

Wellbeing in Universities during and post Covid 19: A study to determine the role of increased student communication need on Faculty wellbeing

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates the changed dynamics of student communication need with the instructor outside the real or virtual classroom and studies the ways it has impacted both faculty and student wellbeing during the pandemic- Covid 19 and the ways it is likely to influence the future post-pandemic learning environments within Pakistan's higher education context. The research questions have been framed to determine the role of students' enhanced communication need during Covid 19 because no previous research in the pre-Covid 19 era specifically was available for addressing this problem. This research used a qualitative design to analyse the experiences of both faculty and students for a comprehensive understanding of the enhanced communication need within the evolving learning environment and its specific requirements. The study sample comprised students and faculty of only those institutions where remote/online/hybrid teaching was practiced through different technological and internet-dependent platforms such as Zoom, Google Meet, MS Teams during the time of the study. It was also ensured that the studied population has the experience of using a Learning Management System or LMS at their respective universities. The data was collected through two separate questionnaires: one for students and one for faculty and the collected data has been analysed statistically. The findings indicate that students' communication need (with their course instructors) increased manifold as compared to pre Covid 19 times and this has not only impacted the faculty wellbeing but also of their students. The results further indicate that both the faculty and students felt themselves under constant pressure in the changed pedagogic scenario which has negatively influenced their physical and mental health. The study concludes by suggesting the ways of effective communication management and advocating its inclusion in pedagogic trainings as a separate skill. The study can be extended, in future, by including university management, to investigate their crucial role as policy makers for ensuring wellbeing in an internet-technology-oriented learning environment.

Introduction:

Education was one of the worst hit areas by Covid 19 globally and Pakistan was no exception. Education scholars were not over the debates about quality education and its effective execution through traditional and technology-oriented pedagogies/methodologies yet, when the pandemic hit and made learning entirely internet and tech-dependent. It was a drastic shift for students, teachers, management and parents. Teachers were made to stare at their screens for answers to their myriad questions ranging from where and how to teach effectively, conduct exams, assess student work, ensure quality and most of all to manage the stress caused due to an increased amount of work to what is the future of education, specifically university education without any face to face interaction and how would it impact their job security? Similarly, students and their parents started asking: how will learning take place without physical access to institutions and

their resources and what is/will be the credibility of an online exam and degree and should they continue or freeze these semesters until the institutions reopen?

For faculty and parents/caregivers, it was the most difficult question because home environment for a vast majority was a space to relax and not a place where full time study, teaching or work could take place. Most of the homes lacked tools, technology, trained professionals- some of the prerequisites for the present form of learning to happen. Moreover, for instructors and teachers it proved to be a novel situation and teaching while learning how to teach without the actual human interaction with their students soon became frustrating, tiring, and boring after the initial excitement of being online waned. A vast majority did not consider the virtual classroom spaces safe due to the availability of class links on LMS and other social media sites that resulted in number of unpleasant events

including incidents of sexual harassment, pornography and abuse.

In addition to that, over the past three decades, especially after the formation of Higher Education Commission of Pakistan in 2002, the focus has shifted on research in universities across the country. This has very positively influenced the other educational institutions including schools and colleges and has facilitated in developing a culture of research. The high ranking universities, to meet the needs of research-oriented learning, have been developing proper research facilities such as libraries and databases that allowed students access to global research material while creating new knowledge in their specific area of study. Thus, the institutions ensured two things: fast and reliable internet facilities and physical and virtual libraries. Unfortunately, the initial closure and later partial opening of universities meant a loss of these two and brought research on a halt. Due to uncertain situation and Government pandemic policies, under World Health Organisation guidelines, a vast majority of students studying in big cities like Lahore, were sent back to their hometowns with no or a very poor, unreliable bandwidth internet, no access to a physical library for research and limited contact with their instructors and supervisors.

Instructors and supervisors within a modern learning environment are another most important prerequisite for a research-oriented learning environment and HEC guidelines ensure that universities have the highest qualified (from national and foreign institutions), experienced, well-researched and published faculty members to teach and guide the students. In a research-oriented, contemporary form of learning-prior to Covid 19- the supervisors/ instructors' guidelines for carrying out the research after the comprehension and clarification of the concept/s under study were of a paramount significance. The inside/ outside classroom discussions and debates fortified the student learning and helped students in clearly understanding their instructor/s' expectations. They further enabled students to structure their research for completing their assignments and projects. The face-to-face interaction in a teaching/learning specific environment of a university classroom or seminar/conference room raised fewer chances of misunderstanding of the given instructions and helped in opening new avenues of research.

