A Study on Examining the Factors Causing the Stress Level of Teachers While Shifting Towards Online Mode of Education in Pakistan

Darakhshan Muslim[1], Khawaja Hisham-ul-Hassan[2], Meimoona Riaz[3], Ayesha Sultan[4]

Abstract
This study aims to investigate the factors contributing to the stress levels of teachers in educational institutions of Pakistan during the shift towards the online mode of education. This quantitative study used a survey questionnaire to obtain data from the teachers. The questionnaire included the items on workload, technical hurdles, social contact, and work-life balance of distance learning teachers while transmission towards online mode. A sample size of 75 teachers was selected for the study. The findings of the study showed that technological challenges such as connectivity issues, coping up with new emerging technology, meeting deadlines and multitasking are the major factors of stress for teachers. They find it difficult to somewhat keep the balance between personal and professional life. On the other hand, the teachers are satisfied by the provided institutional support.
Keywords: Technological challenges, Workload, Multiple Tasks, Work-life Balance

1. Introduction

Online education has transformed education, allowing students to study from home. Teachers are becoming more important as online education grows. They face unique challenges and stressors that might affect their well-being and job satisfaction.

Universities and colleges around the globe have undergone a shift to online instruction. The abrupt transition from blended learning or traditional face-to-face teaching to online learning has significantly interrupted university activities and presented numerous obstacles for teaching staff, who were tasked with rapidly creating online versions of their courses (Mosleh, 2022).

Teachers encounter tensions associated with their personal and professional responsibilities, worries over the welfare of their students that went beyond academic matters, and challenges with administration and other institutional bodies regarding COVID safety protocols. Lack of sufficient support and inclusion of teacher viewpoints can result in job-related stress, which in turn can contribute to teacher shortages, decline in teacher mental well-being, and ultimately, negative consequences for children (Robinson, 2023).

Stressful teachers tend to have more stressful students. This study will help to investigate the factors that can cause the stress for distance teachers who are teaching online and based on these identified factors we can make a more satisfactory environment for our teachers.

1.1. Research Objectives
The objective of this study is to identify the main factors that contribute to the stress level of teachers in educational institutions of Pakistan during the shift towards online mode of education.

1.2. Research Questions
Q: What are the main factors that can cause the stress to teachers in online mode of education?

1.3. Rationale of the Study
This study examines teachers' stress in Pakistani educational institutions. Understanding these aspects is essential for identifying areas for development and implementing effective online teacher well-being practices. This research examines instructors' stressors to add to the body of information on teacher well-being in online education. Teachers have different pressures and it can be stressful due to increased effort, technological obstacles, restricted social interaction, and work-life balance issues. This study examines these elements to understand Pakistani teachers' problems and stress levels. The findings of this research will help academic institutions and policymakers to design teacher well-being strategies. Addressing instructors' stressors can create a positive work environment that boosts job satisfaction and well-being. This research seeks to improve educational environment by protecting its essential stakeholders, teachers.

2. Literature Review

According to Dehghan (2021), the technology handling, less self-esteem, less training to implement the new technology in teaching learning process cause the stress level for teachers. Burnout and exhaustion have a huge impact on teachers stress.

According to Bruggeman (2022), filtering new information is some time challenging for the University teachers. Lack of technological and institutional support may hinder the smooth working of teachers. Less network connectivity is also a big barrier in a continuous teaching learning process. Moreover readiness for teaching and learning on the part of both teacher and learner requires a lot of patience and it can hinder the efficient implementation of online education.

According to Mosleh (2022), the sudden transition to online teaching increased teachers stress and perceived burnout. This transition negatively affected family life, physical health, mental health, and stress management. To ensure the learning process is not compromised and teachers are teaching with the least stress, worry, and exhaustion, more focus should be placed on providing the contextual and technological resources. Additionally, academic institutions must acknowledge the exceptional efforts of teachers in unusual situations like COVID 19.

According to Klapproth (2020), Teachers worldwide face stress from different academic and nonacademic factors, including environmental, socio-cultural, and psychological factors. Teachers may experience stress to outperform with their peers, meet expectations of different stakeholders such as students and parents etc, Teachers may experience burnout due to heavy pressure from these factors. Various coping mechanisms might impact stress level of online teachers such as staying mindful, use different cognitive strategies etc.

