

“IMPACT OF PANDEMIC ON STUDENTS’ SOCIAL AND ETHICAL ATTITUDES”

Ghulam Muhammad Memon^{*1}, Tahmina Mukhtiar²

^{*1}Lecturer, College Education Department GoS

²Ph.D Scholar, Department of Usool Udin University of Karachi

^{*1}memongull86@gmail.com, ²tahminamukhtiar@gmail.com

Corresponding Author: *

Ghulam Muhammad Memon

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ABSTRACT

Covid -19 proved a pandemic that has affected the whole world on a large scale. Every walk of life got disturbed by the pandemic. Educational institutions not only in Pakistan but all over the world remained close, which caused a huge loss of social attitudes along with the studies. This study is exploratory in nature and uses questionnaires and interviews to investigate the impact of pandemic on students’ social and ethical attitudes in the selected educational institutes of Naushahro Feroze. The sample for data collection were the elementary level students. It is found in data collected from various elementary level educational institutes that in pandemic scenarios students have gone through moral decadence and are socially rebellious against restrictions to abide by the SOPs. This paper highlights the issues of lack of social and ethical attitudes among students of elementary level in post-Covid time. This paper presents the solutions and recommendations for the lack of social and ethical values in students. It is recommended that the active participation of stakeholders (parents and teachers) may improve the character-building ethical and social values as per the need of an hour.

Key Words: Pandemic, Social, Ethical, Education, Elementary schools

1.INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 (C-19) is the name given by WHO (the World Health Organization) to a virus caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2), it began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 and has since increase throughout the world (Vergnaud, 2020). Pakistan recorded its first case on February 26, 2020, when a person arrived from Iran was tested positive (Wikipedia, 2020). Pakistan had 69 instances of Covid-19, 496 cases, the death toll rose up to 1483, and 25,271 individuals had got recovery. It has expanded further since the government partially lifted the total lockdown during the holy month of Ramadan, and the curve was growing till 2020 (Worldometer, 2020). The pandemic has put practically every organization's operations in jeopardy, as well as educational

institutions and education as a whole, all across the world. Such a pandemic has never occurred in Pakistan, there is little material accessible except a few items that have appeared in Pakistani newspapers.

This pandemic has made things worse for Pakistan, a state that is still battling to become self sufficient economically, politically, or in terms of education. The government closed all educational institutions on March 13, 2020, for a 03 weeks period (Anadolu Agency, 2020). Due to the abnormal surge of Covid cases, the National Coordination Committee (NCC) then decided to extend the closure of educational institutions in the country until July Asian Journal of University Education (AJUE) Volume 17, Number 3, July 2021 68 15 and to eliminate all examinations that were to be

conducted by the boards, according to the DAWN newspaper of May 8, 2020 (DAWN, 2020).

1.1 Impact of pandemic on Education

Going to school isn't just for enjoyment; it also aids in a student's capacity to become more extrovert. Above all, it improves their capabilities and teaches the youngster critical skills that he will utilize in his daily life (Burgess & Sievertsen, 2020). If a child misses even one day of school, he will have a lot of ground to make up in order to catch up with his peers. Because the repercussions of the Coronavirus pandemic are now being observed in the realm of education, it is no longer about missing a few days, but about missing months of face-to-face instruction. Countries all across the world have imposed school closures in reaction to the C-19 epidemic in order to prevent the sickness from spreading. Classroom culture, tests, and other physical activities have taken a back seat. Either being terminated permanently or being replaced by online learning, due to the global lockdown of educational organizations produced an unplanned and unpredictable suspension in education. As per the global monitoring of closure of schools by UNESCO, about 900 million students were affected worldwide and 46,803,407 students were affected in Pakistan at the pre-primary, primary, secondary, and university levels (Education: From disruption to recovery, 2020).

Pakistan is already in a frantic state of education, with various educational paths co-existing in one community and a battle to maintain a huge number of youngsters in school. The lockdown points out existing issues while also creating new ones for educational institutions within the country, according to the situation it can be predicted that this lockdown will continue for some more time, the dropout ratio will increase more as financially weak families choose to keep their children at home rather than send them to work.

Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a worldwide reliance on virtual schooling to assist with the interruption of educational development at academic institutions. Pakistan's government ordered that educational institutions close until further notice. The global reaction has a trust on virtual teaching and learning to allow students to continue their educational advancement. In Pakistan, however, youngsters studying from rural regions, from disadvantaged homes and more specifically from

government-funded institutions where there is a lack of technology for virtual learning. This means that the education of approximately 47 million pupils in public schools will be influenced negatively (Bajwa, 2020). This disturbance in their schooling will have long-term consequences and will effectively rise the country's educational disparity, the impact of which will reverberate late after the pandemic has over.

Pakistan ranks at fifth number for being one of the most populated country, but only a little percentage of its people have access to vital and modern innovative technologies like computers and internet access. This is due to a large income inequality in the population, with only a tiny percentage of people able to afford innovation that can ensure educational institutions continue digitally during the pandemic lockdown. According to figures from 2017, only 15.5 percent of Pakistan's population has internet connection (Pakistan: internet penetration rate 2017, 2020). This is in stark contrast to the fact that a large portion of the population is poor and lives on the outskirts of contemporary technology.

1.2 Impact of pandemic on students' social lives

As physical learning has come to a break in both public and private academies, virtual learning has increased to the peak in private schools creating the higher and middle classes, which have quickly started offering e-classes through free websites and applications such as Skype, Zoom, Edmodo, and Google Classroom. These online classes in Pakistan's urban regions are designed to minimize the impact of interruptions to students' normal routines. It was only a little hardship for most of the educational institutions that fall into this financial range. The majority of these children have parents who are technologically literate and have access to a rapid-speed internet connection. While online classes do not completely replace real classes, they do compensate for some of the intellectual loss while also teaching youngsters how to use technology. Students in these online classes communicate with their teachers, complete homework, and learn how to use an email, internet, and videoconferencing by providing them a competitive advantage. The shortcoming is a loss of social dealings and face-to-face communication, as well as sports/ physical games and extracurricular activities that are just as necessary as academics. When factors such as loss of social

connection, children's poor attention, noise and distractions, poor internet access, and a lack of independent study skills are taken under observation, it can be understood that these restricted few students from attending private educational institutions in rural areas of the country have a significant learning disadvantage over those who attend state-funded institutions (COVID-19 and education: Unequal learning loss, 2020).

While initiatives to replace classroom learning and promote a more digital platform are admirable during the pandemic, there are concerns about the mental and physical health of millions of pupils who are no longer in school. These are related to the notion that keeping children at home for long periods of time due to school closures may have dangerous consequences.

When this scenario is combined with a social lockdown in which students are not allowed to go outside or socialize with children of their age, the negative impacts become considerably worse. The effect is increased in Pakistan, where a major section of the population is impoverished and lives in substandard housing. Children in the country particularly in rural areas, do not have the digital play gadgets, resulting in even bigger losses. The virus is spreading at a much faster rate in metropolitan areas where a large number of students attend school. The loss of learning is unavoidable for these students, but there is also a significant psychological cost on these isolated students. Staying indoors for a long period of time, fear of virus disease, frustration, anxiety, boredom, and lack of information, lack of engagement with friends and teachers, and family financial concerns can cause youngsters to become more stressed and anxious.

Methodology

For this study, a quantitative method is employed. Google survey form is used to obtain data. Our research is based on survey, to obtain primary data. In addition to gather various types of information from participants, a questionnaire method is selected for this study, allowing the collection of accurate data from the intended audience.

Elementary level Students from District Naushahro Feroze participated in this study. A

total of 60 students took part in the activity. A total of ten questions were included in the survey. It is written in an easy-to-understand English language so that all participants may understand and answer the questions correctly. To determine the respondents' opinions, a scale of 1 to 5 was employed. Whereas, 1 shows "Strongly Disagree" and 5 shows "Strongly agree".

