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The New Normal: Online Classes and Assessments during the COVID-19 Outbreak

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Abstract

The current quantitative research paper intends to investigate students' and teachers' experiences and opinions about virtual learning and testing and how remote learning has affected their teaching and learning and assessments during the pandemic. To find out the effects of the online platform on classes and assessments, two sets (one for students and the other for teachers) of questionnaires were formulated comprising three sections; first, about demographic information of the participants, second (variables, 1-8) about online classes and third (variables, 9-17) about online assessments. The questionnaires were administered among 150 participants- 90 students and 60 teachers from five countries: Saudi Arabia, India, Turkey, England and Canada. SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences)-version 26.0 was used to analyze the data statistically. The results showed that both students and teachers faced challenges in adopting online teaching, yet they had to do so out of necessity because they did not experience online teaching especially online assessment up to the standard of face-to-face (in person in classrooms). Moreover, the research findings did not show much significant difference between teachers' and students' experiences and opinions towards online classes and assessment across all five countries. Furthermore, the study offers some implications based on the findings. The researchers see that blended learning might be the future of education. Unified online curricula and learning management systems, competency in using various digital tools/platforms, availability of stable Internet connection, innovative and engaging teaching strategies and proctored exams and a variety of formative/summative assessments are required in order to maintain the quality of learning and testing, and prepare educational institutions and teachers to meet any challenge in this unpredictable world.

KEYWORDS: COVID-19, Face-To-Face Teaching, Online Classes, Online Assessment, Online Teaching.

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1. Introduction

The whole world has faced changes and challenges due to the outbreak of COVID-19. It has also shaken the education system worldwide. The higher education system across the world is affected too by it to a larger extent. After WHO's (2020, 11 March) declaration of the coronavirus disease a pandemic, universities and colleges all over the world have been closed for an unknown period, and teachers and students have experienced disruption, educational challenges and sudden shocks because of transformation from face-to-face classes (presence on campus) to virtual classes (UNESCO, 2020, 13 March). The sudden closure of educational institutions turned the hitherto optional mode of online learning into a compulsory one due to the non-availability of any other option. Consequently, all stake holders; teachers, students and parents were caught unawares as neither the students and parents nor the teachers or institutions were prepared for the online mode of teaching, learning and testing. This new mode of education brought about many intrinsic changes in the system and these new dynamics have a bearing on all dimensions of the teaching learning process. The

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new ecosystem of virtual learning has transformed the mode and manner of content delivery by the teachers and has altered the student response to the system as well.

Online teaching, learning and testing have brought many challenges for language learners and teachers. Therefore, the present research aims to report some experiences and opinions of teachers and students from different universities to draw attention to online teaching/learning and assessment issues and how online platforms affect achieving the desired outcomes of language learning, teaching and testing.

An online classroom can be defined as a room that is fully involved in technology. In this kind of teaching, the whole syllabus is taught online via the internet using different digital tools. Online teaching or eLearning has made it possible to continue learning during COVID-19. At the same time, the forced transformation from traditional to online classes has its challenges and issues. It has burdened teachers and students to use new technologies and discover effective online teaching and learning strategies. It has cleared how important it is to grow professionally and reflect on online teaching effectiveness and success. The crisis also opens the possible doors of better opportunities (Li & Lalani, 2020; Agarwal & Kaushik, 2020). In the future, higher education across the world, face-to-face (presence in classrooms) teaching can sustain only with the blending of technologies.

1.1 The Rationale of the Research

Due to the outbreak of the pandemic, it is evident that university students and teachers have faced many challenges i.e., finding the right online platform, technical issues, attendance and a lack of knowledge in adapting to the online classes. During the transformation from face-to-face on campus to online classes, teachers and higher education were not ready. It was a sudden shift with no other option. Teachers and students have struggled to make the online classes effective and online assessments valid. Especially for university teachers, it has not been easy to choose the correct way to examine their students' performance and justify their results.

