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Experiences of Students Regarding Online Education during COVID-19 Pandemic in Baluchistan

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Abstract: *The study explored the experiences of the students regarding the online education programs during COVID-19. The aim of the study was to explore the experience of online education among university students in the pandemic of COVID-19. This study was qualitative in nature. The Population was Quetta, Baluchistan Universities; sampling was purposive in nature with 20 samples of male university students. Data was collected through an interview guide and was analyzed through thematic analysis. The main findings were that students experienced difficulties in learning, use of modern technology, internet issues, interaction with teachers and uploading assignments. The recommendations were put forward to the policymakers that the higher education commission should make a proper strategy for the students during online class regarding technological tools, online database, and proper outlay of the graphics.*

Key Words: Experience of Students, Online Education, COVID-19

Introduction

Education is a process that's specifically related to the improvement of a nation, particularly for the third world developing nations; it appears to be a nostrum in case not for each issue; however, at slightest most of the issues are handled with proper instruction. It has been watched that education is a backbone of a nation like our own, for educational advance leads to financial development as well (Berchin et al., 2018). Especially higher education plays a critical part in Pakistan's socio-economic and political progress (Haider, 2008). Recounted rates paint a disheartening image of both universities and students. According to the American Board on Education Enrolment, in the fall of 2020, it is likely to drop 15 percent, while at the same time, many institutions may have faced demands for immense reductions in educational costs on the off chance that classes will remain virtual. In a comparative vein, students experienced an increasingly dubious atmosphere (Plass, 2020), where financial and health shocks (for example, lack of digital

skills, lack of resources to complete their thoughts about or fear of getting really wiped out may have affected their academic results, instructive plans, current labor advertising help, and desire for a move to online learning besides the move to online learning. The focus of my paper is on the experience of students regarding online education during Covid-19 in Baluchistan.

Similarly, the pandemic of Covid-19 has wreaked havoc throughout the world. COVID-19 is a new virus that has spread rapidly to numerous nations around the world. COVID-19 is the official title for the coronavirus disease 2019 (Vellingiri et al., 2020). It is caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, which had not already been distinguished in people. Over 65 million cases have been affirmed, and the disease has presently claimed more than 1.5 million lives around the world (Dhama et al., 2020). Nations have loose lockdown limitations but are being prompted to proceed with extensive testing. The pandemic has

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put health systems beneath extreme strain, and there have been shortages of basic supplies (Balachandar et al., 2020). Pharmaceutical companies and research groups around the world are competing to create a secure and compelling immunization. It has affected all fields of life, be it Media, entertainment industry, the world economy and lastly and most imperatively, education (Waqas, Farooq, Ahmad, & Ahmad, 2020).

The pandemic of Covid-19 has impacted education systems around the world, contributing to the near-complete closing of schools, colleges and universities. In an effort to minimize the spread of COVID-19, most governments around the world have decided to briefly close educational institutions (Chen, Yang, Yang, Wang, & Barnighausen, 2020). As of 30 September 2020, Khan, Mamun, Griffiths, and Ullah (2020) have affected around 1,077 billion students due to school closures in response to the pandemic. As of now, 53 nations are introducing nationwide closures, according to UNICEF monitoring, and 27 are implementing community closures affecting about 61.6 % of the world's student population, and 72 countries are now open schools.

The government of Pakistan also decided to shut down the school at the beginning of this year, and since then, numerous meetings have been conducted to come to a decision to reopen schools and other educational institutes. School closure impacted or experienced not only students but teachers, parents and school administration. It also has many economic and societal consequences. But our focus today will be the different experiences that it had on the education of students of Baluchistan (Aziz et al., 2014).

As it's a known fact, Baluchistan already lacks in many basic necessities of life, including quality Education. Students of Baluchistan already faced many problems on the path to education. No schools or teaching staff are present in remote areas; the few areas which had these facilities now faced a year ahead with little or prospect of education with the news of the closure of schools. Most of the world, including Pakistan, moved towards the option of Digital Education, and it was also a successful initiative to an extent. But for the students of Baluchistan, it also proved to be a tough experience.

As Digital education and classes depended on an Internet connection for their success, most of the students were faced with the problem of arranging a fast and stable internet connection for themselves. Many students coming from lower to middle-class families were unable to afford this, and Internet Prices are skyrocketing. So, most of the students who were unable to afford the internet were not able to attend their classes (Oberlin, 2020).

