
MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES BY SCHOOLS FOR STUDENTS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT DURING COVID-19 LOCKDOWN

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to examine the perceptions of teachers of students with hearing impairment on the perspective of educational activities during lockdown due to COVID-19. The nature of the study was descriptive under quantitative paradigm. Population of the study was teachers of students with hearing impairment in Lahore, city of Pakistan. Sample of the study was teachers 101 (M=26, F=75) of student with hearing impairment selected through purposive sampling techniques from different special education institutions. Survey method was used to collect data through self-developed questionnaire with reliability coefficient ($\alpha=0.72$). Statistical measures were used to analyze the data. The results of the study highlighted the educational activities by schools for students with hearing impairment during COVID-19. Special education schools designed syllabus in print form without providing video tutorials, poor communication networks between teachers and students during lockdown. Findings showed that both sectors were lacking to provide professional trainings to teachers, parents and students to avoid pandemic effects on education of students with hearing impairment. Government should be ready to deal this type of situations by providing resources, professional developments, and technological trainings to all the

*educational stakeholders.***KEYWORDS***Educational Activities, Special Education Schools, Students with Hearing Impairment, Teachers of Student with Hearing Impairment, Lockdown, COVID-19***INTRODUCTION**

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted education like never before, affecting 1.6 billion pupils in over 200 countries. Closures have affected 94% of pupils worldwide. This has changed our whole existence. Social marginalization and movement restrictions have disturbed traditional schooling. The different new SOPs complicated the reopening of schools after a lockdown. The year, 2020 may lose academic ground, and more may follow. Innovative educational systems and assessment methods are essential. We can prepare ourselves for digital learning owing to COVID-19 (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021; Viner et al., 2020). The Pakistani government initially shut down all educational institutions out of concern for the safety of the students and in accordance with the actions taken by many infected nations with COVID-19. Later, however, partial school openings were permitted, allowing 30–50% of students to attend classes on a cyclical basis. This choice had a premature break and lost learning chances for all pupils as its primary and most immediate effects (Chaudhary, 2021).

For all tiers of the global social, economic, and political systems, COVID-19 has been a nightmare. The present system's status quo has come under intense scrutiny. One of the most impacted sectors is education. It caused the global education system to shut down for roughly a year. Despite the fact that sophisticated nations have switched from traditional to online education system (Lepp et al., 2021; UNESCO, 2020). Pakistan and other developing nations suffered the most because they lacked the technology necessary for online learning during COVID-19 outbreak. There have been a number of difficulties in getting instructors to get to know and use this new technology. Whether teachers are fully equipped to teach online effectively is still a matter of debate. Like most parents, most teachers are unfamiliar with alternatives to textbook education and are working to provide multimedia content that will keep students' interest in interactive classroom that they do not see (Rehman et al., 2021).

Parents' participation in the online learning process accompanies children with special needs, teachers and parents work as a unit to support, guide, motivate, and design lessons for children with special needs, according to 67.5% of teachers who strongly agree to use online-based learning when teaching children with special needs during COVID-19 pandemic (Jariono et al., 2021; Clase et al., 2020; Tetro, 2020). In Pakistan, the education system as a whole has suffered greatly, but pupils with special needs, particularly those with hearing impairment, are the most neglected group in this

respect, being ignored by school administration, instructors, and parents. There was no voice for the educational rights of deaf kids during the COVID-19 lockdown.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An estimated figure of 930,000 pupils is anticipated to drop out of both primary and secondary schools. Given that 22 million individuals are already out of school; this indicates an increase of about 4.2%. Pakistan is the nation where we anticipate the greatest dropout rate owing to the COVID pandemic. The average student will lose between 0.3 to 0.8 years of learning-adjusted education due to school closures during the epidemic. Only 30% of families are aware of the availability of remote learning alternatives. Only 10 percent of all parents have children who utilize distance education (Geven & Hasan, 2020).

