

STUDENTS' MOTIVATION TOWARDS THEIR STUDIES: POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC SITUATION AND FUTURE DIMENSIONS FOR EDUCATION

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Abstract

COVID-19 pandemic has a substantial impact on student motivation and learning outcomes, therefore this study attempted to find out the motivation level of students towards their studies after COVID-19. Survey method was applied for this study. 350 students were selected from secondary school of District Bahawalpur Punjab Pakistan by using random sampling technique. To meet the study's aims, the data was collected from the students through a questionnaire get the necessary information related to the learning motivation of students towards their studies. The reliability of the questionnaire was statistically computed by Cronbach Alpha value which was 0.785. SPSS was used for data analysis. Descriptive statistics and t- test were applied to find the results of this study. The findings explored that students have a moderate level of learning motivation. Moreover, a significant relationship was found between male and female student's motivation towards their studies. Female level of motivation was higher than male in all. Based on these findings, the study suggests that students should be raised in their level of learning to reduce learning problems.

Keywords Motivation, secondary education, Covid-19, pandemic, learning.

Introduction

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic that began in March of 2020, some countries implemented measures such as travel restrictions, quarantines, and stay-at-home orders. Disruptions to student learning strongly effected the education systems and students (Noori, 2021). Because of COVID-19 pandemic break, students were unable to attend classes in the traditional face-to-face manner. In the interim, teaching staff was moved quickly to transition from traditional teaching methods to online. Numerous research reported that e-learning enhanced students' engagement and critical thinking abilities (Tan, et al., 2020) with many negative impacts. According to Shepherd and Mohohlwane (2021), in result of pandemic break, children have been put at greater risk of dropping out of school, lagging behind and losing learning. Dutta and Smita (2020) reported that a change in educational procedures created stress, anxiety and disappointment due to a sudden change.

Numerous scholars and professionals have stressed that one of the most important variables affecting students' academic progress is motivation that was impacted due to unforeseen conditions during Pandemic break. Motivation is a dramatic component used to explain the initiation, direction, intensity, persistence, and overall excellence of behaviour, particularly goal-directed behavior (Hartnett & George, 2011).

Learning techniques are bound to teacher's guidance and practice in real situations. Class room situations develop specific learning skills among students that depend upon the situations offered to students. The learning skills are specialized activities designed to make learning simpler, quicker, more fun, self-assured, and more productive in the new environment. The learner uses the learning technique as a concept to comprehend, absorb, and remember knowledge (Brophy, et al., 2013).

Background of Study

Motivation is the readiness to expend high levels of efforts toward organizational goals, contingent upon the effort ability to meet some individual need (Robbins, 2002). It is state of willingness to work hard to achieve human goals. According to wang and(Denhardt 2008), motivation seems to be agreed upon. Goal-directedness is one of the characteristics of motivation, and it also describes pursuing and achieving goals. It is complexed in nature because of impossibility to observe and measure directly. But, for educational process and effective output in all fields of life, motivation is necessary. It is unconscious trend of a human brain and emotions towards life intentions and priorities towards actions. Motivation is necessary to attain life goals and set routines of life towards setting actions for life priorities.

Education is a complexed process that is impossible unless hard work of teachers and students. A teacher working without motivation can never achieve educational targets. Students' on the other hand can never attain mastery on course

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contents and skills unless having an accepted level of motivation. That's why, first step in teaching learning process is to motivate students for learning. Research shows that students having skills to provoke students' motivation before start to teach always achieve goals with less efforts. For the learners' point of view, a student having high level motivation always attain better in easy manners. But, due to reality of motivation as internal condition it cannot be seen. Its' provoke in students is a difficult but crucial task. According to Dewi et al. (2020), to motivate students, one must make them wish to engage in learning activities so that they develop a habit and a desire to achieve objectives. Wang and Denhardt (2008) has a point of view that motivation is linked to mind and heart and it is not possible to observe and measure directly.

Motivation has been divided into different sections. Most common division of motivation is defined in to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is related to inner satisfaction. Its not bound to a person to act something for the cause to do something to achieve in return. It pushes a person to act something without having aim in mind to attain rewards. A person performing something with this type of motivation look calm and feel pleasure and satisfaction in work. A work or action done with intrinsic motivation never give urge to person to attain any type of incentives but person feel enjoyment in such tasks (Legault, 2020; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Reverse to this type is extrinsic motivation that pushes a person to act something to refrain criticism, failure, punishments and attain rewards, incentives and promotions (Bruce, et.al, 2010; Erten, 2014).