[1] Phd Scholar, Department of Education, Superior University Lahore, Pakistan
[2] Assistant Professor, Commerce Department, Superior University Lahore, Pakistan
[3] PhD Scholar, Department of Education, Government College University, Faisalabad, Punjab, Pakistan
[4] Department of Statistics, Virtual University of Pakistan

Gonser, S. (2021), has provided some tremendous strategies to overcome the teachers stress level. He said that the self-care must be the chief priority for the teachers. Teachers must create a shared agreements between the administration and themselves. Admin must provide them with sufficient breaks to regain their energies. Schedule personal time for teachers in their hectic work hours. Informal meetings and appreciation comments from the senior persons can minimize the stress level of teachers. Arranging the frequent counselling sessions for the teachers on the part of the institution can bring the stress and anxiety level of teachers to a less problematic condition.

Pato (2021) has used the previous study in his article that was originally applied in Portugal in 2021, which says that teachers stress level is based on the performance and behaviors of the students. Transition to online teaching and new emerging trends also have an impact of the anxiety level of the teachers.

According to Vijaya, Unreliable information and communication gap between higher authorities and teachers can cause stress among the teachers. Conducting online classes itself a stress for the teachers. Teaching and no- teaching staff both experience the same level of anxiety factors. Huge factor of causing the stress is lack of recognition and appreciation.

3. Methodology

Quantitative research methodology has been used in this study. Survey design has been used in which we have developed a questionnaire with structured statements and five point Likert scale. The target population for this study is the teachers teaching online in educational institutions of Pakistan. We have selected a sample size of 75 teachers through simple random sampling technique.

3.1. Ethical Considerations
o   Collected data with informed consent from participants.
o   Ensured participant confidentiality.
o   Complied with all provided research guidelines related to the human subjects.

4. Data Analysis

We have used 20 participants for our pilot study. The responses are collected on 19 items. A sample of 75 respondents is used for analysis purpose. In table 1 the Cronbach's Alpha is applied on the pilot study data which shows the 0.7 value. 0.7 value shows that the items are sufficiently consistent to indicate that the measure is reliable.

Table 1: Reliability statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.70	19

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics

Items	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1. You feel comfortable in using technology for online teaching.	1	5	3.97	1.026
2. You encounter technological challenges while teaching in online distance learning mode.	1	5	3.71	1.100
3. You have been provided with adequate support by the University in coping your stress as an online teacher.	2	5	3.67	.875
4. You feel stress while meeting the intense deadline in online distance learning mode.	2	5	3.79	1.107
5. You find it difficult to cope up with the new emerging technologies.	1	5	2.48	.964
6. A lot of workload is hectic in online distance learning mode as comparative to the conventional learning.	2	5	3.69	.930
7. You feel stress while not interacting face to face with the students in online learning.	1	5	2.99	1.059
8. You feel discomfort when there is some connectivity issue that disturbs your online teaching learning process.	2	5	4.16	.855
9. Managing multiple tasks at a time is stressful for you as a teacher.	2	5	3.37	.882
10. Maintaining the student attention in online distance learning put extra pressure on the teachers.	2	5	3.77	.981
11. Online teaching can blur the boundaries between work and personal life, making it challenging for teachers to find a healthy work-life balance.	2	5	3.69	.958
12. Limited opportunities for training, or inadequate resources for online teaching can add to the stress levels of teachers.	2	5	3.79	.874

Table 2 displays the quantitative summary of the items/statements based on the mean values, it is evident that the majority of respondents either agree or strongly agree with each statement on average. The table shows the factors that cause the stress for teachers. These factors are technological challenges, meeting up the intense deadline of online mode, internet connectivity issues,