Distance education and face-to-face education were not offered, and the value of family education was not emphasized during COVID-19. Special education teachers have both favorable and negative thoughts on distant education in primary education. There are insufficient distance education apps for students with special needs and no IEP (Individualized Education Program) applications for kids with diverse developmental features; the utilization of resources that meet students' needs are inadequate (Ayda et al., 2020).

At all levels, the discussion centered on the need of incorporating the most vulnerable students, i.e., those who come from households without appropriate technology gadgets (digital gap) or digital abilities (cultural gap), as well as those with learning difficulties (owing to impairments or other factors). In addition, as reported in the research, there is a possibility of exclusion of deaf students owing to a lack of user-friendliness to synchronized classes on e-learning platforms (Martins et al., 2015). People who are deaf have been described as "the neglected victims of the epidemic" (Shin, 2020). It has been shown that the cognitive styles of deaf individuals vary depending on the intensity of hearing loss, the language proficiency in the native language, the predominant mode of communication, and several environmental circumstances (Marschark & Hauser, 2008).

Distance education is not new to the majority of global education systems. However, the situation is different for poor nations, which lack specialized infrastructure and qualified personnel (Ferri et al., 2020). The accessibility of educational resources for deaf and hard of hearing pupils has long been a matter of debate (Kritzer & Smith, 2020). Due to their inability to listen well, deaf and hard of hearing students may not necessarily have the same experience with distance education as hearing students. Lessons with closed captioning are insufficient. Many deaf and hard of hearing pupils have really limited reading abilities, and subtitles do not provide them with an

appropriate advantage (Algraini & Paul, 2020; Alshawabkeh et al., 2021).

During online education for students with HI, it is essential that materials be supplemented with graphics that are self-explanatory, cohesive, and free of excessive ornamental features, which are likely to produce in high levels of cognitive load from unneeded information. The digital products that must have enough speech with clear audio and no background music, be subtitled according to the age of the students and the usage of sign language, and have acceptable framing of the face or of the signing area. Given the effort required to engage in a virtual classroom lecture, it was important to provide exercises with limited variables and micro-goals (feel, understand, speak). For a right balance between generic and uniqueness of the educational intervention, it is apparent that instructors and helpers must operate as a team, much more so for remote instruction. Coordination and monitoring are crucial to both conventional face-to-face instruction and remote instruction (Baroni & Lazzari, 2020). During a lockdown, remote teaching necessitated experimenting with alternative methods of conducting education, emphasizing on openness and building innovative competence among instructors and in the habit of technology. It is a common knowledge that technologies by themselves do not increase learning processes: their utility, especially in the education of deaf children, is helped by procedural considerations, such as balancing particular and universality, and needs large expenditures in teacher training (Hattie, 2008; Halverson & Smith, 2009).

During the suspension of schools due to the continuing COVID-19 outbreak, deaf pupils in Saudi Arabia were excluded from all alternate education options. In addition, their instructors did not effectively challenge this exclusion or compensate for the lack of educational resources for these pupils. This absolute exclusion is attributable to a number of factors, including the absence of an inclusive emergency plan, the marginalization of deaf students as second-class citizens, the challenges of online learning, and a dearth of electronic materials that fulfil the learning needs of deaf students (Madhesh, 2021). It is challenging for deaf students to adopt alternate means of education due to a lack of resources and an access to online learning. It was revealed that deaf students do not have easy access to blackboard and course materials; deaf students find studying during epidemic to be exceedingly stressful. Google Meet is the favored e-learning tool; but interaction between deaf learners and educators is ineffective, which negatively affects academic achievement; a lack of support in terms of sourced translators impedes the learning experience; new tech does not constantly improve the learning process; and deaf or hard of hearing students have difficulty managing their time due to a variety of distractions (Aljedaani et al., 2021). Time, technological issues, and a lack of simultaneous translation are among the online learning obstacles that must be addressed in order to meet the educational demands of this population of students with HI (Alsadoon & Turkestani, 2020).