In the emergence of COVID-19, a massive, quick and forced transformation from face-to-face classes and assessments to virtual classes and assessments has become the new normal. Many studies have reported about online teaching and assessments, and teachers' and learners' experiences and perceptions during the coronavirus pandemic. Bao (2020) shares one Chinese university teachers' teaching experiences about online teaching. On the basis of their experiences, she has suggested six specific pedagogical strategies to overcome the challenges posed by the pandemic. To face this sudden transformation from face-to-face setting to online setting, her research offers five effective principles: relevance of online course plans with students' learning, teachers' successful and effective delivery of lectures/lessons, adequate support by teachers to students, students' participation and possible plans to mitigate the effects of unexpected problems of online teaching. Huang *et al.* (2020) have also supported the notion of the flexible online teaching to face the challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic. According to Allen, Rowan and Singh (2020) in the time of COVID-19, the increased workloads for instructors due to shifting the teaching materials into online mode have caused unequal pressure between teachers and learners. Not only teachers are moving the content into online content but they are also struggling to find an adequate online platform because some universities like in India do not have their own established LMS (Learning Management Systems) though other universities in Saudi Arabia, Turkey, England and Canada have. Digital education in India depends on mainly the videoconference systems (Zoom, Google Meet, Cisco Web, Microsoft Teams, etc.) while the other four countries have been using Blackboard, Moodle, Schoology, etc. even before the pandemic era. Therefore, institutional settings must build their own learning management systems to meet the standards of high-quality education. Yet it has to be observed through the outcomes of virtual teaching whether virtual teaching will open the doors to stupendous innovations broadly in terms of instructional strategies or instructors will use traditional ways to teach online. Jan (2020) has observed that teachers are not applying the new pedagogical strategies to cope-up with the present situation due to the lack of institutional support. So, they are making use of the traditional teaching style in online teaching. She points out the need to apply rapid and necessary pedagogical changes to cover the challenges of online teaching. Her study is limited to primary education as she seeks the views of Malaysian primary students' parents to investigate the use of different online platforms and the effectiveness of online teaching. In a broader context, Crawford *et al.* (2020) have also suggested redeveloping full online curricula by discussing the responses of different universities across 20 countries to COVID-19 threats to higher education differing from no response to quick response in developing full online curricula. They have suggested that universities can learn from one-another to fight back with the coronavirus pandemic through a unified response, such as making full online curricula. Further, the World Bank (2020) sees this pandemic as a good opportunity for curriculum designers and policymakers to learn from each other and to cooperate with each other to lessen the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. So, it cannot be denied that COVID-19 may work to bridge the gap of traditional and online learning through changes in curricula development, though the higher education system has been trying to incorporate online redevelopment of pedagogies at a slow pace in the pre-COVID-19 period (Raman, 2020; Nehal &

Khan, 2020). Li and Lalani (2020) and Minerva (2020) discover online transformation as a positive step towards the development of the education system. Minerva (2020) finds teachers and learners in educational institutions, could cope-up with the unprecedent time because they have digital technology. However, they have faced issues due to the lack of unified structure. The researcher looks at digital technology as a useful tool to improve learning in remote as well as on-campus environments. Similarly, Agarwal and Kaushik (2020) also recommend making online teaching as an integral part of pedagogical development beyond the crisis period in their research on 77 medical students in India. By collecting students' feedback responses after 12 days online sessions on Zoom, they have found online classes a good alternative to traditional teaching in the time of lockdown due to COVID-19. Their research has claimed online teaching is highly effective, interesting, and easy to use and adapt teaching materials according to the needs of learners. They have also advised to use the latest version of the software for the time being to deal with unprecedented technical problems. In fact, COVID-19 will be a transitional phase to change the structure of higher education setup from traditional to blended and full online pedagogies. It is going to be an integral part of post-COVID-19. After the application of diverse online platforms, the effectiveness and pitfalls of this drastic transformation will be measured and unprecedented technicalities of remote pedagogy and rapid changes in the education system may be overcome by interactive lectures (Ertmer *et al.*, 2011, Richardson *et al.*, 2016), coordination of colleagues, continuous professional development, improvement in IT structure and contingency plans for future (Devitt *et al.*, 2020). Their study on the second level school teachers in Ireland has recommended making changes on three levels; teaching (efficient teachers, best practice application, coordination among faculty members and professional development), learning (synchronous, interactive, motivating and student engaging online classes) and education system (advanced online platforms, development in IT infrastructure and supportive social context) in order to resolve challenges of remote learning as well as face-to-face learning. Richardson *et al.* (2016) has supported a caring environment and a good relationship between student and teacher for effective online teaching. Continuous professional development (Schon, 1983, Richardson & Diaz Maggioli, 2018, Shanjida *et al.*, 2018; Hasper, 2020) and reflective teaching strategies (Kolb, 1984; Hasper, 2020) are the key factors to grow and deal with any kind of change or in times of uncertainties in both the settings face-to-face and online. Being in the teaching profession, practitioners always must reflect on effective teaching strategies and evolve continuously in order to adapt changes and optimize teaching (Hasper, 2020).

Before the pandemic, a lot of studies are available on effective online teaching strategies and teachers' perception of eLearning and its successful application (Carter *et al.*, 2014; Frazer *et al.*, 2017). In qualitative research on 11 American nursing faculties who have 6-7 years online teaching experience Frazer *et al.* (2017) have also investigated teachers' perspective of online pedagogy and effective teaching strategies with some quality indicators to obtain desirable student success. According to them, efficacy of online teachers must be enough to apply some effective teaching strategies of eLearning such as regular synchronous online sessions, discussions, responses to discussions and grading of assignments. In the same regard, Dickinson and Gronseth (2020) have emphasized the application of online Universal Design for Learning with its effective teaching approaches, alternative modes of assessments and different means of communication to boost the student development.

