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Navigating the Digital Shift: Analyzing Teachers' Perceptions of Transitioning to Online Platforms at Higher Education

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ABSTRACT

The current descriptive study examined the teachers' perceptions of transitioning from traditional classroom instruction to online learning platforms at universities. The research covered total 217 teachers as a target population from three public universities in Multan: The Women University Multan, Bahauddin Zakariya University, and Emerson University Multan. A simple random technique was utilized to select a sample of 160 teachers in the study. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, standard deviation, and frequencies) and inferential statistics (t-test). Findings indicate that prior experience with traditional educational methods significantly predicts teachers' perceptions of online learning, suggesting that familiarity with conventional teaching practices influences adaptability to digital platforms. The study highlights the need for targeted faculty training programs to equip educators with the technological skills and pedagogical strategies essential for effective online instruction. The study recommended that institutions should implement structured professional development initiatives to enhance digital literacy, student engagement, and instructional efficiency in virtual classrooms.

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1. Introduction

The swift transition to online distance education presented educators with a range of cognitive, social, pedagogical, and technological challenges (Alenezi et al., 2022). These difficulties primarily involved mastering emerging digital tools, navigating social interactions in digital environments with limited direct connection in real class room situation (Wut & Xu, 2021), and managing parental scrutiny as families gained direct exposure to instructional content (Picciano, 2018).

According to Alexander et al. (2019), every sector of society benefits greatly from education. It promotes the growth of an organization and keeps the populace alive. The abilities and attributes of a country's educational administrators to elevate their institutions are crucial to determining its future. The rapid transition to online distance teaching presented university educators with numerous cognitive, social, pedagogical, and technological challenges (Alenezi et al., 2022). Teachers had to quickly adapt to new technologies, manage interactions with limited nonverbal cues, navigate unclear rules of online discourse (Wut & Xu, 2021), and address parental scrutiny of course content (Picciano, 2018).

The challenges we faced emphasized the increasing power of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in education while permanently changing educational teaching methods. The global community has confronted different types of crises, such as epidemics and disasters that generated extensive economic consequences combined with social effects (Ekinci, 2021). ICT became essential for education digital transformation as the COVID-19 pandemic forced the preservation of learning activities through online means. ICT transformed traditional teaching methods as well as online learning spaces through tools which boost student interaction while enabling higher knowledge acquisition levels (Jogezai et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2017). Technology integration creates powerful effects that improve teaching standards while strengthening student motivation and helping students build new abilities (Akram et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2018). The maximum benefits of ICT systems require educators to complete specialized training programs (Guillén-Gámez et al., 2020).

Virtual classroom systems contain video conferencing and chat and text interaction features, yet they bring specific difficulties to the educational experience (Barry & Kanematsu, 2022). The absence of nonverbal communication signals in online settings makes both social interaction and academic dialogue more difficult to perform (Mukhtar et al., 2020). Educational organizations failed to establish proper planning or faculty training programs for online learning (Abhinandan et al., 2018), which created additional barriers for teachers and students throughout their transition.

Both PowerPoint presentations and Smartboard technology were adapted for use in online education, yet the use of advanced technological tools continues to progress (Guillén-Gámez et al., 2018). Changes in e-learning effectiveness emanate from both technological systems and teacher readiness along with the overall quality of educational platforms (Tere et al., 2020). Institutions needed to guarantee high-quality learning results when they suddenly transitioned to online education during the global pandemic (Rodriguez-Segura et al., 2020) .

Research indicates that digital literacy exists among most educators, but they need additional training for implementing ICT in classrooms properly(Al-Samarraie & Saeed, 2018). Research reveals males outnumber females when it comes to digital instructional development as male educators demonstrate greater ICT adoption than female educators (Boyte-Eckis et al., 2018). Educators in China faced the challenge of delivering online lectures from their homes because educational institutions lacked sufficient technical support and infrastructure(Zhang et al., 2020).

