Assessment of the effectiveness of EFL online learning and teaching during Covid-19 pandemic

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused the largest disruption to education systems in human history, affecting about 1.6 billion students in over 200 nations. Closed schools, institutions, and other learning facilities have harmed 94 percent of the world's student population. This has impacted many facets of our daily life. Social alienation and movement limits have significantly disrupted traditional schooling procedures. Reopening schools after restrictions are lifted is another problem, especially with so many new standard operating procedures in place.

After the COVID-19 epidemic, many specialists shared their findings on teaching and learning in various ways. Several schools and universities have begun to phase out face-to-face education. The 2020 academic year, and possibly more, may be lost in the near future. The study addressed issues most EFL students faced during COVID-19 online learning. Alternative teaching and assessment methods must be designed and deployed as quickly as practicable. The COVID-19 epidemic has given us a chance to promote digital learning. A detailed review of the influence of the COVID-19 epidemic on online teaching and learning of various articles is the goal of this study.

Keywords: Internet Use, Learning, Teaching

Introduction

The worldwide epidemic of the COVID-19 pandemic has spread throughout the globe, affecting almost every nation and territory. The epidemic was initially discovered in December 2019 in the Chinese city of Wuhan. In response to global warnings, the public was warned to take care. A variety of public health initiatives have been introduced, including hand washing, the use of face masks, physical separation, and the avoidance of large gatherings and assemblies. Lockdowns and staying at home have been used to flatten the curve and limit the virus's spread (Li et al , 2021).

China announced the first wave of school and institution closures, as well as a reduction in business hours, during the second week of January 2020. (Xiang et al, 2020). The nationwide lockdown was implemented on August 1, 2020 and will remain in effect until further notice (Hussain et al, 2020). In the interim, individuals were free to move about, businesses resumed operations, and schools and institutions reopened for selected levels while continuing with online courses for others. School closure all around the world has affected more than 180,0000 pupils in grades PP–XII, who are presently absent from class. The ramifications have been far-reaching, and they have had an effect on learning throughout the academic year, and they may have an even bigger impact in the coming days. Face-to-face instruction has been phased out in a number of schools, colleges, and universities. There is a critical need for innovative and effective educational and assessment methodologies to be developed and implemented. Fortunately, the COVID-19 outbreak has provided us with an opportunity to create the basis for the introduction of digital learning (Dhawan, 2020).

According to the research, certain deficiencies have been identified, including a lack of online teaching infrastructure, a lack of exposure for teachers to online teaching, a lack of information, a non-conducive environment for learning at home, a lack of equity, and a lack of academic excellence in higher education. The goal of this article is to examine the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on the teaching and learning process throughout the world. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the issues and opportunities of online and continuing education are discussed, and a plan for going forward is suggested.

Pedagogy for Continuing Education Through Online

In reaction to the COVID-19 outbreak, most countries have closed schools, training institutions, and higher education facilities. Instructors are increasingly using online means to deliver high-quality instruction. Environnementally friendly choices for schools and kids have arisen to combat this unprecedented worldwide pandemic. As a result of the current educational atmosphere, there are few or no alternatives to traditional face-to-face instruction. Schools and educators have adopted "Education in Emergency" due to the profusion of online platforms, for which they are unprepared.

Schools and universities have relied on e-learning platforms to facilitate student learning throughout this pandemic, which has resulted in the closure of several institutions of higher learning (Donthu et al., 2020). While adjusting to the new circumstances, it is vital to evaluate the level of preparation of faculty and students and to give appropriate support. Learning to adapt and modify is more difficult for students who have a fixed mentality, whereas learning to adapt and modify is easier for students who have a growth mentality. When it comes to online learning, there is no one-size-fits-all system that is effective for all students. There is a diverse spectrum of disciplines, each with its own set of specifications. When it comes to online learning, different fields and age groups need a variety of strategies that are both effective and efficient (Dwidienawati et al., 2020). The ability to study online also gives physical disabled students with more freedom since they may do it in a virtual

setting that requires no movement (Sathishkumar et al, 2020).

