

Quality of Literacy Courses in Online Blended Learning: Analysis of Curriculum, Teaching Learning Environment, Evaluation System and Feedback

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Abstract

This study analyzed perceptions of students towards online blended learning environment in which quality of literacy courses in online blended learning was analyzed in terms of quality of curriculum, teaching learning environment, feedback and evaluation system. As we all know, this is technology-oriented era and world has transformed into technovillage in which every field of life is influenced with technological interventions. Education and literacy are also impacted by technology drive. Online education is entirely based upon technology gadgets where literacy initiatives are influenced. To achieve the goal of this study, data was collected through survey by administering questionnaire from randomly selected sample of 100 postgraduate university students. The findings gave positive perceptions towards quality curriculum, and teaching-learning environment. However, respondents indicated unsatisfactory provisions and use of ICT tools and learning resources indicating dominance of teacher in selection of teaching methods, a smaller amount of ICT use, strain in courses' completion process and delayed declaration of exam result. The study recommended that the online blended literacy environment should foster use of proper ICT tools, students' engagement, use of multiple assessment and feedback activities to enhance quality of online blended literacy environment in a variety of ways.

Keywords: *Online Learning, Information and Communication Technology, Curriculum, Teaching Learning Environment, Evaluation System and Feedback*

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Introduction

Education is the most important aspect of daily life. Now a days the need for education is necessary for everyone as part of life it captures different aspects such as semester system and annual system. Among every aspect it become very popular for everyone to have education with some unique degree such as bachelor, graduation, post-graduation and PhD etc. in this competitive world one can be go for the education. But the phenomenon is that everywhere there are a lot of opportunity to have enrol in its education that may be Government institute or private both perform the same opportunity for you to have education. Now the Education system of Pakistan and its problems capture the eye of most of the researchers to find out the most appropriate system for it. A lot of researchers pay their role, attention and work on it.

This paper is an endeavour to perceptions of students towards online blended learning environment in which quality of literacy courses in online blended learning was analysed in terms of quality of curriculum, teaching learning environment, feedback and evaluation system.in Pakistan. The topic under consideration is descriptive regarding the prevailing online blended literacy environment. As it is apparent that technology is the demand of the present day. We need technology in every aspect of life. Artificial intelligence and augmented reality tools have transformed the learning scenarios in different dimensions. So, this demands a lot from educators to design and develop their teaching learning systems efficiently to meet the demands and challenges of the present day. Each passing day is adding new into technology drive. This demands multiple efficiency level not from teachers, but also designers and planners of online literacy environment and all stakeholders equally. Munnawar, and Awan (2019) viewed tasks and responsibilities on teachers in face-to-face teaching learning environment. Diabat and Aljallad (2020) emphasized important role of teachers in online technology environment to plan and to enhance support management to execute teaching learning resources, plan and apply scientific research do assessment procedures, and use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively.

Due to certain changes in technology and advancement in new teaching learning theories/concepts, educationists explore possible ways to teach texts in various possible ways (Rasool et al., 2024). There is also hesitancy from teachers to adapt towards new technological interventions. That's why in many ways they have been reluctant to use new online teaching tools in the first go. Studies indicated that when they use then have largely positive effects in using live synchronous lessons not only for lectures but also for experiments and inquiry-based group work etc.

Formal and informal social interactions are enhanced when students interact in synchronous learning activities and interact among peers. This also helps teachers to get revised work from students after live feedback from their peers in online learning classes. There also remains facilitating interactions between peers, teachers as well as administrators on LMS. There are certain constraints associated with online blended literacy environment. These include but not limited to prompt feedback of teachers on assignments, internet connectivity issues to join online sessions, voice distortion during remote teaching, lack of parents' knowledge to support their students with online learning, lack of ICT infrastructure in remote areas, lack of funds for IT equipment installation and purchase of independent servers etc. (Topping et al, 2022). Apart from teaching learning activities, online assessment and feedback is an integral part of online blended literacy courses. In this regard, Topping (2022) indicated the challenges associated with online assessment and feedback system. They stated that:

“Although there were many reports that assessment online was particularly challenging, 21 different types of online assessments strategies were identified, with online quizzes and formative online feedback the most frequent. Several studies reported that online quizzes were beneficial for teachers, as they were easily corrected, could be used to rehearse recommended elements, could help maintain student interest in their learning, and allowed teachers to easily check student understanding of concepts. Live marking or recorded feedback and assessment were found to be particularly beneficial, as providing feedback during live lessons was sometimes challenging. Peer collaboration was facilitated through peer assessment, inquiry-based group work and experiments, aided using collaborative software”.