Some studies have been reported here which discuss students' and instructors' views and experiences on online assessments. One observational research by Elzainy, El Sadik and Al Abdulmonem (2020) has reported the positive and satisfactory experiences of medical students and faculties about online assessments, but they can be achieved with technological educational competencies. Contrary to this research, OECD (2020) has raised questions of academic dishonesty and unfairness among university students in unproctored distance online exams and risks of technical issues during the pandemic. Redesigning of examinations has been suggested with some adaptations to create a blend of different examination modes such as synchronous oral and written exams with questions of critical thinking and various types of objective questions. Several sets of exam questions in a randomized order with limited time can reduce the chances of cheating to some extent though it is unavoidable in online distance exams. Other modes (projects, assignments, discussion forums) of formative assessment can be applied to see the students' performance. Similarly, Wahid and Farooq (2020) also suggested some quality parameters (speaking, written and objective types of questions and continuous formative assessment) to justify the validity of online assessments. Like Wahid's and Farooq's research (2020), Khan and Khan (2019) have also investigated 41 university students' views on online assessments and found students' unwillingness to accept them because of technological incompetency, lack of individualized interaction with teachers and restrictive nature of online tests mainly depending on objective types of questions. Spivey and Mcmillan (2014) have also reported that online assessments are not up to the mark of academic superiority, but they are of convenience. Their research suggests that online assessments should be synchronized and invigilated on campus. Betlej (2013) and Spivey and Mcmillan (2014) have favored the randomization of test questions with

multiple attempts and feedback. Amendola and Miceli (2018) have worked on the peer assessment to increase the efficacy of online assessment that may be a useful tool to introduce students with the dynamics of online collaborative assessment. Their study finds a significant correlation of peer assessment with the grades assigned by teachers.

The research about online classes and assessments has many prospects such as adequate application of online teaching, yet no research to the date has tried to explore specifically the experiences and opinions of university students and teachers on online classes and assessments together from five different countries.

1.2 Significance of the Study

The researchers have observed that their students and colleagues encounter many issues while conducting online classes and exams. To add or modify some online teaching and assessment strategies to overcome those problems, they have tried to collect the university students' and teachers' experiences and opinions about remote classes and assessments. Based on their experiences and opinions, changes can be made by the curriculum designers, university administrators, teachers and students to avoid those reported problems and obstacles. As a result, online classes and testing can be run successfully without hurdles like less attendance, concentration, engagement, plagiarism and technical issues.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study mainly aims to investigate

1. experiences and opinions of students and teachers towards online learning and assessment,
2. whether there is a relationship between students' and teachers' experiences and opinions about online classes and assessments or not, and
3. whether there is a relationship in the experiences and opinions of students and teachers of five countries: Saudi Arabia, India, Turkey, England and Canada or not.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Participants

The study intended to find out students' and teachers' experiences and opinions on online teaching and assessment. To do this, the questionnaires were distributed to around 300 participants, but 150 responses were collected from 90 students and 60 teachers. The participants were randomly selected from Saudi Arabia, India, Turkey, England and Canada. Participants were categorized according to their countries into five groups. The first and second groups from Saudi Arabia and India, each had 30 students and 15 teachers, third, fourth and fifth groups had 10 students and 10 teachers from each country; Turkey, England and Canada. See Table 1 below for the details.

Country	Students	Teachers	Total
Saudi Arabia	30	15	45
India	30	15	45
Turkey	10	10	20
England	10	10	20
Canada	10	10	20

Table 1-The numbers of participants country-wise.

All subjects were from universities (higher education). The student participants were undergraduate students. All teacher participants had 5 to 25 years of teaching experience at the university level. Many of them were already using online teaching as full, blended, or facilitative teaching, but some teachers never used online teaching before the COVID-19 period and the same was the case of student participants. The age of all student participants varied from 18 to 25 years. The participants were from heterogeneous linguistic and cultural groups. Moreover, they were from various faculties; Arts and Humanities, Science, Life Science, Medicine, Information and Technology, Law, etc.

2.2 Instruments and Data Collection Procedure

Two sets of questionnaires; one for students and one for teachers were composed in the Google Forms comprising 17 variables on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from '1=strongly disagree', '2=disagree', '3=neither agree nor disagree', '4=agree' to '5=strongly agree'. Both the questionnaires were divided into three parts, part 1 collected the demographic (nominal) data such as country, age and teaching experience, part 2 (items 1-8) gathered students and teachers' ordinal data (agreement or disagreement) about online learning on a five-point Likert scale and part 3 (items 9-17) elicited students and teachers' ordinal data (agreement or disagreement) about online assessment on a five-point scale.

To collect the data, the researchers distributed the questionnaires by sharing the link to their colleagues working in Saudi Arabia (Abha and Taif) and India (Kashmir and Aligarh). For the other three countries, their friends and colleagues working in the universities of Turkey (Ankara and Izmir), England (Liverpool and London) and Canada (Oshawa) helped them collect data by distributing the questionnaire among their students and colleagues.

2.3 Data Analysis

The collected data were coded for statistical analysis. To analyze the data statistically, SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences)-version 26.0 was used. First, descriptive statistics were employed to tabulate means and standard deviations. Then a series of independent samples t-tests were run to obtain the

significance value and to find out the significant relationship between students' and teachers' experiences and opinions about online learning and assessment. After that, One-way ANOVA tests were applied to compare the significant relationship among all five groups of students and teachers as well.

