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## Shift to Online Learning: Response of Pakistani Visual Art Teachers During Pandemic and Post-Covid Era

Tauseef Hussain Mr

*College of Art and Design, University of the Punjab, Lahore, stauseef1979@gmail.com*

Nimra Akram Miss

*Punjab Institute of Fashion Design, nimraakram31@gmail.com*

Rabiya Asim Ms

*National College of Arts, Lahore, rabiyaasim2020@gmail.com*

Amina Sarfraz Cheema Ms

*College of Art & Design, University of the Punjab, Lahore, amina.cad@pu.edu.pk*

Kiran Zohra Ms

*APS (GIRLS) Sarfaraz Rafiqi Road, Lahore, syeda.kiranzaidi@gmail.com*

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## **Shift to Online Learning: Response of Pakistani Visual Art Teachers During Pandemic and Post-Covid Era**

### **Abstract**

*Purpose of this paper* – This study aims to investigate the response of Visual art teachers to educational lockdown and shift to online learning at art institutions.

*Design/methodology/approach* – The study employed qualitative phenomenological research design to investigate visual artists i.e., painters, sculptors, textile designers, graphic designers, and performing artists who were faculty members in five leading art institutions of Lahore. Data were collected by conducting a total of 15 interviews from each mentioned discipline. These interviews were conducted preferably in their studios, at their homes, or at times online through WhatsApp video calls. The data was analyzed thematically by using NVIVO 12 software.

*Findings* – It was observed that new methodologies were devised by the faculty and art institutions to mitigate the pandemic upshot, however, virtual learning made it hard for the faculty to teach practice-based subjects. As a result, the assessment criteria were also affected.

*Social implications* –The study findings provide an insight for art institutions and the Higher Education Commission (HEC) to start preparing their systems to offer effective online teaching as a substitute for regular classes in Visual Arts.

*Originality/value* – As the researchers could not find any such study in local context, and very few globally. Therefore, this study may serve as a baseline for further research in this area.

**Keywords** – Visual artists; pedagogy, covid 19, online teaching; Pakistan.

Article Type: Research paper

### **Introduction**

*Background*

Covid 19 has deeply impacted all segments of human life. The intercontinental epidemic has brought a significant change in economic and social structure globally. There came a sudden shift in lifestyle with educational lockdown, shutter down on entertainment, disruption of cultural activities, ban on traveling, and prohibition of religious or festive congregations. The prolonged pandemic led to the idea of virtual platforms to avoid damage in profits and to gain amounts even at a lower rate. The virtual functional structures initially started with online exhibitions, marketplaces, grocery apps, virtual meetings, and even concerts (Kahraman, 2020). Similarly, during the pandemic, a radical change came in the role of the teacher, and it required a new course of action. During Covid-19, teachers made efforts to upgrade students' skills virtually by using various digital platforms. Educators took redundant actions to develop and continue competitiveness among students. They strived to prepare students cognitively, emotionally, and practically (Dube, 2020). It has been observed that practical subjects couldn't be conducted online, especially for students who lacked basic skill sets. The pandemic caused a colossal loss of education throughout the world. According to an estimate, over 1.9 billion students from more than 190 countries were barred to attend school (UNESCO, 2020).

As stated by Starkey (2019), by this point in time, digital competence was of utmost importance. According to him, digital and professional competence led to success in terms of virtual learning. According to Basilaia & Kvavadze (2020), Online learning has not been a new term for developed nations and even for developing ones, though they had been using technology for teaching at a limited scale. However, shifting from face-to-face to virtual learning was an unexpected transition. Though the distance protocols were applied to curb the levels of the infectious disease, it was reported statistically by the United Nations almost 91% of students worldwide had a negative impact in terms of education during the worldwide pandemic break (UNESCO, 2020). It can be argued that the Coronavirus has direct effects on art itself that are mirrored in art education. This study is based on the problems faced by educators at the time of the pandemic because of the closure of institutions especially focusing on the visual arts faculty. Their response to the educational lockdown and the resultant shift to online learning that it brought along.