Traditional learning methods are now replaced in higher education through online formats, which constitutes a major educational shift. The assessment of digital platforms' influence on teaching methods and student achievements depends heavily on how educators view these platforms, even though these platforms provide beneficial accessibility and flexible features. Oncoming educational institutions need to focus on faculty improvement combined with strategic planning through technology-based educational methods to achieve balanced online learning success.

Relying on teacher perspectives enables the discovery of critical insight regarding both educational difficulties and professional adjustment through digital transformation. Teachers' reflective opinions reveal detailed information about the conditions which affect the success of digital learning environments. Because educators deliver instruction as the primary frontline staff, their opinions serve to discover positive and negative aspects of virtual platforms, thus enabling ongoing development and enhancement.

Investigations into how teachers use online educational methods produce substantial implications which extend into educational practice fundamentals. Studies show that online learning proves effective, especially in advanced technological countries (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020).Furthermore, Richardson et al. (2017) establish that educational institutions must provide teachers with dedicated professional growth opportunities alongside resource access and performance-based rewards since these elements guarantee effective online teaching implementation. Peer mentoring programs and professional learning communities serve to develop an innovative teaching environment which sustains consistent improvements in online teaching methods (Oliver et al.,2018).

Online education is raising widespread acceptance as an educational method which strengthens teaching-learning practice by using proactive student-focused teaching approaches alongside complex digital technology tools. Learning experiences occur through these platforms in synchronous and asynchronous formats, which provide freedom to learners (Yang & Li, 2018). Academic institutions depend on data-based information to guide their decisions about integrating online learning programs into their curriculum system. Data from this research helps policymakers as well as administrators create and execute successful e-learning strategies by supplying factual evidence to them.

The study findings about educators' online teaching perceptions may help identify what professionals need to develop in their careers. Research findings help create purpose-built professional development programs to teach educators effective methods for smooth implementation of changing instructional approaches. Educational effectiveness depends on adaptive teaching methods, which must be developed because educational standards will continue shifting during periods of evolving educational formats.

Educational institutions increasingly embrace online learning platforms in higher education because students want adaptable educational options combined with the rapid growth of digital tools. The transition towards digital learning brings extensive benefits, including better accessibility and personalized education, while creating major obstacles for teaching staff. The positive effects of online teaching require more research about instructor perceptions because many educators struggle to transition successfully. A detailed investigation of teachers' attitudes and their digital learning environment adoption and flexibility allows researchers to discover implementing obstacles and the needed resources and successful methods to enhance virtual teaching quality. To create efficient virtual teaching strategies, teachers' technical skills need to be evaluated because assessment data enables the construction of appropriate professional development plans.

The adoption and growth of distance education delivers flexibility along with scalability combined with accessibility, thereby becoming an essential aspect of university studies. Online learning success depends primarily on what educators think of it and how well they adjust to this format of instruction. An evaluation of the effectiveness of online learning and suggestions for development necessitates knowledge about what teachers encounter in using digital tools.

The research may deliver significant findings about faculty member views on online instruction through which it reveals how the benefits (which include operational ease and open access and expanded resources) coexist with learning difficulties and assessment steadiness and technological skill shortages. The research analyzes these viewpoints to help universities establish specific professional development initiatives which build educational expert competence in technology as well as teaching practices.

Additionally, as universities increasingly engage in global collaborations, a deeper understanding of instructors' attitudes toward online learning will enhance cross-institutional training coordination, international partnerships, and knowledge exchange. The use of quantitative research methods ensures that the findings are generalizable and applicable to a broader academic audience, providing evidence-based recommendations for policy and practice in higher education. The research objectives are to investigate teachers' perceptions of the transition from traditional classroom instruction to online learning at universities, to examine the teachers' perceptions of traditional classroom instruction at universities and to identify the differences in teachers' perceptions of the transition from traditional classroom instruction to online learning based on their gender at universities. The research questions are as under;

- What are the teachers' perceptions of the transition from traditional classroom teaching to online learning practices at universities?
- What are the examine the teachers' perceptions of traditional classroom instruction at universities.
- What are the differences in teachers' perceptions of the transition from traditional classroom instruction to online learning based on their gender at universities?