Secondly, many areas in Baluchistan do not have the facility of Mobile internet services (Waris, Atta, Asmat, & Baset, 2020), which is what most students depend on for their internet use. With limited Ptcl connections and no Mobile internet, these students also missed the chance to attend their online classes.

Due to these issues, the students of Baluchistan faced many difficulties & experiences (WHO, 2020a). So, we can say that the Covid-19 Pandemic had a very negative effect on the Education system of Baluchistan. With the closure of schools for almost a year, the students missed out on one year of their education and learning experience, for which they will have to compensate with hard work in the coming years. We can only hope that this nightmare will end soon and our lives would back to normal. And the education and learning experience of the students will continue again.

Background of the Study

COVID-19 appeared like a nightmare for the year 2020. It disturbed the entire world to a depressing extent. It confounds the world economy, social and cultural life, education and all others. The entire world is focused on restoring and consolidating the world as prior. COVID-19 also brought devastation to education. To cope with the current disturbing situation of education, many strategies are being implemented extensively all around the world, including Pakistan. However, these policies carry certain negative aspects for the students belong to less advantaged areas such as Baluchistan, taking particularly into consideration where students do face a lot of reasonable hardships in online learning programs and thus face educational inequalities based on their socio-economic conditions.

Significance of the Study

The current study has focused on the problem and experiences of students during online classes, which give an idea to the private institutes about the problems of students. On the basis of this explorative study, there could be reformed in the structure of learning and online studying. It will also inform the government about the lack of availability of technology and gadgets of the students, thus helping them.

Conceptualization

The outburst of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 underlined the entire world non-compensating impact. It trolled the world economy, social life and educational system. In an attempt to undermine the speared of a pandemic, is engaged in practising every possible measure to protect people from further loss to the extent it is possible.

Specifically considering the educational domain, UNESCO decided that by the end of April 2020, educational institutions would be closed in 186 countries, including Pakistan. However, the prolonged closure of educational institutions up till the month of October 2020 has had devastating impacts on learners and education, affecting approximately 74% of enrolled students around the world. In order to lower down the adversities of educational loss, policymakers, education sectors, and institutions have decided to temporarily suspend the walk-in interaction and to induce a remote learning system with the aim not to completely deprive students of learning and education.

Students Experiences in Covid-19 Regarding Education

Observing the current situation, not only for the rest of the world but for Pakistan also it became obligatory to practice the carry out all the concerned precautionary measures in every public sector including education for the safety of its citizens. Therefore, the educational policymakers in Pakistan, showing keen concern, formulated and implemented the strategies of distant learning to learn from home to assist both parents and teachers in how to best support students to lower down their educational loss during and after this emergency period. However, distant learning also carries some cons in itself. Many students from different socio-economic backgrounds face different experiences in remote learning programs. In an attempt to talk about the issues related to the students' remote education, especially from less developed and less privileged areas of Pakistan such as Baluchistan are more affected by the problem and different experiences concerned with distant education out of many unavoidable reasons. Some major experiences include parental financial resources and learning inequalities, unavailability of digital resources at home, home learning environment and lack of digital skills.

Financial Parental Resources and Learning Inequalities in Pandemic

Digital Resources at Home

In distant learning programs, most of the students in different settings of Baluchistan face considerable socio-economic inequalities in access to different digital resources such as internet facilities, laptops, computers, electricity. The deprivation from the basic technologies necessary for the successful commencement of online lectures, make student anxious, depressed and low esteemed with respect to the students from high socio-economic classes having all the facilities for online study programs.

