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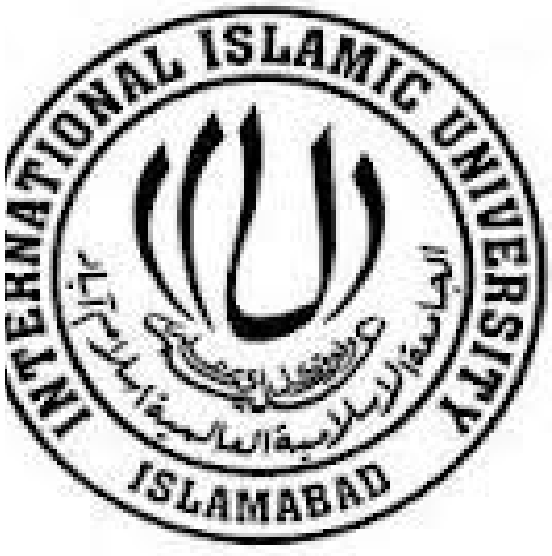

Department of Education,
Directorate of Distance Education,
International Islamic University, Islamabad Pakistan

International Journal of Distance Education and E-Learning (IJDEEL)is an online and print open access, peer reviewed and bi-annual journal. There is dearth of quality research journals in Pakistan. Therefore, for the encouragement of research activities and publication of research work by the researchers, academicians, faculty members and research students (Specially MS and Ph.D. level), IJDEEL provides plate form for publication of researches. The aim of the Research journal is to promote research activities and provide original, relevant and timely information in different fields of education. It will focus on the use of latest media/ technologies in distance learning and implementation and integration of new technologies in distance teaching learning. The journal is available to all practitioners and researchers who are interested in publishing their research work in Education particularly Distance Education and E-Learning.

Scope

Scope includes but is not limited to the fields of:

Distance Education in Developing Countries
Distance Education in Developed Countries
Web-Based Learning Communities
Blended Learning
Teacher's Support Programmes in Distance Education Learning and Grading Management Tools/Software
Learning Strategies in Distance Education & Blended Learning
Emerging Trends in Andragogy
Literacy through Media
Mobile Learning
Virtual Learning
Simulations and Modeling
Marketing of Distance and Blended Learning
Pitfalls and Solutions in Dual Mode of Learning
Quality Distance Education
Quality of Research in Distance Education
ICT& Education
SupportSysteminDistance
Education Training of Tutors
Case Studies in E-Learning
Case Studies in Distance Learning

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MESSAGE FROM RECTOR

International Islamic University Islamabad has always played a key role in promotion of education with a unique vision among more than 150 universities of the country. A large number of students from more than forty-eight countries of the world are studying in IIUI which is unprecedented characteristic of a University in Pakistan. By adding a mode of Distance Education we consider ourselves privileged to be associated with this unique pedagogical practice according to demands of the best of modern world. I am really excited about the launch of **"International Journal on DistanceEducation and E-Learning (IJDEEL)".** IJDEEL will provide aforum to the academicians, professionals and researchers to re-shape their knowledge in the field of Education and particularly about Distance Education and E-Learning.

Prof. Dr. Masoon Yasinzai,
Rector International Islamic University, Islamabad

MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT

Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has become popular not only in Pakistan where more than 15 universities are offering their programmes through dual mode but highly ranked international universities of the world are successfully offering programmes through distance education. International Islamic University, Islamabad, is in the process of embarking on a new phase in the history of the University through Directorate of Distance Education. The Directorate is striving hard to achieve academic excellence. **The International Journal on Distance Education and E-Learning (IJDEEL)** is expected to address the expectations of the academic community and I am confident that the Directorate of Distance Education will maintain the quality of International Journal on Distance Education and E-Learning (IJDEEL). I value the insightful contribution made by all in making IJDEEL a renowned journal of its kind.

Prof. Dr. Ahmad Yousif A. Al-Draiweesh President,
International Islamic University Islamabad

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COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES OF THE DISTANCE UNIVERSITIES OF PAKISTAN

[1]Dr. Muhammad Ajmal, [2]Sophia Tabassum, [3]Javaria Hussain

Abstract

The study analyzed the mechanism of student support services of Allama Iqbal Open University and the Virtual University of Pakistan The objectives of the study were, to analyze student support mechanism at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU)Pakistan and Virtual University(VU) of Pakistan and to compare the student support mechanism of both universities. The population of study was the students and sample comprised of 200 students from each university. The study was delimited to the students of Campus Rawalp indi/ Islamabad, Virtual University and Regional office Islamabad, Allama Iqbal Open University and session 2015-16.To achieve the objectives of study one questionnaire was developed for the students of both Universities, consisting of seven parts i.e. Admissions, Book delivery, Study centers/tutorials/laboratories, Guidance and counseling, Call center, University official website and Examination. Questionnaire was based on five point Likert scale and open ended questions. Data was collected through questionnaire from respondents of AIOU and VU of Pakistan. The data was collected through the questionnaire was tabulated and analyzed through calculating the percentage, mean score and t-test. The findings of the study have led the researchers to recommend that AIOU and VU should go for correspondence, online and blended distance learning (face to face and online learning). AIOU should provide computer labs to its students and introduce online learning system as it''s the need of current era. VU should not rely solely on online video and lectures but should arrange regular workshops for students and face to face tutor tutorial meetings in every semester, Modern communication facilities like toll free phones, voice e-mail or auto answer should be provided at AIOU and VU campuses, both universities should establish Student Association and provide platform to students. In Assignments there should be given specific and encouraging remarks to ensure the improvement on part of the students.

1. Introduction

Student Support Services (SSS) are a cluster of facilities and activities that are provided to make the learning process easier and more interesting for the learner. In distance education, they serve as the interface between the institution and the learner. The effective provision of theis now widely and increasingly being recognized as an essential component of any open and distance learning system. Tait (1995) has noted that, "there has been an enormous growth in interest and indeed institutional

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commitment even in times of financial constraint to student support in distance education and many examples in different countries of excellentpractice…."The importance and necessity of the SSS have been highlighted by many authors,among whom Prideaux‟ (1989) observation is universally accepted. He maintained the view that "the quality of both the materials and the support systems are critical to the success of a distance learning system". According to Croft (1991), "the goal of most support services is to help the student realize the instructional objective of the course by minimizing the negative effects of isolation and the lack of regular personal contact". Sewart (1993) is constructive in stating that the SSS should be evolved in the context in which the system works. To him, the SSS must be constructed in the context of the almost infinite needs of the clients; are dependent on the educational ethos of the region and the institution; are dependent on the dispersal of the student body, elements of resource and the curriculum or product of the course production sub-system and are dependent on the generic differences in the student body which it has been set up to serve. He also maintains the view that student services in distance education are equated with customer service of an industrial enterprise. There exist clear differences in the nature, range, method of delivery and organization, and management of SSS from one institution to another. In particular, the nature of the distance teaching institution, i.e., whether dual or single mode has an influence on the provision, organization and management of SSS. For example, Croft (1991) noted that in dual mode institutions, the SSS tend to have a low status, the system is rarely geared to cope with the needs of adult students and the various functions are usually widely distributed, with little contact between the areas which could or should provide services. In these types of institutions, responsibility for decision making is so dispersed that there is no perception of the needs of distance students, no co-ordination and often very few real services available. In a study (Richard Siaciwena, 1996) observed that in a dual mode university in which distance education is not necessarily central to the activities of an institution, issues of co-ordination anddecision making in the area of SSS are of paramount importance. Student Support Mechanism being operationalized by Distance Education Institutions in Pakistan is very important to be investigated. The Virtual University of Pakistan was established in 2002 , over one hundred cities of the country with more than one hundred and ninety associated institutions providing infrastructure support to the students. Pakistani students residing overseas in several other countries of the region are also enrolled in the University's programs. The Virtual University student support services encompasses video lectures, reading material, digital library, labs, audio/video tutorials, website, face book, and on-line interaction (e-class rooms) for imparting knowledge. However, it follows a very formal assessment and evaluation system in the same fashion as used in any conventional higher education institution (HEI).

Although, the Virtual University of Pakistan observes the semester system, its students have complete flexibility to study at their own convenience, pace and place. More than 170 campuses of the University across Pakistan provide its students a great opportunity to participate in academic activities without any extra burden on their pockets as compared with those studying at home.

The University's video lectures are delivered through University's Learning Management System and its four free to air Television Channels (VTV1-4). Lectures

are also made available over the Internet on YouTube, Daily motion and the Virtual University's Open-Courseware site (http://ocw.vu.edu.pk). Although, the students can watch these video lectures at their own convenience, however the University suggests a "Time Plan" for guidance and better time management for studies during the semester. Students may also obtain the video lectures on DVDs from the University's online bookshop.

Virtual University is Pakistan's first University based completely on modern Information and Communication Technologies Using free-to-air satellite television broadcasts and the Internet, the Virtual University allows students to follow its rigorous programs regardless of their physical locations.The Allama Iqbal Open University was established in May, 1974, with the main objectives of providing educational opportunities to masses and to those who cannot leave their homes and jobs. The University with its main campus at Islamabad and huge network of regional centers spread all over the country is serving its clientele all over Pakistan and inthe Middle East. AIOU is a Distance Education institution, which provides multi disciplinary education from basic to doctoral level programs. The university is part of the Ministry of Education/Higher Education Commission system and abides by the mutually agreed curricula. The university student support services consist of non-formal method of correspondence, tutorials, assignments, workshops, face to face teaching, radio and television broadcasts, library, special textbooks and reading materials prepared on self-learning basis, website, face book, part-time teachers (tutors) engaged nearest to the student's residences. And a system of regional offices and study centers for applied training is spread throughout Pakistan.

The present study might provide an efficient view and information to officers of Allama Iqbal Open University and the Virtual University of Pakistan about the use and advantages of student support services. It also assesses the availability, quality, worth and similarities of the student support services in different open universities. The study might be useful for Allama Iqbal Open University and the Virtual University of Pakistan to look into the quality of its student support services in the regions and in emphasizing the strengths and weaknesses in the student support services. It might enable the Allama Iqbal Open University and the Virtual University of Pakistan Regional Offices to overcome weaknesses and fulfill student needs and also provide guidelines for the rest of the Allama Iqbal Open University and the Virtual University of Pakistan Regional Offices in the country. It might be helpful for academicians, personnel‟s of regional offices and policy makers in distance learning system to strengthen the students support services at Allama Iqbal Open University and the Virtual University of Pakistan. It might also suggest various measures for upgrading the student support services of Allama Iqbal Open University and the Virtual University of Pakistan.

2. Statement of Problem

The present study was designed to analyze the student support mechanism of Allama Iqbal Open University and the Virtual University of Pakistan and compare them for better analysis of the services in both universities.

3. Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To analyze student support mechanism at Allama Iqbal Open University Pakistan.

2. To analyze student support mechanism at Virtual University of Pakistan.
3. To compare the student support mechanism of Allama Iqbal Open University and Virtual University of Pakistan for better analysis of the services.

4.Delimitations of the Study

Due to limited resources on the part of researcher the study was delimited to:

i. Allama Iqbal Open University and Virtual University of Pakistan
ii. Campus Rawalpindi/ Islamabad, Virtual University
iii. Regional office Islamabad, Allama Iqbal Open University
iv. Students of the Virtual University of Pakistan
v. Students of Allama Iqbal Open University Pakistan
vi. Session 2015-2016

5.Review of Related Literature

Distance education is the most renowned descriptor used when referencing distance learning. It often describes the effort of providing access to learning for those who are geographically distant. Distance education has a history that spans almost two centuries (Spector, Merrill, Merrienboer, & Driscoll, 2008), and this time period represents significant changes in how learning occurs and is communicated.

From basic correspondence through postal service to the wide variety of tools available through the Internet, society has embraced new forms of communication through the years. One such form, online learning, is known to have a history of access beginning in the 1980's whereas another term, referred to as e-Learning, does not have its origins fully disclosed (Harasim, 2000). As researchers and designers utilized these emerging technologies, we find that a relaxed use of the terminology makes it difficult to design and evaluate similar learning environments without understanding the specific characteristics (Phipps & Merisotis, 1999). The design of different types of learning environments can depend on the learning objective, target audience, access (physical, virtual and/or both), and type of contentAccording to Alan Tait (2003), generally every learner is expected better support services from the institution where he has enrolled. The institution shall recognize the basic needs of the learners and try to fulfill them to the best of its abilities. The institutions should understand the effects of the learners when the needs are not fulfilled. The support services identified mainly in the fields of Establishment of Centres, Registration; Material Distribution; Library; Media; Examination & Evaluation for the distance learner community. Apart from this, the institution should ensure the availability of qualitative study materials before launching any programme of study.

5.1. Services and Activities

The services and activities involved are delineated below:-

5.1.1. Establishment & Maintenance of Regional/Study Centres

Locations should be identified geographically; thecenters should be equipped with minimum educational infrastructural facilities Technological facilities should be provided to the centres Ensure that the centres should be managed in a purposeful manner.

5.1.2 Information Services

About Academic Programmes,Encourage prospective learners who desire to pursue their studies through distance mode.

To provide information about admission procedures and schedules,

About the distance education system and methodology including tutorials, counseling & assignment schedules, induction, library, tele-interactive sessions, dispatch of Course materials and Examination System.

5.1.3Pre-Admission Services

The prospectus-cum-application forms for academic programmes should bemade available to the prospective learner community at various places where these can be easily accessed by the learners. The information in respect of these programmes should be provided by various means such as posters, mailing, e-mailing and media. These documents should be made available to the learners at affordable prices.