Thousands of students, parents, and educators throughout the globe have been adversely impacted by the unanticipated ripple effect of the COVID-19 outbreak, which has happened as a consequence of schools being closed around the world to cope with the global pandemic. While governments, frontline workers, and health authorities are doing all they can to slow the spread of the pandemic, education systems are working to provide high-quality education for all kids despite the difficult conditions. Many students have suffered psychological and emotional distress at home or in their immediate living environment, making it difficult for them to engage in class activities. At the moment, researchers are looking at the best practises for online homeschooling (Hyseni Duraku et al, 2020).

The use of suitable and relevant pedagogy for online education may be influenced by the amount of skill and exposure to information and communications technology (ICT) that both instructors and students have to the medium. Instructors have been using unified communication and collaboration platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Google Classroom to construct online educational courses, training programmes, and skill development programmes so far. Other systems such as Canvas and Blackboard are also being used (Hyseni Duraku et al , 2020). They include features such as office chat, video meetings, and file storage, which make it easier to keep courses organised and productive over the course of the semester. A vast variety of materials, including Word documents, PDFs, Excel spreadsheets, audio and video files, among other things, may be shared over these platforms. Through the use of quizzes as well as rubric-based grading of submitted work, they also make it easy to track student learning and assessment.

Providing learning resources before a class, such as articles, pre-recorded videos, and YouTube links, is an easy strategy that may be employed in a range of situations. The time spent in the online classroom is then put to use to improve understanding by interacting with instructors and other students in a virtual environment (Dwidienawati et al., 2020). With this approach of teaching and learning, developing talents such as problem-solving, critical thinking, and self-

directed learning are made much simpler. Virtual classroom platforms such as videoconferencing (such as Google Hangouts Meet), Slack, Cisco, and WebEx, as well as flexible cloud-based learning management systems such as Elias, Moodle, BigBlueButton, and Skype, are becoming more popular.

Challenges in Learning and Teaching

As platforms and online educational resources have grown in number and quality, users—both educators and students—have seen an increase in the number of technological challenges they have encountered when utilising or referring to these tools. A large number of academics have identified and emphasised the following difficulties:

A wide range of concerns are related with e-learning, and some of the most significant include accessibility, affordability, flexibility, pedagogy, lifelong learning, and educational policy (Li et al, 2020). When it comes to Internet access and the availability of digital devices, a large number of countries face considerable hurdles. Many economically poor students in developing countries are unable to acquire online learning tools, and as a result, they spend a growing amount of time in front of a computer screen. Students have grown more dependent on offline activities and self-exploratory learning as a consequence of this. Another issue is a lack of parental guidance, particularly for young learners, which is particularly problematic when both parents work. It is important to consider the practical implications of physical workplaces that are conducive to diverse styles of learning and instruction.

The naturally motivated learners are mostly unaffected by their learning since they need less monitoring and help, while the vulnerable group of children with learning problems has difficulties. Online education is out of reach for certain academically gifted kids from economically poor homes who are unable to obtain or fund their education elsewhere.

As a consequence of reduced engagement time with instructors and a lack of consultation with professors when facing difficulties with learning or comprehension, students' academic performance is likely to suffer during courses performed for both year-end and internal exams (Li et al, 2021).

The administration of student assessments is done online, which results in a great deal of trial and error, uncertainty, and misunderstanding among instructors, students, and their parents. The technique utilised to conduct online tests varies depending on the convenience and skill level of the educators, as well as the compatibility of the learners with the system. Many schools and institutions have not adopted appropriate ways to combat plagiarism, mostly as a result of the large number of students enrolled in such institutions. The closure of schools and colleges has had an impact on not only internal evaluations and exams for major public credentials such as the General Certificate of Secondary Educations (GCSE), but also the cancellation of A levels for the entire cohort in the United Kingdom due to the closure of schools and colleges. The test assessment may be postponed or cancelled completely depending on how long the lockdown lasts (United Nations, 2020). As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and statewide lockdown, a large number of state-level board examinations, recruitment tests, university-level exams, and entrance exams have been postponed throughout India. The rescheduling or postponement of several entrance exams (such as the BITSAT 2020, NATA 2020, CLAT 2020, MAT 2020, and ATMA 2020) has also been announced. The education system at schools, universities, and other institutions throughout the country has been severely disrupted as a result of the present economic crisis.

Additionally, the breaks may help certain students advance in their jobs. As an example, in Norway, it has been decided that all 10th grade students would get a high school certificate upon graduation. An study done in France found that the 1968 abandonment of normal examination methods in France as a consequence of student riots had positive long-term labour market effects for the group that was negatively affected (Da Costa, I. , 2005).

