

# An Analysis of Students' Perceptions about Pedagogical Shift During Emergency Remote Learning

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## **Abstract**

*In this research, the insights of learners in the direction of emergency remote emergency learning were examined. The theory of transactional distance (Moore, 1996) was an essential factor of the theoretical framework that encouraged in this study. The data were gathered with the support of a survey form from Google that consists of open-ended and close-ended queries which makes it a mixed-method study. Tables and charts were created to assess the data in quantitative form and descriptive analysis was done to comprehend the data in qualitative form. The result and conclusions of the research outlined the problems students went through, the benefits that can be acquired and aspects that can encourage oneself. The information that was collected, specified the particular elements that shaped learner's thoughts and made them opt for online education. For example, flexibility in timings, saving of time, cut down in expenses and easy access to educational material are the factors in favor of remote education. The study also identified the issues related to remote education that includes technical problems, less connection between students and teachers and late responses from teachers. The collective outcome points out that one cannot completely discard traditional or remote education because every individual mode has its own benefits and drawbacks.*

**Keywords:** Remote Learning, Distance Education, Online Learning, Educational Shift

## **Introduction**

21st century has introduced an incredible transformation in education in present times. In this day and age, learning and teaching are no longer constrained to traditional lecture rooms. Being geographically far away is no longer an obstacle in learning and can be made effortlessly available to learners with the help of technology. As claimed by Dempsey and Van Eck (2007), the tendency in the direction of online education and remote learning are making people offer online courses, letting both students and teachers to gain benefits. Wolfinger (2016) professed that the tremendous expansion in the technological world also signifies the growth of learning. Learners must engage in acquiring knowledge at any time or place, irrespective of circumstances. The expression "e-learning" was firstly used in the midst of 1990s as an outcome of educational development and amplified awareness towards asynchronous discussion groups. It was aimed to define the education that was fully delivered in online settings and learning that share features of both online and traditional education settings

(Garrison,2011). This specific research uses the expression “emergency remote learning” to mention a method of teaching and studying while educational institutes were closed. In any kind of situation that involves some spontaneous catastrophe, any alarming situation or any epidemic, remote education seems to be the most appropriate option for pupils and tutors. By implementing remote education, both teachers and students own a better chance to participate in classrooms discussions.

The key objectives of this research are:

1. Examine the students' thoughts towards pedagogical and andragogic shifts throughout remote learning.
2. Discover the benefits and disadvantages of remote learning.
3. Investigate that whether learners select emergency remote learning or traditional education in particular conditions.

### **Research Questions**

The following are the questions:

#### **1. How do learners perceive about the sudden educational shift made throughout remote learning?**

- i) What difficulties do learners come across in the settings of remote education?
- ii) What gains do learners acquire from remote learning in a case of emergency?

### **Literature Review**

The chief factor of emergency remote education encompasses the idea of a substitute of educational lectures and mode of delivery throughout an emergency situation. It deals with the implementation of innovative teaching approaches till the situation gets normal and everything is back to regular routine (Hodges, 2020). Emergency remote learning is concerned with online lectures, courses and materials delivered in the circumstances of a catastrophe or calamity. The main objective in these kinds of conditions is to deliver educational materials as a momentary solution by using such methods that are easily comprehensible and applicable in any event of emergency. On a contrary note, the term “digital network education” is concerned with the idea of developed usage of digital instruments and machinery to implement different teaching strategies in the hour of need (Hodges et al.,2020).

As professed by Jandric (2020), emergency remote learning is considered as an attempt to answer all the issues regarding remote education and gives solution to the spontaneous facility, supervisors, students and instructors. Numerous studies have been carried out on distance education in emergency situations, but the term “emergency remote learning” has not been used excessively. Manfuso (2020), described that this particular term not only separates itself by implying that it is concerned with a certain occasion but it also changes the understanding of its phenomenon in previous researches. A study examined the factors that shape up the preferences of students in remote learning. The results of the research outlined four factors that can positively impact on the satisfaction level of students and as a result boost up the performance of learners. These four factors encompass the proficiency of teacher, assembling the course outline, timely response and prospects of learners (Gopal, Singh and Aggarwal, 2021).