5.1.4. Post-Admission Services

- Material Dispatch
- Library Services
- Examination & Evaluation Services
- Financial support
- Technological Services
- Media Services
- Other Services
    - Change of Address
    - Change of Electives
    - Change of Medium of Instruction
    - Processing of Credit Exemption requests
    - Inter-centre transfers
    - Issue of ID cards
    - Issue of Migration Certificate
    - Arrangement of contact programmes

5.1.5. Material Dispatch

- Procurement of stationery for dispatch of course materials
- Collection and storage of printed course materials
- Storing, packaging the materials
- Scheduling the distribution to avoid inconvenience to the learners Generating the address labels
- Collection and storage of audio/video programmes
- Distribution of printed materials, and audio/video programmes to the Regional Centers and Study Centers.
- Maintenance of records of course materials received, dispatched, etc.
- Updating the inventory
- Responding to learners‟ complaints about non-receipt of course materials

5.1.6. Library Services

- To develop appropriate collections in various disciplines to meet the needs of the clientele of the libraries of the University, Regional & Study Centers;
- To provide reading, lending, reference, information and documentation facilities to all categories of staff and students
    - To develop a special collection of distance education books and journals at the libraries
    - Circulation service including Inter Library Loan

- Reference & Referral
- User guidance
- Bibliographies/Indexes
- Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC)
- CD-ROM search
- Microform search
- Online Databases
- Reprography
- Lamination & Spiral binding

5.1.7. Examination and Evaluation Services

- Preparation of guidelines for the conduct of examinations and evaluation of assignments.
- Conducting entrance tests for admission to programmes, wherever necessary.
- Selection of examination centers, appointment of paper setters and coordination of all work relating to the setting of question papers.
- Printing, storage and dispatch of question papers and answer books to examination centers.
- Arrangements for evaluation of answer scripts, scrutiny of the answer sheets and preparation of award lists.
- Processing of admissions to programmes involving test results, and maintenance of data on courses chosen by students, etc.
- Preparation of labels and lists of candidates admitted to various programmes.
- Evaluation of computer marked assignments and entering the scores in learners' grade cards along with the scores of Tutor Marked Assignments (TMAs).
- Preparation of grade cards on the basis of the results of term-end examinations. • Processing of examination results.
- Dispatch of grade/result cards to students.
- Preparation of certificates/diplomas/degrees to be awarded to successful students.
- Consideration of the cases of the use of unfair means in examinations.
- Development of guidelines for assessment of assignments and printing of assessment sheets.
- Continuous assessment of students' performance through assignments and entering the awards in the students‟ records.
- Collection of project reports and their evaluation.
- Analysis of examination results.
- Development of new methods of assessment/evaluation.

5.1.8. Financial Support

Financial assistance to the needy learners in terms of subsidy in course fee and free course material, etc. may be provided as per the norms of the Institution.

5.1.9. Technological Services

- Set up & Maintenance of Computer Laboratories
- Introduction of Menu-driven training programmes
- Web hosting, development and maintenance
- Providing Networking facilities at Centers

- Providing ICT resources

5.1.10. Media Services

- Production of audio/video programmes;
- Arranging Teleconferencing sessions,
- Interactive radio counseling sessions
- Conduct of Induction Programmes through tele-conferencing mode.

5.1.11. Change of Medium, Electives and Programme

As part of the flexibility, the learners after having registered once, they may be given a facility to change the subjects and medium of instruction. Such requests shall be processed by the staff as per the provisions made by the institution

5.1.12. Issue of Identity Cards

The ID cards are issued to the learners, which can be used for availing library facilities, attending classes and other purposes

5.1.13. Migration Certificate

Migration Certificate is issued to the learners who have completed the academic programme from the institution

5.1.14. Arrangement of Contact Programmes

The counseling schedules and teleconferencing schedules are to be prepared and sent to the learners. Audio/Video and Computer facilities are also to be arranged simultaneously during the tutorial sessions.

5.2. Organizational Structure of AIOU

Allama Iqbal Open University was established under an Act of the Parliament in 1974 under the administrative control of Federal Ministry of Education of Pakistan with the name of People„s Open University (Act No XXXIX of Parliament of Pakistan, 1974). Its principal seat is at Islamabad with a viable network of Regional Campuses/ Centers throughout the country. Its name was changed to Allama Iqbal Open University in 1977 in commemoration of 100th Birth Anniversary of Dr. Allama Muhammad Iqbal (Research and Evaluation Centre, Triennial Report, AIOU 1972-80). It was the first distance learning university in Asia and the second to come up in the world. Its slogans are CONTINUING EDUCATION AND EDUCATION FOR ALL. Its purpose is to impart education to the masses of Pakistan at their door-steps through print and electronic media (books, readers, study guides and radio/TV programmes etc) without any discrimination of age, sex or creed. Now, taking idea from the success of the UKOU and the AIOU, many Open Universities has been established in different countries like India, Sri Lanka, China, Canada, Korea, Bangladesh, Japan, Thailand, etc. in a sense, the Allama Iqbal Open University is the fore-runner of all these open universities. In 1976, the university started off with a few courses of Arabic, a Primary Teachers Orientation Course and Foundation Courses, with nine regional offices in the country. On the request of the government, it started Teacher Education Programmes like PTC/CT/ATTC for training and orientation of the untrained teachers working in different government schools (Research and Evaluation, AIOU 1999). Later on, the range of its teacher education programmes was extended up to B. Ed (General), B. Ed (Arabic), M.A. Education, M. Ed (in four disciplines), M.A EPM, Diploma TEFL, M.A TEFL and M. Phil (in four disciplines). To cater to the needs of the businesses community, the university

started Bachelor and Mater,,s Degree Programmes in Business Administration (MBA and BBA) through distance learning system, subsidized by the government. Recently, Business Administration and Computer Programmes have been started and face to face instruction/ teaching is provided at the approached study center.

5.3. Regional Network of Allama Iqbal Open University

The headquarters of the university is based at Islamabad; its services are provided to the masses through the Directorate of Regional Services at the main campus and its network of regional campuses, and regional centers have been established in various parts of the country.The booklet on Regional Services‖ (1976) of Allama Iqbal Open University highlighted the Regional Services network as:

"The Allama Iqbal Open University regional services network became operative in 1976 when the university planned to establish its offices in all the four provinces starting from Multan, in November and at Quetta, Karachi in December 1976. In Mach 1977 two more offices were established at Peshawar and Mirpur (AJK). In October 1977, Lahore office was established. This figure gradually a raised to 9 in 1981, 14 in 1985 and at present 28 regular regional offices and 20 part time regional coordinating offices are operating."

The beneficiaries of AIOU are spread over from the seashores of Karachi to the heights of Himalayan Mountains like Siachin and far flung areas of Chitral i.e. Wah Khan near Tajikistan borders (Central Asia States). The range of services provided by the regional centers are of all levels, from basic through secondary, intermediate, bachelor, master, M.Phil and Ph.D. It includes general, vocational, technical and research field at pursuit opted by the enrollees – male, female, rural or urban alike.

Allama Iqbal Open University report 1985–88 (p.165) indicates the regional servicesas:

Being a distance learning institution the regional services meet the essential purpose of instructional support, information and advice for the student who may be under reads of kilometers from the main campus. The regional services comprises of directorate at the campus mainly responsible for the policy and coordination of activities carried out by a network of regional offices/ sub-regional offices/personal coordinating offices and part time regional coordinating offices.

Special emphasis at AIOU regional services is being paid currently to the following activities in Allama Iqbal Open University Report 1997–99 (1999, p.7) as:

- Establishing of sub-regional coordinating offices in remote areas.
- Training of newly recruited offices.
- Establishment of libraries in regional offices.
- Appointment of senior tutors with particular reference to monitoring of tutors performance.
- Improvements in model study centers.
- Consolidation of physical facilities in regional and construction of regional campuses.
- Strengthening of regional centers to provide better services.
- To computerized the regional centers for better record keeping and solving student problems at local levels.

- To network regional centre with the computer centre, main campus using internal or provide e-mail or fax to expedite transfer of student data to the regional centre and fast communication.

Regional campuses play an important role in distance education. Regional directors identify the experts in the region in all the disciplines. They appoint tutors from these experts for each group of students. The director also arranges collaboration with sister institutions and registers them as study centers. They organize workshops and practical training in the region. Opportunities for personal contact in distance education course are linked in face-to-face session, which are helpful to the students. It improves the quality of answer and increasing the frequency of student assignments.

Report of the Allama Iqbal Open University 1999–2000 (2000, p.109) indicated the tutorial support services as:tutorials are arranged at local study centers through part time tutors numbering around 7000 per semester. These tutors belong to local educational institutions and provide guidance/counseling to the students besides evaluation of their assignments. The university has by non-established over 780 study centers where tutorials are held as per study schedule. 70 of these study centers are equipped with audio-visual aids in each semester apart from arranging internship for each student at the end of the final semester.

In distance education, support services are organized and managed on the concept of local centers and study centers. Study centers are generally carry out one or more of their functions, academic, advisor and administrative.

5.4. Organizational Structure of Virtual University of Pakistan

The University opened its virtual doors in 2002 and in a short span of time its outreach has reached over one hundred cities of the country with more than one hundred and ninety associated institutions providing infrastructure support to the students. Pakistani students residing overseas in several other countries of the region are also enrolled in the University'. The Virtual University, Pakistan‟s first University based completely on modern Information and Communication Technologies, was established by the Government as a public sector, not-for-profit institution with a clear mission: to provide extremely affordable world class education to aspiring students all over the country. Pakistan‟s first University based completely on modern Information and Communication Technologies Using free-to-air satellite television broadcasts and the Internet, the Virtual University allows students to follow its rigorous programs regardless of their physical locations. It thus aims at alleviating the lack of capacity in the existing universities while simultaneously tackling the acute shortage of qualified professors in the country. By identifying the top Professors of the country, regardless of their institutional affiliations, and requesting them to develop and deliver hand-crafted courses, the Virtual University aims at providing the very best courses to not only its own students but also to students of all other universities in the country. The Virtual University of Pakistan holds a Federal Charter, making its degrees recognized and accepted all over the country as well as overseas. Vision of the university is To become an internationally acclaimed technology based university that improves access to higher education while maintaining the highest quality standards. Mission of the university is:

- To provide the highest quality of education and research opportunities to all aspiring students irrespective of their age, gender, religion, and geographical location by using modern ICT with content developed by top experts of their respective fields.
- To train students to grow in their professional lives and inculcate an entrepreneurial mindset with high ethical and moral standards to become a productive part of society. To provide the best working environment to faculty and staff to create a culture of research, innovation and cooperation.
- To promote the philosophy of knowledge sharing by providing free and unhindered access to all of its educational content.

5.4.1 Administrative Structure

- Other Officers of the University include:
- Registrar
- Deans
- Chairpersons or Heads of the Teaching Departments
- Director Finance
- Controller of Examinations
- Director of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)

The Board of Governors is the apex body of the University, responsible for the general supervision and control of administrative, academic and financial affairs, to lay down the policies and statues.

- Other Authorities of the University include:
- Executive Council
- Academic Council
- Board of Studies
- Advanced Studies and Research Board
- Selection Board
- Finance and Planning Council
- Affiliation Committee

5.4.2. Mode of Education at VU

The Virtual University uses a combination of video lectures, reading material, audio/video tutorials and on-line interaction (e-class rooms) for imparting knowledge. However, it follows a very formal assessment and evaluation system in the same fashion as used in any conventional higher education institution (HEI). More than 170 campuses of the University across Pakistan provide its students a great opportunity to participate in academic activities although, the University observes the semester system, its students have complete flexibility to study at their own convenience, pace and place.

More than 170 campuses of the University across Pakistan provide its students a great opportunity to participate in academic activities without any extra burden on their pockets as compared with those studying at home. The wide spread of virtual campuses and complete flexibility to study at home jointly support the unique idea of "World Class Education at YourDoorstep" and in a true sense makes it unnecessary for students to relocate or travel to larger cities to obtain higher education.

The University's video lectures are developed by highly qualified faculty members or field experts in a complete digital environment and handcrafted at its own fully equipped recording studios. These lectures are then delivered through University's Learning Management System and its four free to air Television Channels (VTV1-4). Lectures are also made available over the Internet on YouTube, Daily motion and the Virtual University's Open-Courseware site (http://ocw.vu.edu.pk). Although, the students can watch these video lectures at their own convenience, however the University suggests a "Time Plan" for guidance and better time management for studies during the semester. Students may also obtain the video lectures on DVDs from the University's online bookshop.

Complete student-teacher interaction and support is provided through the VULMS while semester examinations are conducted in a formal, proctored environment at designated examination centers throughout the country.

6. Methodology

Cross sectional survey design was employed for this study and it was a descriptive/ survey as well as desk analysis based on qualitative and quantitative methods. Convenient sampling technique was employed as given in the table to collect the data from the students of the both universities.

7. Population and Sample

S. No	Category	Sample	Sampling Technique
1	Students of AIOU	200	Convenient sampling
2	Students of VU	200	Convenient Sampling

After review of the literature, one questionnaire was developed which was used for the students of Allama Iqbal Open University Pakistan and Virtual University of Pakistan. The questionnaire was prepared on 5 point likert scale and some open ended questions.Students were contacted during workshops, examination, library and campuses to fill the questionnaire.