The pandemic COVID-19 impacted all walks of life whether it was the economy, trade, commerce, industry, traveling, entertainment, health, or education. It hit the educational system

to an extreme degree that varied from institution to institution based on their response and preparedness to face this radical crisis. In visual arts, different tools are used to create artwork, and for practical subjects an online demonstration becomes problematic. Harris and Jones (2020) showed concern that it is not about the pandemic, it is about creating a balance between pedagogy and technology in normal circumstances. Training teachers and students in the digital world is very important. In the field of visual arts, the physical presence of students matters a lot because there are multiple variables involved to execute a final product, such as color, material, the texture of paper, and tools. Watching and examining the artwork and its whole process in real-time remain a matter of great concern for teachers. This study aims to investigate the response of visual arts faculty to the education lockdown and the resultant shift to online learning. In the wake of COVID-19, there was a complete lockdown almost all over the world including Pakistan. Institutions were supposed to play a greater role by creating a learning space for students. The task was choosing the best e-learning platforms with effective teaching methodologies.

#### *Implications/significance*

It is anticipated that distance learning will continue in some capacity for a while, and it is hoped that measuring its benefits and drawbacks considering academicians' knowledge and insight in fine arts, particularly at the higher education level, which calls for skills and training, will help to find a solution to this issue in education.

#### *Research Question*

Keeping in view the research objective, the following questions will be addressed.

- How did visual arts faculty and students respond to the sudden educational lockdown?
- What were the emergent technologies used by faculty to facilitate the learning process?
- What were the assessment criteria during the process?
- What kind of barriers were faced by faculty and students?

#### **Literature Review**

The COVID-19 pandemic in complex ways has disrupted social, economic, educational, and cultural activities thereby compelling health-related apprehension and skepticism (Grubic et al., 2020; Torales et al. 2020). All these impacts from various sectors have deeply impacted the education sector, especially the field of art education. Institutions were left with no choice but to facilitate the learning process virtually (Al- Maroof et. al, 2020). Art educators have employed non-conventional techniques and devised new pedagogical approaches to teach students visual art skills and assist students in their practice and concepts in their virtual classrooms in these challenging times. This transition was anticipated to accelerate stress on the ability to perform higher degree students at institutions (Khan & Jawaid 2020). Pekrun et al. (2011) through their research claimed that students' emotions are directly linked to their sense of achievement, and help them excel in academia, as they actively employ their learning strategies to their best. Symptomology like Insomnia, anger, anxiety, and negative emotions during the quarantine have led to mental and physical discomfort for both students and teachers.

The field of art education is mutually enchaining with art practice, and it was not prepared to face the pandemic and the problems COVID-19 had brought to all art institutions. The visual arts faculty designed new curriculums and adapted their lesson plans for distance learning that addressed a unique set of needs, complexities, and new modes to deliver education to students. The visual arts students had to experience online learning through blended learning, though studio space as a pedagogical approach is of extreme importance for a visual arts student but blended learning with traditional modes also at times helps enhance the learning (Cho & Cho, 2014).

#### *Online Learning and Role of a Faculty*

Though the challenges were huge during Covid-19, various initiatives were taken to fill the learning needs of students. Synchronous and asynchronous education carried out through multiple digital platforms mostly supplemented the teacher during the pandemic. In the current crisis, the role of the teacher became more important, and it required a new skill set, and contemporary modes of thinking (Swartz et al., 2018). Because of COVID-19, and the educational institutional lockdown around the world, institutions speculated and had to play a proactive role by creating a conducive virtual learning space and scheduling online appointments

to answer the needs and questions of students. The faculty at institutions are tasked with updating and refining e-learning platforms to conduct effective teaching. Though the teaching methodologies adopted were a hit-and-trial method due to new emerging technologies, so rather results would tell if the technology needed to be more user-friendly (Wilson, 2020).

Al-Marroof (2020) investigated the effective technology applications that could facilitate the learning process in a better way. According to him, Google Meet is a platform that can be used by teachers and students to achieve their learning goals. Google Meet minimized the fear by providing an effective learning platform. No matter it was group discussion or individual session or creating a lesson plan, it facilitated all. Harris and Jones (2020) showed concern that it's not about the pandemic, it's about creating a balance between pedagogy and technology in normal circumstances. Training teachers and students in the digital world is the key to surviving the prolonged pandemic. (Lucas et al., 2020). The educators strived to continue the competitiveness among students and tried to induce the student's cognitive, emotional, and practical well-being in a productive way (Dube, 2020).