The chief factor that enhances the achievements of any sort of instructive activities is based upon the perceptions of learners. There are particular factors that assist in creating a procedure of learning from various viewing platform (Chickering and Gameson, 1987). As proposed by Dawson et al. (2019), perceptions of learners help in creating instant and straightaway thoughts according to their experiences. While speaking about engagement, Bond (2020), claimed that engagement is

concerned with all of the determination and struggles that students do within their learning environment. As claimed by Dixson (2015), the efforts of learners to increase their knowledge and to enhance their creativity is known as engagement. It is also concerned with the creative thinking patterns in their respective educational platforms. The degree of involvement of students plays an integral role in learner's satisfaction of remote learning (Martin and Bollinger, 2018). Wang et al. (2019), the ratio of a student participation and their efforts during the procedure of learning can be called engagement of students, which eventually enhances their academic records (Alrashidi et al., 2016).

According to Lie (2020), the participation and engagement of learners can be easily influenced through the technological methods, approaches and skills used before. Individual variables can also modify the perceptions of students about remote education (Stoessel, 2015). Bandura (1997), described self-efficacy as a notion that any individual's perceptions about their responsibilities, occupations, tasks and conditions are vital. As claimed by Yusop and Albelbisi's (2019), a consistent element of effectual remote education is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is concerned with the perceptions and interpretations of people used to produce effective environments in the world of educational technology. Some individuals may come across a specific task as unlikeable but those with high levels of self-efficacy normally take their problems as a way to learn and grow (Bandura, 1994). It is believed that self-efficacy is the key element in the determination and perseverance of learners. Self-efficacy helps learners in enhancing their academic performances (Pajares, 1996). Students who are successful generally, often provide valuable and insightful results even in emergency situations (Swan, 2004).

Traditional learning has many shortcomings because of its lack of engagement in students. It has also come to attention that conventional education fails in solving related issues, analytical thinking and advancement of learning (Hannum and Briggs, 1982; Banathy, 1994). Duffy and Cunningham (1996), claimed remote education can trigger analytical thinking of students if they were provided with different tasks about regular issues of real world. Remote education can also provide positive conditions to students in order to grow and clarify themselves. According to Johnson, Killion, and Omomen (2005), the method of teaching during remote education proved to be a source of sustenance of critical proficiency, communication assistances, engaged participation, and facilitated students' efforts with their particular philosophies and areas.

Tao (2006), proposed that this new situation enabled learners to not only receive support in educational settings but also have their classes scheduled according to their convenience. These factors aid learners and instructors in interacting successfully as compared to conventional educational settings. Previous studies declared that the use of technology and software made academic procedures much more compelling, inspiring and appealing (Liaw et al., 2007). Looking at the general context of academic arrangements, Olugbenga, Rotimi, and Olakulehin (2006) settled that educational organizations that offer remote education throughout the situations of emergency are proved to be enormously profitable in terms of cost.

Kartha (2006), declared that now learners and instructors both comprehend the benefits of remote education which eventually increases the number of online courses. According to You & Kang (2014), learners who are independent in general terms opt for remote learning. They further described that these students possess the capability to grasp various learning approaches. These learners have the capacity to organize

their time efficiently, complete their tasks sensibly and have adequate skills to focus on their education and learning. Thomson (2010), claimed that online mode of education gives ample amount of time to learners and instructors to dedicate to more essential tasks rather than travelling.

According to Chany (2001), learners who belong to underdeveloped regions can gain great benefits from remote education. Dempsey & Van Eck (2007) proposed that a great positive point if remote education is online classrooms allows students to have more in-depth debates regarding theoretical educational approaches. According to Hay, Peltier, and Drago (2004) asserted that interaction is the most vital factor in any educational setting. Nguyen (2015), the quality of traditional and remote learning can be matched easily if remote learning is planned properly. A course that is organized correctly will surely increase the level of interaction among students and teacher. (Palloff and Pratt, 1999) declared that though remote learning secures the general information and identities of students, it is considered as a reasonable and unbiased approach of learning. It was stated that in order to create an effectual remote learning environment the teachers should put some extra efforts.

Conlon (1997) asserted that although online education is more prevalent nowadays, it is not without its critics among traditional organizations and learners. Because they don't have the assurance that remote learning can effectually address tough coaching and education problems, many learners and teachers opt not to practice it. Jaques and Salman (2012) proposed that introducing virtual classes in a remote background can be not only demanding duty for students but also for teachers. Learners encountered numerous problems when converting from a conventional learning mode to a remote one. Henriksen (2020), highlighted the challenges that learners faced. In the light of the research, shifting educational strategies can be pretty troublesome. Every now and then health emergencies lead to rapid changes without the proper situations. One of the most notable factors in acceptance of remote education is student's poor economic situation. Technology issues are the main obstacle in implementing remote learning successfully. Alhabeeb and Rowley (2017), professed that there are certain elements in applying remote learning. These elements contain the basic know how of instructing methods, digital tools and technological skills. Taylor (2002) recommended that technical issues can be pretty challenging. Another issue is inadequate video and sound quality. Krull (2020), highlighted the issues and boundaries of remote education. The particular study concluded that the major issues in gaining knowledge proficiently during problematic situations are technical and internet problems.

