

Perceptions Of Students Regarding Changes In LMS Of AIOU, Islamabad, Pakistan

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Abstract

Information Technology (IT) has long been a part of daily life in educational institutions around the world, including Pakistan. A learning management system (LMS) is designed to assist students by facilitating learning and communication. In recent years, LMS has gained popularity among students as a method of acquiring knowledge through electronic media. The use of computers and an understanding of information technology are required for this. The current study sought to learn more about how students at AIOU Islamabad, Pakistan, perceive the changes in learning management systems by distributing a questionnaire consisting of a few questions related to LMS. Majority of the respondents involved in the study were females (51.67%) while 48.32% were males. The respondents with Bachelor, Masters, MS/M.Phil, and Ph.D. levels of degree were 31.62%, 30.07%, 27.20%, and 11.13%, respectively. It is concluded that the majority of participants (male and female) had no internet facility which is a very important part of LMS. Syllabus and course materials were the frequently used tools of LMS in the study area. LMS can be a highly effective learning tool when they are designed to be scalable and able to adapt to the needs of the University. According to research, electronic Moodle-based LMSs may be more effective than traditional face-to-face teaching, resulting in learning outcomes that equal or exceed those of face-to-face teaching. Students face difficulties using Microsoft teams because they are not well aware of its functionality. It was recommended that proper training regarding the usage of the AIOU Aaghi LMS Portal should be provided for the provision of efficient learning environment.

Keywords: Information Technology; Learning Management Systems; Microsoft teams; Student perceptions; Pakistan.

Introduction

Learning is a process that begins in the earliest stages of life and continues indefinitely until death. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) are challenged to improve the student learning experiences by demonstrating program effectiveness (Lee et al., 2009). According to Al-

Zahrani (2015), active learning and improving student engagement are critical tasks for HEIs. Traditional classrooms are no longer effective in developing learners' ability to apply knowledge in real-world situations. Thus, scholars, advocacy groups, and policymakers are working to improve higher education quality through active methodologies that equip students with life-long

learning skills necessary for the labor market (Mazur, 2009; O'Flaherty & Phillips, 2015). Learning Management System (LMS) is an online software portal that allows students and instructors to easily share classroom resources, tools, and activities with each other (Cavus, 2011; Bonnaire and Phan, 2017). There are many applications and tools of LMSs that encourage faculty members to use them for teaching and learning practices all over the world including in Pakistan. These tools help the faculty members or teachers to check the students' activities in a more manageable manner, allowing involvement, interaction, and collaboration. Assignments, quizzes, announcements, discussion forums, resources, chat, and other functions and communication tools are provided by LMS to support teaching and learning. The main examples of LMS are Canvas, Google Classroom, Sakai, Blackboard, e-College, and Moodle (Green et al. 2006; Preidys and Sakalauskas 2010).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has spread throughout the world, including Pakistan, China, America, Indonesia, and many other countries, LMS applications have begun all over the world. In this application, both students and teachers should stay at home due to a government regulation that restricts activity at schools or campuses in order to stop the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) is the only distance learning university founded in 1974 with the goal of providing education to those students who are unable to continue their studies due to geographical, cultural, or traditional ties. The advancement of internet technology and modern information technology has led to the growth of online educational programs in recent years (Sahin, 2007; Ali and Ahmed, 2011; Khan et al., 2019; Meral, 2019).

A vast development in Internet applications has been triggered by rapid innovation in mobile and

computer technology. A variety of perspectives and uses have been developed to meet the needs of the social community through the Internet (Edmunds and Hartnett, 2014). Resources, information, and interactivity have been made available through Web 2.0 technology in Higher Education institutions. Students can also benefit from learning management systems by improving classroom or distance learning by giving them access to learning content. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) is becoming more and more prevalent in students' daily lives. By using ICT, students and teachers are better able to manage assignments and communicate across time and space (Chen, 2011).

According to the study of (Singh and Thurman 2019) as cited by (Shahzadi & Alam, 2021). The E-learning approach, which may be characterized as learning experiences in both synchronous and asynchronous platforms using various devices with internet access, makes the teaching and learning process more student-centered, engaging, effective, inventive, and flexible. Because of this, they can study on their own and communicate with their instructors and fellow students.