During Covid 19 pandemic this lack of interaction was initially partially bridged through a university Learning Management System (LMS) and later with Zoom, MS Teams or some other online platforms to substitute the traditional interaction system. For many, including the university managements that mostly comprised the non-teaching staff, these technologies were thought to be sufficient for effective teaching and communication between the faculty and students. These technologies were promoted in meetings and e-gatherings with the result that institutions had to buy the expensive products to save the precious academic time. However, faculty were not provided any such facility and they had to purchase longer time slots on internet platforms themselves for conducting longer than 40 minutes classes (e.g. Zoom), upgrading their systems and tools during lockdown. Neither were students given access to any such facility so it was their and their families/care givers

responsibility to provide them along with their siblings with high speed internet and other tools such as laptops/tabs/phones to study. The working parents/caregivers have to provide the same facilities for themselves in order to work from home. It was considered the best available solution.

However, little did anyone realise that the successful execution of teaching and learning through the online platforms meant that:

1. The instructors must write down all the instructions about the course content, research projects, assignments in a simple yet easy to understand and easy-to-follow pattern keeping in mind their students so they could be understood by them. It is a well-known fact that not all the students in a learning group are always at the same level.
2. Then plan and execute a synchronous or asynchronous class.
3. They should have and use a reliable digital forum for this purpose.
4. They should also have a perfect bandwidth internet that does not falter class after class.
5. They should further have ample reliable tools such as laptops/tabs/phones, microphones, earphones in case one device fails they can switch to another.
6. They must also have a quiet, secluded place (a classroom) in home/s without outside (living and non-living) interruptions such as no human or non-human presence to distract them and their students.

A similar arrangement was expected of students as well. If on the one hand it meant that instructors need to write down each step, for students it meant a careful reading and comprehension so that the content and instructions might not get lost. In addition to that remote/online/hybrid teaching for many students meant misunderstanding, poor comprehension of the content and instructions which made students communicate more with their instructors outside the virtual or real class.

The exclusivity of this online teaching arrangement has caused a shift in overall student motivation and drive for learning and transformed their attitude towards learning within a university environment. Moreover, the arrangement of this pandemic response has been largely influenced by the model of online learning courses offered by universities for distance learning. So were the universities thinking of becoming open universities? This brought in the questions of students motivation, engagement and retention.

Furthermore, the shift in student attitude toward attending classes during hybrid teaching also need attention. Students have been reported to become reluctant to attend the physical classes and preferred to spend time with their friends because they knew that the course content is available on LMS and they can ask their instructors anytime they would feel like doing their course work and assignments. In addition to that many students opted for full online semester because they and their parents were scared of contracting the virus outside their homes and considered studying from home as more safe and economic. Though, students did not realise that a remote/online/hybrid system makes them more responsible and demands commitment for their learning in ways they had not anticipated. For instance, each online student had to access the course content from the LMS, read and comprehend it

thoroughly and come prepared for the online class and if due to some reason, like power failure or internet disruption or simply due to casual behaviour they could not do it, they were left dependent upon a communicate with the instructor.

Hence, remote/online/hybrid teaching resulted in an anxiety - that can specifically be called communication anxiety- faced by instructors and their students alike. The students could not comprehend what they were expected to do even after all the lesson/s content on LMS and generated data in the form of emails, texts, group chats, or calls and it became a 24/7 job for many instructors to be available for their students. Since all the focus was on the resumption of education system so that students' precious time might be saved and universities do not end up with back log. This was no doubt a noble intention but it tested the instructors beyond their limits and impacted their health as they worked under stress for a prolonged period without any respite especially in private sector universities where instructors work on semester or annual contracts unlike the public sector universities. A few were able to manage this communication anxiety, but a majority could not give their best and their otherwise vibrant teaching slumped to boring slides or book reading and they anxiously waited for the resumption of normal on campus classes. A few students, who overcame the internet and technological barriers to attend online/ hybrid classes became demotivated due to lack of face-to-face interaction and their attendance dropped considerably, seriously impacting their learning process. I hope the success or failure of the internet exclusive execution of education is under study. Moreover, how far this emergency response was successful and can it be refined and used as an alternative to face-to-face education- where universities can offer online courses on a large scale as parallel distance learning or during future disasters- are the questions that require research. It further needs in depth studies through the wellbeing lens because if the online practice has become a constant stressor for the faculty and their students, adding to their mental stress in social isolation, then how far a relatively modern nation state like Pakistan, and other nations, with a still developing internet system and digital inequity are likely or unlikely to benefit from graduates with a compromised notion of their and others' wellbeing? It was important to investigate how faculty and students felt towards challenges of remote education, employing innovative strategies to keep students engaged and motivated. My hopes are that this study will lead us to an understanding of the communication anxiety as a stressor that needs to be recognised as an essential part of the university wellbeing concept. This will further help improving the concept of wellbeing in the virtual realm of learning both for students and instructors' physical and mental health with the practices and skills learnt during the Covid 19 pandemic. Furthermore, there is dire need to devise strategies for its proper management in a systematic way as core digital skills required to be taught while opting for high technology adaptation.

Research Questions

- Q1. Is it true that students' communication need has increased during a remote/online/hybrid teaching system?
Q2. What are its repercussions for faculty and students' wellbeing?