Lack of Digital Skills

Family background and competency of digital skills have a strong correlation. Most of the students of Baluchistan being residing in rural areas belong to families of zero literacy rate, and they don't have literate parents, deprived of any kind of digital skills, which also holds true for their children and the disadvantage of not possessing the digital skills leads students of facing hardships in online learning to run the system, different applications and carrying out different online tasks. On the other hand, those with high socio-economic backgrounds are more likely skilled in different kinds of advanced digital skills, which leads to educational inequalities in terms of scores and grades in exams and tests.
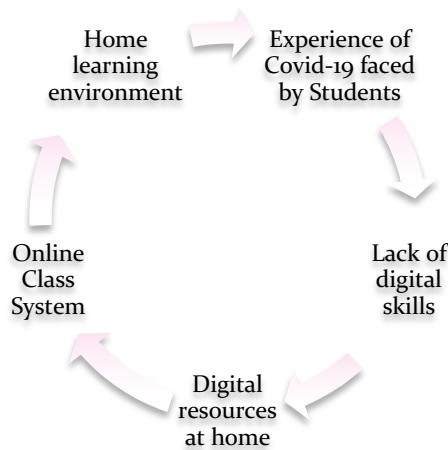
Home Learning Environment

In addition to the availability of digital resources and digital skills, students also need to have an environment at home which is feasible and conducive for learning. However, this might not be the case for students of Baluchistan from less

advantaged families. Some students might belong to a large family or having the join family systems, where they need to work in a small shared space with other family members. Thus it becomes very difficult to be properly focused on studies and to attend lectures in a peaceful environment with complete devotions and without distraction.

Objectives

1. To explore the experience of online education among university students in the pandemic of Covid-19.
2. To investigate the influence of covid-19 on the learning process of the university in lockdown.

3. To examine the financial problems faced by university students.

Questions

1. Which type of difficulties are faced by university students during online classes in Covid-19?
2. What are the experiences of university students during online classes in Covid-19?
3. Does lack of gadgets such as laptops, smartphones influence university student's academic achievements during online classes in Covid-19?

Operational Framework

Home learning environment → Experience of Covid-19 faced by Students → Lack of digital skills → Digital resources at home → Online Class System → Home learning environment

Literature Review

Adnan and Anwar (2020) expressed that the states of mind of Pakistani higher instruction understudies towards advanced and remove (online) learning college courses in the midst of Coronavirus (COVID-19). The reason for this considers was to explore the encounters of understudies in online classes during Coronavirus (Covid-19).

Undergraduate and postgraduate were overviewed from diverse educational and from diverse ranges to discover their viewpoints around online education in Pakistan. Information was collected from 126 understudies (84 female and 42 male), 64 undergrad as well as 62 postgraduate understudies. The study findings highlighted that online learning in immature countries such as Pakistan, where prerequisites for online education

are not available, cannot yield desired results because a vast majority of understudies are unable to access the internet due to technological as well monetary issues. Among a few other problems raised by higher education understudies was the lack of face-to-face contact with the teachers, reaction time and non-appearance of traditional classroom socialization.

Nambiar (2020) Conducted an online overview to find out the perception and involvement of student's and teacher's regarding online classes. Conveyance of classes through online mediums has been a later adjustment brought out by the education system in India within the wake of the current pandemic circumstance.

Hence, this study portrays college and university instructors and students' recognitions

and concerns with regard to taking online classes that have been made obligatory within the wake of COVID-19. The sample estimate of the study was 477, in which 70 instructors and 407 understudies were taken an interest from colleges and universities in Bangalore city. An online study strategy was utilized for the purpose of data collection. The result of this study appears that the following regions are imperative for educator and understudy fulfilment with online classes; these zones are quality and convenient interaction between understudy and instructors, specialized bolster accessibility, and alterations to suit conduction of commonsense classes.

Deli (2020) In this research, the perspective of understudies on online learning in the midst of a Covid-19 pandemic was discussed. The author utilized a connected subjective strategy for this think about. The theme of this study is the learners of English ponder program of UKI Toraja. The instrument utilized for data collection is the semi-structured interview. Due to the pandemic situation of covid-19, the analyst interviewed the learners by calling utilizing the WhatsApp application. The study showed that the learners' perception of online learning shows that it is good within the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic. They realized that online learning is helpful within the middle of a pandemic instead of doing nothing. This study also takes note of the accessibility of the web gets to, financial issues, and distance studies implementation. The result of this study suggested that Voice Note will be viably utilized when giving information. The experiences appear that the material and instruction actualized by the teacher within the online classes were not simple to utilize.