Allama Iqbal Open University Aaghi LMS Portal 2022 provides access all of the academic year's details, including tutor, class, etc., by logging into AIOU Students Profile. Students may find more information by going to aaghi.aiou.edu.pk online. The most important initiative platform that AIOU has established is the AIOU Aaghi LMS Portal 2022. Bachelor, ADC/ADB/BS/BBA, B.Ed., ATTC, CT, PTC Courses Post-Graduate Courses Autumn/Spring Semester2022, guidelines are available for writing assignments, submission of assignments, attending the workshops online and online attendance of workshop. Students access to AIOU AGHI LMS at @aaghi.aiou.edu.pk

Changes were made in Aaghi LMS Portal by introducing the tabs "Current LMS Portal",

“Previous LMS Portal” and “Support”. The AIOU and Microsoft reached a Rs 270 million deal to repair gaps in the prior system and guarantee hassle-free e-learning (<https://dailytimes.com.pk>).

Including other social networking sites, Microsoft Teams offers expanded capabilities like collaborative discussion, chat, video conferencing, and content sharing. (Muhammad Usman Keerio et al., 2022).

The Current LMS Portal is designed with the provision of access for international students' login and download and install Microsoft Teams App on PC/Laptop/Mobile. The credential used for log in to LMS can be used for log in to Microsoft Teams App. The workshops are delivered online using the university's LMS portal. Graduate students are also required to attend their courses' workshops in accordance with the workshop schedule, and they are advised to get in touch with the closest regional office if they have any issues with the online workshops. (<https://www.aioupk.net/>).

In Pakistan, the quality of education may deteriorate through online education considering that the issues such as power cuts and unequal access to the internet remain unaddressed. Distance learning as well as by LMS in Pakistan is generally perceived as having lower quality by the majority of people.

Online tutoring system using LMS demands that learners must have basic abilities to operate or

utilize it so that they may quickly post their assignments on it and obtain all instructional material (Noreen, 2020).

According to studies, Microsoft teams have attracted 2.7 billion users, and this tendency is growing quickly (S.K. Suresh, 2020).

In fact, the current study was conducted to evaluate the opinions of AIOU students towards the changes in LMS. The aim of the current study was to determine the perceptions of students about the changes in LMS of AIOU specifically the usage of Microsoft Teams because demand of distance education is increasing not only in Pakistan but all over the world.

Material and method

A cross-sectional study/survey was conducted in the Allama Iqbal Open University Islamabad, Pakistan (33°39'24.23"N 73°1'29.14"E) to determine the perceptions of students about changes in LMS. A questionnaire was developed to collect the data from Bachelor's, Master's, MS/M/Phil, and Ph.D. students. Online questionnaire was distributed to the students for describing their opinions and use of learning technologies like Microsoft PowerPoint, tools within Blackboard in an academic environment and podcasts, Microsoft Teams App etc. It was briefed the respondents about the aim of current study. A total of 449 Bachelor's to Ph.D. students participated in this survey and gave their opinions about changes in LMS.

Results and discussion

Table 1. Socio-demographic characteristics of the Respondent.

Gender		Age			Education level			
Male	Female	18-23	24-29	30-35	Bachelors	Masters	MS/M.Phil	PhD
217	232	149	152	148	142	135	122	50

Demography of the respondents showed that majority of the participants were between 24-29 years of age. Majority of the respondents involved in the study were females (51.67%) while 48.32% were males. The respondents with

Bachelor, Masters, MS/M.Phil, and Ph.D. level of degree were 31.62%, 30.07%, 27.20%, and 11.13%, respectively (Table 1). All the respondents are currently users of Microsoft teams since spring semester 2022.

Table 2. Opinions of participants about Microsoft Teams app for learning.

Opinions	Mean
Effectively listen to the professor's lecture than attend a lecture physically	3.66
Online workshops are a good way to review materials in theory-based courses	4.59
Online workshops are a good way to review material in quantitative courses	4.85
No time to listen to online lectures	3.54
Prefer to watch an online lecture than attend a lecture physically	3.41
Microsoft Teams app is an easy way to conduct online classes	3.00

*Scale of 1-7 with 1 being "not at all" and 7 being "very much"

For their learning, participants were asked to rate statements about the Microsoft Teams app on a scale of 1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree. The response of the students was positive about the use of the Microsoft teams app, with the exception of "Online workshops is a good way to review material in theory based courses" which they rated 4.85 out of 7, followed by online

workshops are a good way to review material in quantitative courses, effectively listen to the professor's lecture than attend a lecture physically, no time to listen to online lectures, prefer to watch an online lecture than attend a lecture physically, and the Microsoft teams app is an easy way to conduct online classes (Table 2).