Methodology

This study is based on primary research and attempts at highlighting all the factors that had caused this communication anxiety with the help of responses gathered through two separate questionnaires with 2 quantitative and 3 qualitative questions each. Due to Covid 19 restrictions, data was gathered mostly online using, interviews with faculty, observations during meetings on national and international forums such as AMICAL Consortium, trainings and my personal experience as a mother with a foreign university undergrad and many informal discussions with teachers, parents and students in and outside the educational institutions in person, on phone, online platforms. Internet facilitated the gathering of data globally which helped in drawing a comparison between Pakistani and international faculty experiences of remote/online/hybrid teaching. The study sample comprised around 100 students and 75 faculty members. The data for this study was gathered over a period of 3 semesters: Spring 2020, fall 2020, and spring 2021 with the special condition that faculty and students must have Learning Management System exposure during the period of study.

Limitation

The study did not include responses from university management. This study can be extended in future to include the university management responses for devising a holistic policy of communication amongst students and faculty that will ensure further developing the university wellbeing policy.

Findings

The first research question for this study had aimed to find out whether there is an increase in student communication with their instructors in an online/remote/hybrid learning environment or not. As per the results of the questionnaires both instructors and students have unanimously agreed to the fact that there is a tremendous increase in the need to communicate on the part of the students in an online/remote/hybrid teaching system.

Research results in Fig. 1 show the students' need of communication in a traditional face to face teaching environment where only 7% students said that they communicated with their instructors outside the class. 22.5% students said that they did not communicate with their instructors outside the class and 70.4% have reported that they sometimes felt the need to communicate with their instructors.

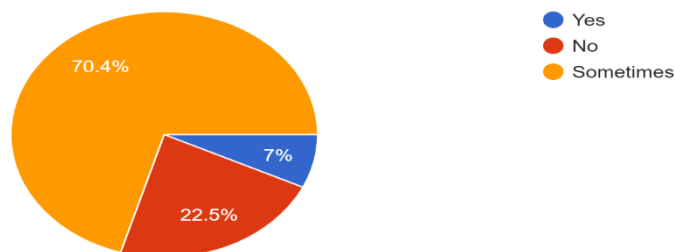


Figure 1. Student communication need during traditional face to face teaching

Fig.2 shows increase in student communication need during online/remote/hybrid teaching and now 80% more students are communicating with their instructors outside the class.

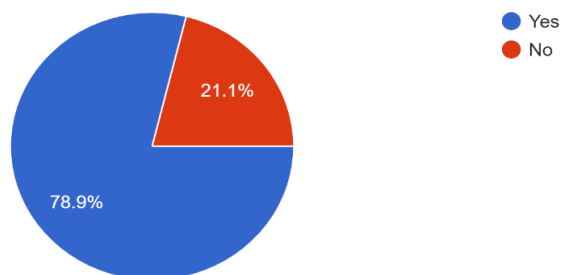


Figure 2. Student communication need during online/remote/hybrid teaching-Student Response

This is further confirmed by Fig. 3 that documents faculty response and explains 90% instructors feel that the online/hybrid teaching system has increased students need for communication with them outside the classroom. Only 9% faculty members feel that they have not experienced it.

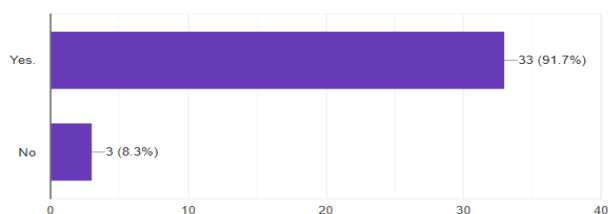


Figure 3. Student communication need in online/remote/hybrid teaching- Faculty Response Factors responsible for Increased Student Communication Need

After establishing the fact that there is an increase in student communication need, the research can be developed towards finding the factors or reasons that are responsible for this trend. The following factors have emerged and they will be discussed both with students and faculty responses.

1. Clarification of Instruction

This study has found that students were generating data in the form of queries because they felt confused about course content, assignment instructions and needed a clarification before or after attending a synchronous or asynchronous class along with other minor reasons such as leaves or grading.

Data results in Fig. 4 show that “student confusion” is the major factor as 55% instructors reported that students communicated for “clarification of instruction for assignments”. 52% instructors have reported that their students reached out to them for “content re-teaching”. 49% instructors have reported student anxiety for “better course performance” and 41% instructors have reported student concern and request “for assignment deadline extension” as they required more time to complete the assigned tasks.