Beyond being fun, school time helps children develop social skills and become more aware of their surroundings. The economic, social, and psychological costs of children being absent from their normal school schedules are well-documented. Many of these students have now enrolled in online programmes, increasing the

amount of time they spend on virtual platforms and putting them at risk of being subjected to online abuse. Increasing the amount of time spent online studying, particularly unstructured time, exposes children to potentially hazardous and violent content, and increases their exposure to online bullying. More and more families are relying on technology and digital solutions to keep their children engaged in studying, entertained, and connected with the outside world as a result of school closures and strict confinement measures. However, not all youngsters have access to the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to be safe when surfing the web.

With regard to online education in world, the majority of students come from distant areas where the majority of parents are illiterate farmers, as seen in the graph below. Farming activities such as agriculture, livestock care, and household chores are carried out by students to assist their parents. Students even requested that their tests be shifted to the afternoon since they were forced to work in the fields during the morning hours, which was granted by the administration.

The care and transportation of ailing parents, grandparents, or other family members was mentioned by many students as a need for their educational programme. By the time they get home in the evening, it becomes more difficult for them to keep up with the lessons. Parents of children in lower grades feel that allowing their children to repeat the academic year is better than allowing them to repeat the previous year. The vast majority of students do not have access to telephones or TVs at home, and they also have a poor Internet connection, according to the data. Thousands of companies and offices have been forced to close, leaving a big percentage of the population with no or little income. According to the average revenue received, the data package (costs) is prohibitively expensive; moreover, sustaining continuous Internet access is a costly endeavour for the agricultural community. However, while the majority of students (particularly those who are economically disadvantaged) support online live courses (video), some students (particularly those who are economically disadvantaged) have expressed concern that online live classes use more data packages than traditional face-to-face courses. Teachers are at a loss as to whom to listen to and which resources to put into use in the classroom. While some people feel that pre-recorded videos are advantageous, others fear that they would hinder involvement. Establishing a system that fulfils the educational needs and preferences of all students is a difficult undertaking.

Opportunities for Learning and Teaching

Although educators, schools, institutes, and the government have faced several problems related to online education from a number of angles, the COVID-19 epidemic has generated multiple chances for those who are unprepared or have long-term intentions to deploy an e-learning system.

It has resulted in a greater link between teachers and their students' parents than ever before. Due to the nature of homeschooling, parents must aid their children academically and financially. Children with disabilities need additional and specialised help during this present situation.

For the first time, online platforms such as Google Classroom, Zoom, virtual learning environments, social media, and other group chat applications such as Telegram, Messenger, WhatsApp, and WeChat are being studied and tried for educational purposes in order to expand educational options. Even once face-to-face education resumes, this may be examined further, and these platforms can provide learners with more resources and coaching.

Teachers are encouraged to think creatively in order to overcome the limits of virtual educational settings. On a local level, educators are actively collaborating to create online teaching approaches. Due to the shared experiences of teachers, parents, and children, there is an unmatched opportunity for cooperation, inventive problem-solving, and a willingness to learn from others and experiment with new technology (Dwidienawati et al., 2020). Numerous educational institutions are making their tools and solutions freely accessible to aid and encourage teaching and learning in a more dynamic and engaging environment, which is gaining popularity. In comparison to the conventional classroom setting, online education has enabled the possibility of teaching and learning in unique ways.

Discussion

As of August 2020, 98.6 percent of learners throughout the globe had been affected by the disease, which affected 1.825 billion children and adolescents in 200 countries, spanning from pre-primary to post-secondary education (United Nations, 2020). Because of this, ensuring that learning is sustainable and accessible via homeschooling has been a critical requirement during the last several years.

When it comes to online learning settings, the methodology that is presently available and in use for face-to-face education is neither feasible or effective. Instructors that are digitally untrained need adequate professional development and training in order to orient themselves towards their students, despite the fact that a number of methodologies have been established for online and remote learning environments.

It is vital to have genuine assessments and to get timely feedback in order to learn. Giving effective formative assessments and timely feedback to online learners is a critical component of distance learning online and should not be overlooked (Dwidienawati et al., 2020). Teachers and administrators are finding it tough to deal with the current scenario as a consequence of this development. Higher class sizes, a lack of online teaching infrastructure and professional development, as well as students' lack of enthusiasm in engaging in class, makes underdeveloped countries educational environment more difficult to navigate.