### *Constraints to Integrate the Concept of Virtual Learning*

Institutions faced certain challenges in the form of the knowledge gap, time management, teachers' fear to adopt technology as a mode of learning, pedagogical constraints, students' response, absentees, and most importantly, transferring the physical space into a virtual environment. This created an internal conflict, the teachers and students had anxiety, lacked skills, and experience, and had little technical know-how to run the operations of this transition of learning and teaching methodology (Mac Callum & Jeffrey, 2014). The adjustment to this new methodology and the transference of the essence of digital learning was neither easy for art institutions nor the student's families. Initially, there were a lot of glitches in this different domain such as IT access, self-isolation, and illness faced by both students and teachers. Due to social distancing and the absence of ill teachers, the workload on other faculty members increased (Nelson & Sharp, 2020) which required a lot of time and effort. Firstly, the core outcome of the virtual space was to provide a conducive learning environment for students. Secondly, the system was promoted for the emotional well-being of the students to minimize the fear of spreading COVID-19 (Al- Marroof et. al, 2020). Art educators facilitated students by

uploading assignments, and books through Google classrooms, email, social media, and other useful apps. However, monitoring strategies were not enough and were up to the mark to track the learning (Tzifopoulos, 2020).

It can be said that pandemic has direct effects on art itself as well as on the reflection of art education. Although it is appreciated that many educational and artistic institutions provided free access to a variety of online platforms and resources for a short time, the existence of people without the necessary technological and artistic tools still represents a shortcoming. It has been observed that there is a dearth of studies conducted on the users in visual arts. The present study attempts to fill this literature gap.

### **Research Design**

The population of the study consisted of higher education professional art institutions that provide visual arts education. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with fifteen faculty members, six of them were male and nine females of five major art institutions in Lahore. Semi-structured interviews empowered the respondents to share their viewpoints freely and in privacy. Researchers conducted interviews using both English and Urdu languages. The information acquired was carefully transcribed. For this study, a list of potential participants was prepared. These participants were frequent users of the internet. The recruitment was stopped at fifteen participants. The reason was that the data were transcribed and analyzed with those of the other participants which were found similar during the comparison. Therefore, the data collection stopped with three participants in each institution until no new significant information was found. This situation showed that the data saturation point has been achieved for these participants. The qualitative information was analyzed using NVIVO software, analysis.

### **Findings**

*RQ1. How visual arts teachers and students responded to sudden educational lockdown?*

*Response to Sudden Shift to Online Learning and its Impact on Learning.* This part of the study documented the findings regarding responses of faculty members to sudden online shifts and their impact on learning. None of the participants witnessed educational lockdown in their teaching career. In the beginning, it was difficult for them to teach students online and to shift

the curriculum virtually. The gadgets were not of high quality and not everyone was able to afford high-quality gadgets. However, with time they cope with the situation and became used to it. One of the participants stated that

*...sometimes I got frustrated because students were unable to pick our point of view. In the physical presence of the student, we judge all aspects of their work such as the handling and use of a particular tool, and the overall rendering of art piece.... To guide our students, we started making online videos, but our gadgets were not up to the mark.... Majority of us only have low quality cameras in their cell phones and laptops (P5).*

Majority of the participants shared that though they were habitual users of technology, they took plenty of time and effort to prepare themselves for online learning. They were not mentally prepared for this change. Similarly, during online classes their main concern was how to make students understand something. For this purpose, faculty started making recorded videos to facilitate students.

*It was more like fear for us. We plan to shift regular classes to the digital platform at once. There was panic in this situation because teachers can teach theory and history online, but they cannot teach studio-based subjects online (P8).*

Most of the participants were of the view that this shift impacted learning in various ways. In visual arts, learning is compromised in the absence of dialogue generation and the unavailability of proper gadgets. Participant 9 was of the view that online learning is not bad, but the institutions were not ready for it. The young generation is technology friendly but to solely rely on this for learning is not suggested until all protocols to shift to online learning are followed.