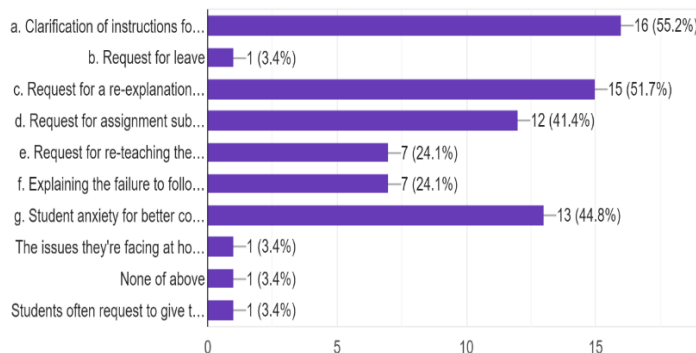


Figure. 4 Reasons for Increased Communication Need-Faculty Response

On the other hand when students were asked about their reasons of communication majority of them had reported the clarification factor as their major reason of communication with their instructors outside the classroom. Fig.5 with its some individual student responses explains that 99% students communicated with their instructors for clarification of instructions about assignments/test/quiz etc, lesson content, general course related inquiries, leaves and grading.

Student Responses

Mostly related to assignment queries.

Because sometimes teacher maybe not available in own office

To ask Questions and to clear the matters regarding studies. I texted or emailed my instructor to get the answer of some confusion.

For our needs like about test assignments and exams etc. usually, assignments and stuff

When I can't understand topic

Assignments and quizzes often urge me to communicate with the instructor to gather more information

To know something that is not clear about course.

When I have any query or I have to inform something than communicate with the instructor

For queries about Assignments

To clear some questions

To get instructions

Related to homework stuff

To ask different queries.

Assignment submission or mostly there are attendance problems

To answer my queries regarding the course contents or the assignments.

To ask queries related to studies

Urgent queries, leaves, grading

Queries regarding assignments

In case of any query or for a leave.

To get clarification for assignments/quizzes, and in case of connectivity issues that prevent me from timely doing or submitting my work

I literally don't want to but i do sometimes for some problems and to ask for compensation.

In order to ask for compensation

To ask about my grades.
 To get noticed or ask something which I couldn't understand
 For clearance of issues.
 For any queries or problems.
 When I need some help
 Communication is made: For clarification of any confusion related to topic. To address the issue, if present.
 Queries regarding assignments
 Sometimes, to ask about the content where uploaded, and basic information is like, due date, etc. Just the nitty gritty details, only when it's not clearly mentioned or visible. But having an online CMS solution like teams and WhatsApp group, made it more effective and easy to follow.
 When I don't understand something about the topic.
 Course queries, leaves, grading
 To ask about things that are not clear to me.
 Sometime I texted or emailed my instructor when I have some queries related to my course.
 For asking something related to course
 To get instructions.
 For the class timings or the feedback on the given assignment.
 I usually send an email to convey my query about a project or an assignment or whether I'll be attending the online class.
 To clear the confusions and misconceptions about the course.
 To ask or clarify something
 About to deal with pressure of social activities
 Clearing things up or asking for leave
 To get the response as fast as possible
 Confusions about work, asking permission for different tasks etc
 In order to ask something if we have problem in it.
 Queries of assignment or leave application
 Help regarding an assignment or the course in general.
 To clarify my problems.
 To clear any confusing regarding assignment
 To discuss the problems related to course work
 For absences, confusions with task
 To clarify doubts about assignments, or to discuss about internet connectivity issues.
 For queries
 To clarify my issues.
 To find the solutions of the problems that I was supposed to find
 To clarify any concept that I could not grasp.
 To ask about assignment issues
 Because sometimes I face internet issues, due to which I cannot understand all the instructions given by our instructor. So I communicate with them to clear my doubts.
 To clear queries
 To ask some questions regarding the work assigned
 Regarding my attendance, to submit assignments or to address late submissions or due deadlines.
 I text them when I want to tell them the reasons why I was absent in the class or if I have any confusion regarding the assignment or If I did not get anything from the lecture or I text them to get an appointment to meet them personally for any reason.

To confirm about the topics
 Asking something related to course
 Fig. 5 Reasons for Increased Communication Need- Student Response
 Along with these students had reported reaching out to their instructors for finding "solution of the problems that" she/he "was supposed to find" or as one student wrote "to get the response as fast as possible" and to get "feedback on assignments". Students also looked up to their instructors to "deal with pressure of social activities". And then there were students anxious about their course performance and contacted their instructors as 42.9% faculty responses in Fig.4 have indicated this fact. This ratio indicates that the students expect their teachers to be available for providing reassurance to those who are otherwise regular and able to follow their course.

1. Demand for Immediate Response

Reading and responding to student generated data for communication became a huge challenge for instructors because of the rate and amount of the generated data in the form of texts, group chats, emails, calls or voice messages with an expectation for immediate response. We should keep in mind that all this data was generated when all the course content, with recorded lectures was available on LMS. Fig.6 shows that 86% instructors have said that their students expect them to respond to their inquiries "immediately" with only 10% saying that at their "convenient time" and another 10% response by saying "during the working hours and days".