The phrase "Maslow before Bloom" is one that is often used in educational circles. The goal of online learning must be to do this in order for education to continue throughout this pandemic, and it must be achieved. When we speak about security, we are referring to the process of ensuring that our students are safe and that their essential needs are met prior to the commencement of online learning activities. Since domestic violence and child abuse are more prevalent in homes and neighbourhoods, they provide a mental diversion as well as a threat to those who are learning about these issues (Ravichandran & Shah, 2020). Children who are presently undergoing homeschooling as a consequence of the COVID-19 outbreak are discovering that the environment at home is not universally suited for kids of all academic levels and socio-economic backgrounds, as previously thought. Studies should be carried out in order to aid the most economically disadvantaged individuals, who have been hit the hardest by the financial crisis. A number of children in world have reported dropping out of school or opting to end their education completely. As a result of the prolonged school closure forced by the COVID-19 pandemic, which occurred during the school year, this occurred during the school year. Despite the fact that no research have been undertaken to evaluate whether or not the pandemic has had a direct impact on dropout rates, a study in this area would give the necessary facts and figures.

An extensive number of educational institutions have built an extensive variety of internet infrastructure that has been made accessible for free study by a number of educational institutions throughout this outbreak of cholera. Prices and accessibility of these online infrastructures for all learners from a diverse range of socioeconomic backgrounds continue to be a source of contention for many educators and students.

Learning issues for students with special needs, such as those who have hearing impairment, visual impairment, or mobility constraints, necessitate the need for additional training as well as assistance and advise from their instructors. As a result, many caregivers and parents at home are unable to meet these expectations, making it difficult for this set of learners to do well in their studies. The conclusion is that it is imperative that we commit time and money to investigating the most effective options for these children' particular educational requirements and conducting research into those options (SEN).

Because all assignments and evaluations are performed at home by the students themselves, it is difficult for instructors to establish the authenticity of students' work and the extent to which true learning is taking place in the classroom. Furthermore, many parents give guidance and support to their children throughout the learning process, and the amount and quality of assistance supplied varies significantly from one child to another. Students' grades are another topic under review, which is troublesome since no relevant standards have been developed and applied appropriately.

Result: -

As seen in the results section, obstacles and related online concerns in online English language learning received the highest scores of any statistical measure. The study addressed the challenges that most EFL Learners experienced during COVID-19 online learning; the majority of the students are from rural locations where the network is under strain owing to the COVID-19 crisis as all students, instructors, and most other sectors migrated to work online. Learners encountered some difficulty accessing online lectures, downloading materials, performing online tests, and so on; students identified these challenges as the most serious. Some other students were unable to open online tests on their mobile phones due to a format or extension that their devices did not allow. Other challenges that the students encountered were a lack of digital abilities in using Blackboard platforms, the requirement for all online learning equipment, tools, and systems, a lack of genuine English language practice with the professors and their classmates, and so on. The current paper's findings support prior study on the same topics of online learning conducted at COVID-19, and the results revealed that students are dissatisfied with distant education and that numerous difficulties have been encountered. The last topic is an examination of learners' overall satisfaction with online English language instruction during the COVID-19 situation. Offering some online courses at most educational institutions prior to the COVID-19 pandemic aided, facilitated, and gave a good chance for students and institutes to transition to online learning following the pandemic's breakout. However, at the beginning, the majority of the students went online for the first time. They lacked the knowledge and confidence to study online through a new medium. Most learners were able to overcome the majority of the technological challenges associated with online learning systems after some time. However, English language learning issues continue to be a barrier in online learning during the epidemic. These findings contribute to the growing body of literature on the significant challenges and problems encountered by EFL learners during the abrupt transition to online learning due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the necessary steps are required to facilitate the online education process and overcome the reported issues.