Babatunde and Soykan (2020) stated that Covid-19 had been declared by the World Health Organization as a pandemic that has created a new threat to humanity. This pandemic has effectively imposed a worldwide shutdown of several exercises, including educational activities, and resulted in tremendous crisis response movement of colleges, with online learning serving as an elective within the stage of education. The reason for this was to highlight the need for distance classes during the pandemic of Covid-19. The result appears that the crisis responds to migration strategies of colleges, staff and understudies, challenges and opportunities were talked about, and it is obvious that online

learning is different from emergency remote teaching.

Elzainy et al., (2020) examined that during the COVID-19 pandemic, academic institutions are rapidly replacing all educational exercises with the e-learning setup. The present study investigated the effect of e-learning and evaluation on the performance of understudies and staff and the challenges to their sustainability. A descriptive cross-sectional strategy was utilized in this study, too recorded the number and duration of diverse online educational exercises during the COVID-19 pandemic. A student fulfilment overview and online staff center gather around the online learning experiences were moreover conducted in this study.

Methods

The interpretative perspective was used in the study. The base of interpretative perspective is a subjectivist supposition which creates reality within a social context (Bell & Bryman, 2005). The constructivist approach was used in the study. This approach leads epistemological foundation (Davis & Sumara,2002). Similarly, E. Guba (1989) the conventional and constructivist belief systems, where socially constructed realities are based on the prevailing belief system in the society and perceived and interpreted variously by the multitudes. This is a fact that socially constructed reality is not governed by any natural laws. An individual's opinion is not acceptable when it is based on a single fact; rather, a consensus of individuals is acceptable in a constructivist approach that accentuates truth. Constructivist beliefs use monistic subjectivist epistemology that postulates queries, while human beings make these queries about the social world and then find an ultimate solution in their own way (E. G. Guba & Lincoln, 1989). So, it is proved that dialectical iteration involves a hermeneutic methodology which is regarded as a constructivist approach. Similarly, the analysis and critique, re-iteration, re-analysis and re-critique are ultimately a form of the pragmatic criterion of touching rational understanding and developing a good sense of thinking.

The study was based on the author's subjective interpretation of the previous theories about the experience of students regarding online education during Covid-19 in Quetta, Baluchistan. Biasness was removed from the data through the

laddering approach, which was further elaborated in the data collection methods. Bell and Bryman (2005) suggested that the interpretive perspective is widely used in qualitative research. Eriksson and Kovalainen (2015) discussed that it is philosophically dependent upon explanation. It is the quality of interpretive research that does not believe in predefined concepts and variables but focuses on human sense and its complexity (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2015). The population was Quetta university students who were enrolled in the present situation. Purposive sampling methods were used, and online interviews were taken through ZOOM Meeting App. There were a total of 7 respondents, and data were analyzed through thematic analysis. After seven respondents, my interviews were become reached saturation point. Pseudonyms were used for the respondents and ethical consideration were followed by the researcher in the study. Data was collected through interview guide and 30 minutes were the duration of the study.

Data Analysis

Themes Wise Results of Interviews

Table 1. List of Themes, Sub-Themes and Codes of the Interviews(N=07)

Themes	Sub-themes	Major codes
Online Educational Programs	• No proper educational atmosphere • Serve Educational Needs.	▪ Education, Online, Programs. ▪ Traditional Class Instruction. ▪ Dislikes online education ▪ Teachers behavior with students is not good during online class. ▪ Our grids and learning are not effective. ▪ Our academic achievements are low due to online classes.
Students Experiences regarding online Classes	• No need of Online Classes. ▪ Learning Outcomes. ▪ Online Educational Environment. ▪ Improve the Quality of Online Education.	▪ We are not learning from online classes. ▪ Zero learning outcomes ▪ Bad Educational Environment.
Quality of the Online Instruction	• Lecture Delivering Style. ▪ Understanding of Psychological Capabilities of Students.	▪ Online Lecture is Difficult to Understand. ▪ Not Creative Lecture. ▪ Students are not Capable to Understand course of semester.
Technological Gadgets	▪ Laptops, Smartphones	▪ Enrolling in Online Class. ▪ Electronic Database. ▪ Written Information.

Table 2. List of Deductive and Inductive Themes of the Study (N=07)

Deductive Themes	Inductive Themes
▪ Online Educational Programs ▪	▪ Traditional Class Instruction. ▪ Dislikes online education. ▪ Teachers behavior with students is not good during online class.
▪ Students Experiences regarding online Classes ▪	▪ We are not learning from online classes. ▪ Zero learning outcomes. ▪ Bad Educational Environment.
▪ Quality of the Online Instruction	▪ Online Lecture is Difficult to Understand.