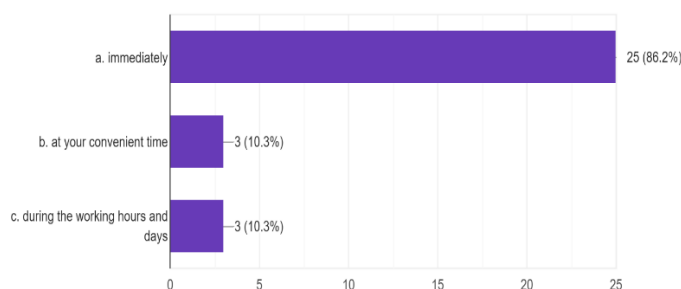


Figure 6. Student Demand for Immediate- Faculty Response

This immediacy for instructor response without any consideration for instructors' convenience, working hours and days has been confirmed by students responses shown in Fig.7. According to it 28% students expect their instructors to response to their queries "as soon as possible", "within 24 hours", "timely", "as soon as" they "tell him/her" their "questions", "as soon as possible, and by providing relevant details", "at the earliest so that I can comply with the situation", "to be quick and supportive", "instantly", "in a timely manner", "I expect them to reply to me within a day. Not right away but that same day would be convenient", "as soon as possible and address the thing properly" and" to respond within 24 hours" because they only communicate when they have some questions. Besides the immediacy factor there is a demand for "a brief explanation with kindness", "a reply that answers my query satisfactorily", "to respond to my issue nicely", "reply it in kind way and explain the things to me, as I only text my instructor when I'm in a great problem

so harsh replies from them usually hurt me”, “ in a detailed manner just like they did in a class”, “step-by-step, clear guidance and understanding of my problem”, “ elaborately” and “[I]t should be quick and precise”. Students also expect

their instructors to “understand their situation and difficulties” and respond to them “politely”, “patiently”, “nicely” because they ask a question only when they are in trouble and are looking for “guidance”.

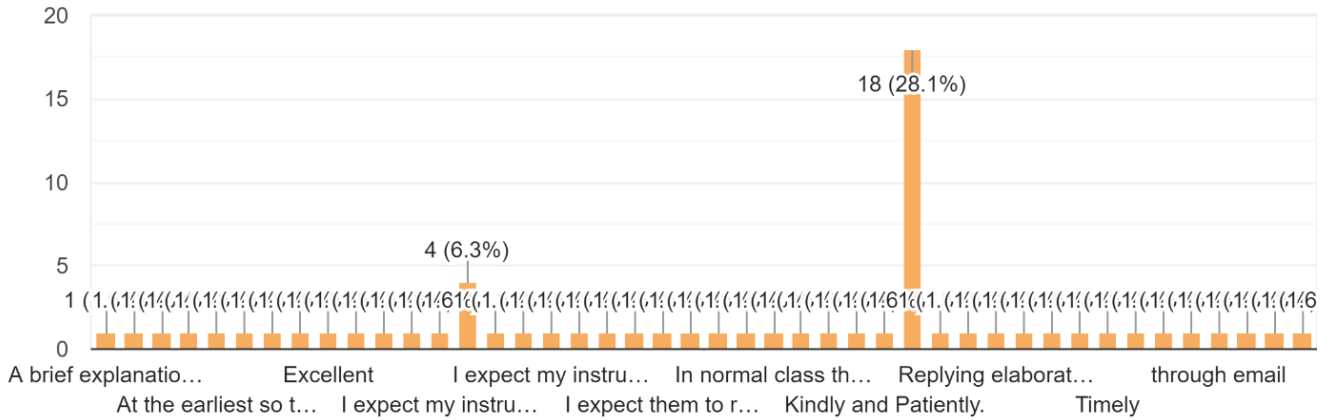


Figure 7. Demand for Immediate Faculty Response- Student Response

More Confused and Dependent Students with High Quality Technology Integration

Figure 8 highlights the different student categories that are communicating more in remote/online/hybrid teaching system. An interesting factor that the data has revealed is that it is no longer the category of irregular or absent students that has started communicating more with their instructors. The two new categories are: students with internet connectivity issues (52%) and another of students (35%) with insufficient tools like laptops, tabs or phones. These two categories require more assistance to comprehend course content, assignments, and exam tasks. It is quite understandable because students need to comprehend their instructors’ expectations before working on an assignment.

However, students with internet connectivity and tools issues are not the only one who are communicating more, there are two more categories, as the results reveal, one (38%) students who have strong bandwidth and proper tools but they have issues with understanding and following the written instruction and second, (17%) students’ who are unable to follow instructions given on LMS. Students with strong internet connectivity and sufficient tools might face the comprehension challenge. 35% instructor respondents have confirmed this trend. They say the students communicate to comprehend the uploaded content and instructions for the tasks because they lack the skills to use an LMS.