Murphy (2020) asserted that after a while students started to comprehend technology and technological tools more proficiently and this eventually helped them in being prepared for their upcoming opportunities. Ali (2020), claimed that implementing new methods of remote learning is replete with pedagogical challenges. A particular research revealed that students psychology can be easily influenced in remote learning environment. Learners tend to get bored after some time which leads them towards anxiety and mood swings. It was also highlighted that students who belonged to middle class encounter severe psychological issues regarding remote education. It was further elaborated that there should be proper counsellors and psychologists to provide their services in times of need. (Irawan, Dwisona, Lestari, 2020). Bond and Bedenlier (2019), declared that during the trial of remote education, correct use of technology actively participates in boosting up interaction level of students. Technology is far most the most crucial part in enhancing student

engagement. According to Bai (2020), if a student and teacher interact correctly and have time to time straight up conversations it will directly enhance approval level of students. (Almaiah, Al-Khasawneh, Althunibat, 2020), highlighted another aspect that learners often didn't get easy access to academic material and when they experience lack of communication.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This particular study is constructed on the traditional approach which was initially announced by Moore in 1973. That approach is considered in the data collection and investigation for this study in the world of remote learning. As professed by Moore (1973), transactional distance is concerned with the remoteness among the instructor and the learner; this distance can be any: mentally, physically or in communication. Moore (1997) further elaborated that the below mentioned features must be in attention when evaluating the distinctiveness of the transaction generated amid teachers and pupils in remote learning:

- Learner autonomy
- Dialogue
- Structure

The transactional distance theory by Moore (1973), corresponds greatly with the objectives of this study. The theory outlines the physical, mental and communicative space within the learner and instructor. The questions that were asked during data collection asks about the challenges or issues that learners may face in order to communicate and contact. The investigator was mindful that according to the theoretical framework, distance does not only call attention to geographical remoteness but it also encompasses to lack of communication, challenging discourse, flawed arrangements, and theoretical misperception brought on by different confusions.

### **Methodology**

This study explored the perspectives of learners regarding emergency remote learning and analyzed the data using mixed method technique. Mixed method aids in comprehending the problems in a better way with stronger findings and conclusions. Another positive aspect of using mixed method is that by using both methods, each method reduces the shortcomings or weaknesses of an individual one.

### **Research Design**

This study used self-created google survey form and applied mixed method approach to analyze the collected data.

### **Data Collection Procedure**

The link of the Google survey form is circulated through the application of WhatsApp. The respondents were connected to the researcher through social media. After a complete month, the link of the form was deactivated. This leads to quite bounded results. There was total 94 responses (willingly) from different educational organizations. The data was gathered over the period of a month. The researcher deployed questions while being mindful of the perspectives and interpretations of learners.

### **Sampling**

This particular study chooses the sampling method that corresponds well with the conditions of the specific research. The data were acquired from the learners who actually encountered remote education in real life. Morrison (2006), declared that this type of sampling is not anticipated much. The study sample includes students at university level who experienced the benefits and difficulties of remote learning. The

researcher focused on these specific students because they would be able to evidently define what they experienced in the emergency situations.

### Results and Discussion

The acquired qualitative and quantitative data of the study discovered different perspectives of students regarding remote learning and also attempts to describe their experiences and thoughts. The results recommended some approaches and policies to enhance the efficiency of remote learning. Being mindful about the objectives of this particular study, every aspect was covered properly. The collected information revealed the constructive and adverse thoughts of learners regarding emergency remote education. The benefits involved economic efficiency, freedom in organizing time, gaining experience about technology, and accessibility to academic resources.

On the other hand, the opposing points that were discovered involved unproductive communication between the student and teacher, discouragement of students, internet connection issues, dearth of senior and experienced teachers and burden of different household errands. All the obstacles that were discovered by the students needs slight efforts on the part of instructors. These efforts will help in providing the sense of connection which will eventually enhance the communication between students and teachers in remote educational setting. Better ways of communication will motivate learners to participate actively in study groups.