- Technological Gadgets
- Written Information.
- Electronic Database.

Discussion and Findings
Themes Wise Results

Section (A) Online Educational Programs

The respondent replied that we do not like online educational programs because our learning potential is going to decrease. Respondents replied that traditional class instruction is better than online classes. The real verbatim of the respondents is the following...

"My experience regarding the online educational programs is bad because teachers are not teaching very well, and we are not habitual with online classes. There are many reasons for my disliking of online educational programs. Firstly, there is no proper educational atmosphere in this online educational system. Secondly, online education is not effective in these stages because no proper pedagogy is used during an online class." (Saba Gul)

Real verbatim of the respondents...

"My experience regarding online classes was not good; it was very hard to study because due to our first time of online classes. As a student, I am facing difficulties, and my teachers also face difficulties regarding online lectures. I do not like online classes at all." (Maryam Hussain)

Respondents have both good and bad experiences regarding the online education system. Such as, he likes good in a sense I could listen to the lecture again and again if it is recorded on my laptop. Another side, the lecture is in soft copy and can ask by the instructor so many times to repeat. However, respondents have a bad experience that when teachers ask questions during online class and internet connection start buffering and missed the important question, which created a disturbance and quite frustrating situation for me.

The role of traditional classes is very good for learning specifically. At least there is no buffering; we can communicate our questions, and teachers can answer very well. The teacher or instructor can share the real picture of the concept during face to face delivering lectures.

"The real verbatim respondent is that I prefer the traditional classed system as compare to online classes because the online educational program is very difficult and learning potential is low." (Bisma Shah)

The last study of Elzainy et al. (2020) examined that during the COVID-19 pandemic, academic institutions are rapidly replacing all educational exercises with the e-learning setup. The present study investigated the effect of e-learning and evaluation on the performance of understudies and staff and the challenges to their sustainability. Such as, respondents seemed that attending face to face classes (traditional classes) is good than online classes. Those lectures which we attended in the face to face classes were still memorized. In the face to face classes, we have discussions with teachers and online classes are finished within 30 minutes. So, it is obvious that online classes bourdon is put on the students and course work materials are a lot which is not covered for exams. (Kiran)

Serve Educational Needs

The respondents responded that online educational programs are not serving my educational needs and experience related to online education is very bad. Some students are waiting for an online class, and teachers are not attending class in a proper way. Education is our needs, and this online educational program is not serving my educational needs. (Tahira)

The respondent suggested that the online education program is not good and it is not serving educational needs. The online lecture should be posted through YouTube than our educational needs could be served. (Maryam Hussain)

Communication becomes complicated online, especially between instructor and student, while with friends, it had no problem at all. Due to poor connections, I never heard them all, so they were not useful. (Aqsa)

A respondent felt a massive gap between Quetta and Islamabad Universities teachers lecture delivery. As a student, I felt that our university should improve our classes for learning needs. There is no proper discussion, no study environment. Likewise, they could not communicate the desired problems and their solutions with teachers. (Sajida)

Communication goes so well if no one interrupts but class fellows are disturbing during class. The connection is a failure, and these connection barriers make the communication failed between the student and instructor.

No, I never had gotten feedback from the instructor. Such as if the internet fails to access and student is unable to respond, then how can be feedback could be making from the instructor. (Kiran)

It is in a timely manner, no doubt, but it is not constrictive. As an example, if we ask the teacher a question, they'll, in turn, send the whole lecture slides, which clearly indicates that they are unable to understand our question. This is again due to weak communication.

Section (B) Students Experiences Regarding Online Classes

Respondent denied Online education system does not provide a proper educational environment for learning. While the teacher is giving a lecture and we get disturbed by class fellow noises. The learning outcomes are very low through the online education system. Now how can we go through a lecture when we do not have any understanding of it. The learning outcomes of the students are disturbed due to Covid-19 as compare to without the pandemic situation. The study revealed by Babatunde and Soykan (2020) stated that Covid-19 had been declared by the World Health Organization as a pandemic that has created a new threat to humanity. This pandemic has effectively imposed a worldwide shutdown of several exercises, including educational activities, and resulted in tremendous crisis response movement of colleges, with online learning serving as an elective within the stage of education.

