

ISSN 2520-7156

**International Journal of Distance Education and E-  
Learning (IJDEEL)**  
Volume II- Issue II (June 2017)



**Department of Education,  
Directorate of Distance Education,  
International Islamic University Islamabad, Pakistan**

**International Journal of Distance Education and E-Learning (IJDEEL)** is an online and print open access, peer reviewed and bi-annual journal. There is dearth of quality research journals in Pakistan. Therefore, for the encouragement of research activities and publication of research work by the faculty members and research students (Specially MS and Ph.D. level), the Directorate of Distance Education, IIUI has planned to start a research journal.

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## Demographic Diversity Affecting Teacher's Perceptions Related to Quality of Research Produced in Distance Education

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Quratul Ain Hina, <sup>2</sup>Ms Mahek Arshad, <sup>3</sup>Ms Sundas Kashmeeri, <sup>4</sup>Ms Saima Mehar

### Abstract

*Research was based on six objectives. The research was designed to compare the perceptions of the teachers related to quality of research on the basis of gender, sector, age, academic qualification, professional qualification and teaching experience. The research was based on descriptive-comparative style. All the higher level distance education institutions of Islamabad were considered as the population of the research. The researcher used the convenient sampling technique to draw the sample for the study. 66 teachers contributed in the data collection process among which 30 were from public and 36 were from private sector. To address the research variable (Quality of Research), a questionnaire was developed by the researcher in the light of theoretical parameters given by Obiageil crystal oluka, shaofa Nie, Yi sun (2014). Research quality assessment scale was divided into 7 sub sections (Clarity In Aims/ Questions, Study Method, Data Collection, Research Context, Data Analysis, Results and Ethical Approval) and was based on 34 items in total. It was found that that in the perception of teachers, students were somehow better in "clarity in aims" and "study methods". However the condition of "data collection, understanding research context, data analysis, finding results and getting ethical approvals" need improvement. There was no statistically significant difference found in the perceptions of the teachers related to quality of research on the basis of gender, sector, age, academic qualification, professional qualification and teaching experience. It is recommended to improve the research quality in distance education system that each department may maintain a research library within the departments for the case of assess of the students. It is also recommended that the research counselor or mentor may be hired specially in distance education institutions only to ensure full time availability of guidance service for research students.*

**Key Words:** Distance Education, Quality Research, Demographic Diversity

### 1. Introduction

Education is a process of training the individual. In Pakistan there are two education systems working, formal and non-formal education. Formal education carries a systematic, organized model, structured and monitored according to given policies, laws and norms. It involves a strictly followed curriculum with objectives, content and teaching methods. It is characterized as "presidential education" that necessarily involves

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<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Education, NUML

<sup>2</sup> Lecturer, Department of Education, NUML

<sup>3</sup> Lecturer, Department of Education, NUML

<sup>4</sup> Student MA (EPM) Department of Education, NUML

the institutes, teachers and students. Normally schools and universities adopt this process. The formal education system is physically and administratively organized that demands maximum attendance of the students in the classrooms. This system involves intermediate and assessment for the promotion of the students to the next stage of education. It awards degrees under a very strict regulation. In many cases students especially at higher level are not able to attend classes on regular basis due to professional responsibilities. Students from remote areas also face this problem. So the Non-formal education is introduced. On other hand Non-formal education allows strategy that does not demand student's attendance on regular basis, Communication between teachers and students take place time to time when needed. The method revolves around home reading and assignments. This process endowed with a very flexible content, curriculum and teaching methods. Students adapt this process according to their interest. In many cases the Non-formal education system does not have a properly established structure like formal education and it lacks facilities. While formal education is structured and well equipped in most of the ways; involving these factors, equality and quality of education is highly influenced. At higher, level both systems involve research that holds a great value. The quality of research is mostly affected by the facilities which are available for the students in both systems. Thus the current research has been designed to assess the perceptions of the teachers related to the quality of research produced by the distance education institutions at higher level in Islamabad.

### **1.1 Research Objectives**

1. To compare the perceptions of the teachers related to quality of research on the basis of gender.
2. To compare the perceptions of the teachers related to quality of research on the basis of sector.
3. To compare the perceptions of the teachers related to quality of research on the basis of age.
4. To compare the perceptions of the teachers related to quality of research on the basis of academic qualification.
5. To compare the perceptions of the teachers related to quality of research on the basis of professional qualification.
6. To compare the perceptions of the teachers related to quality of research on the basis of teaching experience.

### **1.2 Research Hypotheses**

1. There is no difference in the perceptions of the teachers related to quality of research on the basis of gender.
2. There is no difference in the perceptions of the teachers related to quality of research on the basis of sector.
3. There is no difference in the perceptions of the teachers related to quality of research on the basis of age.
4. There is no difference in the perceptions of the teachers related to quality of research on the basis of academic qualification.
5. There is no difference in the perceptions of the teachers related to quality of research on the basis of professional qualification.
6. There is no difference in the perceptions of the teachers related to quality of research on the basis of teaching experience.



### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

The formal and non formal system of education, both are equally important in the development of nation. Non formal education provides a relaxed environment to the ones who want to continue their education side by side their family, social and financial responsibilities. In this way it becomes more significant. As compare to formal education, Non formal education is not a very regular system. The relaxation in the regular class schedule sometimes affects the quality of education and teaching and learning process. So the research would help to assess the quality of research in non formal system of education. In this way, the research would be beneficial for the students studying in distance education system. The findings of the study would be helpful to focus on the areas of research to improve the quality. It would also be beneficial for the teachers to understand and focus on the attitudes of students and by keeping in view their attitude towards distance education system. Keeping in view the available facilities the teachers would be able to utilize the facilities for the improvement of research qualities.

### **2.Literature Review**

With the expansion of educational opportunities through distance education technology and quality assurance has become a major issue. Distance education is not a window of money; it is a window of opportunity for specific purposes and population. Although based on many standards similar to "traditional" higher education, special consideration is needed to reflect the uniqueness of distance education programs. Interest in the concept of distance education attracts the attention of university and college administrators, teachers and other professionals around the world (Willis, 1994; Birnbaum, 2001; Moore, 2003).

Distance education refers to the learners and teachers in different locations of education. Distance education correspondence courses have been used for decades. The current approach is expanding, including new technological advances such as audio and video conferencing, satellite, Internet, video and audio tapes and multimedia. Instructors' experience in teaching face-to-face teaching in a distance learning environment is not considered a distance education. Distance education became a teaching method at least 150 years ago (Holmberg, 1986). The term distance education covers the form of learning at all levels, not under the supervision of the student at the podium or within the same premises, but benefited from planning guidance and tuition fees for teaching organizations (Holmberg, 1977).

The early form of distance education is correspondence learning. With the emergence of more sophisticated methods and media, distance education has been transmitted via satellite or fiber to recording and educational television programs. The Internet opens the door for computerized courses, as well as a supplement to television programs. Rapid changes in technology have changed distance education. New policies are being developed to determine how distance education is hired and used. The growth and impact of distance education and the opportunities offered by it are directly related to the availability of new technologies. As technology transforms remote locations into electronic information networks, people around the world are pulled together and demand for distance education opportunities around the world (Thach & Murphy, 1994).

Distance education scholars continue to focus on the lack of sufficient attention to the theory, especially in the context of distance education learners and learning. Gibson (2003) reported the content analysis of the three major journals of distance education,

revealing that research-based learning articles accounted for only 17% to 21% of the total number of articles reviewed. She continues to point out that most studies focus on individual learners, and the most attractive variables are interactions between learners and learner mentors. With increasing emphasis on learning the community, Gibson agrees with those who advocate more research on this group as a unique learning phenomenon. She further argues that even if distance education researchers gradually accept the theory, they still seem reluctant to learn from the relevant disciplines.

According to the Phipps and Merisotis (1999) studies, the most important issue in the comparative study in distance education was that the overall quality of the original study was questionable and that many of the findings were uncertain, they indicate that the lack of certain quality elements in the experimental design, such as control variables, increases the effectiveness and reliability of the instrument that cannot show the factors and effects, randomized, and instruments used to collect data. Joy and Garcia (2000) also emphasized the design of weak studies in distance education that did not incorporate control measures for certain important variables in the meta-analysis of the comparison of technology-based delivery models with traditional delivery methods used in distance education. According to Meyer (2002), most of the articles on distance education, online education and quality are still position papers, personal experiences and suggestions for people of online courses. These articles may provide good advice, but rarely suggest well-designed research results.

In order to have a high degree of quality in distance education practice, it is necessary to carry out high-quality research to report the results and then apply them to the actual setting of distance education. Translating research into practice, especially high-quality research, will help practitioners in the field of distance education design, implement and evaluate their programs and curricula based on the reliable processes identified in the study.

## **2.1 Theoretical Frame Work**

In this study research quality assessment model developed by Oluka, Nie and Sun (2014) was selected as a theoretical framework. He explained that the quality of research has the following 7 sub factors.

### **2.1.1 Clear Aim or Research Question**

Every research starts with the questions and there are some aims of the study that give direction to the researcher. This factor deals with the reasoning and help to understand the importance of work to be done.

### **2.1.2 Details of design and study methodology**

As mentioned before, research is a systematic process; this factor explains the importance of the research methodology. It leads the researcher to select the targeted population, sample, sample size, data collection tools, data collection and analysis.

### **2.1.3 Description of data collection**

This factor explains how an interpretation of the collected data affects the quality of the research.

### **2.1.4 Research content; description of the study**

This factor explains the importance of the previous researches for further research, and how related literature can improve the quality of research.

### **2.1.5 Data analysis**

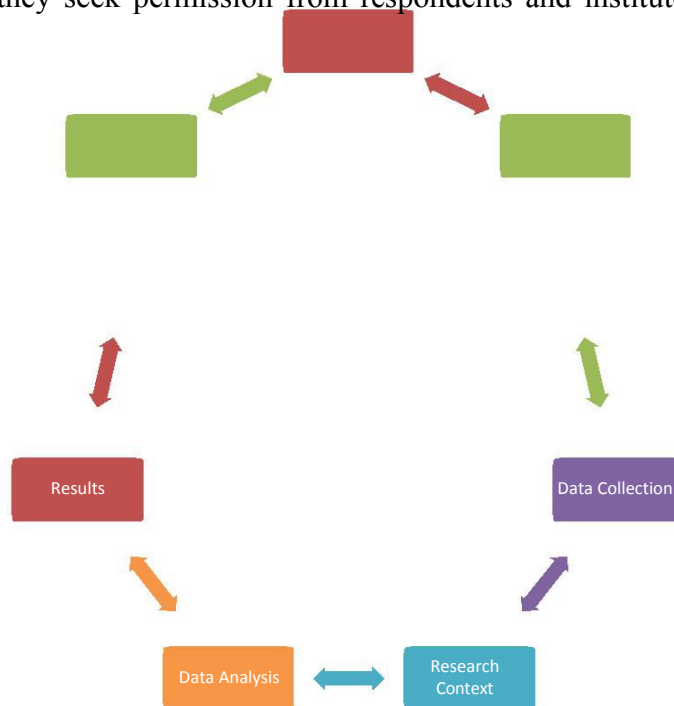
This factor revolves around the data analysis through statistical techniques. It explains related statistical techniques to get accurate results. Statistical techniques can play a role in the quality of research.

### 2.1.6 Results relevant to the aims of the study

This factor discusses the relevance of the aims of the study with the findings and the interpretation of the data. This factor explains the importance the recommendation and practical solutions for research problem.

### 2.1.7 Obtaining ethical approvals

This factor explains the students understand the importance of ethical approval for conducting research and they seek permission from respondents and institutes for data collection.



**Fig. No. 2** Research quality assessment model developed by Oluka, Nie and Sun (2014)

## 3. Methodology

### 3.1 Research Design

The researcher selected quantitative research approach for the conduct of research. The data was collected through the survey and was analyzed by using statistical tests.

### 3.2 Population

The study population was based on all the faculty members serving in distance education institutions at higher level. In Islamabad 04 public and 03 private sector universities are offering distance education programs. In these 07 universities 3,734 faculty members are hired. These were the population of the study. Following table No. 1 shows the detail of distance education institutions in Islamabad.