Learning motivation has significant role in conditions for learning process. It is conviction that learning motivation directs a person's learning objectives, encouragement towards positive learning behaviour, exert constant effort, reinforces cognitive history and strengthens and enhances learning output (Lin, Chen & Liu, 2017). Therefore, a teacher try to develop learning motivation among students using different tacts of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. A student with high level learning motivation performs better in academic achievement and finally learn to use motivation skills to attain his life goals throughout the life.

Since 2020, study on effects of COVID -19 pandemic on different life routines has a popular area of research for researchers all around the world. In the field of education, this pandemic left many impacts on all elements of teaching learning process. During pandemic period, sudden change in procedures disturbed everyone. The situation also stressed educationists to adopt alternate ways to regulate educational process in schools, colleges and universities. Unless having preparations, an innovation in the field of education was introduced those days. Online teaching and learning that was never a part of formal education, suddenly imposed to implement. Governments, on the other hand also take initiatives to give some

relaxations to students in the form of credit benefits, promotion to next grades without formal assessments and involved students to study using online media. This no doubt brought an unconscious change in students for future. The very negative impact of this was promotion of lack of social relationships among students and teacher students' interaction.

Smith et.al (2021) asserted that COVID -19 effected students' trends towards studying behavior and psychology. According to Crawford (2019) a break in social connectivity among learners was a major source to negatively impact the motivation of learners towards learning. A study reported by Gonzalez et al (2020) highlighted that examination of administered grades revealed that grades were higher in 2019–20 rather than lower as predicted. This was due to policies announced and adopted during COVID-19 break. Once, promotion to next grades without evaluating students' attainment through examinations as per set criterion further motivated students to get relaxations for future too. As per report of Okoronka and Filgona, (2020), the early impact of the lockout seemed to be wearing off when June and July results returned to prior year's levels.

Statement of the problem

Regular schooling in formal schooling plays vital role in learning quality of students. A break may be due to any disaster, mis happening, illness or any disruptive behavior of students badly effects learning process of students. During COVID 19 pandemic situation, students faced issue to attend schools in face-to-face mode of education. Unforeseen situation disturbed not only every field of life of human beings but also effected students regarding learning routines. This period fostered a change in thinking and study style of students. Students having experience to attend schools in regular way and meet teachers in formal environment faced lot of issues to contact teachers and classmates during classes. Majority of students were not trained to study online and use social media to contact their teachers. This no doubt, motivated students to study using own will and attain learning goals by working with motivation. But, Online learning in COVID-19 pandemic period caused a lack of motivation for many students to learn. Many researchers and experts are agreed that motivation is one of the key factors that influence learners' success in learning process. If, motivation for learning is poor or lacks during studies, attainment of educational goals and quality learning is impossible. Therefore, with an assumption that students accepted the relaxations regarding promotions to next grades without exams or examinations in relaxed environment made students habitual to study with relaxations, this research planned to find out the motivation level of students towards their studies in post COVID-19 pandemic situation and search out future dimensions for education in Pakistan specifically and for the globe in general.

Objectives of the study

The study's goals in terms of research were to:

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1. Identify the motivation level of students towards their studies after COVID-19 break.
2. Evaluate inter relationship between different factors of motivation
3. Compare the motivation level of students among males and females.
4. Suggest measures to overcome factors that are possible to effect quality of education in post pandemic period

Procedure of the study

This study was conducted using a sample of students who faced COVID 19 Pandemic during 2020. Therefore, ex post facto research design of descriptive research method was employed in this quantitative study to ascertain students' motivation level towards their studies after COVID-19 break from January 3, 2020, to September 15, 2020. Keeping in view the available resources, one district of Punjab province of Pakistan was selected to choose cases for this study. All students in Bahawalpur district of Pakistan who faced COVID 19 pandemic break for regular schooling had experience to work at distance from teacher using online education mode. After the break, they were transferred to a face-to-face learning environment like past routines. So, 350 students of secondary classes from eight secondary schools (female & male) including private and government schools were chosen using random sampling technique. Research tool of the study was a self-developed motivation measurement scale. Motivation measurement scale has 33 items on five-point likert scale. This measurement scale covered five learning motivation factors including; intrinsic goal orientation, self-efficiency, task value, attending the class, test and assignments. Validity of tool was measured by experts' opinion method. A pilot test was also conducted to check understanding of respondents regarding items of the instrument and functioning of items in relation to achieve the objectives of study. The reliability of the questionnaire was statistically computed by Cronbach Alpha value which was 0.785.

For data collection, personal visit was arranged and respondents were informed about aim of the study and provide data with confidence that aspect of secrecy will be responsibility of researchers. Data analysis was done on computer using mean, standard deviation, t-test and correlation.