The respondents were from a variety of university levels. This revealed the EFL students' mentality and the challenges they were dealing with. There were 228 students that took part in the poll, including both male and female students, as well as married and unmarried students. As the learner's marital situation has a significant impact on his or her psychology.
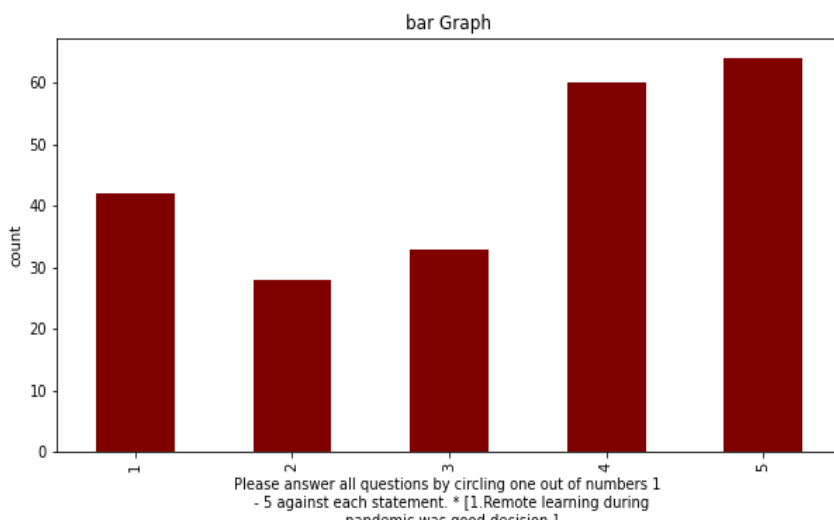

Figure 1: Student response for that question Remote learning during pandemic was good decision.

The findings suggest that the students in this study displayed a variety of conceptions of engagement with their online English course in relation to many constructs of engagement. As illustrated by survey responses, students demonstrated their learning through classroom

engagement, contact with instructors and classmates, skills practise, emotional interest in the class topic, and performance in class. Furthermore, they were discovered to have a

favourable relationship between enjoyment and involvement. Nearly half of the respondents said their experience studying English as a foreign language was unsatisfactory.
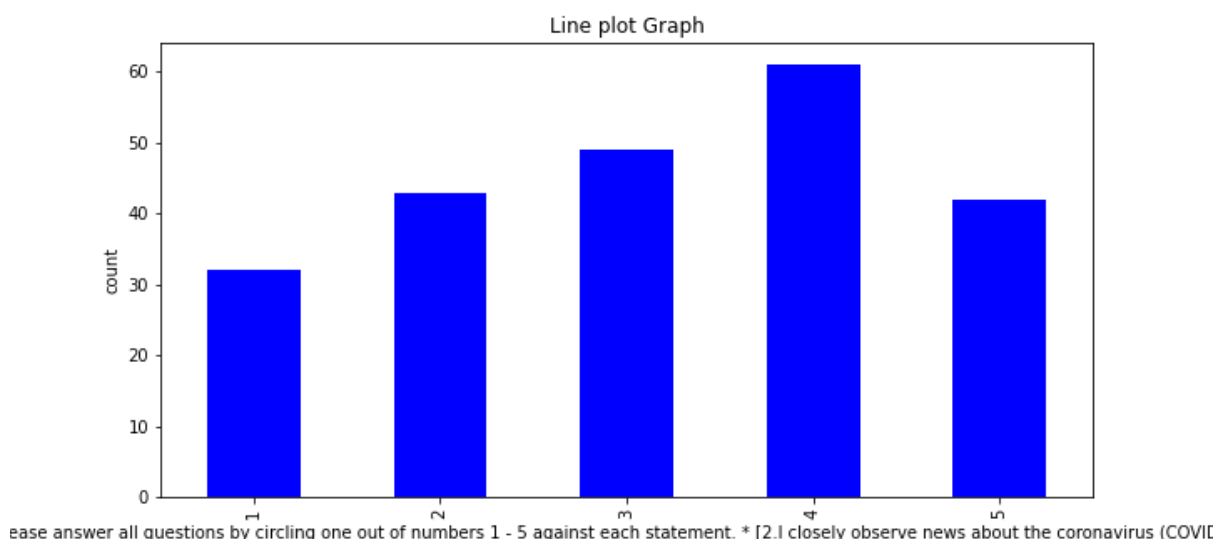

Figure 2: Student response for that question I closely observe news about the coronavirus (COVID-19)