**Table No. 1 Population of the study**

S No	Name of university	Sector	Faculty
1	Allama Iqbal Open University	Public	159
2	COMSATS Institute of Information Technology	Public	2163
3	International Islamic University	Public	500
4	NUML	Public	513
5	Comwave institute of Sarhad University	Private	65
6	Virtual university of Islamabad	Private	280
7	Preston university	Private	54
<b>Total</b>			<b>3,734</b>

### 3.3 Sample

By using convenient sampling technique 100 faculty members were approached to get their views about quality of research. Out of these selected 100 respondents 66 respondents returned the survey sheet with complete information. Thus the response rate was 66%.

### 3.4 Data Collection Tool

To address the research variable (Quality of Research), a questionnaire was developed by the researcher in the light of theoretical parameters given by Obiageil crystal oluka, shaofa Nie, Yi sun (2014). Research quality assessment scale was divided into 7 sub sections (Clarity In Aims/ Questions, Study Method, Data Collection, Research Context, Data Analysis, Results and Ethical Approval) and was based on 34 items in total.

### 4.Data analysis

Data was collected through personal visits of one of the co-authors of the research. The following table explains the statistical tests used for the purpose of analysis.

**Table No. 2 Data Analysis**

S No	Objectives	Statistical Tests
1	To compare the perceptions of the teachers related to quality of research on the basis of gender	t-test
2	To compare the perceptions of the teachers related to	t-test

3	quality of research on the basis of sector To compare the perceptions of the teachers related to quality of research on the basis of age	ANOVA
4	To compare the perceptions of the teachers related to quality of research on the basis of academic qualification	ANOVA
5	To compare the perceptions of the teachers related to quality of research on the basis of professional Qualification	ANOVA
6	To compare the perceptions of the teachers related to quality of research on the basis of teaching experience.	ANOVA

#### 4.1. Results

**Table No. 3 Reliability Analysis of Quality Research Assessment Scale**

Scale	Items	Cronbach's Alpha reliability
Quality research assessment scale	34	0.94

Table No. 3 shows that the Cronbach's Alpha reliability of the research quality assessment scale was 0.94. That shows the tool was reliable and can be used in future researches as well.

**Table No. 4 Inter-Section Correlation of Quality research assessment scale (N=66)**

	Clarity In Aims/Questions,	Study Method,	Data Collection,	Research Context,	Data Analysis,	Results	Ethical Approval	Quality research assessment scale
Clarity In Aims/ Questions,	1							
Study Method,	0.840**	1						
Data Collection,			1					

Research Context,	882**	719**						1
Data Analysis,	794**	652**	685**					1
Results	813**	603**	737**	767**				1
Ethical Approval	723**	743**	650**	685**	697**			1
<b>Quality research assessment scale</b>	235	623**	193	136	063	096		1
	974**	932**	858**	784**	786**	782**	408**	

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table No. 4 shows the intersection correlation between the sub scales of the Quality assessment scale. The table indicates that the highest correlation (.974\*\*) was found between section Clarity in Aims/ Questions and the Quality research assessment scale

**Table No. 5: Teachers Perceptions related to Quality Research**

Quality Research Assessment Scale	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Clarity in Aims / Questions	66	73.03	18.353
Study Method,	66	46.83	10.113
Data Collection,	66	11.77	3.637
Research Context,	66	11.52	3.579
Data Analysis,	66	11.27	3.715
Results	66	14.62	4.553
Ethical Approval	66	16.80	4.811

Table No. 5 shows that in the perception of teachers, students were somehow better in “clarity in aims” (Mean= 18.35) and “study methods” (10.11). However the condition of “data collection, understanding research context, data analysis, finding

results and getting ethical approvals” was not very good. Thus there is a need of improvement in all related areas of research.

**Table No 6: Objective No. 1: To Compare the Perceptions related to Quality of Research on the basis of Gender**

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	t	df	sig
Research Quality	Male	31	109.52	1.67	64	.09
	Female	35	99.97			

Table No. 6 shows that there was statistically no significant difference ( $t = 1.67$ ) found between male and female respondents’ perception related to the quality of research produced in distance education institutions. Thus the hypothesis No.1 is approved.

**Table No. 7: Objective No 2: To Compare the Perceptions related to Quality of Research on the basis of Sector**

Variable	Sector	N	Mean	t	df	sig
Research Quality	Public	36	106.33	.71	64	.47
	Private	30	102.20			

Table No. 7 shows that there was no statistically significant ( $t = .71$ ) difference found between public and private sector related to the quality of research. Thus the hypothesis No. 2 is approved.

**Table No. 8: Objective No. 3: To Compare the Perceptions related to Quality of Research on the basis of Age**

Variable	Age	N	Mean	F	df	Sig
Research Quality	20-30	14	107.57	.34	63	.71
	31-40	42	104.60			
	41+	10	99.50			

Table No. 8 shows that there was statistically no difference ( $F = .34$ ) found in the opinion of faculty members on the basis of age difference related to the quality of research. Thus the hypothesis No. 3 was approved.

**Table No. 9: Objective No. 4: To Compare the Perceptions related to Quality of Research on the basis of Academic Qualification**

Variable	Academic Qualification	N	Mean	F	df	sig
<b>Research Quality Assessment Scale</b>	Masters	4	91.50	2.25	62	.09
	M.Phil	41	110.07			
	Ph.D.	20	95.75			
	Any other	01	100.00			

Table No. 9 shows that there was statistically no significant ( $F = 2.25$ ) difference found in the opinion of teachers on the basis of academic qualification relate to the research quality. Thus hypothesis No. 4 is approved.

**Table No. 10 Objective No. 5: To Compare the Perceptions related to Quality of Research on the basis of Professional Qualification**

Variable	Professional Qualification	N	Mean	F	df	sig
<b>Research Quality Assessment</b>	B.Ed.	14	102.57	1.26	62	.29
	M.Ed.	24	104.50			
	Any other	10	94.10			



None 18 111.61

Table No. 10 shows that there was statistically no significant ( $F = 1.26$ ) difference found in the opinion of the teachers related to the quality of research on the basis of professional qualification. Thus hypothesis No. 5 is approved.

**Table No. 11 Objective No. 6: To Compare the Perceptions related to Quality of Research on the basis of Teaching Experience**

Variable	Teaching Experience	N	Mean	F	df	sig
<b>Research Quality Assessment</b>	0-3	16	110.94	2.07	60	.08
	4-6	25	109.68			
	7-9	11	100.45			
	10-12	08	92.13			
	13-15	05	95.20			
	15+	01	59.00			

Table No. 11 shows that there was statistically no significant ( $F = 2.07$ ) difference found in the opinion of teachers on the basis of experience related on the views about research quality. Thus hypothesis No. 6 is also approved.

### 5. Discussion

Research is the mother of all developments. This is one of the common area that is the part of education in all fields (Birnbaum, 2001). Students from any field of education need to understand and conduct research at higher level of education. This is considered as the compulsory part of degree requirement.

The purpose of this compulsion is to develop a research related attitude among students. However in distance education system students are not in full time contact of

their teachers as in regular system. Thus they need more attention and guidance in this field (Willis, 1994). This field demands clarity of concepts, positive attitude and training. Keeping in view the importance of research the study was designed to see the demographic diversity and its effect on the quality of research produced by distance education (Meyer, 2002). The data collected in this research shows that our students need to improve data collection techniques, understanding research context, data analysis techniques, drawing findings and understanding ethics in research. The study was based on 06 null hypotheses in order to find difference in perception of teachers on the basis of gender, sector, age, academic qualification, professional qualification and experience.

The data showed that no statistically significant difference found between any compared groups. Thus all hypotheses approved. It shows that in the perception of teachers from all sectors, gender, age, groups, academic/professional qualification and experience were almost same. So students from all group are in need of guidance, facilities and training on equal basis.

### **6.Recommendations**

1. It is recommended to improve the research quality in distance education system that each department may maintain a research library within the departments for the case of assess of the students. Students may get sample researches to be consulted in order to clear their ideas.
2. It is also recommended that the research counselor or mentor may be hired specially in distance education institutions only to ensure full time availability of guidance service for research students.
3. There is a need of establishing computer labs with latest technology to facilitate the research students. Internet and access to valuable online journals need to be provided.
4. To maintain quality of research continuous workshops & training sessions need to be organized for students of all levels, age groups & qualification.

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## Uses and Applications of Assessment Modes in E-Learning System

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Munazza Mahmood, <sup>2</sup>Memoona Bibi

### Abstract

*In the response of the recent emphasis on the valuable assessment in higher education, careful assessment in e-learning has also become continuously important for accountability and accreditation purpose. As the e-learning is concerned, e-students concentrate through precise combination of interactive media, computerized or simple, on line or distance. The assessment of e-learning is normally controlled through different types of assessments including; focus based assessment directed at an assigned testing focus under the nearby supervision of proctors and the assessment of assignments, for example, reports; tasks, and activities submitted by means of email. The main objective of the study was to; to know about the most frequently assessment methods used in e-learning system and uses and application of modes of assessment in e-learning. Research articles, thesis, case studies and e-books were used to collect the literature. After the literature analysis it was found that there are many approaches of assessment that can be used in e-learning assessment but the most important is that when e-assessment is to be implemented it should be compared with the directions in which students are to be taught. Both e-learning and e-assessment must be significant for the progress of the students.*

**Key Words:** E-Learning, E-assessment, Assessment Mode.

### 1.Introduction

The computer-based learning and training entered the nineties with four things conflicting with it. In the first place, innovation changes made it practically difficult to serve every one of the stages that were being used. Second, the restrictions of both equipment and programming rendered programs exhausting and unauthentic. Third, the developing instability of content, and improvement expenses and time, made individuals difficult about spending the money expected to assemble and send a powerful framework. Lastly, the restrictions and issues connected with computer innovation, and in addition an absence of attention to current instructional outline approaches, decreased the commitment of more propelled learning approaches (Meyen, Skrtic, Deshler, Lenz, Sailor & Chaffin, 2000).

A valuable change in the assessment of higher education is getting familiar by changing emphasize from input (number of credit hours taken by the student in a subject) to outcomes (what students have learned and what they are able to do). The e-learning assessment depends on the three major criteria;

1. E-Learning is organized, which makes it fit for moment upgrading, storage/recovery, dispersion and sharing of instruction or information.
2. It is conveyed to the end-user by means of a computer utilizing standard internet innovation.
3. It spotlights on the broadest perspective of learning arrangements that go past the conventional standards of training.

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<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Education, International Islamic University, Islamabad

<sup>2</sup> Ph. D Scholar, Department of Education, International Islamic University, Islamabad

The Web as a specialized instrument has been produced and refined to simulate the greater part of the arrangements utilizing before advances including the face-to-face classroom. The main purpose of the creation of e-learning advancement is E-learning advancements have created to the degree that quality teacher-student exercises can be upheld either among groups or separately and in either constant (synchronously) or in deferred time (no concurrently) (Zou, 2008).

With e-learning, we're not simply presenting new innovation for learning but we are acquainting another path with consider learning. Learning does not really require training or direction. Individuals learn in numerous ways through access to well-designed information, by utilizing new execution upgrading instruments, through experience, and from each other. In the event that we consider learning in this wide viewpoint, it will be less demanding to see new choices for enhancing performance. (Petty, 2016)

The crucial standards of e-learning are:

- Scalability; e-learning can be scaled almost limitlessly at minimal extra cost
- Access; e-learning is accessible anyplace there is an Internet association.
- Timeliness; e-learning can be consistently redesigned with new data and knowledge generally cost adequately.

Interestingly, traditional methods of delivery do not have every one of the three qualities including; an educator can only be accessible to such a large number of individuals at a time, is not accessible at whatever time and anyplace to the learner and may not be fully informed regarding the most recent data and thoughts. Delivery of e-learning can either be synchronous, with participants signed on together in virtual classrooms, or non-concurrent in which courses are self-guided taken by means of the Internet, CDROM, or streamed audio-video Web presentation (Rowlands, 2001).

The development and provision of e-learning products and opportunities are one of the most increasingly growing areas of education and training. However e-learning is thorough internet, multimedia, computer etc. but the development and assessment of e-learning is the mostcritical aspect. The most energizing thing about e-learning is that organizations are together for empowering between huge innovation and media companies, leading global colleges, and enterprising new e-learning organizations (Yorke, 2005).