maintaining the student's attention and limited opportunities of training and inadequate online resources. Moreover, maintaining a balance between work life and personal life is also a main reason for the anxiety of teachers who are teaching online.
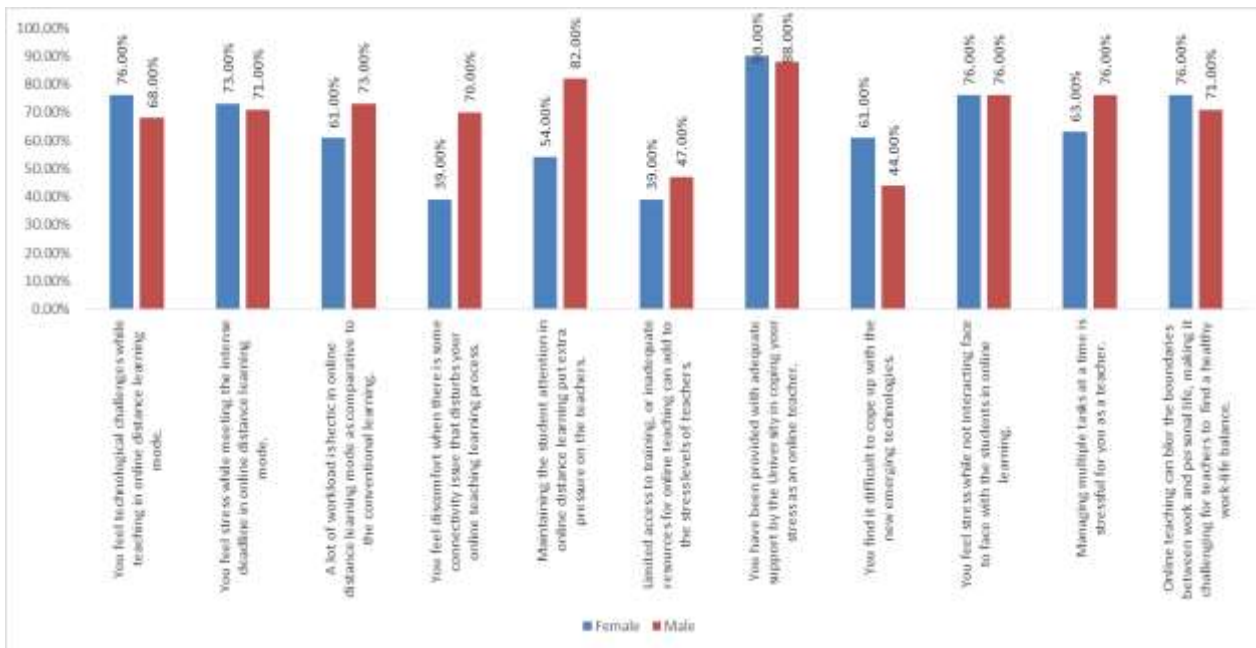

Figure 1: Gender-wise Response (%)

Figure 1 shows the percentage of agree responses to the items under study. The responses reflect the perceptions of the males and females against each statement. In comparison to males, the females find the technological challenges more stressful while teaching in an online mode. Male and females both find it difficult to meet the intense deadlines of online mode of education. The percentage of females is higher in feeling the anxiety level while meeting the deadlines than the males. Majority of males feel stress while maintaining the attention of students in an online mode of education. Female participants feel more stress while coping up with the new technologies. More than 70 percent males and females feel stress because of the non-face to face interaction with the students. For males in comparison to females, multitasking is most stressful. For females it is more difficult to keep the balance between their personal and professional life.

In Table 3, independent sample T test is applied to test the significance of mean difference between males and females. It is found that the P-value for the items related to coping up with the new emerging technologies and managing multiple tasks at a time is stressful for teachers is less than 0.05 so the mean difference is significant for these variables.

Table 3: Independent Samples Test for gender wise response testing

| | | Levene's Test for Equality of Variances | | t-test for Equality of Means | | | | |
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
You feel comfortable using technology for online teaching.	Equal variances assumed	1.573	.214	1.386	73	.170	.328	.237
	Equal variances not assumed			1.425	72.105	.159	.328	.230
You encounter technological challenges while teaching in online distance learning mode.	Equal variances assumed	7.885	.006	.425	73	.672	.109	.257
	Equal variances not assumed			.410	55.844	.683	.109	.266
You have been provided with adequate support by the University in coping your stress as an online teacher.	Equal variances assumed	1.358	.248	1.515	73	.134	.305	.201
	Equal variances not assumed			1.506	68.696	.137	.305	.202
You feel stress while meeting the intense deadline in online	Equal variances assumed	2.335	.131	-1.161	69	.250	-.308	.265