Respondents critical discussed that the quality of graphics, layout and navigation was not user friendly. The situation of layout is quite difficult for us. Other than a pandemic, there's nothing in this world that can lead me to online educational programs.

"The real verbatim of the respondent was that online classes could improve through proper navigation, graphics etc." (Sajida)

Respondents portrayed that the online education system is not improved, and Covid-19 put disturbed the overall class system, quality of education and put negatively. There is no way to improve the online education system in this Covid-19. The educational environment is very weak due to online educational programs. The layout of graphics during class and lecture delivering a style of the teachers are not supportive for the students, which have put students in psychological problems. Students are now psychological patients, and understanding of the psychological capabilities of students are weak due to Covid-19.

Quality of the Online Instruction

The overall respondents of the study rated that we are not agreed with this online education system. It is not serving our educational needs, and we are not capable of learning more. The Covid-19 had made difficult every subject in the semester, and we are not able to attempt any competitional exam for our future job. There is created mistrust between teachers and students regarding the learning of the students.

Section (C) Technological Gadgets for Online Classes during Covid-19

The complaint of the student is put forward to the management, and students are facing problems again and again. Teachers are relying on the class representative, and he/she does not complain to management. Class representatives do not communicate with teachers and management of the university due to his or her limitation. So, that is why the complaint is not delivered to the concerned or relevant department in the university regarding lecture quality, supportive documents, online class issues and electronic databases.

Somehow online system education is suitable for those students who have a hundred percent of accessibility to modern technological tools or gadgets and fast internet connections. But due to Covid-19, the business is a decline in the whole world, especially in Pakistan. Poor students are able to buy weekly internet packages, and mostly, students live in the rural and tribal areas of Pakistan. These students have no access to technological accessories such as laptops, mobile and other technological gadgets. There is a mobile phone for every student, but the availability of smartphones and laptops is very rare. The load

shading is one of the most problematic issues in the rural and tribal areas of Pakistan, especially Quetta Baluchistan. These worse experiences are happened due to pandemic Covid-19. Most students are unaffordable with online educational programs on higher educational levels. In the previous study, Adnan and Anwar (2020) expressed that the states of mind of Pakistani higher instruction understudies towards advanced and remove (online) learning college courses in the midst of Coronavirus (COVID-19). The reason for this considering it was to explore the encounters of understudies in online classes during Coronavirus (Covid-19).

The real verbatim of the Bisma is counted….

"I am a poor student and father is working at daily wages. I am not afforded laptop or smart mobile phone for online classes. I am not satisfied from the online educational program." (Bisma)

As far as my opinion is concerned that our online university portal is not working properly. Online university portals must develop properly and bring new improvements in the online database for university students. Online classes are not improving our quality of learning.

Even though still two lectures are uploaded on the online university student's portal. There is a lack of awareness among class fellows, and even courses tiles, syllabus, daily base tasks, quizzes, presentations and assignments are known by us.

Respondents replied that we were enrolled, but we were not trained to use new software for the taking of online classes. Our teachers have taught us the whole semester regarding online classes, and we did not cover our semester syllabus.

"The real verbatims of the respondents were quoted that due to this reason I did not attempt my previous exams because I did not know about course." (Maryam Hussain)

Conclusions

Covid-19 is one of the pandemic issues in the whole world, which have now death occurred 1.7 million. Due to this pandemic viral disease, our education system is disturbed on higher and lower levels worldwide. There are bad experiences are faced by students worldwide. This particular study had explored the experiences of students regarding online education during Covid-19. The results of the study highlighted that students have very bad experiences regarding the online educational programs, and there is very low learning outcome among the students in the previous and present semester. There is a lack of technological tools for the students in their homes for online classes.

Recommendations

- The recommendations were put forward to the policymakers that the higher education commission should make a proper strategy for the students during online class regarding technological tools, online database, and proper outlay of the graphics.
- It is recommended that instructional resources could be delivered on the fast internet system.
- The management system of the university should convey the message to the instructor or teacher that proper feedback should give to the students regarding assignments or term papers.
  The result of this study has clarified the drawback and benefits of e-learning and the evaluation of higher education institutions.

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