3. Results

3.1 Students' Experiences and Opinions about Online Classes and Assessments

Table 2 below illustrates mean scores and standard deviations regarding students' experiences and opinions about online classes and assessments.

During the COVID-19 period, students had to adapt online learning as they had no option left, but their experiences and opinions about online classes and assessments were almost negative because their responses to most items were in disagreement as most of the responses ranged from 'strongly disagree' to 'neither agree nor disagree'. There were a few positive responses. They expressed their disagreement by scoring less than 3 points on a 5-point Likert scale in these variables numbered 4 (M= 1.71, S. D= 1.22), 5 (M= 2.77, S. D= 1.24), 6 (M= 2.33, S. D= 1.43), 11 (M= 1.49, S. D=1.12), 13 (M= 1.79, S. D= 1.48), 14 (M= 1.26, S. D= .815), 16 (M= 2.03, S. D= 1.67). The participants showed neither agreement nor disagreement for the following variables numbered 1 (M= 3.31, S. D= 1.73), 2 (M= 3.48, S. D= 1.60), 7 (M=3.63, S. D= 1.50), 8 (M= 3.74, S. D= 1.23), 9 (M=3.86, S. D= 1.50), 10 (M= 3.93, S. D= 1.65) by scoring more than 2 points and less than 4 points. They scored higher than 4 points only for 4 variables numbered 3 (M= 4.71, S. D= .864), 12 (M= 4.47, S. D= 1.21), 15 (M= 4.14, S. D= 1.55), 17 (M=4.41, S. D= .947) to express their agreement. For the variables 7 and 8, students felt satisfaction in terms of only having online classes because they think that at least, they had the availability of digital classes rather than the complete shutdown of classes. However, they did not discover them equivalent in quality of face-to-face on campus classes.

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Online Classes		
1. I enjoy online classes like traditional classes.	3.31	1.73
2. Virtual classes open the doors to innovations more broadly.	3.48	1.60
3. I am well-trained how to use different types of online platforms.	4.71	.864
4. I understand better in virtual classes than in face-to-face classes.	1.71	1.22
5. I never face any technical problems in attending online classes.	2.77	1.24
6. Online classes are effective and high-quality learning platforms as face-to-face classes.	2.33	1.43
7. I feel as satisfied with online lectures as traditional lectures.	3.63	1.50
8. My experience of attending online classes was great.	3.74	1.23
Online Assessments		
9. Online tests are valid tools or alternatives to pen and paper exams.	3.86	1.50
10. I never face any technical problems in doing online exams.	3.93	1.65
11. Asynchronous assessment is a valid tool to examine students' progress and performance.	1.49	1.12
12. Synchronous assessment is a valid tool to examine students' progress and performance.	4.47	1.21
13. Synchronous subjective (written) test is the best type of test for the online assessment.	1.79	1.48
14. Synchronous speaking test is the best type of test for the online assessment.	1.26	.815
15. Synchronous objective exam is the best type of test for the online assessment.	4.14	1.55
16. Synchronous objective, subjective followed by a speaking test is the best type of test for the online assessment.	2.03	1.67
17. My performance in online exams was excellent.	4.41	.947

Table 2 - Students' experiences and opinions about online classes and assessments.

3.2 Teachers' Experiences and Opinions about Online Classes and Assessments

Table 3 below presents mean scores and standard deviations of teachers' experiences and opinions about online classes and assessments.

The findings in Table 3 are not very different from those of Table 2 though they chose disagreement options more than students. Teachers also asserted that online classes and assessments were not up to the mark or highly appreciated because online teaching does not meet the quality of face-to-face teaching and especially online assessment. From the results, it can be said that it was a forced shift to online teaching just to cope with the pandemic situation. Their responses noticeably tended to be negative. The range of their responses mostly varied from 'strongly disagree' to 'neither agree nor disagree'. Only a few responses were in agreement. They showed their disagreement in these variables numbered 4 (M= 1.33, S. D= 1.11), 5 (M= 2.70, S. D= 1.32), 6 (M= 2.30, S. D= 1.24), 7 (M= 2.37, S. D=1.66), 9 (M= 2.43, S. D= 1.38), 10 (M= 2.63, S. D= 1.31), 11 (M= 1.15, S. D= .481), 13 (M= 2.07, S.D= 1.70), 14 (M=1.33, S. D= 1.11) by scoring lower than 3 points on a 5-point Likert scale. The teachers indicated neither agreement nor disagreement for these variables numbered 1 (M= 3.30, S. D= 1.63), 2 (M= 3.37, S. D= 1.61), 15 (M=3.73, S. D= 1.68), 17 (M= 3.90, S. D= 1.10) because they scored more than 2 points and less than 4 points. Like students, to express their agreement, they had higher than 4 points only for 4 variables numbered 3 (M= 4.77, S. D= .767), 8 (M= 4.00, S. D= 1.04), 12 (M= 4.85, S. D= .481), 16 (M= 4.47, S. D= 1.17).