284

		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
distance learning mode.	Equal variances not assumed			-1.181	66.131	.242	-.308	.261
You find it difficult to cope up with the new emerging technologies.	Equal variances assumed	4.169	.045	2.308	73	.024	.501	.217
	Equal variances not assumed			2.346	72.983	.022	.501	.214
A lot of workload is hectic in online distance learning mode as comparative to the conventional learning.	Equal variances assumed	1.301	.258	-1.885	73	.063	-.400	.212
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.878	69.382	.065	-.400	.213
You feel stress while not interacting face to face with the students in online learning.	Equal variances assumed	.913	.342	.337	73	.737	.083	.247
	Equal variances not assumed			.335	68.760	.739	.083	.248
You feel discomfort when there is some connectivity issue that disturbs your online teaching learning process.	Equal variances assumed	4.497	.037	1.772	73	.080	.346	.195
	Equal variances not assumed			1.802	72.991	.076	.346	.192
Managing multiple tasks at a time is stressful for you as a teacher.	Equal variances assumed	2.010	.161	2.651	73	.010	.522	.197
	Equal variances not assumed			2.623	66.870	.011	.522	.199
Maintaining the student attention in online distance learning put extra pressure on the teachers.	Equal variances assumed	.521	.473	.540	73	.591	.123	.229
	Equal variances not assumed			.536	67.884	.594	.123	.230
Online teaching can blur the boundaries between work and personal life, making it challenging for teachers to find a healthy work-life balance.	Equal variances assumed	5.533	.021	.138	73	.891	.031	.224
	Equal variances not assumed			.142	72.289	.888	.031	.218
Limited access to training, or inadequate resources for online teaching can add to the stress levels of teachers.	Equal variances assumed	1.276	.262	1.264	73	.210	.255	.202
	Equal variances not assumed			1.252	67.428	.215	.255	.204

From Figure 2, we can see 81.33% of respondents feel at ease utilizing technology for online teaching. 72% of respondents are agreed that they encounter technological obstacles while instructing in online distance learning mode. 72% of respondents have the view that they see sufficient assistance from the institution in their capacity as online instructors. 66.2% of respondents experience stress when faced with tight deadlines in online mode of learning. 18.67% of respondents agree with the statement that they find it challenging to adapt to new emerging technology. 66.67% of respondents concur that a significant workload in online distance learning mode is more demanding compared to traditional schooling. 42.67% of respondents feel stress when not engaging in face-to-face interactions with students in online learning. 89.33% of respondents concur with the statement that they experience discomfort when faced with connectivity issues that disrupt their online teaching and learning process. 53.33% of respondents have the view that managing numerous responsibilities simultaneously is a source of stress. 76% of respondents are agreed that student engagement in online learning places additional strain on educators. 69.33% of respondents find it difficult to keep a balance between their personal and work life. 73.33% of respondents feel that limited access to training, or inadequate resources for online teaching can contribute to elevate stress level among teachers.
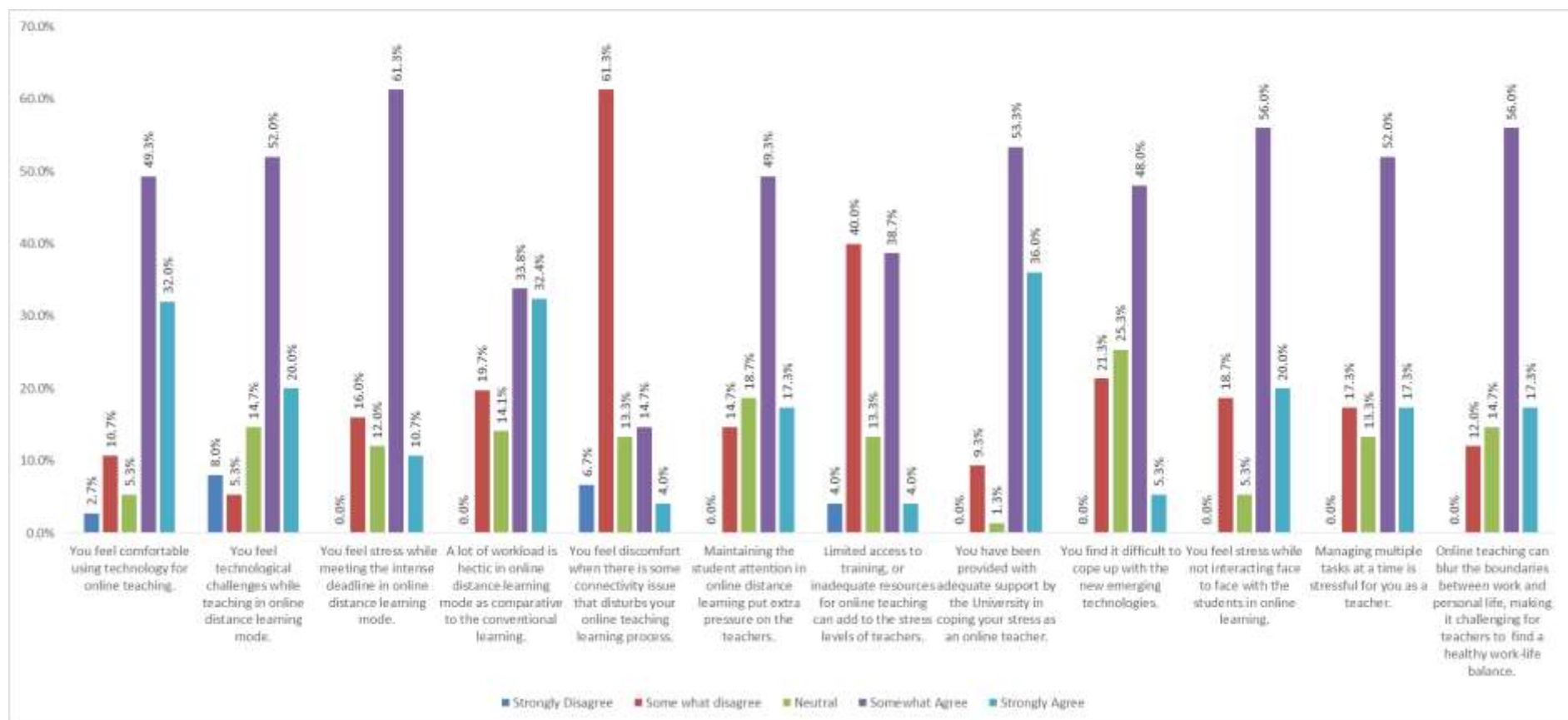
Figure 2: Responses on items (%)