### Quantitative Analysis

Kothari (2007) professed that the methods and approaches used in quantitative research provide distinctive and quantifiable descriptions. Quantitative research emphasizes on analytical methodology of a study. As claimed by Rovai (2014), quantitative researchers perceive the world as being separate from their own self and as having an individualistic truth that is independent of any understanding. Phillips and Burbules (2000), claimed that by using technical and numerical approaches that calls out attention on exploratory or experimental process for collecting quantitative evidence, the method of collecting and assessing data is accomplished. The assessed conclusions are then made easy to comprehend for the research. This method was grounded on postmodern philosophy (Phillips & Burbules, 2000).

S.No	Statements	Agree	Strongly agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1.	Remote learning and customary learning are fairly equal.	9.6%	0%	12.8%	56.4%	12.3%

2.	I can approach the internet smoothly for educational tasks.	52.1%	16%	13.8%	14.9%	3.2%
3.	I am satisfied with learning electronically.	40.4%	7.4%	28.7%	20.2%	3.2%
4.	I can simply interact with my companions and teachers.	30.9%	17%	23.4%	24.5%	4.3%
5.	I can organize my time and tasks well.	34%	16%	22.3%	21.3%	6.4%
6.	I have sufficient technical skills to learn through online learning mode.	39.4%	10.6%	28.7%	16%	5.3%
7.	The teachers are active in giving feedback.	35.1%	11.7%	27.7%	20.2%	5.3%
8.	I am able to freely engage in can a remote lecture.	37.2%	11.7%	19.1%	28.7%	3.2%

9.	The given educational content was helpful in learning.	46.8%	9.6%	26.6%	14.9%	2.1%
10.	I was inspired and motivated during the period of remote learning.	27.7%	11.7%	30.9%	21.3%	8.5%
11.	The instructors were helpful and extremely kind.	50%	16%	22.3%	10.6%	1.1%
12.	I felt diverted due to different household chores.	45.7%	41.5%	7.4%	4.3%	1.1%
13.	I opt to learn with the help of video lectures.	25.5%	12.8 %	24.5%	25.5%	11.7%
14.	Teachers helped in clarifying my queries.	31.9%	9.6%	29.8%	22.3%	6.4%
15.	I am able to resolve technological issues with ease.	36.2%	7.4%	22.3%	28.7%	5.3%



16.	I developed analytical skills in distance learning.	29.8%	3.2%	35.1%	26.6%	5.3%
17.	The teachers were capable of managing an online class.	38.3%	13.8%	28.7%	17%	2.1%
18.	I see remote learning as engaging.	28.7%	6.4%	20.2%	30.9%	13.8%
19.	My private information is secure in a virtual classroom.	36.2%	13.8%	21.3%	25.5%	3.2%
20.	Remote learning caused stress in students.	50%	20.2%	18.1%	10.6%	1.1%

The quantitative part of the questionnaire concentrates on the basic perspectives of students regarding remote learning in emergency conditions. The participants revealed the issues they faced due to sudden shift in educational settings. They further elaborated that in spite of development of technology, students were unable to actually acquire knowledge for the reason of numerous problems such as internet connectivity issues, lack of technological expertise, poor communication between students and teachers. Students declared that although they are contented because of the leniency in time and easy access to academic materials but they were uneasy because of the disruptions.

### **Qualitative Analysis**

The systematic gathering, organizations and interpretations of acquired information from open discussions or conversations are mainly emphasized in qualitative study. Maltured (2001), asserted that qualitative analysis focuses on the concealed meanings and traditional concepts of social settings. Cohen (2007) proposed that the procedure of understanding and grasping from the gathered data that validates the attitudes, opinions, environments, themes, categories, and systematic networks of participants that can further be called qualitative data analysis. Gibbs (2007) proposed that the procedure of arranging collected qualitative data into a shape that is comprehensible, insightful, and dependable is known as qualitative data analysis. As asserted by Marshall and Rossman (1999), suggested that qualitative data analysis is an examination into comprehensive rights about associations between arrangements of information. According to Muijs (2011), qualitative approaches are much more suitable for shaping up the significance of certain practices or surroundings.

Moreover, the researcher created some open-ended questions. Public interpret open-ended questions as a disagreement to closed questions. As declared by Fribourg and Rosenvinge's (2013), open-ended questions are supposed to disclose more detailed and comprehensive data than close-ended questions, but sometimes there are dispersed or lost information that is difficult to comprehend.