3.3 Difference in Experiences and Opinions about Online Classes and Assessments between Students and Teachers

Table 4 below illustrates the difference in experiences and opinions between students and teachers about online classes and assessments. For this purpose, independent samples t-tests were performed and the mean scores of students' experiences and opinions about online classes and assessments were compared with teachers' experiences and opinions about online classes and assessments.

The first 8 variables are about online classes in Table 4, and the 9 items are for online assessments starting from 9 to 17. The results of the t-test for equality of means did not reveal a significant difference between students and teachers regarding online classes because the significance value is > 0.05. Only variable no.7 has a difference as its significance value is p=<.000 which is <0.05.

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation
Online Classes		
1. I enjoy conducting online classes like traditional classes.	3.30	1.63
2. Virtual classes open the doors to innovations more broadly.	3.37	1.61
3. I know very well how to use different types of online platforms.	4.77	.767
4. My students understand better in virtual classes than in face-to-face classes.	1.33	1.11
5. I never face any technical problems in conducting online classes.	2.70	1.32
6. Online classes are effective and high-quality learning platforms as face-to-face classes.	2.30	1.24
7. I feel as satisfied with online lectures as traditional lectures.	2.37	1.66
8. My experience of conducting online classes was great.	4.00	1.04
Online Assessments		
9. Online tests are valid tools or alternatives to pen and paper exams.	2.43	1.38
10. I never face any technical problems in conducting online tests.	2.63	1.31
11. Asynchronous assessment is a valid tool to examine students' progress and performance.	1.15	.481
12. Synchronous assessment is a valid tool to examine students' progress and performance.	4.85	.481
13. Synchronous subjective (written) test is the best type of test for online assessment.	2.07	1.70
14. Synchronous speaking test is the best type of test for online assessment.	1.33	1.11
15. Synchronous objective exam is the best type of test for online assessment.	3.73	1.68
16. Synchronous objective, subjective followed by a speaking test is the best type of test for online assessment.	4.47	1.17
17. My students' performance in online exams was excellent.	3.90	1.10

Table 3 - Teachers' experiences and opinions about online classes and assessments.

Item numbered 7 asked their agreement or disagreement about their satisfaction, *I feel as satisfied with online lectures as traditional lectures.* Here, teachers disagreed more than students. Perhaps the reason would be teachers' overload of preparing content and material for online classes and to give extra efforts to make online lectures interactive while students often did not attend the lectures until there was the marking of attendance.

However, regarding online assessment, there is a significant difference in experiences and opinions between both the groups. From variable numbered 9 to 17, Table 4 has items about online assessment, most of the items revealed a significant difference. It might be because teachers expressed eagerness in the validity proved exams by applying different online assessment tools. On the other hand, students agreed on the easy-way options for online testing to avoid any mishap. The significance value of items numbered 9, 10, 11,12,16,17 was <0.05. While 3 variables (13, 14, 15) revealed non-significant p-value (>0.05) indicating no difference.

t-test for equality of means			
Online Classes		**Online Assessments**	
Variables	**P**	**Variables**	**P**
1.	.969*	9.	.000
2.	.6798	10.	.000
3.	.687*	11.	.012
4.	.118	12.	.008
5.	.753*	13.	.290*
6.	.883*	14.	.644*
7.	.000	15.	.133*
8.	.188*	16.	.000
		17.	.003

Table 4 - One-way ANOVA for students' experiences and opinions about online classes and assessments with respect to country.

3.4 Country-wise Students' Experiences and Opinions about Online Classes and Assessments

To examine whether there was a significant difference or not according to country wise, the mean scores of students from five countries (Saudi Arabia, India, Turkey, England, and Canada) were compared in Table 5 below by applying the one-way ANOVA tests.

The findings of the ANOVA tests revealed that there was no such a significant difference among five groups of students according to countries. 9 items did not display any difference in experiences and opinions about online learning and testing among countries. They share non-significant difference (>0.05) as in these variables numbered 1 (F= .446, p= .775), 3 (F= .735, p= .571), 5 (F= 2.449, p= .052), 6 (F= 1.402, p= .240), 8 (F= 1.617, p= .177), 9 (F= 2.203, p= .075), 11 (F= 1.021, p= .401), 12 (F= .649, p= .629), 14 (F= .701, p= .593). While 8 variables showed significant difference (<0.05). They are as follows numbered 2 (F= 3.464, p= .011), 4 (F= 4.469, p= .003), 7 (F= 5.971, p= .000), 10 (F= 6.342, p= .000), 13 (F= 3.205, p= .017), 15 (F= 4.255, p= .003), 16 (F= 2.773, p= .032), 17 (F= 2.960, p= .024).

Furthermore, to exhibit the multiple comparisons of variables with a significant difference among all five countries very clearly, post hoc tests (Scheffe test) were done (See Appendix 1). These post hoc tests indicated that Turkish and British students did not consider an online classroom setting as innovative as a face-to-face classroom setting. They disagreed with this variable 2 more than Saudi, Indian and Canadian students. The mean scores (2.20, 2.80) and standard deviations (1.38, 1.55) of Turkish and British students' responses respectively were lower than Saudi (3.97, 1.50), Indian (3.77, 1.61) and Canadian (3.10, 1.45) students' responses.