Together, schools and parents must overcome all home and school-related obstacles that these children face. Schools are also obligated to accommodate pupils' needs and maintain constant communication with parents in order to track children' academic development. Finally, during distance education, deaf/hard-of-hearing students need different types of continuing support from their families and schools in order to achieve and gain from this experience (Algraini & Alasim, 2021; Aljedaani et al., 2022).

RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

1. To investigate the perceptions of teachers of students with hearing impairment about the role of special education schools in managing educational activities for students with hearing impairment during COVID-19 lockdown

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Which type of steps were taken by special education schools to manage educational activities of students with hearing impairment during lockdown?
2. How did special education schools address the educational challenges during lockdown faced by students with hearing impairment and their teachers & parents?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive research design inside a quantitative research paradigm. All school-level teachers of children with hearing impairment in the city of Lahore were the focus of this research. A sample of 101 respondents was obtained using the approach of purposive sampling. A self-developed questionnaire was planned to find out the management of educational activities for students with hearing impairment by schools during lockdown. It was pilot tested on a sample of 30 teachers of students with hearing impairment working in special education schools from both private and public sectors. After pilot testing, questionnaire ($\alpha=0.72$) was revised and then its final version was developed in the light of suggestions given by the experts. Instrument was distributed for data collection through google form, via phone calls, WhatsApp, Instagram, emails and other social media sources. About 200 questionnaires were administered, from which 108 were returned. After a thorough assessment, 101 questionnaires were chosen for analysis.

DATA ANALYSIS & DISCUSSION

Table 1: Gender of Respondents

Gender	F	%
Male	75	74.3
Female	26	25.7
Total	101	100

Table 1 demonstrates that majority of the (74.3%) respondents were female and (25.7%) were male.

Table 2: School Sector of Respondents

Sector	F	%
Public	62	61.4
Private	39	38.6
Total	101	100.0

Table 2 demonstrates that majority of the (61.4%) respondents were from public sector and (38.6%) were from private sector.

Table 3: Experience of Respondents

Experience	F	%
0-10 years	75	74.3
11-20 years	17	16.8
21-30 years	4	4.0
Above 30 years	5	5.0
Total	101	100.0

Table 3 demonstrates that majority of the (74.3%) respondents had 0-10 years' job experience, (16.8%) respondents had 11-20 years' job experience, (4.0%) respondents had 21-30 years' job experience and (5.0%) respondents had above 30 years' job experience.

Table 4: School provided the syllabus to students with hearing impairment only in print form during lockdown.

Responses	F	%
SD	2	2.0
D	2	2.0
N	8	7.9
A	38	37.6
SA	51	50.5
Total	101	100.0

Table 4 demonstrates that majority of the (88.1%) respondents agreed whereas (4%) respondents disagreed and (7.9%) respondents were neutral that the teachers designed the syllabus for student with hearing impairment only in print form during lockdown.

Table 5: School organized scheduled parent-teacher meetings on regular basis during lockdown.

Responses	F	%
SD	48	47.5
D	31	30.7
N	0	0
A	14	13.8
SA	7	6.9

Total	101	100.0
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Table 5 demonstrates that majority of the (78.2%) respondents disagreed whereas (20.7%) respondents disagreed and (0%) respondents were neutral that School organized scheduled parent-teacher meetings on regular basis during lockdown.

Table 6: School established a communication networks between teachers, students and their parents during lockdown.

Responses	F	%
SD	34	33.7
D	44	43.6
N	8	7.9
A	9	8.9
SA	6	5.9
Total	101	100.0

Tables 6 demonstrates that majority of the (77.3%) respondents disagreed whereas (14.8%) respondents agreed and (7.9%) respondents were neutral that School organized a communication interaction networks between teachers, students and their parents during lockdown.

Table 7: Teachers made available video tutorial of lessons with sign language for students with hearing impairment during lockdown.

