work about it.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made on the basis of results of this study:

- Teachers must be provided with proper training regarding how to conduct online assessments effectively so that unfair means cannot be used by students.
- Teachers should be given freedom by university administration in terms of designing assessments by using different modes which thus results in promoting students' learning.
- This research study suggests that universities now more than ever must infuse in the professional improvement and development of their faculty for ensuring that they are up to date on effective instructional and assessment methods, perhaps using technologies online.
- Professional development programs for teachers should be introduced by the institutions so that digital literacy skills of teachers could be enhanced to

effectively use online assessment tools.

- For reducing the academic dishonesty regarding online assessment among students it is recommended that the universities should integrate platform tools for online learning by offering good quality teaching and learning.
- Teachers' freedom and opinions should be considered when implementing the policies of online assessment.

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