Online Classes			**Online Assessments**		
Items	**F ANOVA**	**P**	**Items**	**F ANOVA**	**P**
1.	.446	.775	9.	2.203	.075
2.	3.464	.011	10.	6.342	.000
3.	.735	.571	11.	1.021	.401
4.	4.469	.003	12.	.649	.629
5.	2.449	.052	13.	3.205	.017
6.	1.402	.240	14.	.701	.593
7.	5.971	.000	15.	4.255	.003
8.	1.617	.177	16.	2.773	.032
			17.	2.960	.024

Table 5 - Difference in experiences and opinions about online classes and assessments between students and teachers.

For item numbered 4, Indian and Turkish students were of the view that online classes do not share the same quality of learning as offline classes more than other groups. As their scores (M= 1.27, S. D= .450) of Indian

students and (M= 1.00, S. D= .000) of Turkish students were lower than the other three groups. Then another significant difference was seen in variable numbered 7. Indian students expressed more satisfaction in attending online classes (M= 4.37, S. D= 1.03) than the students of the other four countries, for example, Saudi (M= 3.83, 1.51), Turkey (M= 2.90, 1.45), England (M= 2.60, 1.51) and Canada (M= 2.60, 1.51). The reason might be in India, online classes were not started immediately after the lock-down (March 21, 2020). The classes were suspended for a long time so the students felt satisfied when the online classes started while in other countries, online classes came into effect immediately. Further, Indian (M= 2.40, S. D= 1.43) and Turkish (M= 2.80, S. D= 1.93) students faced more technical problems than other groups (Saudi Arabia, M= 3.90, S. D.= 1.73), (England, M= 4.60, S. D= 1.26) and (Canada, M= 4.63, S. D= 1.07) in doing online exams due to many factors like in Kashmir, India, students had only unstable 2 GB Internet speed and in Turkey, students might have problems because of the high rates of Internet and control of the government over social-media platforms. The next variable that had a significant difference in the groups was 13. Saudi and Indian students expressed their disagreement greater than the other three countries, the scores were M= 1.37, S. D= 1.23 (Saudi Arabia), M= 1.47, S. D= 1.14 (India), M= 2.70, S. D= 2.00 (Turkey), M= 2.50, S.D= 1.78 (Britain) and M= 2.40, S.D= 1.84 (Canada). While Saudi (M= 4.53, S. D= 1.22) and Indian students (M= 4.63, S. D= 1.13) preferred objective type of online exams more than other students of Turkey (M= 3.40, S. D= 1.90), Britain (M= 3.00, S. D= 1.76) and Canada (M= 3.40, S. D= 2.07). Again, for variable numbered 16, Indian and Saudi students were in less favor of using different assessment tools combinedly than Turkish, British and Canadian students. The mean scores and standard deviations of Saudi, Indian, Turkish, British, Canadian students were 1.30 (1.02), 2.13 (1.72), 2.60 (2.07), 2.80 (1.75), 2.60 (2.07) as shown in Table 5 above. Then for the last variable numbered 17, Saudi (M= 4.53, S. D= .766) and Indian (M= 4.73, S.D= .640) students felt more satisfied towards their performance in online assessment than Turkish (M= 4.10, S. D= 1.10), British (M= 3.90, S. D= 1.45) and Canadian students (M= 3.90, S. D= 1.10).

3.5 Country-wise Teachers' Experiences and Opinions about Online Classes and Assessments

Likewise, students' data analysis, teachers' data was also compared by using one-way ANOVA tests to investigate whether there was a significant difference or not according to countries illustrated in Table 6.

The findings of the ANOVA tests indicated that there was not a significant difference among five groups of students according to countries in Table 6. 15 out of 17 variables marked no significant difference such as 1 (F= 1.649, p= .175), 2 (F= .658, p= .624), 3 (F= 1.706, p= .162), 4 (F= 1.497, p= .267), 5 (F= 1.110, p= .361), 6 (F= 1.229, p= .309), 7 (F= .313, p= .868), 8 (F= 1.081, p= .375), 11 (F= 2.250, p= .076), 12 (F= .651, p= .629), 13 (F= 1.243, p= .304), 14 (F= 1.497, p= .216), 15 (F= 1.777, p= .147), 16 (F= 1.384, p= .252), 17 (F= .780, p= .543). Very less difference was found ($p=<0.05$) only in two variables numbered 9 (F= 3.18, p= .020), 10 (F= 2.83, p= .033). Additionally, post hoc tests (Scheffe test) were performed to make multiple comparisons among all five countries (See Appendix 2).

Online Classes			Online Assessments		
Items	**F ANOVA**	**P**	**Items**	**F ANOVA**	**P**
1.	1.649	.175	9.	3.178	.020
2.	.658	.624	10.	2.830	.033
3.	1.706	.162	11.	2.250	.076
4.	1.497	.267	12.	.651	.629
5.	1.110	.361	13.	1.243	.304
6.	1.229	.309	14.	1.497	.216
7.	.313	.868	15.	1.777	.147
8.	1.081	.375	16.	1.384	.252
			17.	.780	.543

Table 6 - One-way ANOVA for teachers' experiences and opinions about online classes and assessments with respect to country.