8. Analysis and Interpretation

Serial	Statements	Mean score AIOU	Mean score VU	t-value	Sig. value
1	Announcement of admissions are made on social and print media in every semester	4.24	4.64	-10.528	.000
2	Admission forms are easily available at nearest places/ Banks, Study centres	4.58	4.82	-3.569	.000
3	Admission forms can be downloaded from Official Website of University easily	4.24	4.70	-6.420	.000

4	Fee depositing system is easy	3.88	3.84	-10.42	.000
5	Regional office/Campus gives instant response	4.24	4.18	.576	.000
6	Study material is sent timely	3.87	4.38	-5.115	.000
7	Study material is sent to homes	4.22	4.20	0.295	.768
8	The study material is self-explanatory	4.00	3.16	2.324	.021
9	Lectures/videos on official website of University and social media are available	3.48	4.61	-11.56	.000
10	Course material is available in print form	4.62	4.52	1.593	.112
11	**Tutors** are easily available on phone or mail	4.18	3.68	4.097	.000
12	**Tutors** remarks on assignments are available	3.98	4.36	-4.072	.000
13	Tutors names and particulars are conveyed in time	4.18	4.56	-4.617	.000
14	Tutors attend tutorial meetings regularly	3.31	1.68	16.335	.000
15	Workshops/lab sessions are in evening	4.09	1.72	29.209	.000

16	Workshops/lab sessions timings are suitable	4.06	1.62	26.23	.000
17	Adequate A.V aids are available at the study centres	3.85	4.57	-7.21	.000
18	Workshops/lab sessions are arranged at approachable places near homes	4.02	4.16	-1.287	.199
19	Library is helpful to complete assignments and research work	3.95	4.00	-0.362	.718
20	Online library is available	3.43	4.18	-6.852	.000
21	Guidance and counseling services are offered	3.98	4.27	-2.643	.009
22	Counselors can be approached easily	3.36	3.63	-1.929	.054
23	Call centres are available and they respond timely	3.53	4.38	-8.174	.000
24	University official Website is informative	4.13	4.36	-2.434	.015
25	Date sheet for exams is very convenient	4.28	4.51	-2.769	.006
26	Examination halls are well equipped. Have proper lighting, furniture, heaters, fans, water etc	3.83	4.10	-2.322	.01
27	Roll number slip can be downloaded from University Official website	3.92	4.50	-6.143	.000
28	Results are uploaded on University website	4.72	4.50	4.200	.000
29	Successful Students in exams receive Degrees and Certificates at home address	3.54	2.02	14.572	.000

9. Findings

Student support services regarding admissions VU online system were speedy and well organized than AIOU. AIOU and VU campuses gave instant response to their students means worth of services in this regard of both universities are same. VU sent study material on time usually reason was it had online system they sent soft copies to students on time while AIOU used postal services so at times its students complained. AIOU books were self explanatory but not revised or updated while VU books were updated but bit tough for students to grasp the concepts. Lectures/videos/ on official website of VU University and social media were available while AIOU lacked it.AIOU usually sent course books in print form at home addresses of students

through postal services which at times delayed while VU uploaded or sent books in the form of soft copies on time, secondly if students needed books in print form they can bought from nearby campuses. Tutors of AIOU were usually available on phone and respond quickly but VU students had to wait emails of their tutor. VU Tutors remarks on assignments were always available while AIOU students lack it and usually they didn‟t get their assignments back after being checked. Tutors of AIOU attended tutorial meetings regularly while VU had no such service for its students. Workshops sessions were arranged by AIOU regarding different programmes in evening for students in every semester while VU lacked it. AIOU and VU both arranged Workshops/lab sessions at approachable places near student‟s home. AIOU and VU both had given online library to its students, but VU students used it frequently. Guidance and counseling services were offered by both universities but VUperformance was better than AIOU. VU Call centers respond timely. VU University official Website was more informative than AIOU. VU examination services were better than AIOU services.

10.Conclusions

AIOU and VU of Pakistan both were doing their level best in giving enhanced student support services to their students. Sufficient number of students of AIOU and VU of Pakistan were satisfied with the provided students support services. AIOU was following correspondence distance learning while VU was following online distance learning. However there were few flaws in both universities student support services.VU followed online system strictly which was good no doubt as its 21st century but unfortunately, students were not ready for this system, rather students were in need of workshops conducted for all programs in every semester plus they needed tutor student meetings, face to face meeting with their lecturers and professors, platform for students meetings, in short students needed to be more in touch with teachers, students and administration. They complained a lot about being in isolation. Lectures and videos of programs were uploaded by VU regularly but they were more passive and uninteresting there was system of asking questions regarding lectures through e- mails from tutors but it couldn‟t fulfilled the demand of teachers. Few students suggested for transport service, canteen, and decrease in fee. AIOU followed correspondence distance learning and was dealing with over one million students. AIOU sent text books, assignments, tutors particulars, workshop schedules, roll number slips, date sheets, DMS, results, degrees, admission slips for next semester etc through postal services plus it uploads all this information on its official website too. AIOU no doubt did a great job but it had few setbacks major setback was it hardly revised or updated its course books, books were not written for distance learners, printing of books and its material was of very low standard, teachers at workshops were not very proficient, online e learning was demand of few students particularly submission of online assignments, course books, lectures and videos of different course programmes needed to be uploaded on official website, transport service, fee structure to be revised, scholarships for students, hygienic canteens.

11.Recommendations

1. VU should arrange workshops for its students in every semester for all kind of programmes, should make its lectures and videos more interesting by adding visuals and illustrations., should arrange tutor student meetings in every semester., should

provide transport and canteens at all campuses and reconsider its fee structure for needy students.

2. AIOU should revise and update its courses where they are needed and must be written particularly for distance learners, AIOU should improve the quality of printing and paper of its books,AIOU should appoint lecturers for workshops on merit, particularly those with experience of teaching adults, Online e learning should be introduced, Scholarships, transport services, hygienic canteens should be provided,Fee structure should be reconsidered for deprived students.

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BARRIERS IN OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING: A PERSPECTIVE OF PROSPECTIVE TEACHERS & TEACHER EDUCATORS

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Abstract

As the demand of open and distance learning approach is increasing day by day due to its flexible nature at the same time many researches reflect various challenges concerning this field. The study was intended to analyze numerous obstacles faced by distance education learners especially in Pakistan. The population of the study was comprised of all the teachers as well as graduate students of distance learning institutions. The data were collected by the use of open ended questionnaire from 150 students and 10 faculty members. The findings indicated that the challenges in the implementation of open and distance learning are numerous in number but some of them reflected by the participants" views are related to personal, institutional, social and infrastructure barriers. The key recommendation of the study is that the administrative authorities may organize workshops in nearest areas which are accessible for the students to eliminate transport issues. Most of issues may be resolved by the frequent use of information and communication technology (ICTs) among the universities within the same cities or different cities; it may enhance or creates ease for open and distance learners.

Keywords: *Barriers, Open and distance learning, Professional development, infrastructurebarriers, communication technology*

1. Introduction

The term „distance education" has been observed from many decades, and the paper pencil medium has changed into real time internet and distance learning education. It is the need of time to examine the significance of distance learning and it probable challenges that could be hurdle for students" effective learning (Galusha, 1998). As in running time this is crucial for students to get higher education to enrich their skills and knowledge to enjoy best of their lives, but because of large increase in population, it is getting more challenging to provide enormous educational opportunities to the huge number of students. The role of students andteachers is becoming more challenging and demanding as the student has to be more collaborative, independent and mobilized to get education through distance learning as well as the teachers are seem different from their traditional authoritative role and not expected as sole source of giving knowledge but more likely a catalyst and facilitator to help in students" learning. Many studies emphasized that world wide open and distance learning institutions must focus upon the probable barriers of

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distance learning and all of their academics, administrative and managements departments collectively made efforts to make efforts to deal with them and help students to get maximum benefit from it (Mbukusa, 2009).

Technologies in education have significantly influenced the mode of education as advancements in telecommunications have opened numerous ways in distance education for personal and groups‟ interactions. It allows introduction of the classes, schedules of learning tasks and activities, discussion forums, interaction between students and teachers more easily only by using computers and audio conferencing even without face to face meeting. E-mails and various Social Medias replace the frequent institutional visits. The distance learning is enabling the learners to acquire education as easily and effectively as a regular student is getting. However truly speaking open and distance education is unable to enjoy the success stories as the regular educational system does. A lot of researches proved that there are enormous unseen hurdles that prevent open and distance education to become a real successful story. Now it is crucial to recognize these barriers of distance learning and try to cope with them to achieve successful stories (Galusha, 1998).The growing need that signifies the role of distance education especially in highly populated and developing countries like Pakistan. Even in developed countries most of universities and colleges offering various distance learning programs to facilitate maximum number of their students. However many of them are confronting various barriers to offer successful distance learning including problems related to defective technologies, domestic hurdles, cost of the distance programs and lack of support services and one to one interactions between teachers and students and much more which are needed to be investigated. This study was intended to explore some unavoidable barriers which distance learners and teachers face and that cause a lot of hurdles in providing and attaining higher education.

1.1. Purpose of the Study

Distance learning is a mode of learning that is really helpful especially for those learners who are not been able to attend classes in institutions at programmed time. There are a number of ways through which adult learners get their higher education. Distance learning is one of the best mode through which adult learners prefer to get their higher education as they need a flexible system of education through which they could compete with their priorities. The adult learners also faces different sort of problems such as motivational issues as the learners have less face to face interaction with the teachers or other peers, they also have potentially exorbitant cost setup and last but not least lack of support from faculty. Other than the previously mentioned barriers literature review reflected are related to other issues like insecurities regarding different problems which includes problems related to self-evaluation, learning, feeling of isolation, lack of support related to tutors or on the other hand technical assistance, having trouble in understanding this mode of learning which further lead to academic problems. There are other barriers related to faculty problems which include lack of proper training for the development of course and technology, provision of proper support for open and distance learning and scarce selection of faculty members for distance learning courses. There are numerous of other barriers related to organization that creates problems for the learners such as lack of provision of proper technology for teaching learning process, infrastructure, and curriculum of course and the proper evaluation of student (Galusha, 1998). Through this mode of learning the students

successfully meet their academic and learning needs. But another important aspect of distance learning cannot be ignored which are the different types of barriers faced by them. Because of these barriers they remain unable to continue their studies. The focus of this research is to investigate accurate information regarding the barriers to the distance education programs or courses. It was intended to explore some unavoidable barriers which distance learners and teachers face and that cause a lot of hurdles in providing and attaining higher education.

1.2. Objectives of the Study

Following were the objectives of the study:

i. Identify the perception of prospective teachers and teacher educators regarding the barriers in open and distance learning.

ii. Sort out the possible solutions to overcome barriers concerning open and distance learning.

1.3. Research Questions

Following were the research questions:

i. What are the barriers according to the perception of prospective teachers and teacher educators about open and distance learning?

ii. What solutions could be available to overcome barriers concerning open and distance learning?

2. Literature Review

In 1840, Sir Issac Pitman provided first distance learning mode for the convenience of the learner. As this mode of learning was adopted by a number of people because of which it proved to be extremely successful and latter those courses were adopted on formal basis. Open or distance learning mode of education can be defined as the education for those type of students who may not be able to get education through physical presence at any institution.

Students are facilitated by the flexibility of freedom by time and place, that open and distance learning provides. The study proves that in Open University students in UK there is less percentage of students who do not want to have contact with other students. Such types of students have chosen this mode so that they may interact less with other people. In distance learning the learners faces issues related to learning, teaching and support of students (Alan & Guest, 2003). The two modes of learning that is distance learning and conventional system are not opponent to each other. Both of these modes can prove to be beneficial for serving the noble cause that is to provide education to all (Attri, 2012).

It can be seen that open and distance mode of learning has most appreciated potential for the generation of new and innovative patterns for teaching and learning. It is strongly linked with informational developments as well as technologies related to communication, on the other hand it interlinked and closed to the development of new requirements of learning and updated guidance of access to information as well as the appliance and learning. There is confirmation about the fact that it can lead to the improvement in conventional education and it may affect the conventional form of education. It can be said without any doubt that openand distance learning plays fundamental role for the establishment of society based on the global knowledge (Evgueni, et al., 2002).

Distance learning is an effective mode through which learning experiences can be enhanced. In order to achieve new information and knowledge, experience must make sense so that it settles down with existing pattern of knowledge. To enhance learning, the atmosphere ought to be:Motivational, Equipped with learning material, Based on activities, Interactive environment of class (Sue, 2002).

There are many motivational theories that signify distance education for instance there is „proactive motivational support theory" which might sustain learning mode more supportively as compare to other theories. This theory also proves to be encouraging especially for the skills development of distance learners (Simpson, 2008).

Open and distance learning has unique characteristics. On one hand the students faces barriers in learning which are not faced by traditional face to face learners. But the benefits of open and distance learning cannot be ignored. Hillesheim highlighted possible strategies and models which can prove to be beneficial for learners of this mode (Hillesheim, 1998).

2.1. Developments in Open and Distance Learning

It is open fact and is quite clear that open and distance learning will be a significant element of prospective education and system of training. Now it is reaching the status of acceptance within educational convention as well as training in such a way to brought up a part of selection in future most of the educational organizations. It can be seen that considerable pedagogical, efficient as well as organizational implications may be seen with the emergence of new and innovative forms of learning through distance mode of education by the use of communication and information technology. In addition to this it has significant trend towards growing globalization in this field. There is increase in the institutional as well as the intergovernmental cooperation; in addition to this a number of projects have been realized in global classrooms by means of global communication network. There is leadership throughgovernmental approach regarding development of network is done. It can be said that the access will be indispensable in this field. Additionally it can be said that all regions of the world have shown their impression with some similarities and some differences. It is about one hundred and more urbanized regions in which open and distance learning have been existed and in other regions under developing areas. In the developing world for the high developing countries open and distance learning mode has been seen observed to offer education and training with a number of vital opportunities. On the other hand there have been some relevant areas that create problem and important barriers in this mode of learning which includes lack of proper infrastructure as well as competencies in professional approach of open and distance learning. It can be said that there are some forms of educational delivery that come to stay and many countries are looking at open and distance learning through which quality is raised, access is expanded and it also ensure the effectiveness of cost (Evgueni, et al., 2002).