*Response from Student's Side.* Firstly, the shift was not gradual but sudden and students was also did not understand the key ethics of online learning. At the beginning of the shift, few of the students were taking online classes seriously but majority of them were not showing their interest in it. Participants shared that students at first join the online class and then they did not stay there. One participant noted that



*It was a mixed response from the student side. It was very important to understand to parents also that if a student is at home and taking online classes, he is not on vacation. Majority of the parents were considering it as vacation because the culture of online learning was applied at once and did not evolve gradually (P12).*

Similarly, participant 13 shared that it was difficult to create a healthy learning environment online because students were not serious. They used to login the online class, but they leave it suddenly. They did not use to attend class properly and used to make excuses such as the connectivity issues, or other domestic engagements.

*It was difficult to create a learning environment online. During online classes sometimes I felt that I was talking to myself only and there is no one. Sometimes it felt that they are very engaged but whenever I used to pinpoint a certain student that wrap up the discussion or share my thoughts, they used to be blank. Sometimes they don't answer, and it seems that they are not physically present there. They were just online. (P13)*

The student's behaviors fluctuated throughout the situation. Some of the students were responsible, while others used to take benefit of the situation and did not use to submit assignments on time. Some students living in remote areas had no access to the internet and proper gadgets.

*RQ2. What were the emergent technologies used by teachers to facilitate the learning process?*

Most of the participants used devices and various digital platforms to facilitate the learning which included WhatsApp, email, and other social media platforms. One participant highlighted that

*I am a teacher of the practical subject. I use digital platforms such as WhatsApp and email. I also use the internet to do research for information gathering but it remains limited (P3).*

Participant 2 uses various portable devices and shared that online communication helps her a lot not only with students but to stay in touch with clients as the participant is not only a teacher but a freelance designer also.

*Besides teaching, I do freelance also. I use a laptop, tablet, and portable devices. I use the internet for file transfer, to do online projects, to stay in touch with clients, and to transfer heavy files. I must share class related data with students. To communicate with students, I use WhatsApp and Google classroom.*

However, a smaller number of participants considered themselves average towards the use of technology. Their use of technology is limited to communication and research purposes.

*Emergent Technologies and Tools Used by Teachers to Facilitate Learning.* Most of the participants noted that the key concern was to facilitate the learning process. For that purpose, various efforts were made from recording demos to sharing presentations. Various digital platforms facilitate the learning process such as Google Meet, Mobizen, Zoom, Teem, Google Classroom, WhatsApp, and emails were mostly used by teachers as shown in Figure 1. Most of the platforms were discovered and explored in the wake of COVID-19 and the resultant shift to online learning. Similarly, they preferred to share the resources in visual and video form followed by presentation and pdf files.

*I tried my best to make things easy for my students. I used to record my videos and send them to students. I used to do research and used to find useful resources for them. We took the class through a projector by coming online. I used YouTube, WhatsApp, and Teem a lot for conducting classes (P12).*

Similarly, Participant five shared that the administration of the institution was constantly in touch, and they used to share cost-free resources to facilitate the learning process. Various emergent technologies remained helpful, and every platform played a particular role to facilitate the learning process.

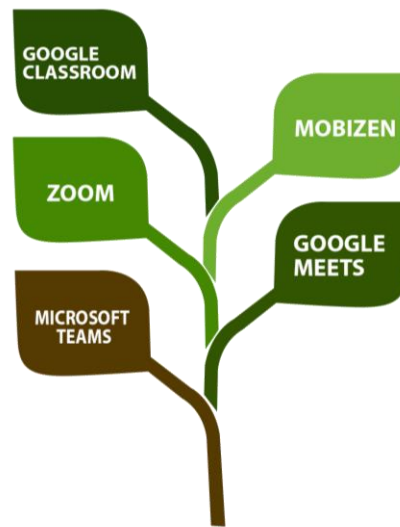


Figure 1. Emergent Technologies Used by Pakistani Visual Arts Faculty Members

*RQ3. What was the assessment criteria during the process?*

*Importance of Physical Presence for Visual Arts Students.* Participants were of the view that the nature of visual arts is more practical and physical presence matters a lot for students. Moreover, the average gadgets are not up to the mark and not everyone can afford them. Similarly, the learning needs of every student differ. In studio-based subjects, students cannot be better facilitated, or their learning needs cannot be catered to in distance learning. Participant 1, who is a sculpturer, explained that their work is mostly in 3d form which cannot be justified in pictures only.