Assessment in e-learning is to be discussed as vital forthe process of learning and as a major aspect of the management system. It is to be recommended that assessments in e-learning should measure student performance execution and result in criticism to students about their execution. There are nine decisions that should be considered while developing assessments for e-learning instructions;

1. Which points of view of learning will be assessed, intellectual (acquisition of information), behavioral (ability advancement), or humanistic (qualities and attitudes)?
2. Who is going to make the assessment, the student, their companions, or the educator?
3. Will assessment techniques be learning encounters in themselves?
4. Is the evaluation to be formative (giving input amid learning) or summative (measuring learning toward the end of the procedure)?
5. Are judgments of performance to make against associate principles (standard referenced) or set up criteria (paradigm referenced)?

6. By what means can assessment give a harmony amongst structure and flexibility?
7. Will the evaluation be true, identified with genuine circumstances?
8. Will the appraisal be coordinated, trying a scope of learning and abilities?
9. In what manner can validity and reliability of assessment be guaranteed? (QAA, 2007).

However, effective usage of e-learning requires institutional support. This support is not restricted to the arrangement of an e-learning platform, technical help, and investigating additionally incorporates data accessibility. While authoritative support for e-learning can prompt to more noteworthy fulfillment, it can also affect the selection of such frameworks. For sure, e-learning is regularly presented at a rapid rate; if representatives are to be quick to embrace such innovations, they require extensive support, preparing, and direction on the most proficient method to utilize the e-learning framework (Nicol, 2009).

### **1.1 Objectives**

1. To know about the mostly used assessment methods in e-learning system.
2. To explore the uses and applications of modes of e-learning assessment.

### **1.2 Research Questions**

1. What are the most frequently methods used in the assessment of e-learning system?
2. What are the possible applications of assessment modes in e-learning environment?

## **2.Literature Review**

### **2.1 Introduction and Importance of Assessment in e-learning**

These days, e-learning has turned into a mainstream method for learning, it has expanded exponentially lately. With a specific end goal to support the change of e-learning quality, assortments of value measures are produced by analysts and associations. Assessment models and structures differ starting with one setting then onto the next as per the particular yield and reason measure. They concentrate on mechanical viewpoints or on instructive view or on the instructional class or on expanding learner's fulfillment (Northcote, Kendle, 2007).

It is to be suggested by the Graham (2001) that there are two types of feedback that are required in the e-learning environment including; information feedback and acknowledged feedback. With the coming of the World Wide Web and data innovation (IT), it has turned out to be less demanding to execute an e-learning educational modules. An e-learning condition encourages student learning without the requirements of time and separation, giving students more chances to control their own learning (Graham, Cagiltay, Lim, Craner, Duffy, 2001). There are three methods of learning discussed by the Harasim (2000) to differentiate the e-learning from the traditional learning;

- Adjunct mode; utilizes networking to upgrade face-to-face or distance education.

- Mixed mode; utilizes networking as important portion of a traditional classroom or distance course.
- Totally online mode; depends on networking as the primary teaching medium for a whole course or program (Harasim, 2000).

According to Jain, 2002 e-learning can be thought to be very identified with learning and instructing (Jain et al., 2002). In this manner, instructional methods are imperative viewpoints for all features of e-learning, coming to from the production of the courseware and use of an e-learning framework to the assessment of the learning progress (Gunawardena & McIsaac, 2003). Considering the conventional showing process, the instructor needs to choose which abilities must be mastered by the understudies to which degree and how the consequence of the learning procedure ought to be measured. Such contemplations are normally acknowledged by deciding learning targets and evaluation techniques for a course (Chellman & Duschateln 2000).

### **2.2 Assessment, Accreditation and e-Learning**

A 2002 report entitled "Accreditation and Assuring Quality in Distance Learning," from the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) reports that 5,655 institutions are licensed by the 17 institutional accreditors, regional and national, in their study. Of these, 1,979 institutions offer a type of distance delivered learning system or courses, a few prompting to degrees.

Evaluation of student performance must exhibit results tantamount to those for private projects. The institution must archive that it leads course/program assessments, including assessment of instructive results, student maintenance and situation, and student, staff, and manager fulfilment." In brief, the utilization of e-learning is expanding among schools and colleges and accreditors are reacting with guidelines intended to guarantee quality, including an emphasis on assessment of student learning results. Be that as it may, a late review found that exclusive 41 percent of designing educators who utilize the Internet for direction report that they assess the Internet parts of their courses (Nickles & Pritchett, 2002).

### **2.3 Usability Assessment in e-Learning System**

Usability is a portrayal of user interface quality and one of the fundamental concentrations in communication framework plan. As indicated by The International Standards Organization (ISO-9241), usability is a point of confinement of effectiveness, productivity, and fulfilment of a client with respect to the utilization of a framework to finish a specific objective. With regards to e-Learning, the issue of usability has turned into the concentration these days by making students connected with the framework and how to make students cooperate with it (Semugabi and Villiers, 2010). The act of convenience assessment in e-Learning is about the usability perspectives itself advanced by the communication outline idea, academic adequacy, learning substance, and what number of backings that can be earned by learners. In this way, convenience assessment in an e-Learning framework ought to be centred on the procedures that are upheld by the framework. There are certain usability factors that are in connected with the e-learning system including;

1. Content; includes all of those languages, terms, learning and supporting material that is being used in the e-learning system.
2. Learning and support; all those characteristics that are directly linked with the learning instructions, discussions and assessment.



3. Accessibility; summarizes having the access of website pages and other sources.
4. Motivation to learn; supporting and engaging the learners for learning (Smulders, 2002).

#### 2.4 E-Learning Assessment Modes, Uses and Application

Instrument	Use and Application
<b>Online Discussion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporate discussion or participation online through chat rooms, gatherings and threaded discussion.</li> <li>• Facilitators can monitor commitments by learners as a part of the class assessment. Set tasks for individual or groups to finish.</li> <li>• Get input and review from different class individuals.</li> <li>• Set every learner a discrete region of work to review and investigate.</li> <li>• Add questionable statements to a threaded discussion and energize learner commitments, with the motivator of credit for interest numbering towards the general assessment.</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborative Assignments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set authentic tasks that groups need to examine and explain.</li> <li>• Learners must utilize online resources to work cooperatively, share resources and findings</li> <li>• Create learner correspondence and group building aptitudes that are so valued by employers.</li> </ul>
<b>Self-Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Give instant online input through surveys, multiple-choice questions and even through distribution of frequently asked questions (FAQs).</li> <li>• Permit learners to assemble the data they require to focus their study in ranges that need change</li> </ul>
<b>Online Exams</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direct and control online exams with begin and stop times, or with login passwords and timeouts</li> </ul>
<b>Online quizzes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize regular tests online for a little part of final assessment.</li> <li>• Tests can be utilized as developmental evaluation during the course, guaranteeing adequate abilities furthermore, information have been accomplished before endeavouring a final assessment.</li> </ul>
<b>Computer-marked</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set multiple choice tests as a speedy and simple indicator to learner and facilitator alike of the learner's progress because they are simple to manage to huge groups of learners and can be set aside a few</li> </ul>



<b>assignments</b>	minutes and place helpful to the learner.
<b>Portfolios</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portfolios are created utilizing an assortment of online devices or computer programming items.</li> <li>• Learning administration frameworks frequently have portfolio offices where learners can accumulate a scope of materials fitting to the course.</li> </ul>
<b>Role play</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build up a role play to permit learners to get into the character of the general population they are exploring.</li> <li>• Learners can go up against a part which they can inquire about, create and carry on.</li> </ul>
<b>Email</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Utilize email for getting and following reports, assignments furthermore, articles.</li> <li>• Return work by email with explanations or, with learner authorization, results can be set on bulletin boards for further discourse or associate audit.</li> </ul>
<b>Web Publication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Motivate learners to compose and distribute articles and assignments in online distributions considering peer also, workforce survey.</li> <li>• Get help and set up a class web based diary with the goal that student work can be distributed and surveyed on the web.</li> <li>• Build up an online frequently asked questions (FAQs) page where regularly asked messages or fascinating messages can be addressed to freely.</li> </ul>
<b>Web design and development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In information technology courses, learners can finish tasks that add to the outline and advancement of their own particular site.</li> </ul>
<b>Peer Review</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Permit learners to survey each other's work.</li> <li>• Urge learners to share their work to expand upon the aggregate aptitudes and learning of the gathering.</li> </ul>

### 2.5 Restrictions of Assessment in the E-Learning Situation

Here are some of the restrictions that are to be found by the many writers while examining the literature review about e-learning system;

- **All sort of abilities;** information, aptitudes, and states of mind might be intervened inside an e-learning condition. In this manner, it is conceivable to make learning content including realities applicable for a learner, guidelines how to accomplish an aptitude, or data around a normal conduct. In this way, innovation can be viewed as an empowering

agent for these sorts of abilities, since data can be improved with mixed media resources (Gunawardena and McIsaac, 2003; Park and Lee, 2003).

- **Within an e-learning framework, goals should be characterized in regards to the objective gathering.** As for the institutionalization procedure in the field of e-learning determinations, a target can be viewed as a state inside the framework and does not inform any thing regarding the level of the learning objective. Moreover, it is not really conceivable to achieve learning targets for every one of the three sorts of skills inside an immaculate e-learning circumstance (ADL, 2004).

- Learning targets which are characterized by an educator dependably must be assessed somehow to grade the students and to enhance the nature of the course for future sessions. Considering the conceivable outcomes of e-learning, it is very much archived that we can evaluate the picked up information by utilizing restricted decision questions like tests or different decision questions (Scouller, 1998; Park and Lee, 2003).

### **2.6. Conclusion**

The progression of education from multiple points of view relies upon assessment. Quality assessment structures and models can give associations, people and instructors with valuable data to propel the field all through the assessment of student's execution and the measure of student's fulfilment. Online e-Learning is another option to conventional face-to-face education. The achievement of e-learning can be asses by utilizing, learning styles, learning condition, learning results, showing practices and money saving advantages. Numerous foundations actualize e-Learning to address students' issues, particularly those of non-traditional students with full time employments. Since e-Learning is directed utilizing the Internet and World Wide Web, the learning condition turns out to be more complicated. Students' who are initially received the satisfaction with the technology based e-learning would be able to decide the continuity of the system usage. These days advanced education institutions need to actualize distance education administrations to support the online enrolled students in more advantageous ways. Online instruction administrations are less expensive, powerful, and usable when contrasted with mixed and face to face learning conditions. It is to be needed that e-learning frameworks must incorporate instructional outline based content and web site usability to trigger the students.

In this era, e-Learning is as yet developing quickly, supported by expanding complexity of data innovation and by better comprehension of how to make content and conveyance of e-courses more compelling. In addition, different sorts of e-learning emotionally supportive network have been progressively acquainted with advanced education establishments with an end goal to meet the student focused learning ideal models prescribed by (UNESCO, 1998).

### **3. Discussion**

It is to be considered that e-Learning is fundamentally an online network that makes data or information accessible to clients or learners and slights time limitations or geographic closeness. Although internet learning has advantages over traditional face-to-face instruction (Piccoli et al., 2001), concerns incorporate time, work escalation, and material assets required in running e-learning situations. The costly high disappointment rate of e-Learning usage examined by Arbaugh & Duray (2002) merits consideration from administration and system designers.

Numerous researchers from psychology and data framework systems have distinguished essential factors managing e-Learning. Among them, the innovation acknowledgment model (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1977; Davis, Bagozzi, & Warshaw, 1989; Oliver, 1980), and the desire and affirmation model (Bhattacharjee, 2001; Lin, Wu, and Tsai, 2005; Wu et al., 2006) have mostly added to understanding e-Learning achievement.

Assessment of students' learning and assessment of instructions are of basic significance and can be upheld by e-learning innovation and procedures (Buzzetto-More and Alade, 2016). Great evaluation, particularly of developmental nature, is unpredictable and considerable exertion is required here. Innovation in e-learning makes great developmental assessment practical by removing some of the effecting factors hindering the higher education (Committee on the Foundations of Assessment, 2001). Advancements and methodologies in e-learning can aid the assessment cycle for developmental evaluation of student work (Blayney and Freeman, 2004).

More usefully a comprehensive study conducted by the Australian Flexible Learning Structure for the National Vocational Education and Training System, recognizes key focuses for the execution of e-learning assessment to produce a quality result by following four basic stages.