2. Literature Review

The understanding of teacher perceptions throughout this shift is essential to execute successful online teaching support practices. Furthermore, Moore and Kearsley (2012) demonstrate how teachers' online teaching attitudes determine their readiness to use digital pedagogical methods. Teachers express three primary concerns about online teaching: they fear losing institutional authority, working harder on preparing lessons, and students' lack of familiarity with educational software, which collectively create obstacles to superior virtual instruction.

Additionally, Lemay et al. (2021) researched the quick transition of teaching activities toward online platforms once the COVID-19 pandemic began. The forced transition to remote learning allowed educators to see its potential for pedagogical advancements, while Bao (2020) noted this transition brought up concerns about online instruction quality and the teachers' technological constraints and instructional challenges (Means & Neisler, 2021). Profile understanding helps develop specific support strategies together with training agendas to create better transition paths.

The fundamental role that teachers play in online education success depends heavily on their cultural perception of virtual teaching methods (Ferdig et al., 2020). People with restricted technology access, together with training deficiencies, tend to demonstrate heightened caution regarding online learning practices. The transformation to remote learning brings both positive aspects and challenges that push teachers to address student retention as well as outcome evaluation and system management (Hodges et al., 2022).

Multiple research investigations exhibit the obstacles which educators encounter when adopting online educational platforms. According to Picciano (2018), institutions should both support their members through training and provide career development for staff to handle essential problems regarding technology know-how, curriculum design and student participation. The main barriers to effective change involve inadequate training together with insufficient resources and resistance to adopting new teaching approaches (Means et al., 2013). The integration of online learning reaches successful levels when teachers show confidence in their digital skills along with receiving sufficient institutional backing (Xie, 2020).

The successful implementation of educational technology encounters resistance from inadequate infrastructure as well as limited digital competency and low teaching staff motivation (Tosuntaş et al., 2019). Developing countries encounter intensified barriers to technology access because teachers, together with their students, face major difficulties in accessing technology, according to research by Eltahir (2019). Research indicates that technical adoption barriers mainly stem from poor instructor-student communication, insufficient support structures, and insufficient ICT competencies. Studies show that Saudi Arabia faces three main impediments to education technology adoption as a result of mismanaged assistance systems, inadequate digital skills, and poor infrastructure (Aljaber, 2018). Additionally, Hamutoğlu and Başarmak (2020) discovered that external funding shortages with limited training resources and limited infrastructure and time availability intensify existing internal obstacles, which include inadequate teacher technological proficiency and limited educational guidance and student familial resistance together with learning method misconceptions.

Further, Alqurashi (2016) demonstrated how understanding user perceptions supports the identification of usability problems and systematic design improvements as well as virtual learning experience enhancement. The progress of online teaching and learning in Pakistan alongside other developing nations has been commendable, yet various obstacles exist that prevent the complete integration of ICT in education (Salam et al., 2017). The educational institutions of Pakistan manage their pedagogical activities through manual processes(Salam et al.,2017). Students living in distant parts of Pakistan face major obstacles in their online learning journey because the country lacks good internet connectivity at an affordable price (Shehzadi et al., 2020).

The transition to online learning has necessitated an unprecedented degree of administrative adaptability (Wu, 2020), compelling numerous educational institutions to prioritize the digital dissemination of instructional content. Nonetheless, the scarcity of student resources, social exclusion within educational establishments, and inadequate access to cutting-edge technology and internet services underscore institutional accountability and students' capacity to engage in digital education (Zhang et al., 2020).

In a similar vein, Goudarzi et al. (2023) investigated the abrupt shift from face-to-face instruction to virtual remote learning necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Their qualitative study, employing conventional content analysis, delineated the initial challenges faced by educational institutions in implementing this transition. Several empirical studies about learning modalities produce conflicting results when comparing traditional classroom methods to online delivery methods. The study by Clayton and Zetterberg (2018) with 464 university students demonstrated that all participants selected traditional classroom instruction over hybrid or complete online courses because they considered the classroom environment to be more dynamic and participatory. According to Yusnilita (2020), online education supplied 80% of students with learning excitement, while 90% found the format workable.