Again, Indian teachers did not see online exams as valid as face-to-face assessments because their universities were lagging behind in the use of technology in classrooms. Till the coronavirus period, Indian teachers were generally using the only traditional way of teaching without any blended or facilitated practice of e-learning with some exceptions. If e-learning pedagogies were growing at a very slow pace (Nehal & Khan, 2020). Therefore, Indian teachers had to make a sudden shift to full online teaching. Variable 9 presented this difference among five groups through these mean scores and standard deviations in parenthesis such as Saudi Arabia, 3.27 (1.71), India, 1.73 (1.03), Turkey, 2.00 (1.15), Britain, 2.30 (.949) and Canada, 2.80 (1.32). Furthermore, Indian teachers for item number 10 (M= 1.80, S. D= .422) revealed their negative response towards technical problems while conducting online exams more bluntly than teachers of other countries Saudi Arabia (M=2.80, S. D= 1.37), Turkey (M= 2.40, S. D= 1.17), Britain (M= 3.60, S. D= 1.43) and Canada (M= 2.53, S. D= 1.36). It might be predicted that in Kashmir, teachers did not have high speed and stable internet connection. However, teachers from other countries faced this problem less than Indian teachers.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

In general, the results depicted that students and teachers were not inclined towards the use of online learning and especially online assessment. They considered that online teaching can never be a substitute to face-to-face learning. Face-to-face on campus classrooms are highly interactive and students come to the classes for the learning purpose only. They do not get distracted by other things unlike online classes where they can remain busy in other things if the online class is not engaging the students. Despite their opinion, they had to take online classes just to cope up with the unprecedented present situation of the pandemic. Classes were taken the same way as in the institutions. The only difference was that of home and the institution. The timetable was followed both by students and the teachers, but more or less they were both overburdened throughout the semester. Sometimes, their digital gadgets/tools were congested and got hanged. In spite of all these obstacles, they had to continue out of necessity. The present study found that both the teachers and students were not satisfied with their experience of online pedagogy. There was no significant difference between their experiences and opinions towards online learning. There might be several factors behind it. The researchers tried to focus on these factors or issues with implications.

Both the teachers and the students across the five countries were enthusiastic at the beginning of the online classes but towards the end of semester, this enthusiasm started decreasing and both teachers and the students began feeling tired, bored because there was no time for social proximity and recreation. They remained all-time busy with eLearning, home-work, assignments, exams, and so on. In fact, teachers were found overburdened more than students as they had to put extra efforts to create e-content for online teaching and additionally, they had to look for a suitable online platform (Allen, Rowan & Singh, 2020) especially countries like India where teachers did not have instructional eLearning platform. In other countries, like Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Canada, England, teachers had already established eLearning platforms that assisted them a lot, but still, they had to prepare teaching materials and contents because previously, they were teaching through either full, blended or facilitative mode of online teaching. These modes helped them teach and they had also social interaction and face-to-face classes on campus. Therefore, it is recommended that the countries can learn from one another in redeveloping their own learning management systems (LMS) and restructuring e-contents and e-curricula to meet any unprecedented situation (Crawford *et al.*, 2020) or even in a normal situation, it would facilitate learning. Teachers who were using online content from different websites had difficulty covering the course plan accurately so, sometimes there was a mismatch between course plan and student learning (Bao, 2020). The study material was made by teachers and sent to students every day and they had to deliver lectures and finish courses on time. This procedure is very hard to follow for teachers. Hence, there is a need to redevelop curricula. To make online learning successful, institutions, teachers and students should work collectively. Without adequate institutional support, online pedagogy becomes quite difficult for both the students and teachers.

Effective and flexible online classes are the keys to overcome the challenges of online teaching posed by COVID-19 (Huang *et al.*, 2020). It is possible when online classes are highly interactive and interesting. Teachers keep their students engaged in discussions and interactions through various teaching strategies and at the same time, they convey information successfully and cover their course objectives to meet the outcomes (Bao, 2020). Furthermore, teachers should not apply their traditional teaching style in online pedagogy. Teachers cannot know whether their classes were taken seriously without interactive teaching sessions (Jan, 2020, Ertmer *et al.*, 2011; Devitt *et al.*, 2020). To improve the virtual teaching, reflective teaching strategies also must be added to online sessions, it would help both the students and teachers to understand the barriers of successful conveyance of online learning (Kolb, 1984; Hasper, 2020) and to evolve for the new setting of pedagogy.

Continuous professional development is another key to face the challenges of online teaching during the coronavirus period. To teach online, teachers and students must be very good at using various online platforms and tools for successful conveyance of information (Devitt *et al.*, 2020). It is the responsibility of institutions, teachers and students to update them according to the new trends of technology and effective pedagogical approaches. If any of them would not be efficient and skilled enough especially teachers, online learning may be a complete failure (Frazer *et al.*, 2017). Though in this research, teachers and students exhibited that they were aware enough to use different online learning platforms.