**Online classes versus conventional classes.** Most of the respondents opt for conventional classes. Their answers revealed that they think that traditional mode of learning provide more opportunities. Learners feel more involved by joining traditional classes. They experience those traditional classes enforces them to be more concentrated and attentive. Traditional classes make the process of learning easier. Learners evidently declared that remote learning environment do not offer sufficient amount of comprehension. Learners encounter a huge number of problems in acquiring the knowledge properly. On the other hand, some of the respondents opt towards remote classes because they seem economical in terms of travel and other expenses. They added leniency in time as another positive aspect of remote learning. Another benefit that was highlighted was the flexibility in schedules. This helped learners to perform more tasks at a time. However, a few respondents were unbiased and completely certain that every mode has its own assets and liabilities.

**Obstacles of Remote Learning.** The outcome of the study outlined numerous challenges that students encountered. The most repeated challenges that students mentioned includes internet connectivity issues, lack of proper communication, lack of technical knowledge. According to some students, the opportunity to approach digital tools and gadgets proved to be the most problematic feature of remote learning. Some respondents also declared that internet connectivity issues are the most strenuous aspect of remote learning and made the experience difficult. Not being able

to concentrate properly due to different interruptions is also a negative point. Learners and teachers not being able to communicate properly increased the challenges of remote learning. Moreover, not being able to receive quick responses and feedback from teachers are also a complaint of respondents. Remote learning was also criticized by students because they were unable to grasp the concepts clearly. The lack of an organized course structure was the reason students used to procrastinate.

**Satisfaction level of students.** The results of the study exposed that most of the students are not contented with traditional mode of learning. They highlighted the reasons behind it. They claimed that the lack of proper communication between teachers and students is the chief concern of students. The students declared that they were unable to focus on their education because of numerous disturbances. However, a large number of respondents seem optimistic about this sudden shift in educational mode. These respondents declared that because of this setting they learned new ways of learning and interacting. They view these shifts as a chance to be productive.

**Effectiveness of Remote Learning.** A large number of respondents settled on the idea that remote education is not an effectual way to acquire knowledge. Some of the respondents think that this mode of instruction is not at all valuable. They believe that while they are not actively learning, it does not enhance their chances of achieving. It was difficult for them to express their thoughts correctly due to communication issues. Nevertheless, a large number of respondents described their own opinions that were very positive and elevating. They declared that in emergency situations, remote learning is the best way to continue education. Some of the respondents dictated that this new educational setting made them proficient in learning and gaining knowledge.

**Stressful factors of Emergency Remote Learning.** The acquired information evidently proposed that learners can have depression and anxiety for a number of reasons. Students feel anxious due to their real experiences. The most important cause was internet connection issues. Some respondents clearly mentioned that due to poor internet connection, they feel unattached and lost. This flaw made several students stressed. Remote learning and its challenges made students mentally and physically unstable. Access to social media and gadgets they became a source of distraction for them. They found it difficult to find appropriate time and location to finish off their tasks.

**Quality Learning in Remote Classroom.** A large size of participants professed that remote learning did not fulfil their hopes. Remote learning is not considered an excellent way of learning. Some resources declared that they were not able to learn and acquire knowledge in this setting. They suggested that remote learning pushes students to be lethargic and procrastinate their tasks. They started relying on time saving methods and stopped working effectually. Some of the participants has unbiased views, while some declared that lack of communication and interaction shaped up unpleasant experiences of students regarding remote learning.

**Strategies to Enhance Effectiveness of Remote Classrooms.** Respondents suggested a number of recommendations regarding the challenges of emergency remote learning. students suggested that before this sudden transition of traditional classes to remote classes there should be proper training sessions for not only teachers but students also. This way the participants can get sure about all the rules and regulations. They will know their upcoming challenges and possess adequate skills to overcome them. Some recommended that by sticking to schedules, teachers and students both can gain benefit. Another suggestion declared that instructors should be

more proficient in technological knowledge in order to deliver the lectures and materials effectually.

### Conclusion

In order to conclude the study, the assets and liabilities revealed by contributors are portrayed. The key concern of the students was the lack of face-to-face interaction, which compelled learners to devote additional time than needed revising educational material and engaging in self-directed education than they would have under traditional mode of teaching. Because of the added tasks given to learners, students felt overburdened. Some participants claimed that although teachers provided them academic material but they didn't assist students further and it proved to be difficult for students to comprehend that material on their own. However, irrespective of the challenges, remote learning is appropriate for learners who have part time occupations. These kinds of students also gained benefit regarding travel expenses and leniency in time management. They can handle more than one responsibility at a time this way and can attend class regardless of their time or setting. To conclude, on account of improvement and development of technology worldwide, remote learning can spread around the globe. This can further enhance the teaching approaches and methods.

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