Responses	F	%
SD	25	24.8
D	42	41.5
N	11	10.9
A	11	10.9
SA	12	11.9
Total	101	100.0

Table 7 demonstrates that majority of the (66.3%) respondents disagreed whereas (22.8%) respondents agreed and (10.9%) respondents were neutral that teachers made available video tutorial of lessons with sign language for student with hearing impairment during lockdown.

Table 8: School provided proper trainings to parents to manage educational activities for their children with hearing impairment at home during lockdown.

Responses	F	%
SD	39	38.6
D	24	23.7
N	9	8.9
A	15	14.9
SA	14	13.9

Total	101	100.0
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Table 8 demonstrates that majority of the (62.3%) respondents agreed whereas (28.8%) respondents disagreed and (8.9%) respondents were neutral that School provided proper training to parents at home to manage their child activities for student with hearing impairment during lockdown.

Table 9: Schools arranged online classes to facilitate academic activities for students with hearing impairment during lockdown.

Responses	F	%
SD	32	31.7
D	29	28.7
N	11	10.9
A	17	16.8
SA	12	11.9
Total	101	100.0

Table 9 demonstrates that majority of the (60.4%) respondents disagreed whereas (28.7%) respondents agreed and (10.9%) respondents were neutral that Schools arranged online classes to facilitate educational activities for students with hearing impairment during lockdown.

Table 10: Teachers developed instructional material for digital teaching-learning process for students with hearing impairment during lockdown.

Responses	F	%
SD	34	33.7
D	36	35.6
N	9	8.9
A	14	13.9
SA	8	7.9
Total	101	100.0

Table 10 demonstrates that majority of the (69.3%) respondents disagreed whereas (21.8%) respondents agreed and (8.9%) respondents were neutral that teachers developed instructional material for digital teaching-learning process for students with hearing impairment during lockdown.

Table 11: School organized trainings for teachers to cope with online teaching-learning process during lockdown.

Responses	F	%
SD	28	27.7
D	41	40.6
N	6	5.9
A	17	16.8

SA	9	8.9
Total	101	100.0

Table 11 demonstrates that majority (68.3%) respondents disagreed whereas (25.7%) respondents agreed and (5.9%) respondents were neutral that schools organized trainings for teachers to cope with online teaching-learning process during lockdown.

Table 12: School provided trainings for pre-requisite skills to students to cope with online learning during lockdown.

Responses	F	%
SD	28	27.7
D	33	32.7
N	11	10.9
A	18	17.8
SA	11	10.9
Total	101	100.0

Table 12 demonstrates that majority of the (60.4%) respondents disagreed whereas (28.7%) respondents agreed and (10.9%) respondents were neutral that schools provided trainings for pre-requisite skills to students to cope with online learning during lockdown.

Table 13: School provided pre-requisite skills to parents to cope with online teaching-learning process for their children with hearing impairment during lockdown.

Responses	F	%
SD	28	27.7
D	45	44.6
N	3	2.9
A	17	16.8
SA	8	7.9
Total	101	100.0

Table 13 demonstrates that majority (72.3%) respondents disagreed whereas (24.7%) respondents agreed and (2.9%) respondents were neutral that Schools provided pre-requisites skills to parents to cope with online teaching-learning process for their children with hearing impairment during lockdown.

Table 14: Schools only concentrated on assigning homework to students with hearing impairment during lockdown same as in summer vacations.

Responses	F	%
SD	9	8.9
D	16	15.8
N	8	7.9

A	37	36.6
SA	31	30.7
Total	101	100.0

Table 14 demonstrates that majority of the (57.3%) respondents agreed (24.7%) respondents disagreed and (7.9%) respondents were neutral that schools only concentrated on assigning homework to students with hearing impairment during lockdown same as in summer vacations.

Table 15: Educational activities for students with hearing impairment were appropriately followed up by the schools during lockdown.