Table 3. Perceptions of LMS Tools for Enhancing Learning.

How much does each of the following tools in your learning management system enhance your learning?	Male mean	female mean	p-value
Podcasts	3.67	3.41	0.52
E-mail	4.17	6.23	0.23
Calendar	4.5	4.99	0.09
Web Links	4.01	4.87	0.31
Class Groups	3.72	4.33	0.05
Chat	3.09	3.59	0.23
Assignments	5.37	5.7	0.04
Syllabus	5.7	5.8	0.73
Course Materials (PowerPoint or readings)	5.37	5.52	0.64
Media Library	3.01	3.26	0.667
Class Roster	3.56	3.78	0.54
Announcements	4.64	5.29	0.13
Learning Modules	4.55	5.1	0.03
Threaded Discussion	3.02	3.23	0.45
Online tests/quizzes	4.78	5.56	0.33

*Scale of 1-7 with 1 being “not at all” and 7 being “very much”

A questionnaire asked participants how much they felt that the tools within a LMS enhanced their learning, ranging from 1 = not at all to 7 = very much”. They responded that course materials, syllabus, assignments, online tests/quizzes, announcements, email, learning modules, and the calendar were highly rated while class roster, chat, and threaded discussion were rated low in terms of enhancing their learning. The significant difference was recorded in responses of both male and female involved in

the study. According to the perception of female regarding LMS tools, assignments, online tests and course materials significantly higher on enhancing learning as compared to other LMS tools. Blogs, chat rooms, discussion forums and wikis have emerged as interactive features in LMS, which can facilitate constructivist learning methods, which contrast with traditional transmission methods (Lonn & Teasley, 2009; Rubin et al., 2010; Asgari, 2014; Badri et al., 2017).

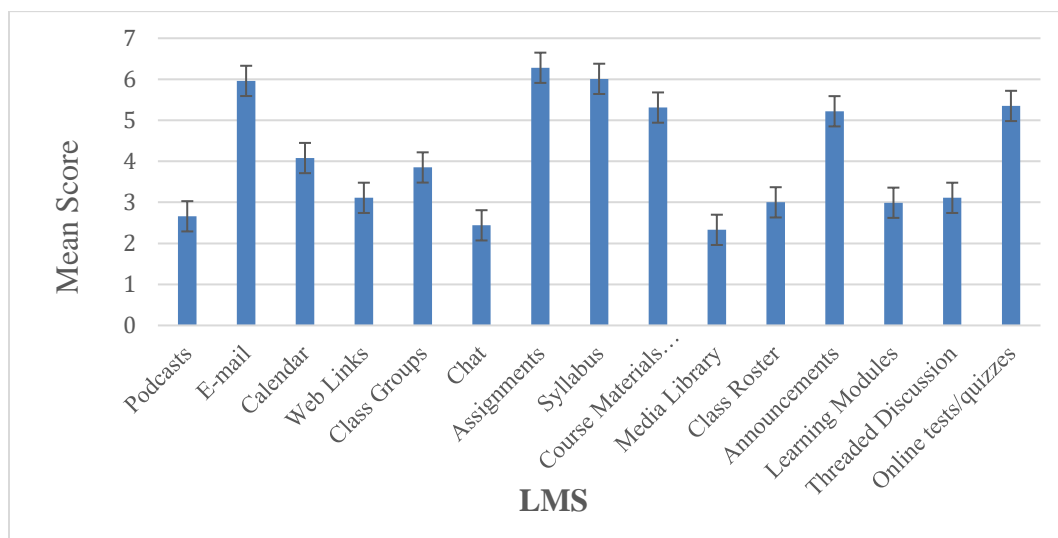


Figure 1. Frequently use tools of Learning Management System (LMS)

Podcasts, email, calendar, web links, class groups, chat, assignments, syllabus, course materials, media library, class roster, announcements, learning modules, threaded discussion and online tests or quizzes were the tools used by the participants for learning management system as shown in figure 1. Among tools, syllabus and course materials were frequently use tools of learning management system in the study area. Palmer and Holt (2014) also reported similar findings that course materials are most helpful in LMS. A study was

conducted in Iran to determine the perceptions of the students for LMS (Ağır and Ahmet, 2014; Sayfour, 2016). The majority of the students respond that they faced inefficient tools for typing in English. No proper and effective tools were told to write in English which proves the most drawback of LMS. Dogoriti et al. (2014) reported similar findings. Wolf (2010) and West-Burnham (2010) reported learning management system as a useful strategy for improving student academic achievement and engagement.