Undoubtedly, it can be said that open and distance education plays vital role in the progression of knowledge and skills of learners. It also helps in the progression of learners at higher education level and educational agencies. Teaching faculty and teacher educators may be assisted through tutorials or web-based resources for the progression of their knowledge and skills in different areas. The teacher educators" progression in the field or area of technology for learning may influence and modernize in the use of technology for teaching of different courses for prospective teachers. In

Pakistan, renowned university that is Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad provides the form of education that is known as non-formal education all over the country and in rural areas through its practical educational projects. There is provision of audio-cassettes/ CD‟s and the provision of flip cards for the leaders of the groups which forms resources to be used in group studies and discussions. It has been suggested through evaluation that this mode of learning is an effectual approach while on the other hand it is also a fact that annual learners have never been increased more than 1500. There is consistent ratio that has been found in other countries which is cause of their growing confidence level. For instance, distance education efforts has been recommended in major and recommended high population countries which includes Pakistan, China, Bangladesh, Brazil, Egypt, Maxico, Indonesia, Nigeria and India. The major focus is on the equivalence and expansion of teacher education, health education and non-formal mode of education. For all the mentioned areas strategies have been developed which could usefully be applied in all or mostprobably in some areas of the mentioned countries. The other forms of strategies like broadcasting and low technologies figure strongly but on the other hand there are growing variety of projects which makes new and innovative utility of information and technology (UNESCO, 2001).

In China there is a need to expand the access to higher education for which government-led „Modern Open and Distance learning mode of education‟. There is a long history of distance learning by the use of radio, television and other technologies but now modern technology that is the use of computer is promoting the development in education. Nowadays it also entertains students with online learning, to different degrees. But there are various types of barriers faced by the learners which include lack of communication, teaching material, learning material, support, economic burden and internet facility, etc. The findings of the research showed that lack of communication with experts and other peers is the most important barrier which creates hurdle for the learners so this mode of learning should create a way through which it become easy for the learner to communicate (Wang, 2013).

Adults have to compete with numerous priorities because of this reason they need a method of gaining education which is flexible in nature. Hence especially for such type of learners open and distance learner mode proves to be the best one. But we cannot ignore the problems faced by adult distance learners as well. They may loss the motivation because of lack of face to face interaction with the peers as well as educators, lack of support from tutors creates barrier in their learning. Distance learners may face insecurities regarding their: self-evaluation, thoughts of isolation, technical backing problem and inexperience with this mode of learning, which leads to academic problems. The faculty members/teachers also face some barriers which include lack of training in course development and technology, lack of coordination with the other members, of distance learning courses (Galusha, 1998).

All the barriers in distance learning are closely linked with technical infrastructure and support. These barriers can be reduced in intensity if there is strong support of administration with organizational norms and culture which remains favorable for distance education (Soomyung & Zane, 2002).

Rumble said that the practical use of open and distance learning practice is continuously misleading its basic concept. This system is open in practice and is

supportive, deals with dialogue, etc. But this system is misleading by the concept of so-called „open learning system" (Rumble, 2006).

3.Methodology

The design for this study was qualitative in nature based on open ended questionnaire.

3.1. Sampling

Simple random sampling technique was used to select sample for the study. Total sample was consisted of 150 graduate students and 10 teachers.

3.2. Instrumentation

For the data collection from teacher educators and prospective teachers an open ended questionnaire was developed on the basis of extended literature review.

3.3. Data Collection & Analysis

The data were collected through personal visits of the researcher. Data were collectedthrough questionnaire which was given to 150 student participants and 10 teacher participants.

The data were analyzed by generalization of codes and themes.

4.Findings

Qualitative data analysis involves the identification, examination, and interpretation of patterns and themes in textual data and determines how these patterns and themes help answer the research questions at hand. The analysis was done in steps in this research; the researchers made initial coding on the basis of common words/statements of the participants and were highlighted under the same theme. In second step, axial coding was made to create broader categories on the basis of initial coding. Finally, themes were generated reflecting the initial coding and axial coding. Following is given the detail of it.

Table 1: Analysis for Personal Obstacle

Theme	Axial coding	Initial coding
Personal obstacles	Financial	• Students generally face financial problems. • Sometimes they do not get books so they have to make photocopies. Along with the semester fee it becomes difficult to manage finance.
	Insecurity about learning	• Sometimes they cannot understand anything but they have to memorize it so they feel insecure about learning. • They find it difficult to read at home because of domestic issues. • Because of family responsibilities their learning becomes insecure.
	Feeling of isolation	• They cannot connect with other fellows and teachers because of which they cannot clarify few unclear concepts. • Feeling of isolation creates complications in their learning process.
	Lack of support and services	• Sometimes they receive their study material very late. • Most of the students do not know how to use computer and they do not have any guidance and support in this regard. • Sometimes they cannot get access to

		internet. • Many people stay in remote areas and faces power problem.
	Demotivation	• Due to isolation their internal motivation decreases. • In many cases they cannot understand concepts which decrease their interest in studies.
	Inexperience with this mode of learning	• Due to lack of experience with this mode of learning it becomes difficult to manage. • Handling with this mode along with other activities i.e job, house, etc becomes difficult to manage.

Table 2: Analysis for Organizational Obstacles

Theme	Axial coding	Initial coding
Organizational obstacles	Poor infrastructure	• The students as well as teachers faces problem while attending workshops at different institutions. • Required facilities are not available.
	Lack of feedback	• When students ask things from tutors, they cannot get proper feedback. • Due to lack of feedback skills cannot be developed.
	Technology problem	• Required technologies are not available in the workshops. • No development in technology occurs in students.
	Evaluation problems	• Most of the students are not satisfied with evaluation system. • Evaluation is not done according to the teaching provided in workshops.
	Communication gap	• No daily or weekly face to face contact with teachers • less likely to experience complete academic and social integration into institutional life
	Inadequate faculty selection for distance learning courses	• Lack of in time presence of teacher. • They must meet the needs of distance students without face-to-face contact • Teachers may lack the basic skills or hardware to fully participate in distance education.
	Lack of funding	• Bright students are not given any type of incentives. • No funds are generated for students.

Table 1: Analysis for Social Obstacles

Theme	Axial coding	Initial coding
Social		• This mode of learning does not develop the social skills.

obstacles	Lack of social development	• There is less face to face interaction of students with teachers and with other students because of which they do not have social interaction.
	Lack of transportation	• Sometimes the classes are arranged during off days because of which many students faces difficulty of transport. For many people it is easy to attend on weekends but they also face transport problem. • Sometimes they cannot access the centre of their workshop because they are far away.
	Less community link	• There is very less community links because of which students face many problems. • This mode of learning does not promote social interactions.
	Lack of confidence in handling situations	• Students lack confidence in handling situations. • Activities are not available which could their confidence level. • Students do not know about their own abilities because of which they lose their confidence.

5.Discussion and Conclusion

The findings of the research showed that lack of communication with experts and other peers is the most important barrier which creates hurdle for the learners so this mode of learning should create a way through which it become easy for the learner to communicate. The findings revealed that students of open and distance learning mode face problem in payment mode as well. Few teachers also agreed on the fact that students face problem because of un-trained teachers which creates hurdles for their learning (Wang, 2013). Teachers also said that due to lack of resources they are unable to communicate with students and could not give proper response them regarding their problems. In a nutshell, it can be stated that the curriculum may be set in such a way which may overcome social, organizational and personal obstacles to its best extent.

No one can neglect the importance of distance learning in new digital and global age as it plays fundamental role for the establishment of society based on the global knowledge (Evgueni, et al., 2002). The two modes of learning that is distance learning and conventional system are not opponent to each other. Both of these modes can prove to be beneficial for serving the noble cause that is to provide education to all (Attri, 2012). By studying different researches it can besaid about open and distance learning mode that there are a number of challenges that are faced especially by open and distance learners. With the arrival of globalization and new technologies changing should be made in this mode of learning. Teachers were of the view that modern techniques should be adopted in this mode for students learning. Among the individual learners noted problems are found to lie for which this study recommended one of the major solutions that are the use of information and communication

technology amongst the universities within the same cities or different cities may enhance or creates ease for open and distance learners.

6. Recommendations

Following recommendations were made on the basis of findings of the current research:

1. Most of issues may be resolved by the frequent use of information and communication technology (ICTs) among the universities within the same cities or different cities, it may enhance or creates ease for open and distance learners.
2. Different educational funds, stipends may be granted to minimize financial problems indicated by various students.
3. Administrative authorities may organize workshops in nearest areas which are accessible for the students to eliminate transport issues.
4. The government may establish guidance and counseling centers for students of this mode of learning which could help the students in their learning.
5. Due to fewer resources teachers cannot give feedback to students in time regarding their queries so more resources may be allocated for advancement in this area.
6. Other than workshops regular meetings may be arranged for the students to overcome the limitation of one to one interaction.

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ROLE OF MOBILE TECHNOLOGY IN DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

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Abstract

The paper presents the findings of a study about the role of Mobile Technology to create awareness about disaster Risk Reduction. A random and stratified sample of 20 schools and colleges of AJ&K and KPK along with 25 faculty members from Allama Iqbal Open University and Natural Disaster Management Authority staff were selected. Alpha reliability has been checked through cronbach alpha. Mode, Mean, median were run on the data collected through questionnaires. The consent of formal education institutions and Non formal education institutions was taken, i.e; Allama Iqbal Open University and Formal educations" heads of institutions" opinions and psychometric response was taken to check the teaching throughMobile technology in order to mitigate the risk of natural disaster in future. The objectives of the study were, to find out that mobile technology is useful in informing all of us about risks and ways to reduce our vulnerability. To explore that the mobile technology is suitable in reducing the risk of disasters in developing countries during and post disaster situations. To describe the effects of disaster risk reduction on the lives of the people. For rationalizing the objectives, the study has focused on identification of the instructional technology. The acceptance level was found about the gravity of natural catastrophe and its destruction in education system, in affected areas. The frequency and tendency of opinions were calculated.As a conclusion; to lessen the risk of natural disaster"s loss in education sector use of mobile in teaching and learning about Disaster Risk Reduction is emphasized.

Keywords: *Disaster Risk Reduction, teaching of Disaster Risk Reduction through Mobiletechnology, Learning through mobile about DRR. Teaching and Learning through mobile in emergency situation*

1. Introduction

Man is vulnerable on earth and faces many manmade and natural disasters. The disasters are inevitable for bear. Disasters and emergencies are fundamental reflections of normal life. They are consequences of the way society structure themselves, economically and socially; the way societies and states interact; and the way that relationships between the decision makers are sustained. Tragedy and loss are inevitable in the life of living beings. Human beings are helpless in front of nature, we cannot change it. But we can reduce the riskof disaster. International day is celebrated on 13 of October every year for disaster risk reduction.

Definition of Disaster

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The definition of natural disasters is any catastrophic event that is caused by nature or the natural processes of the earth. The severity of a disaster is measured in lives lost, economic loss, and the ability of the population to rebuild. Events that occur in unpopulated areas are not considered disasters. So a flood on an uninhabited island would not count as a disaster, but a flood in a populated area is called a natural disaster. http://www.basicplanet.com/natural-disasters

"A disaster is a natural and man-made hazard resulting in an event of substantial extent causing significant physical damage or destruction, loss of life, or drastic change to the environment. It is a phenomenon that can cause damage to life and property and destroy theeconomic social and cultural life of people."https://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Disaster

Mobile for Development

Recent natural and manmade disasters have taught us that resilient communications are vital to saving lives. Available and emerging technologies are evolving to meet the needs of governments, first responders and citizens in better informing all of us about risks and ways to reduce our vulnerability to them.

The Use of Mobiles in Disasters

To better serve the needs of people affected by disasters, humanitarian organizations must be able to make use of new technologies to train its staff on a number of key subject areas such as humanitarian principles, operations planning and security risk management. Some of these subjects can be delivered through more "traditional" eLearning delivery methodologies such as self-study eLearning and webinar-based coaching. However, due to the very mobile nature of the operations, there is an increasing need to enable humanitarian staff with tools and information that they can access on-the-go. In addition, staff and volunteers need to be equipped with tools to access real-time information on disasters, even before they hit.

The example of local, untrained, taxi drivers coordinating relief efforts, in isolated areas and situations, over traditional radio frequencies illustrates available alternatives to mobile communications when networks go down. Defining who the key players are in preparing for and recovering from disasters is of primary importance. In earthquake 2005, Mobile operators, government agencies and civil society are finding ways to work together in honing mobile approaches to disaster risk reduction and to incorporate key players into the mobile communications process.

The Use of Mobile in Earthquake

The 2010 Haiti Earthquake offers another example where mobile networks went down temporarily and radio again played the crucial intermittent role in coordinating response efforts to the crisis. In other words, disaster response using mobiles can be unpredictable and problematic. The focus in the communications realm, until now, has been on facilitating communications between relief agencies in the short term, usually using two-way radios, Very High Frequency radios and satellite phones. This tends to exclude those directly impacted by disasters. Inclusion is vital and has long-term benefits, but is expensive to deploy and complicated to coordinate. Mobiles can be invaluable in disaster preparedness and recovery efforts. The ubiquity of mobile ownership and network access means mobile phones are becoming the default method of communication and can make positive contributions before, during and after the disaster strikes. The multiplicity of available applications - voice, SMS and broadband -

and citizen familiarity with them increases the range of opportunities. Smartphone games, for example, are helping to prepare school children for catastrophic floods in Thailand and mobile operators are helping to deliver short code-enabled emergency texts in many developing countries. The United Nations has been hard at work in putting together a framework for technology-led disaster communications. The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been incorporating mobile technology into disaster response efforts since the 1990s. We are currently defining who the key change agents are at the government policy level and how we can better engage partners in developing a comprehensive approach to reducing risk using mobile and other technologies.