*The sculpture is skilled work. To produce quality work, you must understand the technical aspect of the material first. I feel it would be unfair if we ask students to understand the technicality of the material online. Likewise, the effort and progress of the students remain undocumented (P1).*

Similarly, participant 8 was also of the view that sculpture is a 3dimensional work and this kind of work cannot be evaluated and observed properly in virtual environments.

*To evaluate a three-dimensional product, the product must be in front of our eyes. We cannot justify 3d work through pictures only. Secondly, the student is not only judged based on the product but throughout the process because their effort throughout any project matters. In case of physical absence, we cannot properly assess their learning process and effort (P8).*

All Participants stressed the importance of a healthy learning environment for students. However, according to the participants, in digital space, it becomes difficult to create the environment. Participant 4 in this regard stated that

*During physical class, you create an environment for students to accelerate the process of idea generation. It was not possible to create the same environment online. Environment matters a lot and idea generation is directly related to your environment. Before Covid-19, we created the environment through face-to-face class discussions and debates.*

Participants highlighted another concern regarding remote learning that there is a lot more risk of plagiarism in distant learning. Students may outsource the work and that is why the process matters a lot. On campus, students can understand the learning process better.

*Assessment Criteria During COVID 19.* Assessment is an important part of learning. Participants shared that during online classes, they had to change the assessment criteria. The focus shifted to keeping students connected to the learning instead of covering the curriculum. For all participants, the key concern was facilitating the learning process. Participants shared that prior knowledge about students learning needs and capacity also helped to assess them partially. Students were assessed on more tangible aspects of the assignments.

Participant noted that they used to divide an assignment into small parts. For each part, the deadlines are created in Google classroom. Students are supposed to update the assignment. However, at the same time, not everyone is able to follow the process due to many reasons, such as the unavailability of the internet or electricity. Keeping this in view, participants shared that they had to compromise on deadlines. Therefore, the key focus was keeping the student in learning mode more instead of focusing on the syllabus.

*During online classes I used to ask students to explain the process of their work verbally due to the practical nature of their work. I used to ask them to share screens and show sketchbooks and to share the process. However, most of the students were from remote areas and did not have proper resources. They were unable to upload assignments timely, and I understand their point of view (P2).*

Most of the participants highlighted that they made effort to engage with students at the individual level because visual arts are a creative work and every student work on independent ideas. The students were encouraged to turn on cameras while working, but the minor details of the work were not captured by it.

*I felt that I engaged more with my students to strengthen their learning process. I was a bit lenient somewhere also. But I had to make a double effort. It was difficult but I tried to manage. There was a major drawback that we could not see the minor details of their painting in pictures. They did not have the proper tools to document their work. We cannot realize the color, or scale of the work in pictures only. The overall feel of the artwork can only be seen in the physical presence (P10).*

Visual art is a practical subject and for teachers, the process toward the final product matters a lot. Students are also assessed based on the idea, effort, and creative aspect of the concept. However, in distant learning, the process part was compromised, and assessment criteria were changed keeping in view the situation.

*RQ4. What kind of barriers were faced by teachers and students?*

*Barriers.* Participants noted two kinds of barriers i.e., internal, and external barriers. Internal barriers included fear and frustration due to the sudden situation.

*There was fear and Frustration. We are frightened of using material because it was coming from outside, so we had to sanitize the material before using it. The fear was high due to Covid-19. Likewise, I got frustrated when I was unable to teach students minor technicalities online. In the physical presence of students, it was easier to view minor details such as color, material, texture, and surface. Sometimes, students were unable to explore and produce the effect which we wanted them to. There was a distance. Verbal*

*communication only develops understanding but in practical subject physical presence matter (P15).*

Moreover, teachers were finding it hard to explain the technicalities of the material online. It was very time-consuming, and the personal life of the faculty members was suffering due to time constraints.

*Another barrier was handling things technically. I can work with different materials such as clay, and wire. Some things are very technical based and are handled by technicians. These technicians support you even during class but when I had to give an online demo of such things through a camera it was very difficult to do all. I had to do double effort because first I produced the work and then I demonstrated the whole process on camera. This effort was huge and in turn, my family life was totally disturbed (P11).*

Another participant noted that

*In the online arena, there was no specific time. We had to be there 24/7. We even received an email at 2 AM. We were also doing things physically and online, so it was a double effort. Our workload increases. It was more demanding. Sometimes there were vocabulary constraints from the students' side. They sometimes were not able to express their ideas in words (P8).*

The situation was sudden and shifting the curriculum and covering of syllabus became an uphill task. There was a situation of panic due to distance learning as minor technicalities of the material and the subject were a matter of concern. Faculty had to work extra hours at home to facilitate the students which was time-consuming. Teachers also face issues from the external side. Firstly, there was a communication barrier to making students understand the assignment and the process of assignments. On the other hand, the administration of institutions was treating the visual arts department like the rest of the department without considering the nature of the subject.