1. The Planning Stage; Use the skills and learning that you have created for face-to-face delivery and assessment to help control your decision of assessment devices and procedures.
2. Developing Strategies; consider the skills and information that are to be evaluated and decide the best techniques to gather the evidence.
3. Implementation; clearly express the criteria for evaluation forthright to learners. Trust that simple technology can be as powerful as complex technology.
4. Assessor Support and Review; Share resources with individuals in comparative fields to help improve your own materials. Utilize the online condition to survey, think about and assess your evaluation methodologies, prove gathered to approve appraisal (Booth, Clayton, Hartcher, Hungar, Hyde & Wilson, 2003).

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## **Reflective practice and action research: A holistic view in distance education teaching learning environment**

<sup>1</sup>Dr Wajeeha Shahid, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Azhar Mehmood

### **Abstract**

*Reflective practice and action research have captured the attention and imagination of educational community in the recent times. Both are considered to be inevitable and critical dimensions of professional development of teachers. Similarly, distance education is gaining popularity day by day, thus increasing the sense of responsibility for teachers as well as students enrolled. Educational institutions are dedicated to cater to diverse need of enrolled students by providing high quality education through emerging technologies. This article explores the critical part action research can play in enhancing reflective practices of teachers which may lead to their ultimate professional development. The article challenges the perceptions of distance education teachers about reflective practice and action research. It takes into account holistic view of both constructs as considering them inseparable elements for improving distance education teaching learning environment. This research suggests that distance education teachers are well aware of the importance of both, but process and practical implementation of action research as effective tool for reflective practice is need of the day. This target may only be achieved through administrative support, on-line sessions, monetary and non-monetary incentives for teachers and personal commitment. Practical implementation of conduction of action research in the domain of distance education may go a long way in improving the whole instructional environment.*

**Key words:** *Reflective practice, action research, perception, holistic view, distance education*

### **1.Introduction**

#### **1.1 Reflective Practice**

Reflective practice is the ability to reflect upon one's own actions in order to engage in the process of continuous professional development. The process of reflective practice involves paying attention to every day actions and assessing practice reflexively and reflectively. Reflective practice can be an important tool for self-development in professional settings specially such settings where people learn from their own professional and personal experiences rather than formal system of knowledge transfer. A reflective person not only looks back on past events and actions, but also takes conscious look at experiences, actions, emotions and responses and then use this information to add to his/her existing knowledge base and ultimately reach a higher understanding level (Loughran, 2002). In reflective practices the teacher thinks and focuses on his/her daily teaching and as well as on educational structures in which teacher and student work (Joyce, 2015)). The reflection is a process in which teachers experience those troublesome

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<sup>1</sup>Lecturer, Department of Education, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad

<sup>2</sup> Associate Professor, Department of Education, International Islamic University Islamabad



event and difficulties which are solved immediately. Reflection starts from when a teacher examines his /her experiences and relevant knowledge so that he/she can find importance in his or her beliefs. Teachers are enabling by reflection to direct and plan their activities with full consideration (John Dewey, 1933). By reflective practices teacher practitioners are able to develop a greater level of self-awareness. This self-awareness is related to their nature and awareness about the impact of their performance. This awareness generates opportunities for teacher practitioners for the professional development and growth (Ahmed, 2013). Teacher gives attention toward what is happening in teaching learning situation and thinks about those alternatives that are helpful for achieving educational goals aims.

Reflective practice for teachers is a process of reflection in which teachers experience those experiences, difficulties and troublesome events that are not resolved instantly. Reflection starts from when a teacher examines his /her experiences and relevant knowledge so that he/she can find importance in his or her beliefs. Teachers are enabling by reflection to direct and plan their activities with full consideration (John Dewey, 1933). Reflection includes skills those are observation, self-awareness, critical thinking, self-evaluation and taking other's perspectives. And integration of these skills result understanding for future planning and for goal setting (Mann et al, 2009). Reflection is a source of continuous personal and professional growth. Reflection gives opportunities for professionals to renovate and refresh their practices. Teachers get information related to their teaching through their own observation of themselves; combine with their own reflections (Paulson & Kenneth cited in Sweigard, 2007).

### **1.2 Action research**

Action research is an organized inquiry where teachers assemble information relevant to school functions that how teachers can teach and how learning can happen for students in a better way. The information is gathered with the goals of attaining approaches, developing reflective practices, valuable positive change in educational practice, school environment and brings improvement in students' outcomes (Donato, 2003). It is a tool that helps teachers and educators to discover new strategies to improve teaching practices (Sagor, 2004). In teaching for the purpose of making improvement and development, research is needed for teachers to conduct in learning environments. Action research is performed by teachers and also for teachers' as well. It is necessary for teachers to know what is really happening in learning environment. Action research can make teachers aware about their practices and gives power to them to play leadership roles in their on teaching environment. Through action research teachers become more responsible, answerable and self-directed (Day, 1987). For school managerial staff, stakeholders and teachers, action research is remarkable opportunity to think about it in the teaching and learning situation (Mills, 2011).

Action research provide new knowledge and understanding to practitioners about how they can bring improvement in educational practices, and how they can determine significant problem in teaching learning settings (Mill, 2011; Stringer, 2008). As action research is relative to a limited small area, and its only aim is to discover, develop and monitor changes to practices (Donato, 2003). Action research provides bridge to cover gap between research and practices. The theoretical works support action research practices, these theoretical works are used to help teacher practitioners to consider and monitor what is happening in classroom environment. At that time, the practitioners have best practice in

mind, these collected data helps in understanding or telling theories and researches that are relevant to best practices (Johstan, 2005). Action research makes teachers habitual to become continuous learner for the improvement of the professional temperament of teachers with in the productive learning environment.

Action research further gives confidents to teachers' practitioners to examine the dynamics of their teaching practice, think over the actions and interactions of the students. Action research also persuades teachers to conform and challenge the existing practices, and immediately take risk in the process (Mills, 2011). These actions are similar to those actions which are daily and regularly practiced by teacher. Action research encourages teacher practitioners everywhere to examine and assess their teaching work. Teachers ask to themselves, what am I doing? What do I need to improve? How do I improve it? These descriptions of practices show that how teachers are trying too much to get improvement in their own learning and others' (McNiff and Whitehead, 2006).

### **1.3 Role of action research as effective tool for reflective practices in distance education**

Reflective practices and action research have same concept of bring improvement in teaching practices and student learning process, and also bringing improvement in student motivation. Both engage teachers in a series of actions that are found in the action research spiral; however to solve a particular problem action research includes some specific strategic actions that are corresponding to purposeful planned attempt (McMahon, 1999). Action research is a form of self-reflective inquiry which is undertaken by participants in order to improve their own practices.

Distance education or on-line education is gaining popularity day by day, thus increasing the sense of responsibility for tutors as well as students enrolled. Educational institutions are dedicated to cater to diverse need of enrolled students by providing high quality education through emerging technologies. Distance education serves large number of students who cannot attend formal system due to financial, social, time or geographical constraints. On line tutors or teachers catering to the needs of students enrolled in distance education have to perform multiple roles such as facilitator, subject expert, knowledge disseminator, coach and assessor. On-line tutoring enables to build up a virtual environment in which learners and teachers are separated by space & time but connected through emerging technologies and internet. Distance education reflects and respects diversity through practising various approaches for distinct learners. Reason, 2001 suggested that action research can be an individual inquiry into one's own practice, or can be an enquiry involving wider communities or larger groups where participants may or may not have face to face interactions or be known personally to each other.

Action research is authentic and significant to the distance education teachers, because it helps them for self-reflection. Action research permits teachers to get ownership over their teaching. Action research is an alluring alternative for distance education teacher researchers, school and administrative staff, furthermore, different stakeholders in the teaching and learning situations to consider (Mills, 2011). In reflective practices, teachers involves in a continuous cycle of self-observation and self-evaluation so that to understand those action and reactions that are theirs' own they prompt themselves and in learners (Brookfield 1999; Thiel 1999; Cunningham 2001). The different model suggested by different authors.





**Figure 1.** The seven steps in action research (McBride 1989).

There are seven steps in conducting action research, identifying a focus of interest or a problem, collecting data, analyzing data/generating hypothesis, planning action, implementing action, collecting data to monitor changes, analysis and evaluation (McBride 1989). The basic aim of action research is to make improvement in practices instead of produce knowledge. It is ensure in improving practices that practitioner end values are realized in concrete forms of action. Consequently reflective practices in action research aims to improve the realization of process values (Elliott 1991). Action research makes improvement in practice by bringing development in practitioner's capability for unfairness and judgment in exacting complex human situation. It unites inquiry that includes the performance's improvement and development of persons in their professional role. Elliot (1991) conceives two techniques of performance that how distance education teachers reflectively develop their practices. Firstly, they identify a practical problem and then take decision to do research on this problem. So here teacher first efforts to recognize the problem related to teaching and learning before bringing changes in teaching learning process-“reflection initiates action”. Secondly, after understanding that there is sensible problem the teacher then brings change in some aspects of her/his teaching using a newer on-line strategy. Teacher examines the effectiveness of change and resolves it. During assessment the teacher realizes that the problem is modified and changed. The teacher's decision to take on a change strategy consequently leads the development of

understanding here ; action initiates reflection (Elliott 1991). Action research in to teaching practices for distance education teachers is a major source of learning and improvement in on-line settings. For action research is relative to a limited small area, and its only aim is to discover, develop and monitor changes to practices. A key question arises that, are AR and RP the same thing? Elliott's (1991) argues that "action research in the kind of reflective practice which aims to improve the realization of process values". The significance given to how reflective practice is completed will decide if what is occurring is action research. Action research therefore can't happen without reflective practice. Reflective practice and action research have often been recognized as synonymous, and the term are sometimes used interchangeably (Johnson, 2005; McMahan, 1990). Both concepts have the same aim to make improvement in practice and student learning and motivation. Both involves the teacher in series of action that are found in the action research spiral; on the other hand action research includes "strategic action" which leads to purposeful and planned efforts to solve a particular problem (McMahan, 1999). Even though teachers are engage in reflective practices may sometime take decision to act upon reflection by taking definite actions, reflections on practices are not followed by action research.

#### **1.4 Statement of the problem**

Distance education has gained popularity in these times. Learners have a flexibility of time and space while opting for distance learning. Similarly teachers involved in this mode of teaching and learning are facing challenging situation due to higher student expectations from them as a result of exposure to latest technology and information through internet. Teacher needs to constantly research on pedagogy and curriculum. Some other responsibilities of distance education teachers include motivating students towards research, evaluating their progress and reporting results. Improvement in distance education is inevitable through research and reflection. This study aims at finding out role of action research as an effective tool for reflective practices in distance education teaching learning scenario.

#### **1.5 Objectives of the study**

Objectives of the study were to:

1. To investigate the concept of reflective practices among distance education teachers.
2. To explore the perceptions of distance education teachers about action research.
3. To assess the role of action research as effective tool for reflective practices for distance education teachers.

#### **1.6 Research questions**

1. What are distance education teachers' perceptions about reflective practices?
2. What are distance education teachers' perceptions about action research?
3. What is the role of action research as effective tool for reflective practices for distance education teachers?

#### **1.7 Significance of the study**

This study will be helpful specifically for teacher educators and tutors engaged in on-line/ distance education for their continuous professional development. The results of this study may provide an insight into current reflective practices and use of action research in professional development of teaching faculty engaged in distance education. Similarly, the master trainers engaged for professional training and development of

distance education teachers may get a guideline about implementing action research as one of the most effective tool in enhancing reflective practices in teaching learning environment.

## 2.Methodology

This study constituted of descriptive survey quantitative research design. A self-constructed 5 point Likert scale questionnaire built upon 20 statements and two sub sections; one for exploring perceptions regarding reflective practice and other for assessing perceptions about effective use of action research among distance education teachers was used to collect required data. Pilot testing of the research tool confirmed its reliability at  $r = 0.86$ , whereas construct validity was taken from two experts of the field. Respondents were asked to mark their agreement or disagreement against each statement. This study was delimited to COMSATS Virtual Campus Islamabad only.

### 2.1 Population and Sample

Population included all the distance education teachers serving in COMSATS Virtual Campus Islamabad. It comprised of 65 teachers serving in four faculties namely, Humanities, Management Sciences, Computer Sciences and Mathematics. 100% of the population was taken as sample of the study. Total responses received on the questionnaire were 57 (87.69%). Statistical treatment of the research instrument included calculation of frequencies and mean scores for data analysis.