1.1 Statement of Problem

This study was designed to explore the role of mobile technology in disaster risk reduction for avoiding enormous loss.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

1. Find out that mobile technology is useful in informing all of us about risks and ways to reduce our vulnerability.
2. Explore that the mobile technology is suitable in reducing the risk of disasters in developing countries during and post disaster situations.
3. Describe the effects of disaster risk reduction on the lives of the people.

1.3Significance of the Study

1. This study will be helpful for saving the big losses of human and financial resources occurred as a result of natural disasters.
2. This study will be helpful to evaluate the mobile technology has been helpful and further can he very fruitful in creating awareness about disaster risk reduction.
3. The study will be influential for the vulnerable people who faced disasters, as they can get benefit from mobile technology by saving their human and financial assets for optimistic life.

1.4 Delimitations of the Study

The study was delimited to:

- Disaster of Earthquake has been delimited (As there are many types of natural disasters, hurricanes, tsunami, floods, and landslides etc)
- Earthquake 2005 is the delimitation (Among major earthquakes which hit the areas of Pakistan)
- District Muzaffarabad and Distt Mansehra were the major affected districts, which have been taken from 9 earthquake affected districts.
- Colleges and higher secondary schools from both districts have been taken.
- Senior Management of ERRA (Earthquake Reconstruction and rehabilitation Authority), the organization which was aimed to reconstruct and rehabilitate the lives of people, after earthquake 2005.
- All the Faculty members of AIOU (Allama Iqbal Open University) because it is the largest institutions of open and distance learning system. And mobile technology is part of open and distance learning.

2. Analysis

Table- 1: Analysis of the Common Responses to all four Categories of Respondents

S. No	Statements	Faculty Mean	HOI Mean	ERRA Mean	Students Mean	Average Mean
1.	Earthquake 2005 caused very sever destruction in education sector and continuity.	4.7	4.5	4.67	4.1	4.5
2.	After any natural disaster, it always required enormous financial resource for recovery of educational infrastructure	4 .5	4.4	4.8	-	4.6
3.	Application of mobile technology can help resuscitating the paralyzed life by knowledge sharing.	4.15	4.5	4.5	-	4.3
4.	The apps of android can aware about earthquake in affected areas.	4.75	4.4	4.5	-	4.5
5.	Technology of Radio is easy and accessible in disaster struck areas for	4	3.5	3.1	-	3.5

	knowledge					
6.	Print media of newspaper is useful for timely knowledge related disaster	3.7	3	3.1	-	3.2
7.	Mobile companies should offer special discounts in earthquake affected areas	4	4.5	4.1	-	4.2
8.	In future, mobile technology should disseminate the information in disaster struck areas	4	3.5	4.1	4.1	3.9
9.	Timely news spreading through mobile technology can save human lives.	4	4	3.6	4.2	3.9
10.	Timely knowledge through mobile technology can help to mitigate the lose caused by disaster	4.4	4.5	4.7	4.3	4.4

3. Results

Table I is showing that the average mean scores are high against the various responses of the population. The use of other technologies in post disaster situations have comparatively less.

3.1. Discussions

The paper presents the study of the mobile technology"s use for the awareness purpose and educating masses. Other technological tools are also significant print and

electronic media, in order to spread pre and post disaster information. For instance how the disaster occurred and destruction on large scale, any society comes across. If the people were aware about the techniques of saving themselves.th e disaster could not bring large scaledestruction. Teachers and students were unaware from the techniques in disastrous situation. People can build back better with the coordination through mobiles. In remote areas this is the best technology to share knowledge and to give hope. We can enhance the capacity building through mobile, to combat this challenge if occurred next time.

4. Findings

The following findings of the study emerged as a result of the analysis of data:

- Mobile technology is useful in informing all of us about risks and ways to reduce our vulnerability as it can save human lives‟ loss as a result of disaster.
- Through mobile technology, which is suitable application in any disaster masses can be educated.
- Mobile technology awareness campaign can reduce the risk of disasters in developing countries during and post disaster situations.
- People can get back to normalcy and mobile will be helpful for early relief efforts. For timely coordination mobile phones are the best.
- In developing countries, use of mobile in emergency situation is economical, having fewer resources.
- Through mobile coordination after disaster, people can get back to early rehabilitation with hope.

5.Conclusions

In a nutshell, we may conclude that disasters are inevitable to human beings, whether they are natural, or manmade. So we should be ready to meet such challenge. We should be aware before, that how we will have to handle any kind of disaster. There are many examples of disasters in which people combat this challenge with the help of ICTs (Information and communication technology). Mobile is the easy and cheap tool available for help in such situation as well as for timely and early relief in affected areas. We should get benefit from the technology of the current era and we should train our generations to meet any future challenge. In such challenge we should all collaborate to mitigate our losses, optimally.

6.Recommendations

- In the light of the findings and conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are made:
- Mobile technology should be used as a tool for early rehabilitation in post disaster situation
- Teachers and students should be trained the techniques about how to handle disastrous situation through mobile technology, as it is available in emergency situation too.
- Mobile technology awareness campaign can reduce the risk of disasters in developing countries during and post disaster situations.
- For early relief efforts technology of mobile should be in use with reasonable rates, as affected people are having loss of resources.
- For timely coordination use of mobile phones should be enhanced.

- Apps related to disaster, encompassing the alarm system should be developed.

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THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE IN TEACHER EDUCATION: GAPS AT APPLICATION LEVEL IN DISTANCE EDUCATION PAKISTAN

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Abstract

The common problem of the teacher education is the gap between what the student teachers know and how they use this knowledge in the real world situation. What strategies can be adopted to minimize this gap? Has been remained a core issue of the research studies at national and international level. The present study focus on to investigate the level of application and gaps between theoretical knowledge and professional practice as well as to develop strategies for bridging these gaps. Quantitative approach with concurrent triangulation design was used to conduct the study. Student teachers (n = 400) and teacher educators (n =were selected as sample through stratified sampling technique. Observation and questionnaires were adopted as instruments of the study. Overall, good and neither good nor poor level of application of the theoretical knowledge with considerable and significant gaps were identified. A significant difference was observed between the student teachers' perceptions and observation records of the researcher. The concepts of close collaborationamong teacher education institutions and practice schools, developing laboratory schools, reflective practices, extended duration of teaching practice, model lessons, proper adjustment of teaching practice in time table and strengthening the role of mentors were identified and recommended.

1.Introduction

This research study was aimed at investigating the issues concerning the most important challenge of gaps between theoretical knowledge and professional practice in distance teacher education. Pre-service teacher education provides knowledge and skills to the student teachers that are practicum to their workplace as a teacher. Professional development starts with a specific experience as well as an abstract understanding of the situation is created through the analysis of the experience which results in its transfer value (Ulvik, 2014). The school environment does not provide a chance to student teachers for practicing the pedagogies in classroom with necessary resources, to encourage in-depth learning of children as well as their own judgments (Government of Pakistan, 2006).The studies have attested the relationship of the theoretical knowledge and practical skills provided to the students in their pre-service education with their effectiveness in the classroom as a beginning teacher (Good et al., 2006). The common perception about the teacher education is that the teacher education programs focus on what students know rather than how they use this

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knowledge (Fraser & Spiller, 2005). There are also great concerns about the lack of integration between different types of knowledge, teaching practice (knowing how) and theoretical knowledge or university course work (knowing that) (Sim, 2006, Wilson, 2006).

Thieson, (2000) argued that the concurrent use of knowledge in each pedagogical phase and context should be experienced by the student teachers on campus through strategies which focus on practically relevant propositional knowledge. In Pakistan, there has been a perception of student teachers about the teaching practice of B.Ed program as ineffective from the implementation perspectives (Qazi, Rawat, Sharjeel& Devi, 2008).We, as researchers, believe that professional practice is a tool that results in illuminating the teacher‟s teaching methods that guide students to be involved in meaningful learning events and experiences. So, it is crucial to study the perspectives of student-teachers, practice school teachers and observation records of the researchers themselves regarding the practical experiences of student teachers.

1.1 Research Problem

The teacher education regarding the Bachelor of Education (B. Ed) lasts for a year consisting of theoretical and practical components. The objective of the theoretical component is to prepare the student teachers with the expansion of pedagogic horizons in their respective domains of expertise in real classroom settings. The practical component lasts for four to six weeks which is assumed to give an in-depth exposure of the student teachers in a real classroom teaching (Qazi, et al., 2008).

The present study investigated the gaps and strategies for closing the gaps between theoretical knowledge and professional practice in distance teacher education in Pakistan. The study was conducted through the experiences and perceptions of student teachers, practice school teachers as well as through the observation records of the researchers themselves.

1.2 Objectives of Study

The following were the objectives of the study:

1. To find out the level of application of the theoretical knowledge by the student teachers during their teaching practice.
2. To find out the gaps between theoretical knowledge and professional practice in distance teacher education.
3. To find out the differences among the perceptions of student teachers, school teachers and observation records of the researchers regarding the application level and gaps between theoretical knowledge and professional practice.

1.3. Significance of the Study

The study was vital due to its consideration of the perspectives of student teachers, school teachers as well as of the observation records of the researchers in the real contexts of classroom. Therefore, the study may help the stakeholders of distance teacher education to adopt the realistic strategies for minimizing the gaps between theoretical knowledge and professional practice. The study was equally helpful for student teachers, practice school teachers, administrators and policy makers to take right decisions for the development of quality teachers as well as for the well being of the teacher education in Pakistan.

2.Literature Review

The development of quality in education is closely linked to the quality of teachers developed through the teacher education system in the country. Isani and Virk (2005) viewed about the process of teaching as an activity and perceived the nature of teacher education as a process of specialized grounding for teachers. Almost all the policies and plans for education in Pakistan acknowledged the need and importance of teacher education in promoting quality teachers for the well being of the education system in Pakistan (Ranjha, Muhammad &Alam, 2013; Kayler, 2009).

Teaching is not only a profession but it is an art and a craft, or a highly sophisticated type of craft (OECD, 1990). With the concept of an artist and a craftsman, the student teachers must have to adapt the designed programme to the situation they find themselves in (Goodlad, 1990). For this reason they have to inquire into this particular practice on the spot via theschool practicum, or by analyzing written cases, audio-visual cases and oral reports. After the investigation, the student teachers have to connect the selected information or the subject matter through the rearranged filter of their subjective theory with the characteristics of the real situation in which they will be teaching (Vermunt, 1998).

One of the major and long-standing challenges of pre-service teacher education programs has been to strike a balance between the theoretical knowledge and practice of the profession (Bates, 2010; Smith, 2008).Internationally there has been observed a growing emphasis on bringing teachers' training concept linked to schools and making its alignment to changing needs of the schools (Ali, 2011).The literature contains a large body of research identifying significant inadequacies in teacher education programs enabling students to apply the knowledge and skills of their pre-service preparation in the workplace (Murray, Nuttall, & Mitchell, 2008). This statement by Skilbeck and Connell (2004, p. 12) is representative of the views of many critics;"There is a widespread criticism of educational theory courses notably by students in training, beginning teachers and school principals."

It is considerably disquieting to note that, as far back as the 1920s, Dewey (1928) expressed similar concerns. Others suggested that separating theory from practice created a false dichotomy and that teaching is a profession in which theory is embedded in and inseparable from practice (Carr, 1987; Lenz Taguchi, 2007). Lenz Taguchi (2007, p. 278), for example, argued that because theories in education are constituted by and perpetually reconstituted as "collectively and culturally-specific materialized meaning-making." It is, therefore, not possible to determine where theory ends and practice begins.

A substantial body of previous research has confirmed the existence of a gap between the theoretical knowledge and practice in schools (Cochran-Smith, 2009; Valentia, Martin, Place & Grossman, 2009). Allen, (2009) concluded that the theory practice gap was co-produced and sustained through social interactions during front-end training programs in the university and school institutional arrangements and initial employment.

Almodairess, (2009) concluded that the reflective practice with ICT had positive impacts for strengthening the relationship between theory and practice in teacher education. Hussain, Jumani, Sultana & Iqbal, (2009) found that the Business English Teaching wasfacilitated and improved through the use of ICTs and the teachers needed special training regarding the practices and implementation of ICTs.

Hussain and Mehmood, (2010) also revealed that the school based internship had a central role in the professional development of prospective teachers and the student teachers obtained competencies and skills through the internship program.

Qazi et. al. (2008) found that the teaching practice was ineffective from its implementation perspective. Rahman, Jumani, Akhtar, Chishti, & Ajmal, (2011) concluded that the teachers' training had a positive relationship with effective teaching in terms of students' achievement. Jumani (2007), found that the curriculum of distance education was less weighed on students' background and culture and teachers focused more on the grasp of knowledge rather than other aspects of personality development. He concluded that the instructional material was prepared for teachers in B. Ed program but there was a gap among the coordination of teachers while implementing in the classrooms.

3.Methodology

Concurrent data triangulation design was used to collect and analyze the data.

3.1. Population and Sampling

All the students, enrolled in one year B. Ed program of distance teacher education institutions under the umbrella of Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad were considered as the population of the study. Stratified sampling was used to select the sample of the study. 400 student teachers in equal proportion from four area study centres were selected as sample of the study. One hundred teachers were taken as sample of the study from twenty practice schools with equal proportion from each school. 200 observations of forty student teachers, selected from four area study centres.