Table 4. Students’ response to the challenges face with the use of Microsoft Teams app in LMS for learning.

Challenges faced by students	Number of Male	Number of Female	Total
Lack of digital knowledge	34 (15.55%)	35 (15.08%)	69 (15.36%)
Limited access to LMS	3 (1.38%)	5 (2.15%)	8 (1.78%)
Time and energy consuming	11 (5.06%)	14 (6.03%)	25 (5.56%)
Extra burden or pressure	11 (5.17%)	14 (6.45%)	25 (5.56%)
Difficult to understand online material	37 (17.05%)	39 (16.81%)	76 (16.92%)
Motivation needed to study online	2 (0.92%)	1 (0.43%)	3 (0.66%)
Lose track of the online activities	4 (1.84%)	5 (2.15%)	9 (2.00%)
Lack of software availability	9 (4.14%)	10 (4.31%)	19 (4.23%)
Lack of teacher availability	24 (11.05%)	26 (11.20%)	50 (11.13%)
WIFI connection problems	45 (20.27%)	48 (20.68%)	93 (20.71%)
Technical issue on submitting assignments	27 (12.44%)	30 (12.93%)	57 (12.69%)
Problems with rebooting	7 (3.22%)	8 (3.44%)	15 (3.34%)

In the current study, it was recorded that majority of students not properly joined LMS Microsoft Teams app due to a lack of digital knowledge and they give preference to a physical class. A total of 69 (15.36%) students including 15.55% male and 15.08% females respond that they are facing digital knowledge. Female students' perception exhibits that they feel it is the time and energy-consuming. Moreover, their opinion regarding Microsoft Teams' usage is considered an extra burden and pressure as compared to males' opinion. The responses show that users face technical issues at the submission of assignments as they do not understand the guidelines and tutorials very well and they get worried. WIFI connection was the major issue for both males (20.27%) and females (20.68%) (Table 4). Sometimes students face difficulty in joining online classes especially when there are weak signals on the internet. Due to this, a distressing environment creates and they are unable to rejoin the class after many times logging in.

According to Khasawneh, Althunibat (2020), as cited by (Farkhanda Warsi, 2021) shows that technological difficulties, a lack of technical support, teachers who lack technology, problems with financial support, and factors affecting the quality of the e-learning system (which should be

improved in order to meet performance goals) are some of the causes of e-learning system failures.

A most recent study related to the usage of Microsoft teams for online Academics improvement explored that there are some challenges but overall, the Microsoft teams were beneficial to the students in developing their knowledge, self-study, job efficiency, and task quality. Their academic progress benefits from online learning using Microsoft Teams.(Muhammad Usman Keerio et al., 2022).

Conclusion

Learning Management System plays a pivotal role in online education. Allama Iqbal Open University Aaghi LMS Portal 2022 is working efficiently regarding time and cost saving. Online lecture delivery is effective and easy to attend as compared to attending lectures in institutions physically. The study conducted by Littlejohn (2005) also emphasized the potential benefits of LMS in terms of cooperation and sharing learning resources as well as providing quick feedback to all students at once. The addition of Microsoft teams for conducting the classes online is an easy way to facilitate the learners of AIOU. However, the changes in LMS affect the learning and academic achievement of students as initially

they are not well informed about the new system. Most students are not digitally literate in far-flung areas of Pakistan that's why they feel difficulty in downloading the Microsoft teams and its running. Most of the time the internet facility is not available or electric power supply is off, then they cannot join the class online. There are some challenges while using the LMS as online submission of assignments becomes difficult due to the insufficient knowledge of information communication technologies. It is recommended that technical support should be provided to the students for addressing their problems timely and quickly. There should a proper mechanism of training regarding the usage of LMS and specifically the Microsoft teams for learners to enhance their learning and academic achievement. Future research can be carried out to evaluate the perceptions of students in other universities in Pakistan regarding the utilization of LMS by applying the technology acceptance model as current research was carried out without the application of model.

Author's contribution

All authors have equal contribution in performing this research.

Conflict of interest

Authors have no conflict of interest.

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