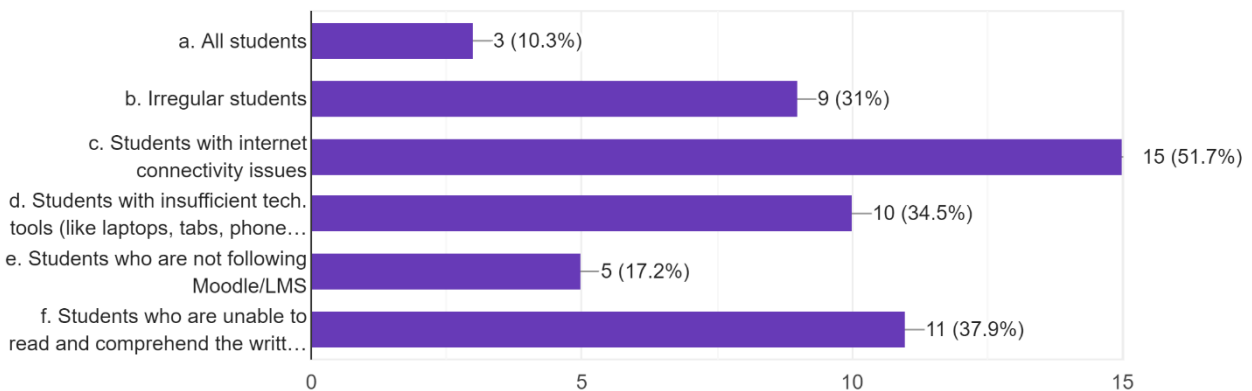


Figure 8. Students with an Increased Communication Need

This leads us to bring into focus the effectiveness of LMS that is the core official tool for an online/ remote/ hybrid teaching system for content and instruction sharing with students. LMS worked when it was combined with synchronous classrooms through Zoom or MS Teams otherwise during the initial lockdown when universities tried to manage through it alone faced many challenges. Fig.8 demonstrates that using and following LMS was not convenient for all students as 35% of the instructors have reported that their students were unable to use LMS and they communicated with them even when content and instructions were available on LMS. 53.6% instructors have said that their students reach out to them for a clarification of instructions given on LMS. This happened when all the content, instructions and recorded lectures have been uploaded by the instructors on the university LMS. 21.4% instructors said that their students contact them to inform that they could not follow the LMS or the

instructions given there. 50% respondents say that their students after attending the synchronous class reach out for further explanation of the taught concept/s and 25% instructors say that their students ask them to re-teach some specific course section.

Effect of Communication Anxiety on Faculty Wellbeing

Students’ failure to meet the assignment submission deadlines or requests for date extension for the instructor means falling behind the semester schedule and a pile up of unchecked work. This has made the instructors feel “overwhelmed”, “annoyed”, “uneasy”, and “exhausted” because they were not “prepared for this massive influx and” they were “needed[sic] to accept it abruptly” or it is simply “very hectic and tiring task”. One instructor feels that “I have become vulnerable whenever I see any text message from an unknown number from a student. Students ask for help that has already been explained several times in class. Specially, near exam they ask for assistance in what will come in exams. They prefer selective study now. Quality of education and learning has declined in this way.”

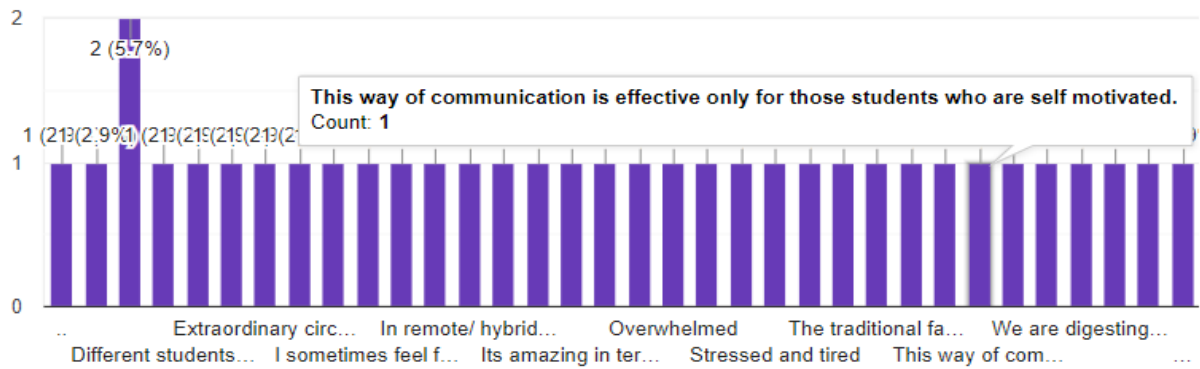


Figure 9. Effect of Communication Anxiety on Faculty Wellbeing

Moreover, instructors are of the opinion that this system has made students “lazy” and they do not show any motivation for this form of teaching. Mostly, it is the internet connectivity issue that disrupts the smooth execution of a class for many students and they eventually lose interest. They believe that “traditional face to face teaching system is best. In online teaching the level of students motivation and attention both decrease which should be alleviated for achieving academic goals”.