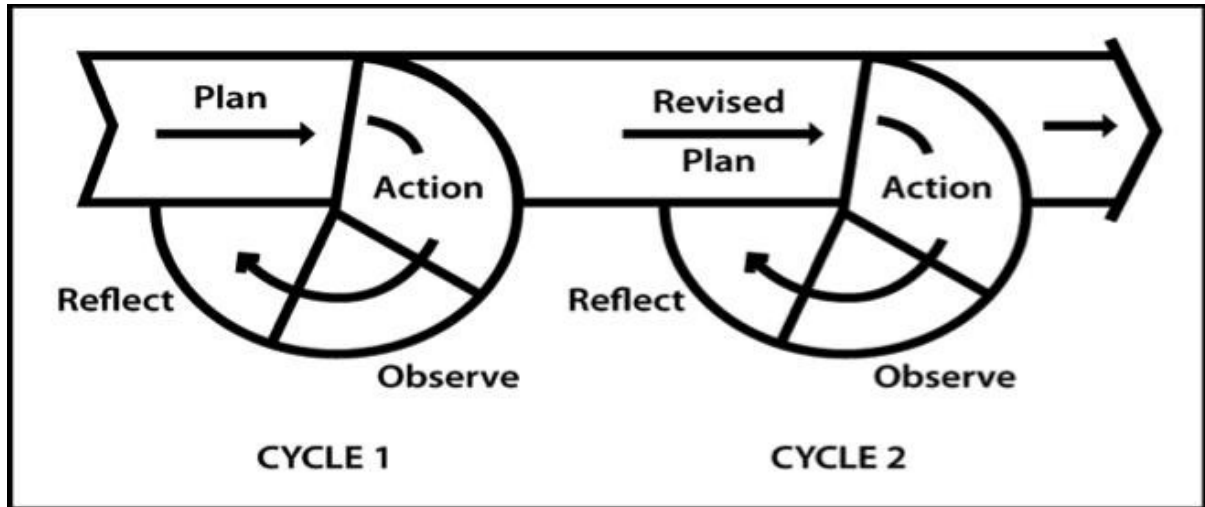
## 3.Results and discussion

Data analysis was done on the basis of responses given by respondents on the self-constructed 5 point likert scale questionnaire. Descriptive statistics was calculated using mean scores on the statements and the results as follows:

<b>Section A: Perceptions about Reflective Practice</b>		
<b>S.No</b>	<b>Statement</b>	<b>Mean Score</b>
1	I make decisions about events as they happen.	3.45
2	I think about events and reasons for actions afterwards.	4.01
3	I research/investigate issues to solve problems.	3.56
4	I write notes which I review (e.g., diary, journal).	3.65
5	I talk with others about events / issues.	4.76
6	I explore theories, models, etc., relating to my issues.	3.54
7	I seek/get feedback from others about events/issues for action research.	4.78
8	I make image/sound record of events/issues.	4.02
9	I question my own ideas and beliefs.	4.79
10	Reflective practice helps in continuous professional development	4.89
<b>Section B: Perceptions about use of Action Research</b>		
11	Action research is done by all teachers in their own teaching context.	3.02
12	Action research brings changes in teaching and learning practices.	4.89
13	Action research is an effective tool for reflection.	4.06
14	Action research can be carried out easily in distance education.	3.72
15	I am quite familiar with action research processes.	4.79
16	Action research is problem focused.	4.73
17	Action research helps to improve distance learning procedures.	4.12

18	Action research helps to improve teaching practices.	4.09
19	Action research is not related to solving problems of distance learning.	2.00
20	I can improve my instructional design through action research.	3.36

The changing roles of students and teachers in distance education are influencing classical education standards and pedagogy. According to research findings, distance education teachers are aware about reflective practices being carried out by them in instructional domain. Reflective practice demands that teachers investigate issues to resolve teaching learning problems. Similarly, writing reflective journals help teachers to recall the events/ problems and then critically reflect upon them for further application in action research. Distance education teachers are catering to a wide diversity of students with less geographic boundaries, so their problems of teaching are unique also. These research findings are consistent with the previous researches (Paula, 2009 and Marina, 2016). Research provides data to compare effectiveness of the teaching and learning in a great variety of situations in distance education. Distance learning in a high-tech, global environment presents new roles and responsibilities for both teacher and learners of distance education. In addition; there is a radical change in construction and delivery of course content in distance education. Media to facilitate interaction between and among learners, teachers, and content increases the opportunity for in-depth and meaningful learning. Distance education teachers can follow the model given below to incorporate action research as effective tool for enhancing their reflective practices.



Source: (Santally, Dorothy, Noel & Caroline, 2015)

#### 4. Conclusion

On the basis of research findings, following conclusions were drawn:

1. Majority of the distance education teachers (86%) strongly agreed that they reflect upon events and incidents for actions afterwards. They agreed that critical events in their teaching situation are starting point for doing action research.
2. Majority of the teachers (89%) strongly agreed that talking about teaching learning events with their colleagues help them to find avenues for action research.

3. Majority of teachers (79%) agreed that they questioned about their own ideas and beliefs which helps them to move forward towards higher levels of reflection.
4. It was concluded by majority of distance education teachers (82%) that reflective practice paves a way to observe teaching deficiencies. This can be helpful in providing a strong foundation for action research.
5. Distance education teachers (88%) were familiar with the concept of action research but they were not familiar with the process and practical implication of action research in distance education.
6. It was concluded that majority of the teachers (72%) agreed that they did not have tradition of conducting action research for active problem solving and improving instructional practices.

#### **4.Recommendations**

On the basis of research findings and conclusions, following recommendations are suggested:

1. In the first step, distance education teachers may be motivated to carry out short reflections on their teaching sessions. These reflections may start by writing down what went well in on-line tutoring or what could have been improved in the session.
2. Teachers may be informed about importance of action research for reflective practice through awareness seminars, e-sessions, blogs and networking. On-line discussion forums may be created to carry out awareness campaign about inevitable importance of action research in improvement of instructional environment.
3. Administrative bodies managing distance education may create a supportive and positive environment for distance education teachers to conduct action research, reflect upon it through preparing written reports and draft a road map for self-development.
4. On-line teachers' training workshops may be arranged to train and guide teachers in using action research effectively and efficiently for critical self- reflection.
5. Monetary and non-monetary benefits may be given to those teachers who integrate theory into practice by applying results of action research for professional development.

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## Effect of Cable TV on Educational Performance of Distance Learners

<sup>1</sup>Ms. Sehrish Javed, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Munazza Mahmood,

### Abstract

*The era in which we are living can be characterized as the age of message uprising a cycle of profound and accelerating social and cultural changes often recognized to the crash of new media technologies. With the progress in technology, media studies need to be shifted towards those new technological gadgets that seem to become globally popular. Current study was proposed to discover the impact of cable television on the educational productivity of university distance learners. Objectives of the study were to what extent distance learners spend their time in watching TV, to find out the programmes which distance learners keenly watch, to find out the effect of programmes on their academic performance, to investigate the effect of programs on the educational performance of the distance learners, to analyze the effect of cable T.V on the life style of the distance learners. Population of the study comprised of distance learners of three public sector distance learning universities including International Islamic University Islamabad, Allama Iqbal Open University and Virtual University. Ninety distance learners were selected as sample of the study. On the basis of variables self developed questionnaire was prepared for the collection of data. Data were analyzed through percentages. Major findings of the study were most of the distance educational learners accepted that Cable TV effect their performance positively and in some cases negatively because it depends on use of viewers. Most of the learners agreed that the programmes they watch on TV will be helpful in their study and grades. The purpose of the respondents' for watching was greatly based upon relaxation, entertainment and the quantity of time they spend in watching TV effects their learning positively because it gives the information about science and real world. On the basis of current study it is recommended that during the academic year/semester seminars, conferences may be conducted by the university in order to make the learners aware how they could make the use of cable T.V positively in their lives.*

**Key Words:** Cable TV, Educational productivity, Performance of distance learners

### 1.Introduction

Cable T.V is twenty first century technical development which has reached in almost all houses. A variety of channels are available on cable T.V which are not only affecting the attitude of people towards each other but also changing the life style of people. The effect of cable T.V on learners is sometimes positive while at other times negative (Henning, 2006). Cable T.V is a great source through which learners could get entertainment, education as well as any other informative new. People get motivation and

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<sup>1</sup> MS Scholar, Department of Education, International Islamic University, Islamabad

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Education, International Islamic University, Islamabad

they can actively participate effectively in solving the social, political and economical issues after knowing it through cable T.V (Mary, 2000).

In 2002, cable T.V has been given much importance as it is taken as a source of entertainment. People especially the learners not only save time for watching cable T.V from their busy routine but also makes it an important component of their routine. Cable T.V effects the psychological development of personalities of the individuals. Culture of different societies are been depicted when effects the life style of people living in Pakistani society (Nisar, 2002).

After researches the researcher conducted that during adolescence frequent television viewing was directly linked with subsequent risk and it causes learning difficulties. The young generation who watch television for about two or more hours in a day may results in prominent risk of negative attitude towards school, poor grades and homework and academic failure. Youth who watched 3 or more hours of television per day were the most likely to receive postsecondary education (Johnson, Cohen, et al, 2007). It was suggested that cable T.V has a long-term effect on people's thinking and on their academic progress (Fatima, 2000). Bar-On et al. (2001) have depicted possible negative behavioral (like aggressiveness, violence), health issues in learners due to cable T.V which has decreased their educational performance.

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

Cable T.V is playing an important role in adopting new behavior and new fashion trends in youth that effects the academic achievement of the learners. This situation motivated the researcher to conduct an in-depth study on the effect of cable T.V on youth. It can be seen that youth are more inspired by the cable T.V. Viewers' whole life style is being adopted by local and foreign media. Cable T.V is a medium through which educational thoughts among the learners can be promoted. Television viewing is generally taken in positive as well as negative sense especially for the academic progress of learners. It can be seen as the channels from cable T.V is the prime source through which youth adopts new fashion trends, etc. There has been growing concern over the relationship between the media and rising violence etc in youth. The focus of this study was to analyze the effect of cable T.V on the academic performance of distance learners and on their behavior.

### **1.2 Objectives of Study**

The objectives of the study were:-

1. To investigate the extent to which the distance learners spend their time in watching cable T.V
2. To find out the programs which distance learners keenly watch.
3. To find out the effect of those programs on the behavior of the distance learners.
4. To explore the effect of programs on the educational performance of the distance learners.

To analyze the effect of cable T.V on the life style of the distance learners.

### **1.3 Research Questions**

1. To what extent the distance learners spend their time in watching cable T.V?
2. Which sort of programs distance learners keenly watch?
3. What is the effect of programs on the behavior of distance learners?
4. What is the effect of programs on the academic performance of distance learners?
5. What is the effect of cable T.V on the life style of distance learners?



## 2.Literature Review

There is power of electronic media which influences human mind and its effect trains people about things they do. Different programs on different channels depict lifestyle of high society which effects on the behavior of learners especially and it is also changing the social and moral values of young generations (Sheher, 2003). The technical development of twenty-first century is T.V. Cable T.V has reached in almost all houses. A variety of channels are available on cable T.V which are not only affecting the attitude of people towards each other but also changing the life style of people. The effect of cable T.V on learners is sometimes positive while at other times negative. Basically, it depends upon the programs which learners keenly watch and the time spends by people for watching programs. Cable T.V plays vital role for spreading education, awareness in the form of entertainment or other type of fun programs. Few people remains attached with entertainment channels. Cable T.V gives some sort of effective programs which helps in the enhancement of the skills of learners like communication skills, leadership skills and gives awareness about their culture but learners normally prefer to watch programs which provide them entertainment instead of educational information especially when they want to get rid of educational activities or their studies (Henning, 2006). It can be seen that some types of programming are positively associated with the developmental outcomes (Wright et al, 2001). One longitudinal study found that adolescents who watched educational programs as preschoolers had a positive effect on their grades, behavior, creativity and social behavior during later years (Anderson, Huston, et al, 2001). There has been growing concern over the relationship between the media and rising violence and other antisocial behavior among youth (Thompson & Austin, 2003).