Another factor that affects online teaching is the unstable Internet connection, its speed and the use of outdated devices and software. Governments and Institutions must provide quick IT infrastructure to its colleges, teachers and students because it was found in some places like Kashmir teachers and students suffered from 2 GB Internet connection. Therefore, stable Internet connection with high speed and advanced versions of the software are required for online teaching in those places where they lacked it like India (Agarwal & Kaushik, 2020). Though the Indian government also launched Swayam program to assist online teaching. Still, there is more need to develop fast institutional eLearning platforms and contingency plans.

This study also implies there must be some kind of financial help for the needy students by distributing them laptops or other gadgets that suit their needs because it was seen by the researchers in India. Sometimes, their students were not able to connect because of low connectivity. There were also students who could not afford digital devices or Internet facilities, so they also had to suffer.

The second focus of this study is the online assessment. For this section, university teachers and students across the countries have not experienced online exams as fair as on-campus exams because it is very easy for students to cheat no matter whatever precautions teachers take. According to them, remote online assessment can never be a replacement to pen-paper or online assessment on the campus. The study found that both the students and teachers favored synchronous (at one time) online exams. Teachers opined online assessment can never be fair without proctored or invigilated exams. Synchronous exams, formative and continuous assessments, time-limit with a mixed approach of creating exams: objective, subjective, extempore writing and speaking are some tips to maintain and justify the validity of online testing (Khan & Khan, 2019).

The study found that both the students and teachers favored synchronous (at one time) online exams (Devitt *et al.*, 2020). They did not consider asynchronous (at different times) online exams valid to examine student performance. Though students were seen to favor objective exams because it was the easiest option for them. However, for teachers, multiple-choice online exams were hard to know how much fair students were in their test. Teachers claimed that online assessment must be a mixed way of objective, subjective questions followed by a speaking exam to discuss students' understanding of the subject. There was a highly significant difference between students and teachers' opinion about mixed tools and only multiple-choice questions. Furthermore, regarding students' performance in online assessment, there was again a substantial difference. Students felt highly satisfied with their performance while teachers were not satisfied to that extent. Teachers viewed that online assessment can never be fair without proctored or invigilated exams.

Based on the findings, this research offered some implications to improve the quality and validity indicators of online assessment (Frazer *et al.*, 2017). First and foremost, online exams should be synchronous that includes various types of questions. Second, different sets of exams through random blocks should be prepared to assess the students fairly. Then any type of exam can be assessed further by a speaking exam or a discussion about the exam. Next, teachers should observe their students' active participation in online sessions for the justification of online assessment. Synchronous virtual pedagogy is required to observe the students' progress throughout the online sessions. Asynchronous teaching and assessment should be avoided. It can be used in case of an emergency, technical problems or giving additional assignments and activities.

The next implication of the research is that teachers must maintain the time limit of online exams. For example, synchronous exams should be completed within the same timing as on-campus exams and asynchronous online exams should have also a time limit of attempting and a deadline for the closure of tests. Students should not be provided many attempts of one test.

This study further implies that continuous assessment through various tools is recommended. Through continuous assessment, teachers might be able to justify the quality of their students' performance in online exams. This work also suggests alternative assessment can be employed to assess the students continuously such as peer assessment (Amendola & Miceli, 2018) project writing, poster making and peer discussion over given topics related to the course. Universal design should be followed (Dickinson & Gronseth, 2020). These topics can be extempore or assigned earlier.

Institutional support is again very necessary for both teachers and students. CPD (Continuous Professional Development) programs about online assessment tools and software are required for both teachers and students. Institutes should organize CPD programs about fair online assessments and give free access to important software of fair assessments like Turnitin, Grammarly, etc. Though the countries which have their own LMS such as blackboard, provide safe-assign option to avoid plagiarism. Blended learning/digital technology should be implied in the post coronavirus period for a better future prospect (Li & Lalani, 2020; Minerva, 2020).

The study focused on teachers' and students' experiences and opinions about online teaching and assessment. It was found that both of them did not agree that online teaching or assessment can meet the quality of face-to-face teaching and on-campus assessment. Still, online teaching is the undeniable need of the hour to deal with unprecedented situations like the COVID-19 pandemic. It can be deployed as an effective tool to enhance and facilitate face-to-face teaching during normal situations. Online teaching in the form of full or blended is an integral and inseparable part of higher education pedagogy in the present and future. It has many benefits to improve the monotonous teaching approaches by making them exciting and interactive. To achieve the targeted outcomes of online sessions, efficient teachers and effective interactive and reflective teaching approaches are required to engage students and reflect upon the information conveyance with institutional support financially, socially and professionally.

This research is limited to university students and teachers in general from five countries. Further studies may explore more about other specific elements or areas of online learning and assessments through LMS. Additionally, the research has limited instruments like questionnaires, so in the future, other instruments, i.e., a combination of questionnaires and interviews, may be used to collect more data to contribute specific conclusions related to online classes and assessments.

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