Education System is one of the serious problems facing Pakistan from the last few decades, as well as in both developing countries of the world. Higher education is re-evaluating classroom functionality. Advances in technology and increased student diversity have driven the change from a lecture platform to a collaborative teaming environment. Chalkboards and rows of chairs with tablet arms are no longer efficient learning spaces. Universities and schools are seeking spaces that allow for multi-modal pedagogy which is a blending of teaching methods and technology for effective hands out and interactive learning; collaboration which prefers to learning from each other and flexibility which allows classrooms to be adaptable to support multi modal pedagogy (Khan et al.2024). In Pakistan, we are facing different challenges in online and blended learning

environments including lack of finances, lack of physical and technical facilities, teacher training etc. this has put an impact on quality of literacy courses in online blended learning in terms of curriculum, teaching learning environment, evaluation system and feedback. This study is focused on exploring the level to which online blended learning environment offers students proper provisions of teaching learning environment, suitable and quality curriculum, suitable evaluation system and feedback mechanisms.

Statement of the Problem

Literacy has many dimensions; it is not limited to reading and writing only. Literacy also encompasses technology literacy, online literacy, literacy in online blended scenarios. How different forms of literacies are executed seems important. What is the quality of curriculum, learning activities, teaching methods, evaluation and feedback system etc.? So, this study was aimed at “quality of literacy courses in online blended learning: analysis of curriculum, teaching learning environment, evaluation system and feedback”.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Explore the perception of students towards quality of curriculum of online blended learning literacy courses.
2. Analyze the point of views of students towards literacy content coverage and regularity of classes in online blended learning system.
3. Explore students’ views towards literacy teaching and learning environment
4. Analyze perception towards evaluation system and feedback in online blended learning literacy environment.

Research Questions/Hypotheses

1. What is the quality of curriculum of online blended learning literacy courses?
2. To what extent literacy content coverage is satisfactory?
3. What is the quality of regularity of classes in online blended learning system?
4. What is the quality of literacy teaching and learning environment?
5. What is the quality of literacy learning environment?
6. What is the quality of evaluation system in online blended learning literacy environment?
7. What is the quality of feedback in an online blended learning literacy environment?

Research Methodology

Research Design

Quantitative research design was used, and data was collected through survey method.

Population

The population was postgraduate students of Allama Iqbal Open University from Mansehra Region for the semester Spring 2024.

Sample and Sampling Technique

The sample comprised 100 students of M. Ed from the Mansehra region. So, a total of 100 students were in the sample. The researcher used a random sampling technique. This is a more reliable technique and bias level is reduced.

Research Instrument

This research employed a research tool which was developed by a researcher. This tool contained items based on the main construct of the research. This scale was validated by two experts and Cronbach alpha was checked which was .78*. There were six subscales of this tool.

Data Collection

Data was collected through personal contact by contacting the respondents through the regional Centre Mansehra.

RESULTS

Reflect the results in the tables below:

Table 1

Quality of Curriculum presented in online blended learning literacy environment

Quality of Curriculum	SS	S	U	D	SD	Mean	St. d
Students' needs & curriculum relevance	3.6	50	14.9	22.7	8.8	3.17	1.1
Curriculum flexibility	7.7	35.6	25.8	23.7	7.2	3.13	1.08
Co-curricular activities	3.6	24.2	20.1	37.6	14.4	2.65	1.11
Hands on activities	11.9	34.5	18.6	24.2	10.1	3.12	1.22
Semester wise equal allocation of curriculum	5.2	38.7	22.2	24.2	9.8	3.05	1.11

The results in this table indicate that in the subconstruct of curriculum quality. Regarding students' needs and curriculum relevance, mean score 3.17 indicates that majority supported it. On the second item majority of respondents (Mean score 3.13) indicated that curriculum is flexible in online blended learning. However, majority of respondents did not support (Mean score 2.65) regarding ample amount of provision of co-curricular activities in open blended learning. Majority of students appreciated provision of hands-on activities with mean score 3.12. there was also semester wise equal allocation of curriculum indicated by most of students with mean score 3.05. Overall, this table concludes that there is quality of curriculum followed in open and blended learning courses.

Table 2

Coverage of Literacy Content and Punctuality of Classes in online blended learning system

Literacy Content and Classes	SS	S	U	D	SD	Mean	St.d
Time frame and contents of courses	8.8	25.8	16	30.9	18.6	2.7	1.2
Regularity of classes	13.4	43.8	19.6	21.1	2.1	3.4	1.0
Ample amount of time to students	4.1	18.6	22.7	40.2	14.4	2.5	1.0

The results in this table indicate that in the subconstruct of content coverage. Regarding time frame and contents of courses, mean score 2.7 indicates that majority did not support it. On the second item majority of respondents (Mean score 3.4) indicated that classes are regular in online blended learning. However, majority of respondents did not support (Mean score 2.5) regarding ample amount of time given to students for completion of content activities in open blended learning. Overall, this table concludes that content coverage is not appropriate in open and blended learning courses. It may be revisited in the suggested areas.