The consent is taken from all the participants prior to collection of data. All the questions are designed while considering the privacy of participants. All the questions are marked while taking into account the ethical and moral values of the local society. We made sure that no question may be responded in defensive mode.

Objectives & Proposed Questions

The objective of our questionnaire is to extract following information:

To know about the development of the interest of students in technology through online classes.

To discover the impact of online learning on improvement of technological skills.

Lack of mobility during pandemic and its impact on mental health.

To evaluate the academic results of the students after the pandemic due to the lack of technological resources especially in rural areas.

To get an idea about the poor impact of students' disciplinary manner due to the lockdown.

To sense the impact of disconnection with the society during quarantine on students' social and ethical values.

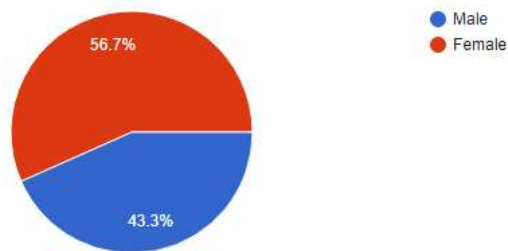
To recognize the family atmosphere of the students, that impacts on students' mental and psychological health.

Demoralization / De-motivation among the participants due to the poor outcome of online learning.

Results and Recommendations

A number of 60 participants of elementary level of District Naushahro Feroze have participated in survey. As shown in figure 01, that 56.7% of female and 43.5% of male students with the age limit of 50% below 13 years and 50% above 13 years was involved. As the figure 02 shows:

Gender
60 responses



Age
60 responses

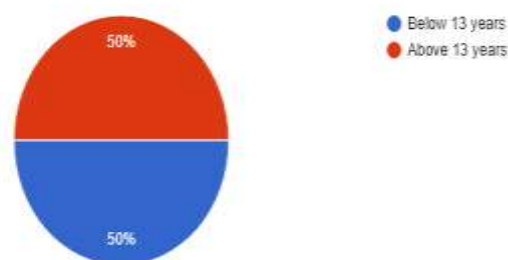


Figure 01

Figure 02

The first question was asked about the development of the interest in technology through online classes, and the graph in figure 03 shows that most of the students are agreed that online

classes have developed interest in technology. It is about 35% of them have developed their interest whereas 33.3% are strongly agree about the development.

Do you feel online classes have developed your interest in technology?
60 responses

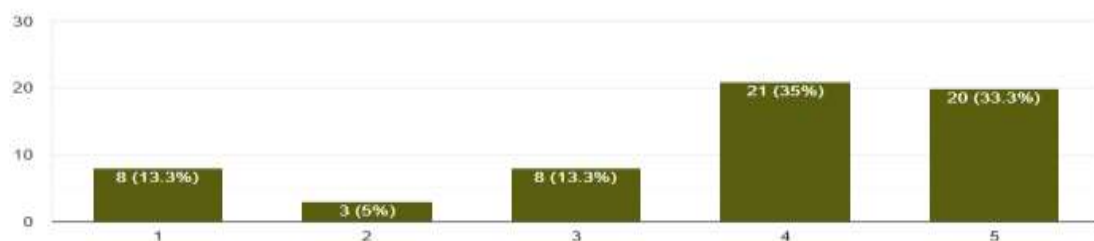


Figure 03

An other question was about the mental health of students during pandemic and it made the students a bit lazy, the graph in figure 04 made it

clear that 48.3% of them are feeling themselves a bit lazy and affirmed that their mental health is affected during quarantine.

There was stress all around during the lockdown, Do you feel that period affected your mental health and also made you a bit lazy?