3.2. Instruments

After the review of related literature, an observation protocol and questionnaires for student teachers and teachers were developed. The observation check list contained only quantitative portion of the instrument. Whereas, the questionnaires included two open ended question items with quantitative portion of the observation checklist. The open ended questions were about to investigate the challenges and problems as well as to developstrategies for filling the gaps between theoretical knowledge and professional practice. Five point Likert scale was used to get the responses. The instruments were developed regarding four categories of theoretical knowledge i. e. lesson planning and organization skills, instructional skills, management skills and evaluation techniques.

3.3. Data Analysis

The researchers used SPSS 18 to analyze the data. Mean scores of the percentage responses, ANOVA as well as the Tukey's HSD were used to find out the results. Data was interpreted at 0.05 alpha level for significant difference.

Table 2.1 Interpretation Criteria of Mean Scores

S. No	Mean Range	Interpretation Criteria
1	Below 1.75	Very Poor with Complete Gap
2	1.75 - 2.75	Poor with Critical Gap
3	2.75 - 3.25	Neither Good Nor Poor with Significant Gap
4	3.25 - 4.25	Good with considerable Gap
5	Above 4.25	Excellent with insignificant Gap

4.Results and Discussion

Following were the results and findings of the data. The following alphabetical symbols were used to identify the types of data sources;

X = Student Teachers, Y = Teachers and Z = Observation Records.

Table 2 Data Triangulation with ANOVA and Tukey's HSD

A	LESSON PLANNING AND ORGANIZATION					
Sr. No	Items	Mean			F	Sig.
		X N= 380	Y N= 94	Z N= 200		
1	Selection of Appropriate Objectives	3.73	3.42	3.46	5.627	.004
2	Selection of an appropriate Content	3.53	3.29	3.25	5.230	.006
3	Organizing Presentation with Logical Sequence	3.51	3.26	3.23	5.420	.005
4	Selection & Organization of an Appropriate Learning Material	3.59	3.40	3.16	11.404	.000
5	Selection of Activities according to the Logical sequence	3.69	3.35	3.40	7.309	.001

B	INSTRUCTIONAL

	SKILLS							
12	Introduction Assessmen	of topic with different Technique s3	3.763.74	3.532.63	3.474.332	7.104.000	.001	

	t Technique for Previous Learning							
3	Appropriate utili	of AV. Aids	3.57	3.23	3.26	7.311	.001	

	zationDeliveryofContentEffectively					3.59	3.47	3.29	6.770	.001
4	Using	Motivational	Technique	for	Active	3.60	3.40	3.32	5.131	.006
5										

6	Participation Focused Objectives	Teaching & Learning according to the	3.67	3.46	3.40	5.633	.004
7	Maintenance In	Student's	Attendance	during	3.55	3.22	3.09	14.353	.000

	structionProviding	Opportunities	to	Students	for	Active	3.52	3.44	3.19	6.211	.002
8	Participation										
9	Proper Use of	Technique s			3.63	3.29	3.13	22.878	.000		

	Questioning								
	Monitoring	Students' Learning	Activities		3.59	3.27	3.26	10.408	.000
10									
D	**CLASSROOM MANAGEME**								

		NT SKILLS			
1	Using different techniques for the maainte	3.19	2.77	15.381	.000

	nance of 30 students' attention					
2	Time and work management	3.12	2.85	2.68	11.236	.000

	gement & organization of instructional materials	3.60	3.57	3.51	.575	.563					
34	Management Dept					3.3	3.3	3.3	7.3	.0	

		velopingfriendlyenvironmentMaintaining	sequenceofactivit							
5				80	673.60	463.40	1473.32	013.854	.022	

		ies												
	Adequate seating arrangements								3.31	3.28	3.04	5.633	.004	
67	Setting jointly rules and the		3.93	3.68	3.62	10.004	.000							

	ircons equences										
	Using effectively	punishment	and reward techniques	3.57	3.44	3.22	9.011	.000			
8	Responding	appropriately	task student's	3&3.52			3.45	3.43	.7512	.4729	

	disruptive behavior disorder						
	Consideration of individual decision	3.35	3.13	3.06	6.180	.002	

		making											
	D	**EVALUATION TECHNIQUES**											
12		Using different assessment techniques	Student Monitoring		3.46		3.41		3.37	3.43	3.098	7.631	.001

	ntsprogressrecords											
	oringUsingdifferentGradingofstud	assessmentstestrecords	methods	3.69	3.173.36	3.36	2.858.481	2.58.000	25.2258	.0000		
34												

56	entsthroughMaintainingReportingstudents'testrecordstothestudent	progress	records	3.25	3.36	3.123.39	3.231.222	.548.295	.578			

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	i		t			.	6		2	3	4	0	
	n		s			6	1		6	4	8	1	
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	b		m				3				0		
	a	a	e				.	3	3	.	.	.	
	c	n	n	t		8	8	.	.	9	0	0	
8	k	d	t	o		8	1	3	5	6	2	0	
	s												
	t												
	u												
	d												
	e												
	n												

	ts										
			statistical								
	Using			technique						14.	.000
9	analysing	tests'	records	3.51	for	3.00	2.70	2.42	359		
10	Alignment of instruction	assignments	with	3.16 8.529	.000						

al

In table 2, the ANOVA results showed a significant difference among the responses of student teachers, practice school teachers and observation records. The ANOVA results also showed no significant difference for few categories. Through Tukey's HSD (Annexure, A), for most of the categories of theoretical knowledge, there was found a significant difference between the responses of student teachers and observation records. However, except for few categories, there was no significant difference between the responses of practice school teachers and observation records. There was also a significant difference, for most of the categories, between the responses of practice school teachers and student teachers.

Overall, the student teachers and teachers identified a good level (MS; 3.25-4.25) of application with considerable gaps for theoretical concepts of lesson planning and organization. However, the observation records identified neither good nor poor level (MS; 2.75-3.25) of application with significant gaps for categories (2, 3 & 4 respectively).

There was identified a good level of application regarding the theoretical concepts of instructional skills. However, the teacher educators and observation records also identified neither good nor poor level (MS; 2.75-3.25) of application for categories (3 & 7) and (2, 7, 8 & 9) respectively. Overall, the observation records identified a lowest level of good application for all remaining categories.

In the context of classroom management skills, student teachers and practice school teachers identified good level of application except neither good nor poor level of application for categories (2) and(1, 2 & 10) respectively. The observation records also identified good level of application for theoretical concepts of categories (3, 4, 5, 7 & 9 respectively) whereas, neither good nor poor level for categories (1, 2, 6, 8 & 10 respectively).

The student teachers and teacher educators identified good level of application for all categories of evaluation techniques except neither good nor poor level for three categories (3, 5&9).The observation records identified good level of application for categories (4, 6, 7 & 8 respectively)but neither good nor poor level for six categories (1, 2, 3, 5, 9 & 10 respectively).

In conclusion, there was identified a successful application of the theoretical concepts by the student teachers with considerable gaps between theoretical knowledge and professional practice. Observation records identified successful application at neither good nor poor as well as at poor level with significant and critical gaps as compared to the student teachers themselves. The practice school teachers also identified successful application of the theoretical concepts but at medium level of student teachers and observation records. The teacher educators perceived more closure to the observation records as compared to the student teachers.

4.1 Strategies for Bridging Gaps at Application Level

Two questions were asked by the student teachers and practice school teachers to develop strategies for bridging gaps between theoretical knowledge and professional practice in distance teacher education. These questions were about,

1. The problems and challenges faced by the student teachers during teaching practice
2. The strategies to fill the gaps between theoretical knowledge and professional practice in teacher education

The student teachers and teachers gave mixed responses to the question items and those were summarized as under.

4.2. Problems & Challenges of Teaching Practice

1. Poor response from the pupils and mentor teacher
2. No proper adjustment of student teachers in time table of practice school
3. No proper access of student teachers to the computer laboratories
4. Unavailability of laboratory schools
5. Gaps between training curriculum and school curriculum
6. Ill concept of participation of student teachers in school meetings and adjustment problems
7. Poor coordination between the supervisors and mentor teachers
8. Poor motivation of school teachers towards innovation in teaching and centralization of powers in the system for availability of resources
9. Poor motivation of student teachers and their uncertainty about future placement
10. No proper concept of rewards for supporting teachers, head teachers and supervising teachers
11. Limitations of male supervisors in female practice school

4.3. Strategies to Fill the Gaps

1. Proper concept of laboratory schools associated with training institutions
2. Close coordination among training institutions, practice schools and educational organization
3. Legitimate support to the teaching practice
4. Proper training and rewards for supervising teachers and mentor teachers
5. Proper adjustment of student teachers in time table of schools
6. Increased duration of teaching practice session, microteaching session and partnership among schools and training institutions
7. Strengthening student teachers' freedom of decision making in the classroom teaching
8. Availability of audio-visual aids and information communication technologies
9. Assessable course content for teaching practice
10. Including private sector in teaching practice concept

5.Discussion

The major theme of the study was to find out the application level and gaps between theoretical knowledge and professional practice of student teachers as well as to develop strategies for bridging these gaps.

Overall, there was identified a good level of application with considerable gaps between theoretical knowledge and professional practice. However, the observation records, overall, indicated neither good nor poor level of application with significant gaps. Gujjar, Ramzan and Bajwa (2011) also found that the student teachers properly plan the lesson before teaching. Ralph and Noon (2004) also found that the teacher candidates were highly rated in the context of lesson planning as compared to the unit planning.

Overall, the results of the study were in line with the previous research conducted in the field of investigating the connections between in-field and on-campus components of teacher education programs. Allen and Peach (2007) also attested as, "pre-service program aligns well with some principles of work integrated learning but falls short of conforming with someothers". Gujjar, Ramzan and Bajwa (2011) are in line with the findings that the teaching practice enhances the ability of student teachers for planning of lessons as well as for management of the classroom. Ralph and Noon (2004) observed that the beginning teachers were competent in the area of management however, with a room for improvement.

It is evidenced that the theory acquired through the theoretical component provides enough information to the student teachers about teaching. However, they take exposure of real world teaching situation through their teaching practice (Kiggundu &Nayimuli, 2009). Teaching practice also provides an opportunity to the student teachers to integrate theory with their first hand experiences during their teaching practice (Buchner & Hay, 1999). Perry (2004) also pointed out that the teaching practice gives meanings to the knowledge acquired through the theoretical component of teacher education.

The major problems were non availability of proper resources, low importance given to the student teachers and adjustment, shortage of time for teaching practice, poor motivation of teachers as well as of student teachers, low level of coordination among training institutions and school administration and gaps between training curriculum and school environment.

The strategies for bridging the gaps between theoretical knowledge and professional practice included close collaboration among training institutions and practice schools, availability of resources, strengthening the freedom of student teachers, adjustment of student teachers in time table and increased duration for teaching practice. These findings are in line with the findings of Gujjar et al. (2010), Azeem (2011), Hmaidi et al. (2014), Manzar Abbas & Lu (2013), Ekundayo (2014), Goh and Mathews (2011) and Okobia, Augustine & Osagie (2013).

An important question is therefore “What is the effect of the failure in closure of theory-practice gap on student teachers?” The academic and personal development of student teachers is effected through this failure and this results in their inability to solve problems. Isaac (2012), in favour of this phenomenon, suggests the following reasons for the lack of integration of theory into practice. a) Hidden curriculum – learning takes place without formal planning. b) Poor level of curriculum development – the theory does not compliment the practice. c) Poor emphasis on practical skills in the classroom. d) Lack of using differenteffective teaching and learning strategies. e) Lack of role models in the real world situations. f) Saturation of workload. g) Educators and management rift. h) Idealistic and impractical nature of theory. i) Poor nature of formal feedback on formative evaluation j) Ill planning in support for students.

6.Conclusions and Recommendations

This study attempted to investigate the application level and gaps between theoretical knowledge and professional practice in distance teacher education. The study focused on one year B. Ed programme through the perspectives of student teachers and practice school teachers.

There were identified good, neither good nor poor and poor level of application with considerable, significant and critical gaps for theoretical concepts during the teaching practice of student teachers. There was a significant difference between the responses of student teachers and observation records of the researcher. Teachers showed no significant difference with observation records as well as with the student teachers' perceptions at a time. However, the teachers were close in perceptions with the observation records as compared to the student teachers for most of the theoretical concepts.

Different themes emerged regarding the problems and challenges faced by the student teachers in applying the theoretical knowledge during their teaching practice. A poor level of coordination among supervising teachers and mentor teachers, ill response of the school teachers towards the student teachers, poor access of resources and low level of student teachers' participation, poor concept of mentoring and shortage of time with poor adjustment of student teachers in the time table were identified as major problems and challenges of student teachers.

Close collaboration among teacher education institutions and practice schools, extended duration of teaching practice, reflective practices with the concept of model lessons, availability of suitable resources, strengthening the concept of mentor teachers through proper training and incentives, accepting the legitimate role of student teachers and their full participation in school decisions were the major recommendations of the study. Same studymay be conducted regarding the gaps between theoretical knowledge and professional practice in comparative perspectives of different teacher education programs.