The different research studies demonstrate that online platform helps to achieve better outcomes than those through traditional on-site instruction (Hurlbut, 2018). Similarly , hybrid or fully online classes showed equal or better educational results for the teachers than physical classrooms (Wu, 2015).

The literature about traditional education versus online education mainly emphasizes student experiences with learning outcomes but gives insufficient attention to faculty perceptions (Alenezi et al., 2022; Lemay et al., 2021). Existing research demonstrates several obstacles, which include technical barriers as well as insufficient digital infrastructure and student engagement problems (Means & Neisler, 2021; Tosuntaş et al., 2019). Few academic investigations have examined university teaching staff members' digital transition perspectives nor studied how gender and institutional backing and teaching experience levels affect their digital platform adoption. The emphasis on institutional barriers within research exists, but studies lack investigation into training requirements that may advance online teaching practices (Hodges et al., 2022).

This research examines the perception of teachers about online learning platforms while assessing their system-related problems, their ability to adjust, and what sort of institutional help they need. The study examines how teachers' gender influences their perception differences while exploring how traditional classroom experience affects their digital teaching transition. This research addresses critical gaps to support policy development which enhances training quality for teachers as well as digital education delivery in higher educational institutions.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

The research methodology which was implemented for the attainment of the targets of this study and procedures employed to collect data to counter research was quantitative and descriptive.

3.2 Population of the Study

All male and female teachers working in the social science departments of public sector universities made up the study's population. There were two hundred and seventeen (N = 217) regular teachers working in higher education institutions. All male and female social science department teachers from three government universities in Multan, The Women University Multan, Bahauddin Zakariya University and Emerson University Multan, made up the research population.

3.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure

According to the resources and time, the sample was drawn from three public sector universities and different departments were selected randomly. A simple random sampling was made for sampling. Similarly, a sample of one hundred and sixty teachers (N= 160), including forty-one males (M, 70) and one hundred and nineteen females (F, 90), were chosen. This research pursuit was accomplished from various departments within the Faculty of Social Sciences. In this regard, teachers who expressed interest in taking part were all chosen.

- Emerson University Multan.
- The Women's University Multan.
- Bahauddin Zakariya University Multan.

3.4 Development of Instrument

The structured questionnaire was developed on a point Likert scale. For this purpose, attention was paid to the clarity, specificity, and relevance of the items to ensure that they accurately captured teachers' perceptions during the transition to online learning. Female and Male teachers at their respective offices were approached, and (n=160) teachers participated in the study after getting the assurance of confidentiality of their responses.

3.5 Data Collection and Analysis of Data

One hundred sixty surveys, obtained from the social science departments, were given to the teachers of WUM, BZU, and Emerson University, who were (n = 70) male and (n = 90) female. The goal of the surveys was to gather data. The questionnaire's return rate was successfully reached following the necessary sample size, and researchers successfully gathered data from instructors at three distinct universities in around three weeks.

To analyze all of the data collected from the male and female teachers, both descriptive and inferential statistics were employed. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 25, was used to examine the information gathered regarding the experiences of the male and female teachers. In descriptive statistics, the researchers employed mean standard deviation and frequencies and t-test. As part of the study, all data gathered and computed from the Google form, as well as in-person interviews, were incorporated.

4. Results & Discussion

Table 1 shows the frequency and percentage distribution of students at approximately equal representation among the three universities: Women University (54, 33.8%), BZU (53, 33.1%), and Emerson University (53, 33.1%).

Table 1: Institute -Wise analysis

Name of institute	Frequency	Percent
The Women University Multan	54	33.8
Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan	53	33.1
Emerson University Multan	53	33.1
Total	160	100.0

Table 2 shows the gender frequency, with females comprising the majority at 119 (43.75%) and males at 41 (56.25 %) out of a total of 160 students**.**

Table 2: Gender -Wise analysis

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	70	43.75
Female	90	56.25
Total	160	100.0

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics' Teachers Perception Towards Traditional Platform (Teachers N=160)