60 responses

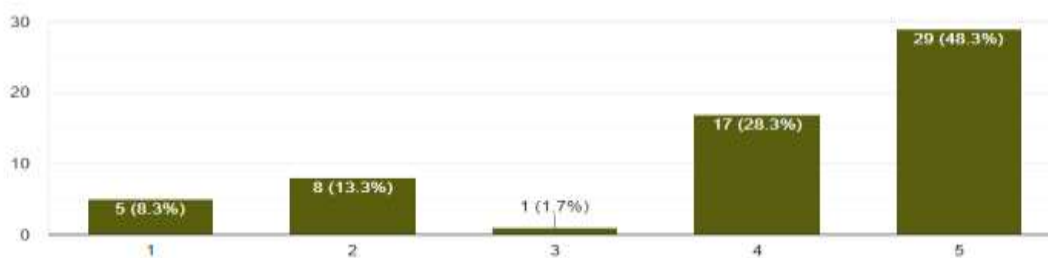


Figure 04

A question was about the impact of pandemic on their academic results but the various ideas came out, some of them were thinking that their academic results are not affected and many of them

are facing poor academic results due to lack of technological resources to attend online classes regularly.

As we belong with a rural area and face the lack of technological resources to attend online classes, do you think it showed poor impact on your academic results?

60 responses

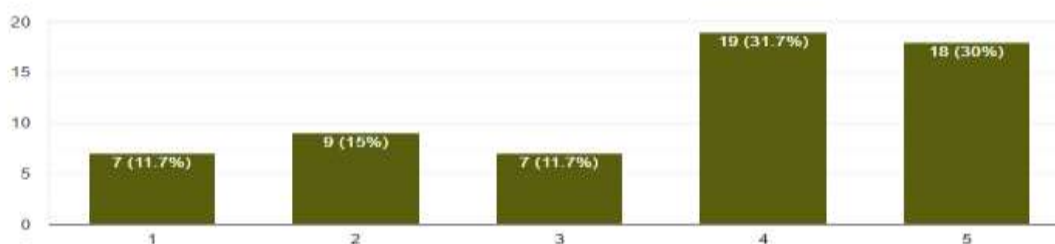


Figure 05

One question was the most important question and the main part of the research to know about the disciplinary attitudes of the students. 31.7% of them are strongly agreed that they might have

forgotten the discipline of attending the schools. Furthermore 20% are remained silent to state something about their disciplinary manner as shown in figure 06.

Do you think that due to the closure of schools for a long time you have forgotten the discipline of attending the school and class?

60 responses

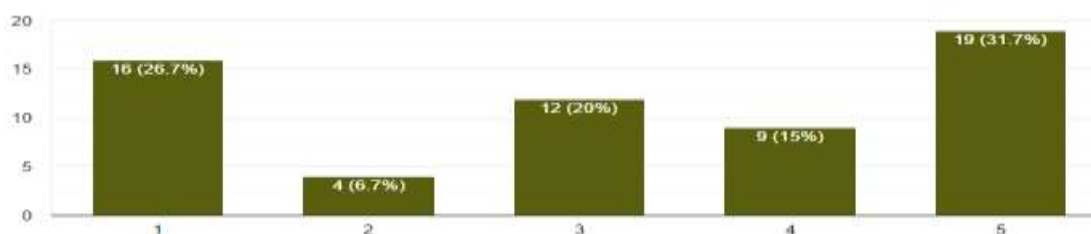


Figure 06

An other question was also the key question and the result of it was quite alarming one for all of us in the capacity of parents and teachers as our children senses that they have compromised their social and ethical values as figure 07 reveals that

40% of the audience are strongly agree that they have really compromised the social and ethical values and 18.3% are only agree with it. moreover 18.3% are remained silent about their social and ethical values and attitudes.

Do you feel due to the disconnection with the society during quarantine you have compromised the social and ethical values?