Results and Interpretation

The first one target in mind behind framing the present study was to review the observation that COVID-19 pandemic break has affected students' motivation towards studies. During COVID break, many relaxations were given to students in educational process in the form of promotion to next grades without examinations, study at home without attending formal school, decision about current grades on the basis of past results etc. This gave a relaxation to students. No doubt, some of the students were curious about their attendance in school and losing chances to attain

teachers’ guidance but majority of students found them relaxed. This brought a change in studying styles and behavior to attend school in different way after COVID-19 break. Students were found less motivated about school routines after ending the break. To evaluate this view, motivation level of a sample of 350 students in post COVID-19 break was measured using a five point scale. The results have shown in table 1. Table 1 describes motivation level of students in Post pandemic situation regarding all five factors of motivation.

Table 1 Motivation level of students after post pandemic situation

Factors	Mean	Standard Deviation
Self-Efficiency	4.34	0.39
Task Value	4.31	0.55
Attending the class	4.19	0.49
Test and Assignments	4.17	0.45
Intrinsicgoal Orientation	4.14	0.45
Total	4.23	0.466

Table 1

1indicates the mean and SD of motivation factors of students towards their studies. On the whole students’ motivation level was at good level but comparison of students’ motivation towards different factors of motivation was showing a bit difference. Mean scores of different factors of motivation indicate the little bit mean difference among different factors of motivation. Students were more motivated in self-efficiency and task value than attending class, tests and assignments and intrinsically goal oriented. Based on these findings, it was determined that students' motivation for learning was suitable for their academic pursuits in post Pandemic period. Moreover, they were best in self-efficiency and task value but less motivated regarding class attendance, tests and assignments and Intrinsic goal Orientation in comparison to their combined motivation score and trend towards self-efficiency and task value.

Table 2 Relationship between factors of learning motivation

		Attendance	TestandAssign ments	Intrinsicgoal Orientation	Self- Efficiency	Task- Value
Attendance	r	1	.333**	.007	.350**	.334**
	P		.000	.899	.000	.000
Test and Assignments	r	.333**	1	-.134*	.181**	.290**
	P	.000		.021	.002	.000
Intrinsicgoal Orientation	r	.007	-.134*	1	.040	-.160**
	P	.899	.021		.493	.006

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Self-Efficiency	r	.350**	.181**	.040	1	.477**
	P	.000	.002	.493		.000
Task-Value	r	.334**	.290**	-.160**	.477**	1
	P	.000	.000	.006	.000	

Table 2

exhibit the relationship of different factors of motivation. Pearson's correlation was applied to find out relationship among the different factors of learning motivation. Results of this table indicates that highly positive significant relationship exist between attendance, test and Assignments, intrinsic goal Orientation, self-Efficiency and task-Value but negative significant relationship exist between intrinsic goal orientation and test and assignment and task-value and intrinsic goal orientation. This indicates that increase of levels of different factors of motivation help learners to improve learning. With increase of Intrinsic goal Orientation, an uplift in Self-Efficiency, performance in test and assignment task value and students' attendance in classes is possible especially after a break like COVID-19 Pandemic.

Table 3 Individual t test about learning motivation among male and female.

Factors of LM	Gender	Mean	SD	t-score	sig
Intrinsicgoal orientation	Male	4.02	.45654	-5.042	.000
	Female	4.27	.405		
Self-Efficiency	Male	4.32	.439	-.758	.449
	Female	4.36	.335		
Task value	Male	4.02	.456	-5.042	.000
	Female	4.27	.405		
Attending the class	Male	4.02	.456	-5.042	.000
	Female	4.27	.405		
Test and Assignments	Male	4.02	.456	-5.042	.000
	Female	4.27	.405		

Table 3

displays a comparison of the motivation level of male and female students

towards their studies after COVID-19 breaks. So, a t-test was applied to achieve the results. The results of the data show a significant mean difference in 80% (4 out of 5) factors of motivation including; intrinsic goal orientation ($t = -5.042$, $p = .000$), task value ($t = -5.042$, $p = .000$), attendance ($t = -5.042$, $p = .000$) and test and assignment ($t = -5.042$, $p = .000$) of male and female students about their studies and insignificant mean difference among male and students regarding self-efficiency ($t = -.758$, $p = .449$) about their studies. Therefore, it was found that significant mean difference exists among male and female student's motivation towards their studies. According to data, overall, women are more motivated than male regarding all factors. This explains positive effect of COVID-19 break on learning motivation of female students in comparison to male students in post COVID19 break.

Discussion and future Implications of the study

The present research was conducted to find out the motivation level of students towards their studies after COVID-19 break. The findings explored that students have appropriate level of learning motivation after COVID-19 break. Furthermore, study found significant mean difference among male and female student's motivation towards their studies. Hence, according to the results of this study, female students have higher level of motivation about their studies than male students.