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AppendixA

Application of Tukey's Test

Sr. No.	Lesson planning & organization				Instructional process skills				Classroom manage ment skills			
	Mean	Tukey's HSD Subset for Alpha 0.05			Mean	Tukey's HSD Subset for Alpha 0.05			Mean	Tukey's HSD Subset for Alpha 0.05		
		1	2	3		1	2	3		1	2	3
1	y	3.4250			z	3.4750			Z	2.7750		
	z	3.4681	3.4681		y	3.5319	3.5319		Y		3.1930	
	x		3.7313		x		3.7667		X		3.3083	
	Sig.	.940	.101		Sig.	.856	.074		Sig.	1.000	.616	
2	z	3.2500			z	2.9450			Z	2.6850		
	y	3.2979			y		3.6383		Y	2.8511	2.8511	
	x	3.5375			x		3.7458		X		3.1229	
	Sig.	.054			Sig.	1.000	.616		Sig.	.368	.070	
3	z	3.2350			y	3.2340			Z	3.51		
	y	3.2660			z	3.2650			Y	3.57		
	x	3.5167			x		3.5750		X	3.60		
	Sig.	.054			Sig.	.966	1.000		Sig.	.804		
4	z	3.1600			z	3.2900			Z	3.4650		
	y	3.4043	3.4043		y	3.4787	3.4787		Y	3.6702	3.6702	
	x		3.5979		x		3.5979		X		3.7979	
	Sig.	.101	.236		Sig.	.190	.514		Sig.	.170	.502	
5	z	3.3511			z	3.3200			Z	3.000		
	y	3.4050			y	3.4043	3.4043		Y	3.2872	3.2872	

	x		3.6917		x		3.6000		X		3.3313	
	Sig.	0.890	1.000		Sig.	.756	.223		Sig.	.050	.931	
6					z	3.4050			Z	3.0450		
					y	3.4681	3.4681		Y	3.2872		
					x		3.6729		X	3.3188		
					Sig.	.833	.148		Sig.	.085		
7					z	3.1950			Z	3.6250		
					y	3.4468	3.4468		Y	3.6809		
					x		3.5229		X		3.9313	
					Sig.	.092	.802		Sig.	.827	1.000	
8					z	3.1950			Z	3.2250		
					y	3.4468	3.4468		Y	3.4468	3.4468	
					x		3.5229		X		3.5771	
					Sig.	.092	.802		Sig.	.097	.445	
9					z	3.1300			Z	3.4350		
					y	3.2979			Y	3.4574		
					x		3.6396		X	3.5250		
					Sig.	.222	1.000		Sig.	.643		
10					z	3.2660			Z	3.0600		
					y	3.2700			Y	3.1383	3.1383	
					x		3.5938		X		3.3542	
					Sig.	.999	1.000		Sig.	.771	.141	

Sr. No.	Evaluation techniques				Teaching methods				Audio-visual aids & technology use			
	Mean	Tukey's HSD Subset for Alpha 0.05			Mean	Tukey's HSD Subset for Alpha 0.05			Mean	Tukey's HSD Subset for Alpha 0.05		
		1	2	3		1	2			1	2	
1	y	3.0850			Z	3.300			z	3.700		
	z		3.4362		Y	3.4104			y	3.819		
	x		3.410		X	3.4894			X	3.888		
	Sig.	1.000	.971		Sig.	1.000			Sig.	.190		
2	z	3.0800			Z	3.7800			Z	3.60		
	y		3.3723		Y	3.8000			Y	3.62		
	x		3.4646		X	3.9563			X	3.88		
	Sig.	1.000	.695		Sig.	.216			Sig.	.056		
3	z	2.58			Z	3.2800			Z	3.595		
	y		2.8511		Y		3.6383		Y	3.798		
	x			3.17	X		3.7146		X		4.07	
	Sig.	1.000	1.000	1.000	Sig.	1.000	.753		Sig.	.163	1.000	
4	z	3.3617			Z	3.1900			Z	3.46		
	y	3.3650			Y	3.4043	3.4043		Y		3.85	
	x		3.6896		X		3.4938		X		4.05	
	Sig.	1.000	1.000		Sig.	.192	.748		Sig.	1.000	.159	
5	z	3.23			Z	3.000			Z	3.57		
	y	3.12			Y	3.2872	3.2872		Y		3.87	
	x	3.25			X		3.3313		X		3.89	
	Sig.	.523			Sig.	.050	.931		Sig.	1.000	.986	
6	z	3.0450			Z	3.285			Z	2.785		
	y	3.2872			Y	3.468	3.468		Y	2.938		
	x	3.3188			X		3.567		X	2.947		
	Sig.	.085			Sig.	.134	.556		Sig.	.383		

7	z	3.26			Z	2.032			Z	2.07		
	y	3.34			Y	2.055			Y	2.08		
	x		3.61		X	2.106			X	2.09		
	Sig.	.792	1.000		Sig.	.762			Sig.	.99		
8	z	3.53			Z	2.862			Z	2.55		
	y	3.71	3.71		Y	2.880			Y	2.73		
	x		3.88		X	3.033			X	2.76		
	Sig.	.164	.182		Sig.	.296			Sig.	.221		
9	z	2.42			Z	3.710			Z	2.30		
	y		2.70		Y	3.755			Y	2.31		
	x			3.00	X	3.846			X	2.39		
	Sig.	1.000	1.000	1.000	Sig.	.422			Sig.	.737		
10	z	3.16			Z	1.915			Z	3.03		
	y		3.51		Y	2.043			Y	3.05		
	x		3.58		X	2.083			X	3.09		
	Sig.	1.000	.844		Sig.	.176			Sig.	.837		

ROLE OF PUBLIC SECTOR UNIVERSITIES IN PROMOTING HIGHER EDUCATION THROUGH DISTANCE EDUCATION IN PAKISTAN

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Abstract

Present research focused to know the role of public sector universities in promoting higher education through distance education in Punjab, Pakistan was conducted to evaluate the support services like reading material, teaching faculty, study Centre support, assignments, assessment, correspondence, use of instructional technology and teaching strategies. An additional concern of the study was to explore the problems and facilities in public sector universities for their distance learners. Population of this study was consisted 92 teachers of three public sector universities (GCUF, BZU & IUB) of distance education programs. The study was descriptive by nature therefore questionnaire for teachers was used for data collection. Data were collected, screened, tabulated, analyzed, and interpreted through using SPSS v21.0. Data was interpreted through applied statistics using mean, standard deviation, chi-square and t-value. Results revealed that reading material, assignments, assessment, correspondence and instructional technology systems was partly fulfilling the requirements whereas study centers support, assignments and access services were needed to be updated.

***Key Words**: Distance education, quality education, universities*

1.Introduction

Education policies have made education compulsory with constitutional guarantee for children from 5 to 14 years of age, will add to the challenge of higher education. Hence, slogans like 'education for all' and 'equality of educational opportunity', from a quantitative as well as qualitative point of view, will have to take recourse to distance teaching (Lockwood, 2001). Distance Education is a term, which is widely discussed in the academic circles all over the world today. In spite of all objections it is one and the only way in which higher education can come within the reaches of the entire population of our country (Creed, &Perraton, 2008).

Garrison (2002) describes as; “distance education is imparted education and knowledge through various innovative means suited to the Open and Distance Education Mode without compromising on quality This provides not only higher education to large sections of the population, but particularly disadvantaged segments of society and strengthens the natural and human resources of the country through the medium of education” (p.12).

A degree or certificate program is considered distance education when a substantial number of credit hours (fifty percent or more of the courses for the program) will be delivered through distance education (Garrison, 2002). In recent times, courses in distance education are offered in blended way. It means that some

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courses are offered through traditional face to face instruction where as some courses are offered using any one mode of distance education through modern sources like Internet video or audio conferencing, electronic mail, radio, television, Internet, cable, broadband lines, fiber optics, satellite, wireless communications devices, etc. Provision and expansion of facilities for expending population of the country are the need of the hour. For this purpose distance education is the most effective tool in order to provide educational facilities to maximum population in a cost effective manner (Sewart, 2001).

According to Bates (2001), "though distance education is a new concept in educational system but it has been catching up very fast in all countries-developed, developing or underdeveloped, socialist or capitalist, Western or non-western, hence, its importance is being realized all over the world and certainly in developing countries". Further he argues that "Adult education researchers found in distance education a myriad of interesting issues that they can study along with distance education researchers, with their focus on improving people's performance, may welcome the chance to deal with some of the important problems posed by distance education practice" (p.6).

We knew that distance education is not newer but academic people didn‟t respect it has a large number of problems and difficulties for the distance education administrators and learners (Rashid, 2002). With the increasing amount of adult learner population is showing distance education as a progressively prior choice of teaching and learning strategies. Further study of student demographics and motivators will help target the adult learner population and will help institutions develop course materials and techniques appropriately (Garrison, 2002).

According to Bransford (2000) "short scrutiny of the basic problems in distance education will help overcome problems of students and faculty. Understanding and mitigating technology problems are important in this regard. Further research into course development techniques will help learning institutions understand which methods work best in the distance learning classroom"(p.2).Enrollment in higher education has to co ntinue at a terrific pace and where available resources in terms of men and money are limited, the obvious solution, if proper, standards are to be maintained and the demand for higher education from different sections of the people is to be met, is to adopt the Open University System with its provision of higher education on part-time or whole-time basis. The Group, therefore, recommends that the Government of Pakistan should establish, as early as possible, a national Open University by an Act of parliament. It‟s essential "to satisfy existing thirst for knowledge as well as degrees admission to formal courses on the basis of merit required that opportunities for off-campus studies should be created on a large scale, for a great variety of courses of high quality. We already have a number of Universities offering correspondence courses; we need to utilize and coordinate this expertise and infrastructure to create an effective system of distance learning" (p.115).The scope of distance education in Pakistan can also be witnessed by its number range. In other words, we can say that this distance education saves time and money of an individual. These e-learning universities in Pakistan will surely and certainly pave great paths of success for the students of Pakistan. Hopefully in the near future more and more universities come at the front stage so that learning environment of Pakistan may get

more enhanced and polished and each and every student may get equal amount of chance to get his desired amount of education.

In Pakistan Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is the pioneer in providing non-formal and distance education in the region. This University is a unique educational institution with the aim to provide ready access to academic and professional skills to the people of Pakistan. Due to its magnificent Success in Pakistani society the general public sector universities have started its several programs under distance education to promote higher education. It is observed that students are taking keen interest in distance learning education because it facilitates them in a good manner."Distance learning has provided an excellent platform to students for learning at their own convenience and at their own pace. In this rapidly changing system of learning, if you are working and need a good degree as well as specialized knowledge to enhance your career then Distance Education can be your cup of tea".www.citehr.com

Punjab is the largest populace province of Pakistan where educational curiosity is increasing with the passage of time rapidly. So to cope with its educational needs public sector universities have launched distance learning programs to promote higher education through Distance Education. Widely researches have been done in distance education on various aspects but this study is pioneer in its nature.

At present public sector universities are introducing multiple modes of education. The purpose of this research study was to investigate the role of public sector universities in promoting higher education through distance education in the province of Punjab.Distance education being an innovative idea in public sector universities aims at to enhance participation in higher education, so that the learners in remote areas may get an opportunity in this sector. Considering that this research study may help the policy makers in future to bridge the gulf of women empowerment providing this segment of population in public sector universities increasing enrollment and future strong footing. This research study may indicate the gaps in the system, in doing so it will provide footing towards improvement of distance learning system in the university. This research would help to promote the culture of distance learning in Pakistan effectively. Study results may help the experts of distance education area for modeling new programs with multi-dimensional strategy to cope with the problems of distance learner. Findings of research would help in developing a cost effective and affording mode of education for the students of remote areas. Awareness among experts of distance learning system may enhance by consulting this study to investigate the needs of the potential clients moreover the study would be helpful to promote the culture of distance learning in Pakistan effectively.

The main objectives of this study were to 1) evaluate support services provided by the public sector universities to their learners in distance education, 2) find out the facilities provided by public sector universities to their distance learners and 3) investigate the problems faced by distance learners in public sector universities.

2.Methodology

2.1 Participants

Ninety two teachers involved in teaching of distance learning in Public Sector Universities of the Punjab were selected as sample.

Table 1: Distribution of Teachers (Department of Distance Learning Education) in Universities

Universities			Number of respondents	Female	Male
Government	College	University Faisalabad			
Islamia	University of Bhawalpur				
Bahauddin	Zakariya University Multan		23		
	Total		**92**		

2.2 Research Instrument

A self-developed study Attitude questionnaire was the instrument of the study. For the constructing of the questionnaires, the researcher reviewed the relevant literature along with the tools of research. Questionnaire for teachers comprised on 27 items with the following section; 1) Reading Material , 2) Study Center Support, 3) Assignments ,4) Access, 5) Assessment, 6) Correspondence ,7) Use of Instructional Technology, 8) Teaching Strategies.

2.3 Validation of Research Instrument

The questionnaire was validated by panel of experts (faculty of education and psychology department).The preliminary questionnaire was consisted of 40items. After the amendments, final questionnaire for teachers was consisted 27 items. In order to ascertain content and construct validity, the researcher also conducted interview in the public sector universities for the distance learning program coordinators.The items were scored by positive system of scoring and the rating of the responses was made on the basis of following scoring procedure ; Strongly Agree as 5, Agree as 4,Un-decided as 3, Disagree as 2, Strongly Disagree as 1.

3.Results and Discussion

3.1 Reading Material

1) Sixty five percent (65%) male teachers agreed and 27% strongly agreed whereas 90%female agreed and 8% strongly agreed regarding to reading material provided by the university fulfills the program objectives.
2) Fifty eight percent (58%) male teachers agreed and 31% strongly agreed while 68%female agreed and 25% strongly agreed regarding supplementary reading are available on student‟s demand.
3) Twenty seven percent (27%) male teachers strongly agreed and 25% agreed whereas 42% female strongly agreed and 35% agreed the students are given access to the library.

3.2 Study Center Support

1) Sixty percent (60%) male teachers strongly agreed and 29% agreed whereas 63% female agreed and 23% strongly agreed regarding study centers are opened when student reach there.

2) Thirty seven percent (37%) male teachers agreed and 19% strongly agreed whereas 38%female agreed and 13%strongly agreed regarding study centre are equipped with multimedia.
3) Fifty four percent (54%) male teachers agreed and 6% strongly agreed whereas 43%female agreed and 10% strongly agreed regarding net browsing facility is available on study center for the students.