No.	Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
1.	I have faith that I can go from a traditional platform to a virtual learning environment with ease.	3.4875	1.19215
2.	During online learning sessions, I have trouble getting students to participate actively.	3.4000	1.04129
3.	I truly believe that traditional in-person teaching approaches may be replaced by online learning.	3.6688	1.14222
4.	To improve as a more skilled online teacher, I would be greatly helped by more training and assistance.	3.5875	1.10110
5.	The fairness and reliability of online assessments are a matter of concern for me.	2.9437	1.14511
6.	The standards of online education will be exceeded by conventional systems.	3.5813	1.16809
7.	Conventional teaching methods are challenged by the use of Internet resources.	3.4063	1.99872
8.	Conventional teaching methods provide a solid basis for learning in sports.	2.6187	1.25328
9.	Online learning offers a flexible way to receive guidance materials.	3.9313	1.01636
10.	One should adjust to modern tools while transferring to an online learning environment.	3.6812	1.95412
11.	Traditional systems allow teachers and students to communicate directly.	3.5563	1.97611
12.	Traditional methods of teaching foster rapport and network within the lecture room.	3.8937	1.10799
13.	Tried-and-true teaching methods are the basis of inspiration in conventional training.	3.4563	1.09226
14.	In online classes, independent and self-directed learning are recommended.	3.3875	1.03394
15.	Online platforms provide more access to educational resources.	2.8937	1.13601

Table 4: Descriptive statistics for Teachers' Perception towards Online learning (Teachers N=160)

No.	Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
16	I have more options to successfully engage pupils due to online learning.	2.8937	1.10799
17	Online learning has positively impacted my ability to provide personalized instruction.	3.0188	1.12977
18	Online learning has allowed me to access a wider range of resources for teaching.	3.9000	1.04129
19	I feel confident in my ability to create a sense of community in the online learning environment.	2.4750	1.08709
20	Online education is just as successful as conventional university education.	3.8125	1.09422
21	The pandemic has made the transfer to online studying inevitable.	3.1813	1.10386
22	The flexibility of teaching techniques has been enhanced through online studying.	3.1250	1.10886
23	There are extra chances for pupil engagement way to online getting to know.	3.0313	1.11830
24	The usage of generation in the classroom has improved student learning.	3.1438	1.10940
25	Teachers can send information and updates to students with ease with the use of online learning.	3.0062	1.04909
26	Putting online learning into practice has forced me to benefit from new tech skills.	2.6938	1.16012
27	Evaluation and assessment steps were changed by a transition to online learning.	2.9375	1.03819
28	Students can get feedback more often and rapidly because of online knowledge.	2.7813	1.09126

Table 3 presents the mean scores and standard deviations for teachers' perceptions of traditional teaching platforms. The statement " Online learning offers a flexible way to receive guidance materials. (M = 3.93, SD = 1.01). However, respondents reported challenges in engaging students during online sessions (M = 3.40, SD = 1.04). Overall, results indicate mixed perceptions: while online learning is recognized for its flexibility, concerns remain regarding student participation, assessment fairness, and the reliability of traditional teaching methods in a virtual setting.

Table 4 highlights teachers' views on online learning. The statement "Online learning has positively impacted my ability to provide personalized instruction" received the highest mean score (M = 3.02, SD = 1.13), indicating moderate agreement. Teachers also acknowledged enhanced flexibility in teaching techniques (M = 3.12, SD = 1.10) and increased engagement opportunities (M = 3.03, SD = 1.12). However, some concerns persisted. The ability to create a sense of community in an online environment was rated lower (M = 2.47, SD = 1.08), suggesting that online platforms may not fully replace in-person interactions. These findings suggest that while online learning has expanded resource accessibility and instructional flexibility, challenges remain in fostering interaction, engagement, and effective assessment practices.

Table 5: T-test for Teachers' Perceptions towards Traditional Platforms based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Male	41	38.1951	7.70785	1.20376	-1.102	158	.272	-1.74605
Female	119	39.9412	9.07529	.83193	-1.193	81.067	.236	-1.74605

Table 5 shows t-test results comparing mean scores on the "Traditional Platform" based on gender. Neither male (p = .272) nor female (p = .236) participants exhibit a significant difference in mean scores. Both genders have similar mean differences of -1.74605. The findings indicate that both male and female respondents have similar mean scores on the measured variables, suggesting no significant gender-based differences in perceptions.