In post COVID Pandemic period, the area was very appealing for a number of researchers. Multiple research studies have reported different situations in different samples. The research studies reported that students claimed that the COVID-19 classes allowed them to gain more credits than the previous class. This was supported by our analysis of administered grades, which showed that, contrary to expectations, the second year of 2019–20 saw grades rise. However, one more study, indicated that COVID-19 has a favorable impact on the academic performance of Spanish school pupils (Gonzalez et al, 2020). Present study also has shown alignment to the same finding. Here a trend towards motivation to learn is in good standing especially in female students. It can be said that increase towards motivation to attain more is a human nature whenever human beings face difficult situations in life. A thrust to complete human wishes, desires and obligations to get more is better observed among those who live in bad conditions.

Human beings are social animals. They urge to live in connection to others. Human needs are attached with having good social relations with others. COVID-19 break increased a thrust to meet others because of law and orders of state during the pandemic period. According to one argument that could explain this assumption, the previous study results showed that the lack of social connection is demotivating for all students equally, and not more so for either student who reported high levels of social integration previously or students who are high in extraversion. People who lack extraversion may not anticipate social contacts as much as extraverted people do, but

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they still enjoy them when they do (Duffy et al, 2018).

According to Gonzalez et al (2020) It is interesting to note that the emergency model implemented by UNIFENAS-BH has both positive and motivating features, notwithstanding the "damage" created by the obstacles to actual face-to-face study. Students' views suggested that online education was superior to traditional schooling because there was no need for travel and there were fewer attendance restrictions. Based on their access to digital traces in online learning systems, students appeared to study more frequently than before. This signifies a trend to turn formal mode of education towards online education. This is big change in mind of people that has occurred due to COVID-19 pandemic. Students' motivation towards attendance in a formal class room, test and assignments and intrinsic goal orientation has decreased in comparison to self-efficacy and task value (see Table 1).

One view point before COVID-19 Pandemic that successful learning could have continued in schools due to the social integration that had already been achieved before the closure of educational institutions (i.e., during the classes during preceding years). In June and July, 2020 when outcomes reverted to those seen in previous years, it appeared that the lockdown's initial effects on improving results were wearing off. Therefore, it is unclear whether this will hold in the future when social ties deteriorate due to isolation.

On the whole, results of this study indicate a significant interconnection among factors of motivation. Most of the factors have positive correlation. A result of the study showing better level of motivation of female in comparison to male students guides to further investigate reasons behind scenarios; why female students got more motivation in comparison to male after COVID-19 pandemic. Is it due to COVID-19 break or due to some other reason?

Based on the study's findings, this study indicates some suggestions for future researchers. As this study has indicated less motivation of students towards regular attendance, test and assignments and intrinsic goal orientation due to post effects of COVID-19 break in formal schooling. Need of the time is to organize training sessions of students to motivate them for regularity and punctuality in post pandemic period. Need is also to educate formal school students for benefits of formal schooling in comparison to learning without social interaction. No doubt, learning by self-effort has other positive effects on learning process but lack of social interaction is harmful for developing social skills to learners that is not possible without learning in face-to-face mode of education. Educationists need to insist students to learn in closed face to face interaction environment. Otherwise, a global social change of promotion of lack of social interaction is possible due to rapid trend to learn through social media and ignore social link. This will finally impact social structure and social relationships in future that should be avoided to make future society human friendly and

cooperative to each other.

Results of this study highlights student's satisfaction towards online learning that attracted students during COVID-19 break. That's why score of students was better regarding self-efficacy and task value after COVID-19 break. This suggests academicians to prepare themselves for online teaching skills to satisfy students psychological needs. This can be very fruitful for future to promote learner centered learning skills among learners that is no doubt a better technique to gain. But, this should be in mixture to formal teaching. On the basis of findings in can be predicted that future of education is in mixed method approaches of teaching and learning. Through, blend of formal and online methods of learning, students learning can be improved and learners' skills can have an improvement because of mixture of learning through guided studies and learner centered skills of learning.

This study also provokes for a change to improve schools' resources for online education. This is due to overall acceptance of students to adapt online learning skills in one hand and schools' poor infrastructure and resources regarding online teaching on the otherhand. In future, if schools will not be improved for mixing online learning with traditional learning skills, a decrease in learners' motivation is possible.

This study through a light on need to conduct seminars and training on the effectiveness of motivation of students regarding all factors and especially for weaker areas indicated by this study. In order to affect students' motivation, the government should also act to create a positive atmosphere in schools. A school with better teaching learning resources more motivate students to attend school happily. This study also suggests to highlight the value of video lectures recordings as a suitable teaching and learning approach for students in formal settings. Moreover, it is need of the time to emphasize for more research to create engaging formats that are tailored to every type of educational setting to meet unforeseen situations in future.



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