This figure shows that, how much respondent observe news about coronavirus (COVID-19). As the above data collected from our survey clearly shows that nearly 60% and above of the respondents are disagree and 30% of

respondents are strongly agree and 32% are agree , 45% and above are shows that don't know and 40% are of strongly disagree to observe news about the coronavirus (COVID-19).
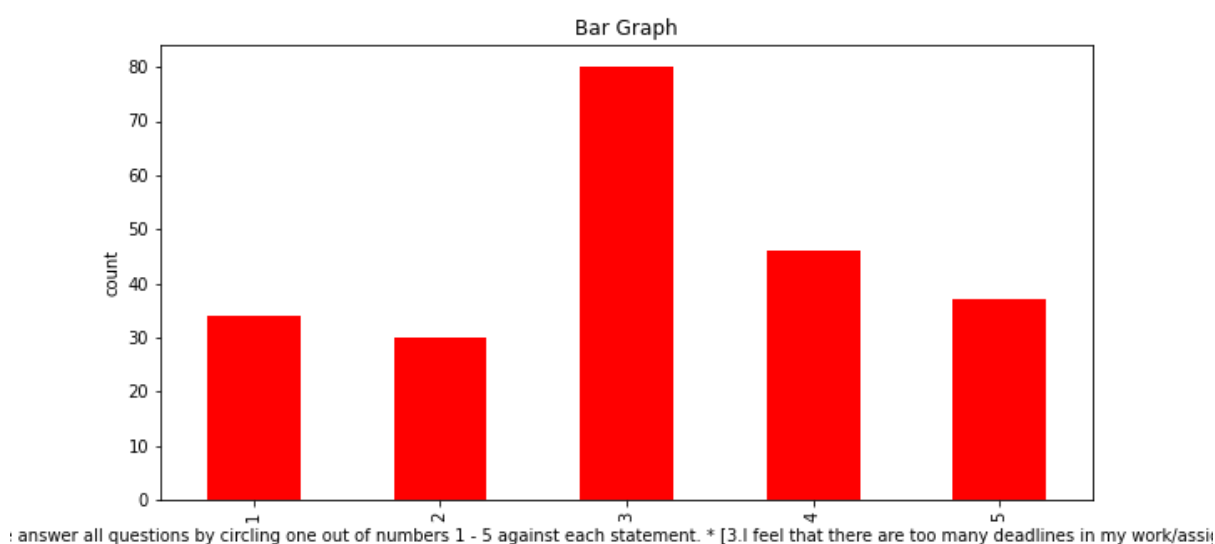

Figure 3: Student response for that question I feel that there are too many deadlines in my work/assignments

This figure and survey shows that, respondent feels that there are too many deadlines in my work/assignments.

As the above data collected from our survey clearly shows that nearly 80% and above of the respondents are don't know about deadlines of work/assignments and 30% of respondents are agree and 34% are strongly agree , 45% and above are shows that they are disagree and near about 40% are of strongly disagree.
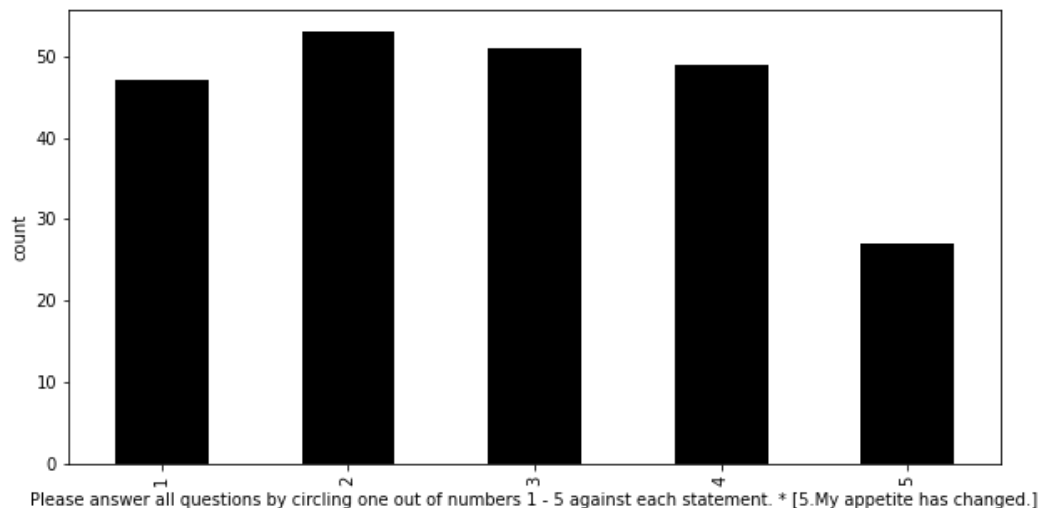

Figure 4: Student response for that question my appetite has changed.