Student Compliance of Set Rules for Communication

The two positive trends that this study has found are that mostly students used the communication platforms specified by their instructors and they made sure that their language is proper. As Figure 10 indicates that 16% students prioritised the use of allowed platforms, 39% the time of communication and 33% the use of proper language for communicating with their instructors.



Figure 10. Use of Specified Communication Platforms- Student Response

However, as the instructors have reported, presented through Fig.11 that an element of informality in students’ communication has become a common feature that at times seems disrespectful. Moreover, some students sent queries in the middle of the night e.g. one student has responded “...if instructor has shared her/his WhatsApp number, it mean they expect us to use it when needed.”

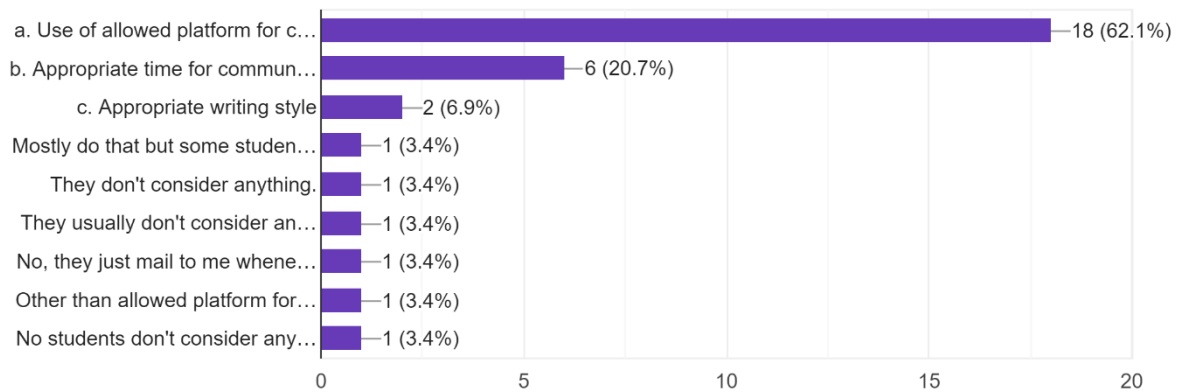


Figure 11. Use of Specified Communication Platforms- Faculty Response

Discussion

It is important to highlight here that online teaching dynamics are different and an online course does not have the immediacy factor that we have experienced in terms of students demand for a response. Online courses are essentially different from regular on campus taught courses. Online courses are expected to have maximum clarity in terms of content and instruction with ample time for the completion of an assignment. Moreover, they does not have the element of the ready availability of the instructor on the behest of the students. This is a significant factor that had not been realized until quite late in this emergency pandemic response.

Similarly, clarification of instruction/s on the part of students is a fair demand but this has brought another student behavioural pattern that shows an increased number of confused students in need of their instructor's assistance with an expectation for immediate response to their inquiry. This indicates two trends in student communication need that contribute to faculty stress level. First, the immediacy factor and second the increased number of confused thus dependent students. Traditionally, this demand came from those few who for some reason could not attend a class and were afraid that they might lose the assignment due to an approaching deadline for submission. Whereas, in an online/remote/hybrid situation even those students felt the need to communicate with the instructors who actively attend a class and are only worried about their course performance.

Most of the confusion has also been caused due to lack of access to LMS and the insufficient digital skillset in students. One possible reason for this challenge might be the fact that before Covid 19, LMS was mostly an optional tool and secondly perhaps a traditional classroom setting did not solely rely upon LSM. In pre Covid 19 times, as an instructor I always ensured that I had a few printouts of the readings, worksheets etc. that I had shared with students on LMS, for those who might have for some reason missed visiting LMS, downloading and reading the shared content. This saved time and ensured maximum student participation for that lesson. I tried the same through Whiteboard in MS Teams or screen share option in Zoom but internet and technical glitches made it hard to achieve that level of inclusive learning opportunity. Moreover, it benefitted only those students who were regular,

self-motivated and had all the necessary tools. All those who did not meet this criteria were, unfortunately, excluded despite their instructors' hard work and left them with no other choice but to demand extra time and effort from their instructors. Many instructors have reported that it was quite hard for them re-teach every course content as most of their time was spent on preparing the lesson slides, recording lectures, uploading content, instructions and above all knowing that it was not enough. The realisation that all students will not benefit from this entire exercise due to factors beyond their control has also made instructors worry about their students.

Faculty have reported feeling anxious about those students who were excluded from learning specially those talented and in more need of education to help improve-their-lives-students who otherwise could not afford an expensive private university education. However, the traditional set up of educational institutions with proper classrooms, faculty, labs and libraries gave all those students who were on scholarships or were only paying a nominal fee or just the tuition fee, a chance to study and even hold part time jobs at the campus. The online/remote/hybrid system enforces a systematic exclusion of all such students because they lacked the essential resources such as a laptop to study. Smart phones have not been efficient tools due to their limitations with usage such as typing an assignment or taking an exam. Moreover, all the parents cannot afford to buy each child a separate laptop and this lack was/is generally managed by students using campus computer labs. Even students share their friends' laptops to complete their work in a traditional setup but the remote/hybrid teaching had/has no room for such technical-tools deficiencies that are taken care of in a human interaction system.