From 2002 onwards, cable T.V has been given much importance as it is taken as a source of entertainment. People especially the learners not only save time for watching cable T.V from their busy routine but also makes it an important component of their routine. Cable T.V effects the psychological development of personalities of the individuals. Culture of different societies are been depicted when effects the life style of people living in Pakistani society (Nisar, 2002).

Sauza (2008), depicted that thee medium which develops and inspires large population is mass media. She further highlighted that it is mass media which is mean of delivering message and it is a source for larger number of people particularly trendy magazines, newspapers and most importantly television. Zia in 2003 quoted that the cause for quick expansion of cable T.V in society is its low cost, easy access to satellite channels and more involvement of viewers in in entertainment programs. Cable T.V has become a common household facility due to the availability of cheap televisions in market. Nowadays the viewers have an easy access to a diversity of channels. We are living in the era which has commonly been characterized as the age of message uprising a cycle of profound and accelerating social and cultural change often recognized to the crash of new media technologies. With the progress in technology, media studies needs to be shifted towards those new technological gadgets that seem to have become popular globally. Cable TV has been put under analysis as it is the most readily accessible form of media and is gaining huge popularity among the masses in Pakistan. In early 80's cable T.V was silently introduced at small scale at Karachi. For subscribers the main hold were PTV dramas, English and Indians movies which was obtained by the video centers on rent. For the examination and availability of those programs on their T.V each household pay a

small monthly fee to the operator (Zia, 2003). In Gerbner’s view this television word as “not a window on or reflection of the world, but a word in itself” (McQuail, 1993).

Through the medium of TV, more is known about the culture, geography and everyday life of foreign lands. TV has helped to make the world a smaller place, and make those distant places with the odd sounding names more well-known to normal people (Paddock, 2011).

Television enables distinguished instructors to reach a large mass of learners at the same time. Idiosyncratic specialty of television is the ability to present the information to the learners which other tools cannot do so. This is an important opportunity for learners who were unable to study at a university or at any other institutions (Bates, 1998). If learners are exposed to programs with high informational (news programs or documentaries) learners have a better opportunity to increase their knowledge and skills (Housden, 1991; Memory, 1992). Fatima (2000) suggested that cable T.V has a long-term effect on people’s thinking. According to her research the culture and tradition is badly affected by new norms and taboos depicted in dramas and movies. She recommended that if we want to save our culture and values then we need to introduce our culture and values as realistic instead of glamorizing it and depicting the moralistic values for the development of community. Stroebele and Castro (2004) found that by watching cable T.V students’ not only academic performance is negatively affected but also become the cause of gaining 163 calories in a day because they ate more.

### 3.Methodology

The design of the study was descriptive in nature. Three public sector universities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, International Islamic University Islamabad, Allama Iqbal Open University and Virtual University were the population of the study. 90 distance learners from three universities were the sample of the study.30 learners from each university has been selected by the use of simple random technique. Research questionnaire was developed as an instrument for data collection based on 30 closed ended statements. Data were collected through personal visits. Data were interpreted and presented in the form of tables. The responses were analyzed by using percentage.

### 4.Result and Discussion

**Table 1 Gender, Age & Education**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Males</b>	---	36	40
<b>Females</b>	---	54	60
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>
	(18-21)	36	40
<b>Age</b>	(22-25)	49	54.44
	(26-29)	5	5.55
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>
	B.S	56	62.22
<b>Education</b>	Masters	26	28.88
	MS	8	8.88
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 established that out of 90 respondents 40% were males and 60% were females. Out of 90 respondents, 40% respondents' age was (18-21), 54.44% respondents belonged to age group of (22-25) and 5.55% respondent's age was (26-29). Out of 90 respondents, 62.22% respondents were from B.S, 28.88% were of Master level and 8.88% respondents were from MS level.

**Table 2 T.V sets**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>T.V sets in home</b>	One	49	54.44
	Two	25	27.77
	More than two	16	17.77
	Total	90	100
<b>T.V sets in bedroom</b>	Yes	17	18.88
	No	73	81.11
	Total	90	100
<b>Reasons of having T.V sets in bedroom</b>	Nuclear family	13	17.64
	For entertainment	17	41.17
	T.V device attached with computer	11	5.88
	Due to separate room	49	35.29
	<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 established that out of 90 respondents, 54.44% respondents have one T.V set at their home, 27.77% agreed that they have two T.V sets at home and 17.77% respondents agreed that they have more than two T.V sets at home. It also established that out of 90 respondents, 18.88% respondents agreed that they have T.V set in their room while 81.11% refused to have T.V in their room. It also illustrates that out of 90 respondents, 17.64% respondents that they have nuclear family system that is why they have T.V in their room 41.17% have T.V in their room for entertainment. 5.88% respondents said that they have T.V device attached with their computer for their room and 35.29% have T.V in their room due to separate room system.

**Table 3 Time for Watching T.V**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent age</b>
<b>Time preferred for watching T.V</b>	Morning	0
	Noon	0
	Afternoon	2
	Evening	15
	Night	20
	Late night	4

	Whenever free	49	54.44
	<b>Total</b>	90	100
<b>Watching cable T.V approximately</b>	1-3 hrs.	85	94.44
	4-6 hrs	4	4.44
	7-9 hrs	1	1.11
	<b>Total</b>	90	100
<b>Watching cable TV late-night</b>	Frequently	12	13.33
	Very frequent	7	7.77
	Rarely	71	78.88
	<b>Total</b>	90	100

Table 3 established that out of 90 respondents, 0% respondents agreed that they watch cable TV in the morning and noon time. 2.22% agreed to watch at afternoon, 16.66% watch at evening, 22.22% watch at night time, 4.44% watch at late night and 54.44% watch whenever they have some time. It showed that out of 90 respondents, 94.44% respondents agreed that they remain watch cable TV for about 1-3 hours, 4.44% agreed that they watch T.V for about 4-6 hours and 1.11% respondents watch for 7-9 hours. And out of 90 respondents, 13.33% respondents agreed that they remain frequent in watching cable TV late-night according to the table 7.77% watched cable TV rarely late-night. 78.88% respondents watched cable TV rarely late-night.

**Table 4 With Whom they like to watch T.V**

	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>With whom they like to watch T.V</b>	Alone	37	41.11
	With family	33	36.66
	With friends	13	14.44
	Others	7	7.77
	<b>Total</b>	90	100

Table 4 established that out of 90 respondents, 41.11% respondents agreed that they watch cable TV alone, 14.44% watched cable TV with friends. 7.77% respondents watched cable TV with other people.

**Table 5 Programs/shows like to watch**

	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Programs frequently watch</b>	Drama	37	41.11
	News	32	35.55
	Fashion shows	5	5.55
	Music/Movies	7	7.77
	Islamic Programs	5	5.55
	Others	4	4.44
	<b>Total</b>	90	100
<b>Reasons why they</b>	For more information	30	33.33
	For entertainment	36	40

<b>like these programs</b>	Good quality of shows	24	26.66
	<b>Total</b>	90	100
<b>Shows like to watch</b>	Fashion shows	11	12.22
	Talk shows	42	46.66
	Music shows	23	25.55
	Other	14	15.55
	<b>Total</b>	90	100

Table 5 established that out of 90 respondents, 41.11% respondents agreed that they watch dramas, 35.55% agreed that they watch news, 5.55% watch fashion shows, 7.77% watch movies/ music programs, 5.55% watch Islamic programs and 4.44% watch other programs. Above mentioned table established that out of 90 respondents, 33.33% respondents agreed that they watch these programs for information according to the table 40% watch these programs for entertainment and 26.66% respondents watch these programs because of good quality of shows. Out of 90 respondents, 12.22% respondents agreed that they like to watch fashion shows according to the table 46.66% agreed that they watch talk shows, 25.55% respondents watch music shows and 15.55% agreed they watch other shows.

**Table 06 Link between exposure to media violence and violent behavior of the youngsters**

		<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Link between exposure to media violence and violent behavior of the youngsters</b>		Strongly Agree	21	23.33
		Agree	50	55.55
		No opinion	17	18.88
		Disagree	2	2.22
		Strongly disagree	0	0
		<b>Total</b>	90	100

Table 6 established that out of 90 respondents, 23.33% respondents agreed that T.V creates Link between exposure to media violence and violent behavior of the youngsters according to the table 55.55% agreed, 18.88% gave no opinion, 2.22 disagreed and 0% strongly disagreed that T.V creates Link between exposure to media violence and violent behavior of the youngsters.

**Table 7: There is a link between exposure to media violence and violent behavior of youngster**

		<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>There is a link between exposure to media violence and violent behavior of youngster</b>		Violent people are display as hero	3	3.33
		People more influence by media	44	48.88
		Youngsters more imitate violent behavior from media	25	27.77

No opinion	18	20
Total	90	100

Table 7 indicated the view of 90 respondents about the statement there is a link between exposure to media violence and violent behavior of youngster 3.33% respondents were agreed on the fact that violent people are display as hero, 48.88% agreed that people more influence by media, 27.77% agreed that youngsters more imitate violent behavior from media and 20% gave no opinion.

**Table 8: You like to copy the styles from Actors and actresses**

	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Copy the styles from Actors and actresses</b>	Yes	18	20
	No	72	80
	Total	90	100

Table 8 indicated that out of 90 respondents 20% respondents were agreed that they copy the styles from Actors and actresses and 80% disagreed.

**Table 9: Distance learners adopt more fashion from cable T.V**

	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Distance learners adopt more fashion from cable T.V</b>	Easy trap fashion from actors	15	16.66
	More concerned about their beauty	20	22.22
	Because of immaturity and adopt fashion easily	50	55.55
	Want to be superior	5	5.55

Total	90	100
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Table 9 indicated that out of 90 respondents to the statement that distance learners adopt more fashion from cable T.V 16.66% respondents agreed that they easy trap fashion from actors, 2.22% are more concerned about their beauty, 55.55% adopts because of immaturity and adopt fashion easily and 5.55% wants to be superior that's why they adopt fashion.

**Table 10: Media is increasing fashion trend in youth**

		Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Media is increasing fashion trend in youth</b>	<b>is</b>	Strongly agree	53	58.88
		Agree	33	36.66
		No opinion	2	2.22
		Disagree	1	1.11
		Strongly disagree	1	1.11
		Total	90	100

Table 10 showed media is increasing fashion trend in youth and out of 90 respondents 58.88% strongly agreed, 36.66% agreed, 2.22% gave no opinion, 1.11% disagreed and 1.115 strongly disagreed.

**Table 11: Inspired by the fashion trends in movies and dramas**

		Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Inspired by the fashion trends in movies and dramas</b>	<b>is</b>	Strongly agree	9	10
		Agree	22	24.44
		No opinion	21	23.33
		Disagree	23	25.55
		Strongly disagree	15	16.66
		Total	90	100



Table 11 showed that they are inspired by the fashion trends in movies and dramas out of 90 respondents 10% were strongly agreed, 24.44% agreed, 23.33% gave no opinion, 25.55% disagreed and 16.66% strongly disagreed.

**Table 12: Media is showing fashion trends that match to our culture**

	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Media is showing fashion trends that match to our culture</b>	Agree	15	16.66
	Undecided	17	18.88
	Disagree	58	64.44
	Total	90	100

Table 12 indicted that media is showing fashion trends that match to our culture and for this out of 90 respondents 16.66% were agreed, 18.88% were undecided, 64.44% disagreed with it.

**Table 13: cable TV affects education and other activities**

	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>cable TV affects education and other activities</b>	Positive	42	46.66
	Negative	48	53.33
	Total	90	100

Table 13 indicated that cable TV affects education and other activities and out 90 respondents 46.66% gave positive response, 53.33% gave negative response.

**Table 14: Cable T.V affects education and other activities**

	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Cable T.V affects education and other activities</b>	Time wastage	44	48.88
	Depends on the viewer	20	22.22
	Informative	26	28.88
	Total	90	100

Table 14 indicated that how cable T.V affects education and other activities and out 90 respondents 48.88% were in response that it is wastage of time, 22.22% depends on the viewers and 28.88% agreed that it is informative.

**Table 15: Programmes will be helpful in the study**

	<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Programmes will be helpful in the study</b>	Strongly agree	10	11.11
	Agree	29	32.22
	No opinion	24	26.66
	Disagree	22	24.44
	Strongly disagree	5	5.55
	Total	90	100

Table 15 indicted that programmes will be helpful in the study 11.11% strongly agreed on it, 32.22% agreed, 26.66% gave no opinion, 24.44% disagreed and 5.55% strongly disagreed.