*From the external side, I faced issues from the student side. Students were unable to understand the language. There was a huge struggle to teach them to explore material in different dimensions. For example, in shaping, we must design first, then render, and then*

*3D shape. After the first stage, they had difficulty understanding the second and third stages due to which the end product suffered (P14).*

Another barrier was lack of interest from the students' side. Students were online but they did not use to remain focused. The students were showing presence on Google Classroom and Zoom but they were not available during class. Participants stated that during online classes you are calling names and the student was not there. This behavior created a learning gap. Similarly, they do not use to follow deadlines. They used to make excuses that there was an internet issue, or they were having guests. There were connectivity issues. Students from remote areas found a lot of issues. Whereas, Some students took unfair benefit of the situation. One participant noted that students used to open laptops while they were in bed, marked their attendance, and went to sleep again. If I called someone suddenly during an online class, most of the time they did not speak because they were not on the spot. These internal and external barriers created panic and stress among faculty members. Handling it was a difficult task but with the willingness of faculty members, positivity, and with the help of various digital platforms, they overcame the situation.

## **Discussion**

It has been observed that there were similarities between the findings of this study and the earlier research conducted on the topic. Teachers were asked to share their experiences in response to the sudden shift to online learning. It was difficult for all participants to switch to online learning. They were using various devices to stay in touch with students before the lockdown, but the use was very limited. Shifting the whole curriculum virtually was difficult for them. Online learning is not a new term, especially for the developed world and even for developing ones. They have been using it at a limited scale. However, shifting from face-to-face to virtual learning was a sudden transition. This sudden shift created ambiguity about the proper plan of action, such as how to teach, what to teach, assessment criteria, and the beginning and closing of the academic year (Basilaia & Kvavadze, 2020; Pujari, 2020; Zhang et al., 2018).

There was a feeling of panic and stress among all stakeholders which sometimes led to frustration. Wilson (2020) and Tadesse et al. (2020) documented that during the educational lockdown, the level of anxiety, depression and stress remained high among all stakeholders. Similarly, Al- Maroof et al. (2020) also highlighted that COVID-19 spread fears all over the

world. It brought to a halt all kinds of activities. Institutions were left with no choice but to facilitate the learning process virtually.

The key concern of the educational institutes was to facilitate the learning process for which they had to shift the whole curriculum online. However, Participants argued that the field of visual art is of a practical kind and in remote learning, they were unable to observe the technical aspect and other elements contributing to the subject in distance learning. Similarly, the learning needs of every student differ. The students cannot be better facilitated, or their learning needs cannot be catered to by distance learning. According to Wilson (2020), in the wake of COVID-19, Institutions were supposed to play a greater role by creating a learning space for students. The task was choosing the best e-learning platforms with effective teaching methodologies. Similarly, the role of teachers was of utmost importance who was at the forefront to facilitate learning while keeping in consideration the situation. While highlighting the role of teachers Dube (2020) argued that in a crisis, the role of the teacher becomes important, and it requires a new way of thinking. During Covid-19, teachers made efforts to upgrade students' skills virtually by using various digital platforms. They strived to prepare students cognitively, emotionally, and practically. For Harris and Jones (2020), it is not about the pandemic but about creating a balance between pedagogy and technology in normal circumstances. Training teachers and students in the digital world is very important.

Keeping in view the situation, teachers tried to facilitate the process of learning by exploring various applications and platforms. Teachers with the help of management explored various tools to facilitate learning. They created virtual classrooms and scheduled online appointments to meet students' needs and answer their questions. Google meet and Google classroom were one of the tools to facilitate the learning process. Teachers made use of various emergent technologies such as Mobizin, Screen recorder apps, Zoom, and WhatsApp. Al-Marroof et al., (2020) also investigated the effective technology applications that can facilitate the learning process in a better way. According to him, Google Meet is a platform that can be used by teachers and students to facilitate learning. Google Meet minimized the fear by providing an effective learning platform. No matter it was group discussion or individual session or creating a lesson plan, it facilitated all.



