International Journal of Research in English Education (IJREE)

Original Article **Published online: 20 September 2023.**

Designing Online English Academic Program at Private Universities in Bangladesh: Issues and Challenges

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Received: 7 May 2023
Revision: 12 July 2023
Accepted: 17 August 2023
Published online: 20 September 2023

Abstract

This study is an attempt to determine problems and prospects associated with designing a fully online English program at private universities in Bangladesh and it reflects the experiences of faculty members and students who have participated in fully online semesters in private universities. It acknowledges that online education is no more a fantasy that receives criticisms at the beginning rather it is becoming a part of equal learning opportunity in global education where learners can carry out the desire for knowledge from any corner of the world. This paper aims at analyzing important factors and potential challenges regarding online English academic program in private university context in Bangladesh as the online academic program is becoming part of higher education around the world and COVID-19 has transformed all English programs into virtual classrooms and Bangladeshi private universities are performing the pioneering role in online education at this time of the pandemic. This study considers that traditional teaching-learning habits are challenging for online learning acculturation of learners in Bangladesh and it attempts to explore cultural contexts of online learning. It addresses the concept of research-based approaches that are required for an effective and quality e-learning environment which can be rightfully compared to face-to-face learning. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are followed for conducting this research and secondary data collection sources are also used to determine the impact of the teacherless classrooms in different settings. It represents data collected from 145 students and 20 teachers at five private universities in Bangladesh through questionnaire, interview, and focus group discussion. It reveals that online programs have many challenges but proper research based-policy and need-based programs can bring futuristic changes in higher education. Based on findings from collected data, some practical and pedagogical recommendations are discussed and some proposals are included for future research.

Keywords: online learning, English program, private universities, learning culture, learning outcomes

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1. Introduction

There are increasing practices of online English academic university programs around the world and experts are engaged to improve the demands of the e-learning strategy of higher education institutions to support learning and teaching as Lim , Morris, and Yoon (2006) describe that online teaching and learning have become most important power at the tertiary-level education and it is projected to maintain its fast expansion because the mainstream of the teachers in higher education considers online teaching and learning as competent of ensuring equivalent or better knowledge experiences balanced to classroom teaching. Therefore, in the context of digitalized Bangladesh and with the parallel progress of the current world, the English teaching-learning setting in Bangladesh has experienced blessings of technology and innovative learning applications and concepts; it is possible to transmit English university programs through the technologically supported environment. The COVID-19 pandemic has also changed many English classes in Bangladeshi private universities into online classrooms where teachers and students are learning how to cope with academic challenges in this new situation.

However, in traditional teaching-learning cultural contexts of Bangladeshi private universities, there are significant issues and they are challenging for English teaching techniques, curriculum, and learning habits of our learners. The infusion of the academic online English program preserves the capacity to improve efficacy for fulfilling shifting requirements as well as the function of tertiary level teaching and learning of Bangladesh and illuminate future technologically connected innovative academic perspectives and collaborations in higher education.

1.1 Significance of the Study

This research study is mainly significant because it sheds light on the essential factors of designing online English academic program at tertiary level education in Bangladesh and similarly it focuses on possible challenges of online English education at private universities in Bangladesh regarding learning culture of the traditional English education system. It advocates prospective online English courses in Bangladeshi higher education so that education planners can incorporate digitally intertwined inclusive needs of learners. Due to worldwide changing nature of learning, online courses are becoming an important part of higher education around the world and higher education institutions are exploring effective e-learning strategies to open online program. This study can facilitate future online education designers to assess their needs for designing online courses.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Online education is extensively advocated across higher education because it focuses on the distinctiveness of digital knowledge. The escalating accessibility of online education has revealed innovative promises but the advantage and implication depend on suitable direction and supervision. One of the privileges of online learning is that it preserves the right of entry to not conventionally justified learners in higher education. However, there are several factors that impact online education and make it tough in many frameworks. For example, there are scores of concerns with online learning in Bangladeshi contexts because of traditional learning setting, lack of research based planning and successful educational administrative implementation. There are so many supplementary apprehensions that we have experienced during COVID-19 pandemic. Both teachers and students can raise issues about achieving proper outcomes from online education in local institutions. Moreover, in local framework, equivalent prospect to higher education is a demanding factor and we have not arrived at the mark where we can claim excellence in strategy issues. Despite the fact that the idea of this mode of learning is dynamic, there are many arguments about it and when we are dealing with challenges we can expect that it requires non-traditional approaches from all stakeholders. As everything is changing from substantial to digital so we should renew and adjust with the procedure. Therefore, it is evident that online programs can carry advancement but before settle in we need careful evaluation of every factor of implementations.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

(a) To determine significant issues of designing online English academic program in private universities

(b) To examine potential challenges of designing online English academic program at tertiary level in Bangladesh

(c) To identify the position of online English education in the context of traditional teaching-learning settings at the university level.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions of this study are as follows:

a) What are the challenges of the online English academic program at the tertiary level of Bangladesh?

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b) To what extent can online English education improve the existing standard of university learning level?

c) Does the newly-developed online English academic program significantly affect the academic achievement in English language program in Bangladesh?