Figure 4 survey shows that, respondent my appetite has changed. As the above data collected from our survey clearly shows that nearly 50% and above of the respondents are agree My appetite has changed and 45% and above of respondents are Strongly agree and 50% are s don't know , 49% are shows that they are disagree and near about 30% are of strongly disagree.
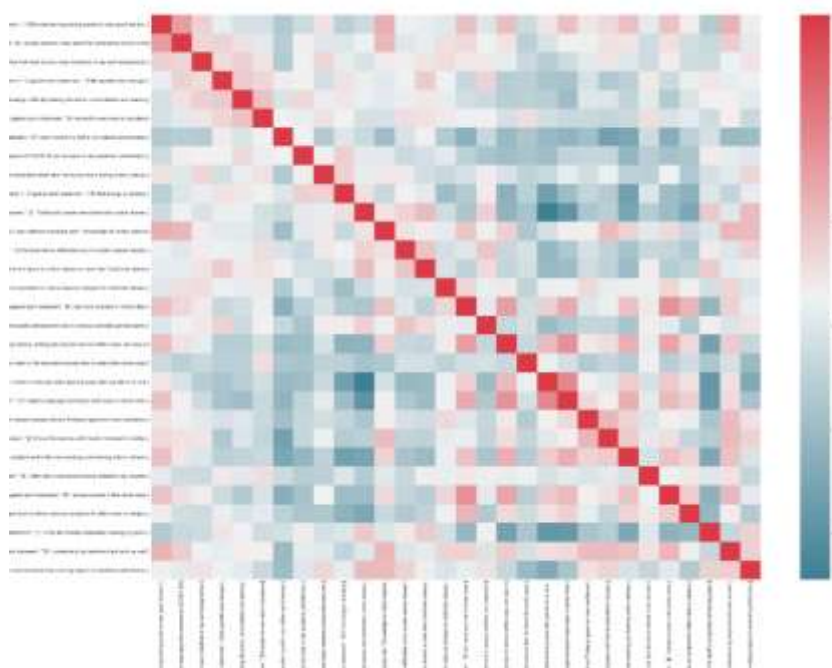

Figure 5: Simple heatmap for Q & A

Above correlation matrix representing correlation between different variables involved in the study, overall matrix shows how one parameter is co related with another and more the intensity of colour it means more that parameter co relates with another. Above correlation matrix is simple heatmap which shows the dependability of one question with another (fig 5).

Conclusion

Studies on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on teaching and learning reveal that adequate pedagogy and platforms for different class levels of higher secondary, middle, and basic education in underdeveloped nations need to be examined. In many developing countries, Internet bandwidth is limited due to a shortage of connection points, and data packages are expensive relative to income, limiting Internet availability and affordability. The study's purpose is to examine online learning challenges faced by COVID-19 EFL students. Synchronised e-learning helped during the outbreak. It did, however, negatively affect student performance and learning outcomes. It was previously underutilised, especially in developing countries. However, the current COVID-19 epidemic has forced the entire world to rely on it. The majority of survey participants highly agreed with e-perceived learning's usefulness, ease of use, and acceptance. Insufficient/unstable internet access, inadequate computer labs, a lack of computers/laptops, and technical challenges were the main obstacles to e-learning. We found that e-learning acceptance was related to age, teaching experience, and male gender. This study focuses on the issues and variables impacting the acceptance of e-learning as a teaching tool in developing nations, which may lead to strategic e-learning development and implementation.

The study found that the most significant issues experienced by EFL learners in online learning were technological. Internet connectivity, lecture access, and course material download issues plagued some students. Students couldn't access online assessments using mobile devices. As seen by their responses to open-ended questions, learners were unable to engage with teachers during virtual English language skills courses. Less than half of EFL students are

pleased with online learning, 14% are unsatisfied, and 43% are not totally supportive of online education in the absence of a crisis. More research is needed to better understand instructors' opinions and experiences with online ESL throughout the epidemic.

Funding:

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