Table 3

Perception towards Literacy Teaching and Learning Environment

Literacy Teaching and Learning Environment	SS	S	U	D	SD	Mean	SD
Supportive teaching-learning environment	5.7	43.3	18.6	25.8	6.7	3.1	1.1
Motivation	10.3	56.7	17	14.9	01	3.6	.90
Teacher-student collaboration	14.4	50	24.7	9.3	1.5	3.6	.89
Encouragement for Textbooks	22.7	56.2	12.4	7.2	1.5	3.9	.88

The results in above table indicate that in the subconstruct of literacy teaching and learning environment. Regarding supportive teaching-learning environment, mean score 3.1 indicates that majority supported it. On the second item majority of respondents (Mean score 3.6) indicated that motivation is given to focus on teaching and learning in online blended learning. Majority of respondents (Mean score 3.6) indicated teachers and students' collaboration for learning in online blended learning. However, majority of respondents (Mean score 3.9) indicated that there is encouragement on use of textbooks. Overall, this table concludes that literacy teaching and learning environment is appropriate in open and blended learning courses.

Table 4
Literacy Teachers and Teaching Strategies

Literacy Teachers & Teaching Strategies	SS	S	U	D	SD	Mean	SD
Skillful teachers with sufficient domain/contents knowledge	17.5	53.1	13.9	11.3	4.1	3.6	1.02
Teachers' punctuality	9.3	46.9	23.2	16.5	4.1	3.41	1.00
Teachers' positive attitude	18	53.6	15.5	9.8	3.1	3.74	.97
Selection of appropriate teaching strategies	2.1	24.2	30.4	30.9	12.4	2.73	1.02
Teachers' focus on students' learning	7.7	51.5	22.7	15.5	2.6	3.46	.934
Use of educational technology	7.2	32.5	21.6	23.2	15.5	2.93	1.21

The results in above table indicate that in the subconstruct of literacy teachers and teaching strategies. Regarding skillful teachers with sufficient domain/contents knowledge, mean score 3.6 indicates that majority supported it. Concerning teachers' punctuality, mean score 3.41 indicated that majority supported it. On the second item on teachers' positive attitude with student's majority of respondents (Mean score 3.74) indicated that teachers focus on positive behaviour with students in online blended learning. Majority of respondents (Mean score 2.73) indicated non-selection of appropriate teaching strategies for learning in online

blended learning. However, majority of respondents (Mean score 3.46) indicated that there is teachers' focus on students' learning. Majority of respondents (Mean score 2.93) indicated improper use of use of educational technology for learning in online blended learning. This table concludes that literacy teachers and teaching environment is almost good in open and blended learning courses.

Table 5

Evaluation and Feedback System in online blended learning Literacy environment.

Evaluation and Feedback System	Y	NC	N	Mean	St d
Satisfaction with the grading system	50.5	16	33.5	3.34	1.81
Grading system reduces subjective biasness in evaluation	54.2	7.7	38.1	3.32	1.89
Internal assessment and overall evaluation are transparent	41.2	7.8	51	2.80	1.92
Results are declared in time	16.5	0.5	83	1.67	1.49
Constructive feedback to students' assignments	52.6	10.8	36.6	3.32	1.87
Creativity enhanced	56.2	5.2	38.6	3.35	1.92
Frequent examinations do not create anxiety	51	13.4	35.6	3.31	1.84
Alternative evaluation techniques	34.5	9.3	56.2	2.57	1.86

The results in above table indicate that in the subconstruct of evaluation and feedback system in online blended literacy environment. Regarding next item, mean score 3.32 indicates that majority supported that grading system reduces subjective biasness in evaluation. Concerning internal assessment and overall evaluation are transparent, mean score 2.80 indicated that majority did not support it. Mean score 1.67 indicates that majority indicated that results are not declared in time. On the next item on constructive feedback to students' assignments majority of respondents (Mean score 3.32) indicated that teachers give positive feedback to students in online blended learning. Majority of respondents (Mean score 3.35) indicated students' creativity is enhanced in online blended learning. Majority of respondents (Mean score 3.31) indicated that frequent examinations do not create anxiety on students' learning. Majority of respondents (Mean score 2.57) indicated that teachers don't monitor students' progress by using alternative evaluation techniques in online blended learning. Overall, this table concludes that literacy subconstruct of evaluation and feedback system in online is almost good.