**Table 16: CGPA while watching cable T.V**

		Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>CGPA while watching cable T.V Grades since they have been involved in using cable T.V</b>		2.00-2.50	20	22.23
		2.60-3.00	22	24.44
		3.10- Above	48	53.33
		<b>Total</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>100</b>
		Excellent	26	28.88
		Good	44	48.88
		Average	18	20
	Poor	2	2.22	
		Total	90	100

Table 16 indicated that cable TV affects on the CGPA of learners 90 respondents 53.33% said their CGPA is above than 3.10 while 24.44 said their CGPA is between the range of 2.60-3.00 and 22.23 said their CGPA is between 2.00-2.50. The grades since they have been involved in using cable T.V 28.88% said that they got excellent grades, 48.88% said that they got good grades, 20% said their grades were average and 2.22% said their grades were poor.

**Table 17: Maintaining the grades after using cable T.V**

		Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Maintaining the grades after using cable T.V</b>		Strongly agree	30	33.33
		Agree	48	53.33
		No opinion	7	7.77
		Disagree	4	4.44
		Strongly disagree	1	1.11
		Total	90	100

Table 17 indicted that they are maintaining the grades after using cable T.V 33.33% were strongly agree, 53.33% were agree, 7.77% gave no opinion, 4.44% were disagree and 1.11% were strongly disagree.

**Table 18: Main purpose for watching cable T.V**

		Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Main purpose for</b>		Entertainment & Relaxation	51	56.66
		To know about other countries and culture	11	12.22

watching T.V	cable			
	Education and guidance	and	1	1.11
	To pass time		12	13.33
	News and information		9	10
	To know about current situation of Pakistan		6	6.66
	Total		90	100

Table 18 indicted that the main purpose for watching cable T.V varies for instance 56.66% were of the fact that they watch entertainment & relaxation, 12.22% watch to know about other countries and culture, 1.11% watch for education and guidance, 13.33% watch to pass time, 10% for news and information and 6.66% watch to know about current situation of Pakistan.

**Table 19: Amount of time spends in watching T.V affects their learning**

	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Amount of time spends in watching T.V effects their learning</b>	Positive	53	58.88
	Negative	37	41.11
	Total	90	100

Table 19 indicated that the amount of time spends in watching T.V affects the learning and out 90 respondents 58.88% gave positive response and 41.11% gave negative response.

**Table 20: Watching T.V affects their learning**

	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Watching T.V affects their learning</b>	Information about science & real world	44	48.88
	Time wastage	36	40
	Source of entertainment & relaxation	10	11.11
	Total	90	100

Table 20 indicated that response about the statement of watching T.V impacts their learning out 90 respondents 48.88% said that watching T.V impacts their learning by giving them information about science & real world 40% said it is wastage of time and 11.11% said that T.V affects their learning by becoming the source of entertainment and relaxation.

### 5.Conclusion

Media is a most powerful tool of message. Cable TV has become an obligation across Pakistan and it is accessible in almost every home where the facility of cable is available. The present study examined the effect of cable TV on the educational

performance of distance learners. The study analyzed that cable TV has positive as well as negative effects on learners' behavior and education. It can be seen that most of the distance learners are tilted towards informative programs which helps in the development of educational trends. It also makes the learners aware about their social, economical issues and different techniques through which they could resolve it. But on the other hand Cable TV promotes fashion among learners. Respondents were strongly decided that dramas, fashion shows promote fashion trends in youth. Cable T.V promotes new fashion trends, norms and culture among distance learners because of which they it can be said that the effect of cable T.V is negative. Changing in the life style of learners for the sake of adoption of style of hero, heroines affect them badly economically and socially. Most of the learners watched cable TV and they were agreed that there is a link between contact to media violence and violent behavior of youth because people are being influenced by media. Through this research the researchers came to know that cable T.V is not effecting the academic performance negatively as majority of learners do not spend more time in watching T.V and when they spend time the mostly watch informative programs.

### **6.Recommendations**

1. On the basis of the study following recommendations were drawn:
2. The results of the study have depicted that in Pakistan the effect of cable television on educational performance of the learners not more because do not watch more cable T.V. But those learners who watched cable T.V very frequently may give their more time to study.
3. Learners have been influenced by modern values. To minimize and resist the effects of those newly self created values local channels and programs may be strengthened in order to promote better content.
4. Channels may produce and broadcast quality programs that could help in the promotion of Pakistani values, traditions and improve the image of Pakistan at international level.
5. During the academic year/semester seminars, conferences may be conducted by the university in order to make the learners aware how they could make the use of cable T.V positively in their lives.
6. Teachers may be trained so that they may become able to highlight about positive and negative effects of cable T.V in front of learners and to guide them in suitable way.

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## Practice of Volunteerism: Adult Education in Rural Areas of Pakistan

<sup>1</sup>Muhammad Arshed Hussain Malik, <sup>2</sup>Prof. Dr. N. B. Jumani

### *Abstract*

*Adult education is a practice in which adults engage in systematic and sustained self educating activities in order to gain new forms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values. It can mean any form of learning adults engage in beyond traditional schooling, encompassing basic literacy to personal fulfillment as a lifelong learner. The learning happens in many ways and in many contexts just as all adults' lives differ. Adult learning can be in any of the three contexts, i.e. Formal structured learning; non-formal learning & informal education. Volunteering practice has been proved effective by different educationists and researchers of the world. The purpose of this study was to investigate the practice of volunteerism in adult education in rural areas of Pakistan at district Chakwal. This study was carried out by reviewing the literature in the field of volunteerism in adult education in rural areas of Pakistan at district Chakwal. Data were collected from the internet, books and through interviews. The collected data were analyzed through applying descriptive statistics. The findings of study showed that people are not involved in volunteerism in adult education in rural areas of Pakistan at district Chakwal. DLO, Dy. DLO and NGO's are running adult literacy programs in rural areas. Volunteerism may be reinforced in rural areas of Pakistan at district Chakwal, through awareness and provision of adult education. Adult education is useful with the inclusion of volunteers, social workers and NGO's in rural areas of Pakistan. The adult learners should have more NFBEC's and ALC's in the rural areas of Pakistan.*

**Key Words:** *Volunteerism, Adult Education, Literacy, NGOs, DLO, NCHD*

### **1.Introduction**

A nation develops in relation to its achievement in education. The literacy ratio of any country is extremely important. A country with educated adult population is bound to achieve social, economic, technological and moral progress. Adult education reflects a specific philosophy about learning and teaching based on the assumption that adults can and want to learn, that they are able and willing to take responsibility for that learning, and that the learning itself should respond to their needs. Famous Hadith of the Prophet (SAWA) says: "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave". It shows that Islam urges on lifelong learning and adult education. Volunteering practice has been proved effective by different educationists and researchers of the world. Therefore the objective of this study was to investigate the practice of volunteerism in adult education in rural areas of Pakistan at District Chakwal.

#### **1.1 Adult Education**

<sup>1</sup> Ph. D Scholar, Department of Education, International Islamic University, Islamabad

<sup>2</sup> Professor, Director, Directorate of Distance Education, International Islamic University, Islamabad

Adult education is a practice in which adults engage in systematic and sustained self-educating activities in order to gain new forms of knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values. It can mean any form of learning adults engage in beyond traditional schooling, encompassing basic literacy to personal fulfillment as a lifelong learner (Merriam, Sharan, B. & Brockett, Ralph, G, 2007). Adult education is the practice of teaching and educating adults. This practice is also referred as an andragogy. Andragogy is therefore, “the art and science of helping adults learn” (Knowles, 1970 p.37).

Good adult learning involves acting, reacting and participating. In its organized form adult education has relatively a short history of nearly two hundred years on this globe. In its informal matter, adult education can be traced back by a fanciful mind to the times of Socrates, Jesus and the Buddha. It gained significance in the form of social education after World War I (Spencer, Bruce, 2006).

### **1.2 Characteristics of Adult Learners**

- Adult learners have characteristics that set them apart from „traditional’ school or college learners. All adult learners come to courses with a variety and range of experiences, both in terms of their working life and educational backgrounds. According to Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 2005; following are the characteristics of adult learners:
  - Adults have accumulated life experiences. They tend to favor practical learning activities that enable them to draw on their prior skills and knowledge.
  - Adults are realistic and have insights what is likely to work and what is not.
  - Adults relate new facts to past experiences and enjoy having their talents and knowledge explored in a teaching situation.
  - Adults are intrinsically motivated and increase their efforts when motivated by a need, an interest, or a desire to learn.
  - Adult students are mature people and prefer to be treated as such. Being „lectured at’ cause resentment and frustration.

### **1.3 Principals of Adult Education**

The learning happens in many ways and in many contexts just as all adults' lives differ (Fenwick, Tara J; Nesbit, Tom; Spencer, Bruce 2006). Adult learning can be in any of the three contexts, i.e. Formal - Structured learning that typically takes place in an education or training institution, usually with a set curriculum and carries credentials; Non-formal - Learning that is organized by educational institutions but non credential. Non-formal learning opportunities may be provided in the workplace and through the activities of civil society organizations and groups; Informal education - Learning that goes on all the time, resulting from daily life activities related to work, family, community or leisure (e.g. community baking class), (Spencer, Bruce, 2006).

Self directed learning is another central concept in adult education, suggests that the focus of control in learning lies with the adult learner, who may initiate learning with or without assistance from others. Some learners need varying degrees of direction and support, while others are ready to be self directed. Characteristics of self directed learners include independence, willingness to take initiative, persistence in learning, self discipline, self confidence and the desire to learn more (Knowles, 1970).

### **1.4 Objective of the Study**

Following was the objective of the study:

- To investigate the practice of volunteerism in adult education in rural areas of Pakistan at District Chakwal.



### **1.5 Significance**

This study is very significant because very less work has been done in this field in Pakistan. This will provide pathway to new researchers. This study will be beneficial to government, educational planners, and researchers. The study will provide direction on how to encourage volunteerism in adult education in rural areas of Pakistan. It will drag the attention of government to doing the needful in rural areas for literacy and adult education.

## **2.Literature Review**

Volunteering practice has been proved effective by different educationists and researchers of the world. The term adult education has been used in literature with three different meanings (Rashid, 1999). Field of operations that encompasses all the organized activities in which mature men and women are engaged for the purpose of learning. A process of self directed inquiry through which individual systematically learn from their daily experiences and from other resources in their environment.

A social movement that encompasses whole spectrum of mature individuals in infinite ways. After World War I, views of education in both the United States and Europe suggested that adult learners did not learn the same way children learn (Knowles, Holton, & Swanson, 1998). We define adult education as activities intentionally designed for the purpose of bringing about learning among those whose age, social roles, or self-perception define them as adults” (Merriam and Brockett, 1997).

In the adult literacy programs, the community not only provides space for adult literacy centers, but some of the literate individuals also provide their services as teachers. A major emphasis of National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) Pakistan adult literacy program was to provide learning opportunities to the illiterate population (11-45 years). Its innovative strategy involves social mobilization to identify keen learners and motivated teachers from within the community. National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) Pakistan implemented this program with partnership of provincial education department. Volunteerism for community Development (VCD) program in NCHD; was a social mobilization movement. The primary focus of the program was on the universal primary education and primary health care. Volunteerism for community Development (VCD) is a platform for all levels of Pakistani community to contribute voluntarily to the development of the country. This is the first ever program of the country, which focuses on individual volunteers from all strata of the society. National Commission for Human Development (NCHD) Pakistan draws upon at the grass root level in the field of education, health and income generation activities. The energies of the volunteers have been channelized which has increased the rate of progress to a noticeable extent (Rahat, 2004).

### **2.1 Social Mobilization**

Social mobilization is a process in which people are made enable to discuss their problems, analyze their problems and make plans to solve them, utilize their existing resources, solve them and sustain it (Ahmad & Zubair, 2009).

These are the main features of social mobilization process.

1. Influential volunteers
2. Identification of learners and teacher
3. Influential volunteer categories

### **2.2 Volunteerism**

Volunteering is the practice of people working on behalf of others or a particular cause without payment for their time and services. Volunteering is generally considered an altruistic activity, intended to promote good or improve human quality of life, but people also volunteer for their own skill development. Volunteerism, in its conceptual form includes the individuals, known as volunteers, to act in ways, which work towards the betterment of oneself, other individuals, communities, and/or society (Fischer, 1993).