Responses	F	%
SD	35	34.7
D	39	38.6
N	3	2.9
A	14	13.9
SA	10	9.9
Total	101	100.0

Table 15 demonstrates that majority of the (73.3%) respondents disagreed whereas (23.8%) respondents agreed and (2.9%) respondents were neutral that educational activities for students with hearing impairment were appropriately followed up by the schools during lockdown.

Table 16: School developed an appropriate mechanism to monitor the learning progress of students with hearing impairment during lockdown.

Responses	F	%
SD	38	37.6
D	30	29.7
N	13	12.9
A	16	15.8
SA	4	3.9
Total	101	100.0

Table 16 demonstrates that majority of the (67.3%) respondents disagreed whereas (19.7%) respondents agreed and (12.9%) respondents were neutral that schools developed an appropriate mechanism to monitor the learning progress of students with hearing impairment during lockdown.

Table 17: Students with hearing impairment and their parents faced difficulty while contacting school regarding educational activities during lockdown.

Responses	F	%
SD	5	4.9
D	11	10.9

N	5	4.9
A	26	25.7
SA	54	53.5
Total	101	100.0

Table 17 demonstrates that majority of the (79.2%) respondents agreed whereas (15.8%) respondents disagreed and (4.9%) respondents were neutral that students with hearing impairment and their parents faced difficulty while contacting school regarding educational activities during lockdown.

Table 18: Students with hearing impairment and their parents were satisfied by schools' efforts for educational activities during lockdown.

Responses	F	%
SD	23	22.8
D	36	35.6
N	15	14.9
A	14	13.9
SA	13	12.9
Total	101	100.0

Table 18 demonstrates that majority of the (58.4%) respondents disagreed whereas (26.8%) respondents agreed and (14.9%) respondents were neutral that students with hearing impairment and their parents were satisfied by schools' efforts for educational activities during lockdown.

Table 19: After lockdown, students with hearing impairment returned to schools having forgotten previously taught content.

Responses	F	%
SD	11	10.9
D	14	13.9
N	8	7.9
A	43	42.5
SA	25	24.8
Total	101	100.0

Table 19 demonstrates that majority of the (67.3%) respondents agreed whereas (24.8%) respondents disagreed and (7.9%) respondents were neutral that after lockdown, students with hearing impairment returned to school having forgotten previously taught content.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

During COVID-19 lockdown, educational pursuits suffered greatly but students with exceptional needs encountered several educational obstacles. Both public and private special education institutions attempted to manage the educational activities of pupils

with hearing impairment in their own ways. Reportedly both sectors followed traditional activities to manage education of students with hearing impairment such as providing syllabi in print form only without video tutorials same as in summer vacations, having a weak communication system between teachers, students, and parents, lack of planned parent-teacher meetings, and no appropriate mechanism of follow up for monitoring the progress of students with HI. Significantly little efforts were made to offer online classes, trainings to teachers, students with HI, and their parents for equipping skills to cope up with educational challenges during lockdown. Teachers, students and parents were found to be disappointed with the efforts made by schools to educate students with HI during lockdown. It was reported that students with HI returned to school having forgotten previously taught content. It is necessary to think outside the box and use creative, proactive, and constructive tactics across the whole system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Government should take practical steps to address educational impediments during the future pandemic-like crises.

Policy makers should plan training programs for different education related stakeholders such as teachers, students and parents to equip them with advanced 21st century skills.

Government must have to ensure the implementation of all planned education related activities on broad level.

The online teaching-learning process is quickly supplanting the conventional ones. All educational stakeholders must concentrate on this global need.

Educational options by schools should be developed and disseminated at technological, methodological and organizational levels.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the necessity for teachers and students/learners to be equipped in the use of a range of online educational materials.

Schooling has a genuine chance to turn a new page and seize the opportunity to shift towards a brighter future as Pakistan moves beyond the worst day of the most recent Corona virus outbreak.

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