Table 6: T-test for Teachers' Perceptions towards online learning based on Gender

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	t	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference
Male	41	38.4878	6.74953	1.05410	.442	158	.659	.65587
Female	119	37.8319	8.63116	.79122	.498	88.272	.620	.65587

Table 6 presents t-test results examining mean scores on "Online Learning" based on gender. There is no significant difference in mean scores for males (p = .659) or females (p = .620). Both genders show a similar mean difference of .65587. The findings suggest that perceptions regarding the measured variables are comparable between male and female respondents, with no statistically significant differences observed.

5. Discussion

The primary objective of this study was to explore teachers' perceptions of the transition from traditional classroom teaching to online learning at universities. One key finding indicates that online learning has positively impacted teachers' ability to provide personalized instruction. In a virtual learning environment, educators believe they can foster a sense of community and engagement. According to Abrahamsson et al., (2021), online education has increasingly focused on creating interactive materials and exercises that enhance teachers' skills and adaptability in digital classrooms.

Another significant finding suggests that online learning has enhanced the flexibility of teaching techniques. Educators reported that digital platforms offer increased opportunities for student engagement and provide a more adaptable means of accessing instructional materials. According to Mahle (2011), effective communication during online learning plays an essential role because it brings together students to students as well as students with

instructors and course materials. Using interactivity enables online courses to boost student motivation and satisfaction, which leads to better achievement results.

The research paper demonstrates that conventional teaching approaches remain essential despite the observed benefits. The survey participants noted that personal meeting engagements between students and teachers help create interpersonal relations while generating social network bonds in education spaces that digital learning fails to duplicate effectively. Similarly, the research findings by Hurlbut (2018) and Spencer and Temple (2021) show that traditional students usually score better in terms of grades and assignment work than students in online programs. The benefits of online learning for accessibility and flexibility meet previous research findings, while traditional education leads better in facilitating direct communication and engagement with students.

6. Conclusions

A research investigation analyzed how university teaching staff perceived their shift from conventional classroom instruction to online education. The research discovered multiple benefits and difficulties which come with online educational approaches. Teaching staff recognized the flexibility and expanded learning resources as well as accessibility in digital platforms, yet they shared worry about student engagement with assessment fairness and direct interactions that disappear in virtual learning environments. The research indicates that educational success depends heavily on public institutions that provide digital systems along with curriculum-focused education programs to train teachers in online teaching methods. The gender-based analysis demonstrated equal perception challenges without statistical disparities between male and female instructors. Online learning provides advantages, yet traditional teaching methods continue to provide essential value by allowing direct teaching methods and student-faculty relationship development. Higher education institutions will find the best educational results by implementing a learning model that combines virtual flexibility with face-to-face classroom experience.

6.1 Recommendations from the Study

- Provide teachers with additional training and resources to optimize pupil engagement in online learning environments.
- Empower teachers to leverage the enhanced flexibility of teaching techniques in online learning.
- Provide training and resources for the effective integration of technology in teaching.
- Offer targeted training programs to help educators develop new tech skills required for effective online teaching.

6.2. Policy Recommendations

- Universities should provide structured faculty training on online pedagogy, digital tools, and student engagement strategies.
- Institutions must establish dedicated IT support teams to assist educators in resolving digital platform issues.

- Institutions should develop secure, transparent online evaluation techniques to address concerns about fairness and reliability.
- Universities should invest in high-speed internet access, LMS improvements, and interactive learning tools to create a seamless digital education experience.
- Institutions must implement strict cyberbullying policies and protect faculty and student data in virtual environments.

6.3. Future Research & Policy Implications

- Future research should examine long-term faculty adaptation to online learning and the effectiveness of various training interventions**.**
- Institutions should incorporate student perspectives to refine online teaching practices and create a more inclusive learning environment**.**
- The study emphasizes a holistic approach to improving online education by addressing technological, pedagogical, and institutional challenges**.**

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