Moreover, another neglected aspects that this study draws our attention to are about instructions and setting up of some boundaries by the instructors. For the instructions' comprehension it is vital that they should be clearly delineated leaving no room for error. Similarly, if the students did not follow any rules while communicating with their instructors. Then the question arises were they provided with some guidelines and made aware of the boundaries set for them by their instructors or not? Therefore, an online class netiquette might have been helpful for managing the communication

anxiety. Additionally, a reflection on the causes that made the students communicate more for each instructor can be a useful tool for devising a solution for the loophole in the instruction. For instance, if students' response suggests that they had difficulty in following recorded lecture, then a written transcript of the lecture might be helpful. Although writing a script would mean an increase in lecture preparation time, a lecture recorded with the help of a script will be more focused, error free and smooth to record as compared to a spontaneous lecture recording. Moreover, a transcript made available on LMS will leave little room for confusion for the students, provided they could access, read and decipher it.

The findings have indicated that there is a need to regularize student communication in case of an online/hybrid/remote teaching setting in future to manage communication anxiety that negatively impacts faculty wellbeing. Most of the issues that arose during Covid-19 remote education had been due to lack of communication management strategies on the part of the faculty that left many students to assume that they could take a number of liberties while communicating with their instructors outside the class using a digital communication platform. Hence, sharing a clearly defined Netiquette Sheet with students that specifies communication rules such as working hours and days, hours for communication and preferred platform for communication, rules for content, assignment uploading, assignment submission deadlines etc. along with the course outline will be effective. Generally, there are three stages of a class: before, during and after and keeping in mind each instructors can frame their dos and don'ts. A sample netiquette sheet is shared in appendix iii.

Recommendations

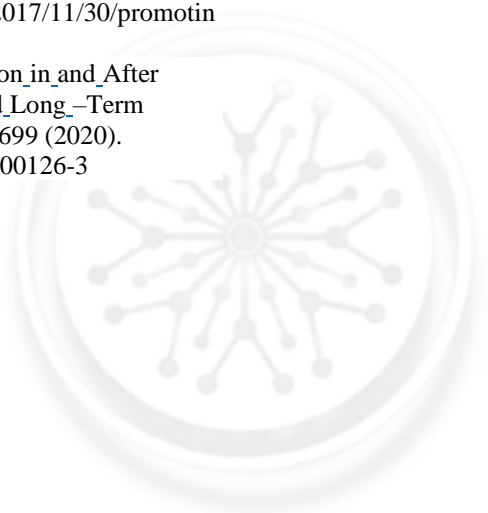
This study recommends that an overreliance upon digital platforms and making it a compulsory part of modern tech-based teaching environment should not be based on broad generalisations about faculty and students digital skills alone. This assumption that everybody knows how to use technology and can do anything that is thrown at them specially teaching and learning needs serious attention. This assumption has seriously impacted the faculty and student wellbeing because of the stress and anxiety. Therefore, it is important that communication stress management, firstly, should be part of faculty training during their induction into the university. The trainings should be conducted by professionals in the field. Secondly, faculty should be given ample trainings by the Learning Management System professionals to use the platforms smartly. Thirdly, there is an urgent need for upgradation of the LMS as teaching assistance tool so that they can be of maximum use during an emergency or even during normal circumstances. Fourthly, the university management must devise a clear communication policy and officially inform the students about it. It is another observation of this study that during Covid 19 instructors had been left to deal with it on their own. Had it been made official it might have alleviated faculty stress and positively contributed to their wellbeing. It is unprofessional and unethical on the part of universities to disregard the mental health and wellbeing of their faculty members by putting them under undue pressure and unrealistic expectations of managing their work during emergencies without proper support.

Lastly and most crucially, our experience of remote/online/hybrid teaching has highlighted a student perception that online teaching means 24/7 availability of their instructors and sending texts, emails or calling the instructors at a time of their own convenience is an accepted practice. This needs to be checked and properly addressed because this attitude will have implications even after the resumption of face to face teaching. The demand for an unlimited access to an instructor's time negatively normalises an unhealthy attitude. For instructors, such behaviour causes domestic and professional stress because they try to meet this demand at the cost of their own limitations and fail to maintain a healthy balance between their professional and private lives. Whereas, for students it leads to the development of an attitude of not respecting others' space, boundaries and privacy. A healthy balance between work and domestic life can be achieved if all the stake holders: the institution, instructors and students follow the rules established by mutual consultation of all stakeholders. It is more of a behaviour that today's students as tomorrow's professional, parents and administrators need to learn for maintain the work-private life boundaries and part of their work stress management strategy.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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DATA SHARING STATEMENT

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request



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