Table 6
Use of Learning Resources in Literacy Environment

	A	NS	I	Mean	St. d
Use of ICT	30.9	8.3	60.8	2.40	1.83
Provision of Reading and Library	47.4	6.2	46.4	3.02	1.94
Provision of additional reference books	33	9.8	57.2	2.52	1.84
Provision of Articles and Journals	42.8	11.3	45.9	2.94	1.89
Provision of Computer in Library	16.5	14.9	68.6	1.96	1.53
Provision of internet	19.6	12.4	68	2.03	1.61
Provision of canteen	51.5	6.7	41.8	3.20	1.93

The results in above table indicate that in the subconstruct of use of learning resources in online blended literacy environment. Regarding first item, mean score 2.40 indicates that majority did not support it. Concerning provision of reading and library, mean score 3.20 indicated that majority supported it. Mean score 2.52 indicates that majority indicated improper provision of additional reference books. Mean score 2.94 indicates that majority indicated improper provision of computer in library. Mean score 2.03 indicates that majority indicated improper provision of internet facility. On the next item on constructive provision of canteen, majority of respondents (Mean score 3.20) supported it. Overall, this table concludes that subconstruct of ICT and use of learning resources in online blended literacy environment. is unsatisfactory and needs improvement.

Findings and Discussions

The results of this study showed that in open distance learning courses, curriculum quality is good in terms of its relevance to students' needs. The curriculum is also flexible in online blended learning. However, provision of co-curricular activities is neglected in ODL curriculum. Regarding content coverage in open distance learning courses, results indicated that it's not covered well in time as well as ample amount of time is not given to students for completion of content activities. However, classes are conducted with punctuality in open blended learning. Literacy teaching and learning environment is appropriate in open and blended learning courses as there is supportive teaching-learning environment, motivation is given to focus on teaching and learning, teachers and students collaborate for learning and there is encouragement on use of textbooks. Results shed light on availability of skillful teachers with sufficient

domain/contents knowledge, teaching strategies, punctuality and focus on positive behavior with students in online blended learning. But there was improper use of educational technology. In one study Sheridan, and Gigliotti (2023) explored the need of more user-friendly and engaging online learning platforms with multiple supported learning opportunities for the students. Findings regarding evaluation and feedback system in online blended literacy environment showed that grading system reduces subjective biasness, enhances students' creativity and internal assessment, and overall evaluation are transparent as teachers give positive feedback to students. Frequent examinations do not create anxiety on students' learning but delay in results is big tension for students. Use of learning resources in online blended literacy environment is not satisfactory and needs improvement as there is improper provision of reading and library, improper provision of additional reference books, lack of computers in library, poor internet facility.

Conclusion

The results of this study reflected potential benefits of online blended learning literacy environment to students who attend classes from distant areas. Potential areas included curriculum quality in terms of its relevance to students' needs, curriculum flexibility, punctuality of ODL classes, supportive literacy teaching-learning environment, use of e-textbooks, availability of skillful teachers with sufficient domain/contents knowledge, teaching strategies, punctuality and focus on positive behavior with students etc. However, provision of co-curricular activities is neglected in ODL curriculum, improper provision of reading and library, improper provision of additional reference books, lack of computers in library, poor internet facility, poor content coverage, delay in results, and improper provision of learning resources. Following conclusions are made:

- There is quality of curriculum followed in open and blended learning courses. This is according to distance learners' academic needs. The aspect which is neglected in ODL curriculum is provision of co-curricular activities.
- Content coverage is not appropriate in open and blended learning courses. It may be revisited in the suggested areas.
- Conduct of classes is proper and punctuality is followed as links are auto generated and are on time.
- Literacy teaching and learning environment motivates students to learn and there is collaboration between teachers and students where

students are also encouraged to keep themselves in touch with e-textbooks.

- Literacy teachers and teaching environment is also satisfactory with availability of skillful teachers with sufficient domain/contents knowledge, teaching strategies, punctuality and focus on positive behavior with students in open and blended learning courses.
- Evaluation and feedback and grading system in online blended literacy environment reduces subjective biasness and anxiety among students, enhances students' creativity and internal assessment, and overall evaluation are transparent as teachers give positive feedback to students. Frequent examinations do not create anxiety on students' learning but delay in results is big tension for students.
- ICT and use of learning resources in online blended literacy environment. is unsatisfactory and needs improvement.

Recommendations

1. It is recommended that in curriculum provision of co-curricular activities may be ensured to enhance motivation and engagement of students.
2. There may be provision of an induction week to enable teachers and students to introduce assessment and feedback mechanisms and communicate reasons for delays in examination and results.
3. Proper provision of ICT facilities may be done to enhance learning resources in online blended learning environment. This may be done by mobilizing local ICT resources.

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