3.3 Assignment

1) Forty six percent (46%) male teachers agreed and 33% strongly agreed however 58%female agreed and 35% strongly agreed regarding assignments are keenly evaluated.
2) Fifty four percent (54%) male teachers agreed and 27% strongly agreed whereas 65%female agreed and 28% strongly agreed regarding corrective feedback is given on the assignments.
3) Thirty seven percent (37%) male teachers strongly agreed and 35% agreed while 53% female agreed and 18% strongly agreed regarding assignment are given back to the students in time.

3.4 Access

1) Forty four percent (44%) male teachers disagreed and 11.5% strongly disagreed while 47.5%female disagreed regarding students are provided inter-city pick and drop facility.
2) Forty four percent (44%) male teachers agreed and 25% strongly agreed while 60% agreed and 13%female strongly agreed regarding study centers are allotted to the students as per their local needs.
3) Forty percent (40%) male teachers agreed and 8% strongly agreed while 40%female agreed and 13% strongly agreed online research journals access is given to the students.
4) Thirty seven percent (37%) male teachers agreed and 19% strongly agreed while 88% agreed and 13%female strongly agreed regarding the fee structure of distance education is affording as compare to formal education.

3.5 Assessment

1) Forty two percent (42%) male teachers agreed and 39% strongly agreed whereas 70%female agreed and 28% strongly agreed regarding exams are conducted with proper discipline and control.
2) Fifty six percent (56%) male teachers strongly agreed and 37% agreed while 60%female agreed and 38% strongly agreed regarding students are facilitated during the exams.
3) Forty eight percent (48%) male teachers agreed and same strongly agreed 65%female agreed and 30% strongly agreed regarding examination mobile inspector, supervise the exam center.

3.6 Correspondence

1) Forty eight percent (48%) male teachers agreed and same were strongly agreed whereas75%female agreed and 15.0% strongly agreed regarding educational information is provided by the university in time.
2) Forty four percent (44%) male teachers disagreed and 11.5% strongly disagreed while 47.5%female disagreed regarding reading material sent to the students through correspondence well in time.

3) Fifty four percent (54%) male teachers agreed and 37% strongly agreed whereas 58%female agreed and 25% strongly agreed regarding teachers‟ appointment sent to the student in time.

3.7 Use of Instructional Technology

1) Thirty nine percent (39%) male teachers agreed and 25% strongly agreed while 62%female agreed and 10% strongly agreed regarding online information about the educational schedule is available.

2) Thirty one percent (31%) male teachers agreed and 15% strongly agreed whereas 48%female agreed and 20%strongly agreed regarding admission confirmation facility is available on the website.

3) Twenty three percent 23% male teachers agreed and 16% strongly agreed while 43%female agreed and 13% strongly agreed regarding reading material is available online.

3.8 Teaching Strategies

1. Thirty nine percent (39%) male teachers agreed and 19% strongly agreed while 48%female agreed and 8% strongly agreed regarding reading workshops are conducted by the University for Post Graduate Courses.
2. Forty percent (40%) male teachers agreed and 29% strongly agreed whereas 53%female agreed and 18% strongly agreed regarding seminars on specific topics are conducted.
3. Forty eight percent (48%) male teachers agreed and 1.9% strongly agreed while 33% female agreed and 13% strongly agreed regarding video conferencing is managed by the university to consult the world experts of the subjects.
4. (44%) male teachers disagreed and 11.5% strongly disagreed while 47.5%female disagreed regarding audio-video CDs are supplied to the students.
5. Twenty seven percent (27%) male teachers agreed and 13.5% strongly agreed while 60.0% agreed and 12.5% female strongly agreed regarding internship is managed wherever required.

4.Conclusions

It was observed that study centers were opened at universities when students reached there whereas study centers were not equipped with multimedia and net browsing facility. Majority of respondents observed that exams were conducted with proper discipline and control moreover students were facilitated during the exams, mobile inspectors supervised the exam centers and the fee structure of distance education was affording as compare to regular program. Majority of respondents mentioned that almost educational information was provided by the university and teachers‟ appointment letters were sent to the students timely but it was also investigated that reading material was not sent to the students through correspondence. It was found that online information about the educational calendar, admission confirmatory facility on website and reading material were available online. It was also observed that video conferencing was not conducted by the university to consult the world experts, CD,s were also not supplied to the students but internship program was arranged by the university administration.

5.Discussions

This study investigated the role of public sector universities in promoting higher education through distance education in Punjab. It was admitted that study centers were opened when students reached there but study centers were not equipped with multimedia and net browsing facility.

The findings from this study were also consistent with the findings of Rehman (2004) who found out missing facilities of modern technology in distance education. The study explored that correspondence queries were addressed by the university, this idea also supported by Afridi (2008) who described that students‟ complaints were entertained properly.It was admitted that exams were conducted with proper discipline and control, basic facilities were provided to the students during the exams, findings of this study were consistent by the Rehman (2004), who stated that examination system of distance education program was satisfactory.

It was exhibited by the results of the study that assignments were keenly evaluated by teachers and corrective feedbacks were not given to the students. Video conferencing facility was not provided by university administration as mentioned by the students while on the other hand teachers described that this facility was provided by university whereas majority of respondents admitted that facility was not available by university. The findings of this study were similar to the results of Ali (1999) who concluded that video conferencing facilities were not available in universities.

6.Recommendations

In the light of conclusion, It is recommended that supplementary reading material should be available to students. Study centers should be equipped with multimedia. Corrective feedback should be given on the assignments by teachers in time. Study centers should be allocated to the students as per their local needs.

Online research journals access should be given to the students. Audio-video conferencing should be conducted by the university administration. CDs should be supplied to the students to facilitate them in their learning process. Universities may take measures to arrange media program for each course. Guidance and counseling centers may be established to facilitate students to solve their problems. Intercity pick and drop facility should be provided to the students by the universities. Availability of reading material should be made possible through correspondence.

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SUBMISSION GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH PAPER

The editors welcome submissions of research papers based on original and new research ideas in proper English language that have not been submitted elsewhere for publication. The manuscripts would only be considered that follow the journal's format. Instructions for authors are given on the journal website. Only the electronic submissions in MS-Word format are accepted and should be sent only to the journal's e-mail address through two file attachments:

Title Page

It must contain the following information:

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The research paper contains the following:

i) Abstract

Abstract is a brief (150-250 words) comprehensive summary of the research. The word "Abstract" is centered as the first line of type on this page. Type the abstract as a single paragraph in block format (i.e., without paragraph indentation). The abstract contains research topic, objectives, participants, methods, data analysis technique/s and key findings.

Write a list of keywords from your research paper at the end of abstract. Type Keywords: (italicized) and then list your keywords.

ii) Introduction (1-3 pages)

Introduction is level one heading of research paper. The introduction of the topic will set the stage for explaining the research. It should clearly present the purpose of study and give general overview of main research question and kind of proposed study. Introduction may include following level two headings:

- Objectives of the Study/Research Questions/Hypothesis
- Significance of the Study
- Delimitations of the study (if any)

iii)Literature Review (4-7 pages)

The review of literature should generally begin on a new page. Discuss the literature related to your proposed study. This section is designed to inform readers about past studies that have already been conducted, and provides perspectives on your area of interest. The review should include a brief discussion of any "classical studies" in this area, if appropriate, but the major portion of the content should focus on the past decade of research. It should close with a logical summary of past research and transition to a statement about what should be studied next. After you present what is already known, make your case for your research either answering a new question, getting a new answer to an old question, answering a question about a new population, etc. After you have made your case that your research is going to give new information, you will summarize the major points. Remember that the Introduction discusses the problem. The review of literature should concentrate on solutions (those that exist, those that are still required.

iv) Research Methodology (1-3 pages)

Introduce the general methodology that was used for your study. You should ensure that your research methodology has been designed properly and that all the elements required have been considered.

Research Methodology may include following subheadings

- Research Design
- Population
- Sample and sampling Techniques
- Instrumentation
- Data collection

v) Data Analysis and Interpretation

Mention the data analysis technique and interpret the data accordingly.

vi)Discussion and Conclusion

In this section discuss the findings of data in light of other studies.

vii) Recommendations

Give practical recommendations based on data analysis.

viii) References

Follow APA 6th Edition for referencing style.

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4. Use the page margin of 1 inch on all sides on A4 size paper
5. Indent all paragraphs 5-7 spaces or .5".
6. All pages are numbered in consecutive order using Arabic numerals. The page numbers should be centered in footer of the page.
7. Justify the text (align on both sides your margins).
8. Plagiarism check will be done of research paper and the allowed limit is less than 19%. Self plagiarism is also not allowed.
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10. Tables should be numbered consecutively in Arabic numerals. The number and title of the table are centered above the table. In the text, refer to tables by their number: e.g. as shown in Table 8, ……., do not write "the table above" (or below) or "the table on page 32," because the position and page number of a table cannot be determined until the pages are typeset.

GUIDELINE FOR BOOK REVIEW

A book review is a description, critical analysis, and an evaluation on the quality, meaning, and significance of a book. It should focus on the book's purpose, content, and authority. It is a reaction paper in which strengths and weaknesses of the material are analyzed. It should include a statement of what the author has tried to do, evaluates how well (in the opinion of the reviewer) the author has succeeded, and presents evidence to support this evaluation.

The following may be included in book review:

1.Write a statement giving essential information about the book: title, author, first copyright date, type of book, general subject matter, special features (maps, color plates, etc.), price and ISBN.

2. State the author's purpose in writing the book. Sometimes authors state their purpose in the preface or the first chapter. When they do not, you may arrive at an understanding of the book's purpose by asking yourself these questions:

a. Why did the author write on this subject rather than on some other subject?

b. From what point of view is the work written?

c. Was the author trying to give information, to explain something technical, to convince the reader of a belief's validity by dramatizing it in action?

d. What is the general field or genre, and how does the book fit into it?

e. Who is the intended audience?

f. What is the author's style? Is it formal or informal? Evaluate the quality of the writing style by using some of the following standards: coherence, clarity, originality, forcefulness, correct use of technical words, conciseness, fullness of development, fluidity. Does it suit the intended audience?

g. See the Table of Contents, it can help understand how the book is organized and will aid in determining the author's main ideas and how they are developed – chronologically, topically, etc.

g. How did the book affect you? Were any previous ideas you had on the subject changed, abandoned, or reinforced due to this book? How is the book related to your own course or personal agenda? What personal experiences you've had relate to the

subject?
h. How well has the book achieved its goal?
i. Would you recommend this book or article to others? Why?
3. Explain the method of development-the way the author supports the thesis. Illustrate your remarks with specific references and quotations. In general, authors tend to use the following methods, exclusively or in combination.
a. **Description:** The author presents word-pictures of scenes and events by giving specific details that appeal to the five senses, or to the reader's imagination. Description presents background and setting. Its primary purpose is to help the reader realize, through as many sensuous details as possible, the way things (and people) are, in the episodes being described.
b. **Narration**: The author tells the story of a series of events, usually presented in chronological order. In a novel however, chronological order may be violated for the sake of the plot. The emphasis in narration, in both fiction and non-fiction, is on the events. Narration tells what has happened. Its primary purpose is to tell a story.
c. **Exposition**: The author uses explanation and analysis to present a subject or to clarify an idea. Exposition presents the facts about a subject or an issue as clearly and impartially as possible. Its primary purpose is to explain.
d. **Argument**: The author uses the techniques of persuasion to establish the truth of a statement or to convince the reader of its falsity. The purpose is to persuade the reader to believe something and perhaps to act on that belief. Argument takes sides on an issue. Its primary purpose is to convince.
4. Evaluate the book for **interest, accuracy, objectivity,** importance, thoroughness, and usefulness to its intended audience. Show whether the author's main arguments are true. Respond to the author's opinions. What do you agree or disagree with? And why? Illustrate whether or not any conclusions drawn are derived logically from the evidence. Explore issues the book raises. What possibilities does the book suggest? What has the author omitted or what problems were left unsolved? What specific points are not convincing Relate the book to larger issues.
5. If relevant, make note of the **book's format** – layout, binding, typography, etc. Are there maps, illustrations? Do they aid understanding?
6. **Summarize**, analyze, and comment on the book's content. State your general conclusions. List the principal topics, and briefly summarize the author's ideas about these topics, main points, and conclusions. Use specific references and quotations to support your statements.

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Only the electronic submissions in MS-Word format are accepted and should be sent to the journal's e-mail address through file attachment.

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Submission Deadline: Authors can send their papers throughout the year and these will be considered for the publication in subsequent issues of the journal.

DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION, INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC UNIVERSITY ISLAMABAD

This is a fact that the world renowned universities are devoted to promote excellence in education through the establishment of distance education centers. Distance Education mode has been growing rapidly worldwide in the present era. The basic purpose of distance education is to provide greater access to large number of students within limited financial budget. We feel proud to announce that International Islamic University, Islamabad has launched Directorate of Distance Education. This has become possible due to vision & commitment of the leadership of the university. The support of HEC has strengthened us to embark on the dual mode. We are committed to provide the quality education through distance education programs. Directorate of Distance Education has started of the first academic session in the fall semester 2015 with MA Education, MA Pakistan Studies and M.ED Programs. Our main objective is to provide a great opportunity to the students who could not achieve their educational targets for several socio-economic, cultural and geographic constraints. Our team consists of well trained and professionally qualified people with a wide experience of teaching and research. Directorate of Distance Education is distinguished with the quality of teaching and learning by utilizing modern instructional materials. We induce and inculcate high moral values and sense of civic responsibility among students.

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