Volunteering is the most fundamental act of citizenship and philanthropy in our society. It is offering time, energy and skills of one's own free will. It is an extension of being good neighbor, transforming a collection of houses into a community, as people become involved in the improvement of their surroundings and choose to help others (Schaffer, 1993).

Human beings are social entities. They need others to interact with and in this process reciprocal relationships are created. Volunteers who are doing voluntary work in fact have social reasons for doing it (Rahat, 2004). Following are some benefits of volunteerism (Fischer & Schaffer, 1993);

- Self satisfaction
- Potential learning & acquisition of new skills
- Relaxation & Socialization
- Career opportunities
- Community improvement

### **2.3 Importance of Volunteerism in Pakistan**

Volunteering is the most fundamental act of citizenship and philanthropy in our society. It is offering time, energy and skills of one's own free will. It is an extension of being a good neighbor, transforming a collection of houses into a community, as people become involved in the improvement of their surroundings and choose to help others. The identification of volunteers in our society has a predominantly religious and moral connotation. People believe that they should do good work, help the needy without asking any kind of return in this world because God will reward them in their lives after death. In other words this indicates the belief of volunteers in „Fi Sabilillah' meaning for God (Rahat, 2004).

Pakistan had a strong tradition of volunteering, as verified by its large voluntary part in October 2005, earthquake. Pakistan considers volunteerism to be one of the important tools for addressing the problem of exclusion. It provides a vehicle for empowering excluded population groups to gain access to opportunities. Pakistan believes volunteerism as a valuable asset, which needed to be strategically factored into development policies and programs. Local voluntary involvement is always a valuable and indispensable contribution to the improvement of social conditions, promotion of economic development and empowerment of people to take charge. It reinforces a sense of collective responsibility and brings about a tangible difference to the lives of many (National Volunteer Movement's Home Page).

### **2.4 Current Literacy Situation in Pakistan**

According to the government of Pakistan (2009), at present about 55 million Pakistanis above the age of ten unable to read and write or do simple calculations. Amongst the 175 world countries Pakistan stands at 136 positions. No country can make rapid progress if the majority of its people remains deprived from the basic skills of reading and writing. Pakistan, India and China had more or less the same rate of literacy

in late 40's when they achieved independence. Today China's literacy rate is more than 80%, India approaching to 65% and Pakistan claims 53%. In the 1998 census the figure was 43%. According to a conservative estimate about 55 million Pakistanis above the age of ten are absolutely illiterate.

### **2.5 Adult Literacy Situation in Rural Areas**

Adult literacy has not yet been accepted as a dire need in Pakistan especially in the rural areas. Feudal culture in rural Pakistan is not conducive for the promotion of education. Illiterate male adults in rural areas are generally not interested in acquiring literacy skills because of age factor and on account of pre-occupation as bread earners of the family. They are also generally not in favor of women going to literacy centers because of imperative work in the home. Inadequate schooling opportunities also hurdle for girls to seek education (Ahmad, M. Zubair, & T. 2009).

### **3. Methodology**

Volunteerism is required in society to help community at large. No research was conducted in rural areas of Pakistan at district Chakwal prior to this study. Therefore to familiarize the community with this approach, the said study was conducted. The objective of the study was „to investigate the practice of volunteerism in rural areas of Pakistan at district Chakwal'. The government of Pakistan has been doing efforts to improve literacy rate and education standards in the country since its creation. In this regard various models and designs were used. This particular research is very significant because very little work has been done in Pakistan. This study provides pathway to government of Pakistan literacy department, NGOs and researchers.

The method and procedure of the study were comprised upon population, selection of sample, development of tool, administration and analysis of data. Different literacy and adult volunteerism programs were reviewed in this regard. Six personnel were got interviewed, i.e. one district literacy officer (DLO), two dy. district literacy officers and three NGO managers in the district Chakwal. Collected data were administered and analyzed in descriptive form. Recommendations and conclusion were made accordingly.

#### **3.1 Population**

The literacy department of District Chakwal and all NGOs in District Chakwal were population of the study.

#### **3.2 Sample**

Following is detail of the sample.

One district literacy officer & two dy. district literacy officers Chakwal i.e. 3, 100% sample. Three managers of NGO's in district Chakwal i.e. 3, 100% sample

**Table 3.1: Sampling Frame for the Analysis of Data**

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<b>Sr. No</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Sample</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
1	Administrators	3	3	3	100%
2	Managers	3	3	3	100%

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#### **3.3 Instrumentation**

Data was collected by conducting interviews of all three literacy administrators and NGO managers of the district Chakwal.

### **3.4 Development of Instrument**

Interviews were conducted to collect data. It was a structured interview. All statements were close ended except the last one. To get quantitative, productive and meaningful judgment each respondent replied according to his/her knowledge and jurisdiction. The researcher personally conducted interviews.

### **4.Data Analysis**

The data were collected and analyzed through applying descriptive statistics. The sample of the study was not so large. Therefore no statistical tool i.e. mean score, median and percentage was used. On the basis of this descriptive statistics analysis recommendations were suggested and conclusion was developed for the future research. The researcher conducted interviews of one (DLO) district literacy officer, two dy. district literacy officers and three NGO managers i.e. (PLAN, HEAL & PODA) to investigate the practice of volunteerism in adult education at district Chakwal.

The researcher interviewed the DLO & Dy. DLO's to investigate the practice of volunteerism in adult education in the rural areas of Pakistan at district Chakwal. The DLO & Dy. DLO's were responsible for implementing government literacy programs in the district Chakwal. Eighty ALC's and 200 NFBE's were working under the supervision of DLO. The DLO & Dy. DLO's who had professional experience, found rare volunteerism in adult education. The DLO & Dy. DLO's were facing challenges, especially providing mobilization and motivation to the learners in basic non formal education and literacy programs. The DLO & Dy. DLO's were monitoring the literacy programs. They were also providing directions to these basic literacy centers. The DLO & Dy. DLO's were responsible to establish basic literacy centers in the district. The DLO & Dy. DLO's were helping the learners to complete their literacy programs. The DLO & Dy. DLO's found some influential volunteer's and simple volunteers in the district Chakwal. The DLO & Dy. DLO's were acting as facilitator by helping the volunteers and learners as a mediator. The DLO & Dy. DLO's were facing problems in finding volunteer teachers to carry out adult learning programs in rural areas of the district.

Teachers qualification was very low i.e. Matric. The honorarium for teachers was insufficient. Adult learners were being provided books and other material by the government. There was no ALC available for men in the district. Time duration was a big problem for adult learners. After completion of basic literacy program active students were enrolled in the formal education system. The DLO & Dy. DLO's had established the district literacy management information system cell.

The researcher had also conducted interview of three NGO managers (PLAN, HEAL & PODA) to investigate the practice volunteerism in adult education in rural areas of Pakistan at district Chakwal. The NGO managers were helping and facilitating DLO & Dy. DLO's to implement government literacy programs in the district Chakwal. Planned Lifetime Advocacy Network (PLAN) was supporting community to access their rights to education, basic health care and nutrition. Pothohar Organization and Development Advocacy (PODA) were working in the district for adult learners. PODA launched awareness seminars and campaigns for adult education in the district. PODA was providing supplies to the adult literacy centers (ALCs) in the district. PODA were providing supplies to 300 ALC's and the target was 400 ALC's. The Health Education

and Literacy (HEAL) was working along with PLAN Pakistan for adult literacy in the district Chakwal since 2009. HEAL established 29 ALC's and 10 NFC's in five union councils of the district Chakwal with the help of volunteers. The NGO managers were facilitating and assisting literacy programs in the district.

### **5. Findings**

The findings are drawn on the basis of data analysis. The study revealed that:

- DLO and Dy. DLO are facing challenges in mobilization and motivation at district level.
- DLO and Dy. DLO are running literacy programs at district level with the help of government and NGOs.
- The majority of people are not involved in volunteerism in adult education in rural areas of Pakistan at district Chakwal.
- Adult literacy centers and non formal basic education centers are providing literacy at district level.
- Teacher's qualification and honorarium is very low in adult education institutions at district level.

### **6. Conclusion & Recommendations**

Volunteering practice has been proved effective by different educationists and researchers of the world. Adult Education can be promoted in several ways. Every literate person should spare some time to educate illiterate people as a service to humanity. There should be mass campaigns to promote adult education. The importance of literacy can be shown in televisions, radios and other media of instruction. There is a need of integrated awareness programs in which scholars, teachers, parents, social workers, social organizations, businessmen, religious leaders and all other government and semi government departments may be involved. The data was briefly described in descriptive form and it was concluded that adult literacy centers and non formal basic education schools are providing literacy at district level. Some volunteers have been found, and NGOs are coordinating and providing assistance to district literacy programs. DLO and Dy. DLO were facing challenges in mobilization and motivation. DLO and Dy. DLO were monitoring literacy programs, providing directions, playing mediator role, established district literacy management cell and basic literacy centers. Books and other material were being provided by the government. No ALC was found for male learners. Active students got enrolled in formal education system. NGO's were assisting and facilitating district literacy office in implementation of government literacy programs.

Educational institutions vary greatly in their acceptance of adult and continuing education as an important part of their operation. At one extreme are schools and colleges whose predominant mission is to serve young people who attend full time. At the other extreme are literacy centers and NGOs, which have a commitment to both preparatory and continuing education. Between these extremes, there is a continuum of institutions which the adult education function ranges from being marginal to central. One limitation of this study was the lack of research available about volunteerism in adult education in rural areas of Pakistan.

There is also a clear need for consensus on components of continuing education. Knowles position is that andragogy presents core principles of adult learning that in turn enable those designing and conducting adult learning to build more effective learning processes for adults. This study was conducted to investigate "the practice of



volunteerism in adult education in rural areas of Pakistan at district Chakwal". The study was carried out by reviewing the literature in the field of volunteerism in adult education. The data was briefly described in descriptive form. The study showed that ALC's and NFBE's were providing literacy at district level and some volunteers have been found in the rural areas of Pakistan at district Chakwal.

Volunteerism may be reinforced in rural areas of Pakistan at district Chakwal, through awareness and provision of adult education. Adult education may be useful with the inclusion of volunteers, social workers and NGO's in rural areas of Pakistan. The adult learners should have more NFBE's and ALC's in the rural areas of Pakistan. Teacher's qualification and honorarium should be improved. Training should be provided to district literacy officers to run literacy programs efficiently. Research has documented the benefits of volunteering therefore social mobilization and influential volunteer's participation should be appreciated.

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## **SUBMISSION GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCH PAPER**

The editors welcome submissions of research papers based on original and new research ideas in proper English language that have not been submitted elsewhere for publication. The manuscripts would only be considered that follow the journal's format. Instructions for authors are given on the journal website. Only the electronic submissions in MS-Word format are accepted and should be sent only to the journal's e-mail address through two file attachments:

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Abstract is a brief (150-250 words) comprehensive summary of the research. The word "Abstract" is centered as the first line of type on this page. Type the abstract as a single paragraph in block format (i.e., without paragraph indentation). The abstract contains research topic, objectives, participants, methods, data analysis technique/s and key findings.

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### **ii) Introduction (1-3 pages)**

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The review of literature should generally begin on a new page. Discuss the literature related to your proposed study. This section is designed to inform readers about past studies that have already been conducted, and provides perspectives on your area of interest. The review should include a brief discussion of any "classical studies" in this area, if appropriate, but the major portion of the content should focus on the past decade of research. It should close with a logical summary of past research and transition to a statement about what should be studied next. After you present what is already known, make your case for your research either answering a new question, getting a new answer to an old question, answering a question about a new population, etc. After you have made your case that your research is going to give new information, you will summarize the major points. Remember that the Introduction discusses the problem. The review of literature should concentrate on solutions (those that exist, those that are still required).

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Research Methodology may include following subheadings

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Mention the data analysis technique and interpret the data accordingly.

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A book review is a description, critical analysis, and an evaluation on the quality, meaning, and significance of a book. It should focus on the book's purpose, content, and authority. It is a reaction paper in which strengths and weaknesses of the material are analyzed. It should include a statement of what the author has tried to do, evaluates how well (in the opinion of the reviewer) the author has succeeded, and presents evidence to support this evaluation.

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