Participants shared that their key focus was to engage students in healthy activities rather than focusing on covering the syllabus or curriculum. The assessment remained a key concern in distance learning and the criteria of assessment were changed keeping in view the overall circumstances. Osman (2020) argued that practical test performance tests cannot be conducted online, especially for students who did not have a basic skill set. Basilaia & Kvavadze (2020) and Lucas et al., (2020) also highlighted that the shift to online learning has a deep impact on assessment criteria. The assessment of a subject depends upon the nature of the course and assessment type. Teachers were bound to change assessment criteria in the evolving circumstances. The student-Centered approach was preferred to design lesson plans and to engage them better. Undoubtedly, it was difficult to monitor students online and how students learning evolved during a task and to assure that they were not cheating.

Despite various efforts from all stakeholders, multiple types of barriers were faced. The response from the students' side remained fluctuated. They have sometimes showed non-serious behavior toward task completion. Not everyone had equal opportunities and required tools to attend classes or to complete tasks. Al- Maroof et. al, (2020) also experienced similar situations. For them, Poor and digitally illiterate families suffered due to two key reasons. First, they did not have adequate resources. Secondly, they also did not have any technological know-how, Institutions had to face certain challenges in the form of the knowledge gap, teachers' fear to adopt technology as a mode of learning, students' responses, absentees and most importantly, transferring the physical environment into virtual. The process of adaptation is not easy as it's a completely different domain that requires time and effort.

Tzifopoulos (2020) and Cramman et al. (2020) highlighted that student from poor backgrounds and with minimum learning motivation suffered the most during this time. Urban institutions facilitated students by uploading assignments, and books through Google classrooms, email, social media, and other useful apps. However, monitoring strategies were not enough and were up to the mark to track the learning. Moreover, not every student had a laptop, desktop, or tablet at home. They use mobile to access the internet which was not time compatible to attend live sessions and complete tasks. Participants remained in favor of online learning but partially. At the same time, they believed that basic prerequisites need to be fulfilled such as proper training and availability of resources. Rees and Seaton (2011) also highlighted that training

teacher, students and parents are crucial. Teachers face various kinds of issues to implement the essence of digital learning. The issues vary from digital inequality among students, poor and non-availability of quality content, lack of proper training and pedagogical constraints similarly. Pragholapati (2020) pointed out that besides learning, students' mental health should also be taken into consideration. The reason for this is that students may feel scared and upset about the overall crisis. It's the responsibility of a teacher to keep into consideration all points. To meet this challenge participants suggested designing effective training sessions for all while exploring digital platforms to meet the learning needs of students.

## **Conclusion**

The result of the study concluded that Covid 19 influenced the education system greatly. In the wake of the lockdown there was no choice for the institution but to facilitate the learning process virtually. Online learning was not new, but it was not considered appropriate for a practical subject like visual arts and shifting from face-to-face to virtual space was a sudden transition. However, institutions accepted this challenge and in collaboration with HEC devised strategies to facilitate the process of learning by using different platforms, such as Google Meet, Google Classroom, Mobizin, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, WhatsApp, Telegraph, etc. The shift to online learning greatly influenced the assessment criteria. Visual art is a practical and creative field. Teachers found it hard to measure students' progress online because various elements are involved to measure the task such as color, texture, material, and scale. Students did not have standard tools to document the work. Similarly, teachers faced various barriers to implementing the essence of digital learning such as non-serious behavior from students' sides, electricity issues, connectivity issues, depression, domestic challenges, and the availability of proper tools. Most of the students did not use to submit the task on time and were not present at the time of class. It was suggested by all to fulfill basic pre-requisite to implement the essence of digital learning fully. At the same time, there were students from poor backgrounds who had no access to the internet and devices. Students from poor backgrounds and with minimum learning motivation suffered the most during this time. Most teachers are discouraged to teach visual arts subjects online. They were of the view that virtual learning should be part of learning partially, but they cannot solely rely on a digital platform to teach students. However, in the current

situation various strategies can be adopted, such as following SOPs and likewise, classes can be divided into different groups and students can attend classes in shifts.

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