60 responses

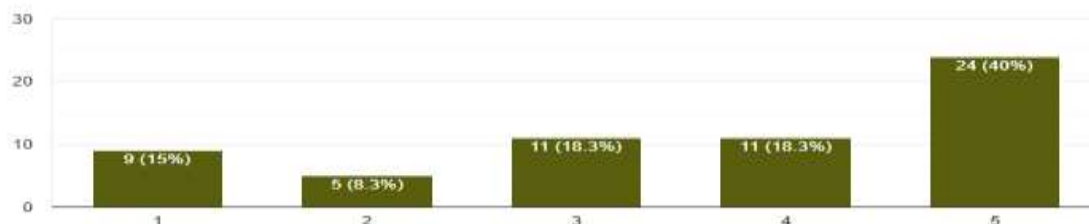


Figure 07

Last two graphs in figure 08 and 09 have revealed that according to our children, lockdown period was a golden chance to spend time with family. A huge number of students are strongly agree that they could get a good time with their families in

lockdown but with this a depressed and heartbroken fact has been exposed that 31.7% of them were feeling that quarrels have increased when they stayed at home.

Do you think lockdown was the golden chance to spend time with family?

60 responses

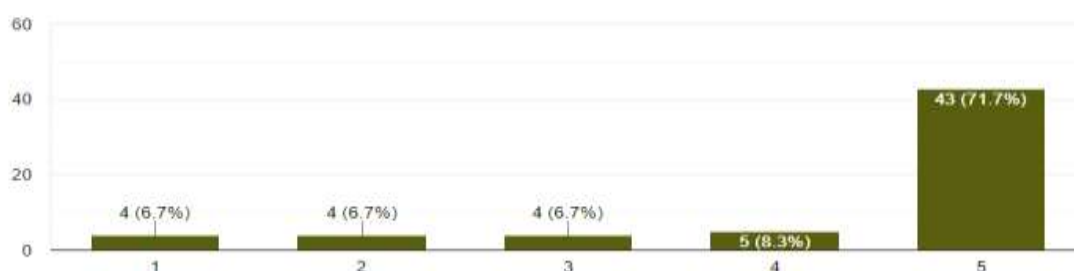


Figure 08

Do you feel family quarrels have increased when people stayed at home during quarantine?

60 responses

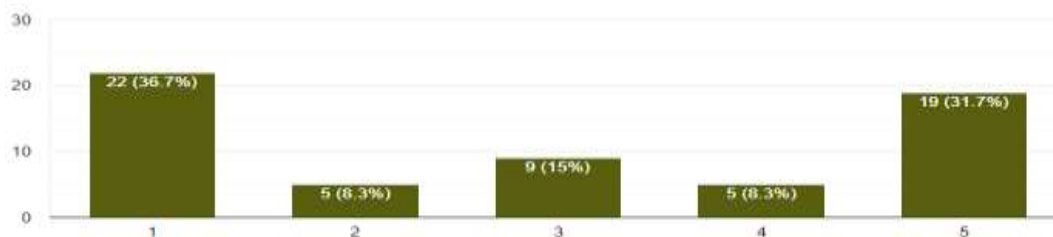


Figure 09

Our Recommendations

Based on our analysis, we suggest that following suggestions can improve the social and ethical attitude of the elementary students

Parents may spend some quality time with their children to make the students more secure and confident.

Schools' management may arrange some counseling sessions for the students to create some charisma towards their careers.

Parents and Schools may give the children additional ethical sessions in order to build and improve their ethical and moral values.

Parents and Schools may support the children and guide them in an appropriate manner until they could come out from the bad dreams of pandemic. Parents may plan for their children a regular visit to the gym and chalk out some healthy diet for them in order to make them physically healthy, which may be helpful for their mental health.

Conclusion

Our work presented research on “Impact of pandemic on students’ social and ethical attitudes”. Our research is based on quantitative analysis. Our target group is students of elementary level from district Naushahro Feroze, Sindh, Pakistan. Our dataset is based on the responses from 60 students of grades VI to VIII. We collected data via Google survey form. The google form collected the responses of the students on their social and ethical attitude via 10 different questions. The result showed that most of the students have improved their technological skills. However, almost 50% participants are of the view that their social and ethical attitude is compromised due to lack of physical activity and communication with friends during quarantine. Finally, we have suggested the remedies based on our analysis.

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