5. Conclusion

Technological challenges has emerged one of the most significant factor that contributes the stress level of teachers while teaching online. Factors such as coping up with new emerging technologies is more of less stressful factor but they have their impact on the anxiety level of teachers. Factors like meeting the intense deadlines and managing multiple tasks are also stress causing. Lack of face to face interaction is also a major cause of stress for teachers in online distance learning as it makes them difficult to keep the attention of students towards online learning. Limited access towards the training opportunities and inadequate resources are also the major cause of stress for teachers. Using the technology and provided institutional help has emerged as a factor of satisfaction to the teachers under study.

References

Bruggeman, B., Garone, A., Struyven, K., Pynoo, B., & Tondeur, J. (2022). Exploring university teachers' online education during COVID-19: Tensions between enthusiasm and stress. *Computers and Education Open,* 3, 100095.

Dara, L.V., & Shanmuganathan, J. Continued Stress Among Teachers Due to Covid-19 Pandemic and Strategies of Stress Management among Higher Education Institutions Bangalore.

Dehghan, F. Teachers' Rise of Stress and Burnout in Online Classes: Causes and Solutions.

Gonser, S. (2021). Schools, not teachers, must reduce stress and burnout—Here's how. Edutopia, February, 11.

Klapproth, F., Federkeil, L., Heinschke, F., & Jungmann, T. (2020). Teachers' Experiences of Stress and Their Coping Strategies during COVID-19 Induced Distance Teaching. *Journal of Pedagogical Research*, 4(4), 444-452.

Mosleh, S. M., Kasasbeha, M. A., Aljawarneh, Y. M., Alrimawi, I., & Saifan, A. R. (2022). The impact of online teaching on stress and burnout of academics during the transition to remote teaching from home. *BMC Medical Education*, 22(1), 475.

Pato, S., & Fontainha, E. (2021). Sources and consequences of teachers' stress during the Covid-19 pandemic. *Revista Portuguesa de Investigação Educacional*, (22), 1-17.

Robinson, L. E., Valido, A., Drescher, A., Woolweaver, A. B., Espelage, D. L., LoMurray, S., & Dailey, M. M. (2023). Teachers, stress, and the COVID-19 pandemic: A qualitative analysis. *School mental health*, 15(1), 78-89.