2. Review of the Literature

This section presents relevant literature about designing online programs and it mainly illustrates major findings related to research questions of this study.

2.1 Historical Contexts of Online Courses

Hill (2012) states that online courses started in 1994 and after foundation it followed structured approach by applying the latest format for the online program managing methods. From the period of 1994, education systems through online teaching and learning have gradually and increasingly developed because it receives recognition and in 2012 an innovative model named MOOCs (Massive Open Online Courses) created extensive attention in tertiary level institutions. After that, MOOCS has promoted planned consideration about online education at tertiary level education planning and implementation and it was supported by renowned universities like Harvard University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Stanford University. Moreover, many other universities used their venture, funds, and supported MOOCs as well as teaching and learning through online platforms.

Baturay (2014) describes that if we look at the historical record of MOOCS, it is actually not very old idea because in 2008 Stephen Downes and George Simens used this term for the first time and their ideas were based on concepts related to connectivist theory and 'distributed peer learning model'. Then, the year 2011 was significant for online courses because two main milestones were achieved in this year. Firstly, Stephen Downes and George Simens created many learning video records which were accessed by using e-learning programs and educational videos were supported with free web resources. Secondly, in 2011 MOOCs received immense recognition in many countries and it is getting attention everyday worldwide and MOOCs are developing very rapidly. In the next year, another important platform of online learning named Coursera was developed and it was acknowledged for its characteristics of self-governing and financially rewarding e-tools. At the same time, Udacity and Udemy were initiated as autonomous non-profit programs, Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology integrated online education programs and two European programs were also established as initiatives of online education.

2.2 Online Learning Theories

Goldie (2016) asserts that connectivism theory promotes a practical perception of investigating teaching and learning by applying digital technologies and preserves the ability to be used for superior observation and association of e-learning but this theory requires additional development and research. Connectivism affirms that understanding and knowledge can be distributed because learning and knowledge are not positioned in any prearranged position, and they preserve arrangement of links created from practice and communications. Since knowledge runs through and develops into component of the system and it is unlock to numerous analysis and modification and knowledge inhabits in network system.

According to connectivism, knowledge preserves the ability to be accumulated in a selection of digital configuration even not including one individual essentially possessing it and connectivism is an evolving theory of the brainpower. Connectivism believes that models of 'input phenomenon' make grounds or generate models of links that are disseminated in neural networks inside the intelligence and these links are created logically through communication.

2.3 Distance and Online Learning in Bangladesh

Chowdhury and Amina (2013) describe historical background of distance education in Bangladesh and according to them in 1992; Bangladesh Open University started education in distance mode and aimed at innovative ways in distance mode education in Bangladesh through development of every section of teaching and learning. BOU promotes knowledge and science by using different methods that apply communication technology for developing tradition of education. Bangladesh Government and Asian Development Bank (ADB) provided financial support for BOU programs that reflect on learning needs of every section of the society especially working people, women, and socially underprivileged.

This study also states that two non- public tertiary level institutions in Bangladesh are offering distance program; however courses offered by private universities are very limited. According to this study, distance education is prospective in Bangladesh because of effective policies that concentrate on telecommunications infrastructure and internet; however Bangladesh requires development of proper telecommunication and networking infrastructure because it is considered one of the major challenges for distance education. Bangladesh has experienced insufficient

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initiatives for developing advanced distance teaching and learning partnership. There was a pilot project named School broadcasting program (SBP) during 1978-1980 which was initiated as part of distance education and in nineteen eighty-five our country started its journey of an institute for distance education named BIDE and it started offering several distance learning academic courses. In spite of initiatives taken by government of Bangladesh, insufficient development of telecommunication and networking infrastructure remains one of the challenging factors for incorporating ICT supported distance education in education platform of Bangladesh. The researchers of this study anticipate that the ruling authority of Bangladesh is working on digital Bangladesh that can unite all with high speed internet facilities and one of the most important factors of internet facilities is many telecommunication operators are offering internet facilities almost all over the country.

2.4 English Online Courses

Beltrán (2013) describes the diversity of learners of MOOCs that was particularly planned for initiating English language education for non-native learners and according to this study particular indented students think that open online courses are attractive option for learning English and they prefer to apply online education study style so initiatives should be taken to address their requirements and curiosity. Moreover, MOOCs have proved that language teaching and learning can be enjoyable experience for teachers and learners by applying accessible technology. This study shows that online learning can be useful for language learners and teachers and this study refers that earlier research studies have previously revealed that the education setting initiated in a MOOC proved to be able to offer incredibly appropriate environment for the language teaching and learning.

Dariyemez (2019) investigates students' willingness attitude for online English courses particularly in advanced level education and illustrates that the majority of the learners have adequate technological expertise to pursue online lessons. In spite of their expertise, majority students are not acquainted with application of Learning Management System (LMS) successfully for online programs and their mind-sets towards teaching and learning English online education are relatively different. Moreover, some students consider online education effective and some learners do not support online programs. However, majority of learners consider learning English through online programs important but they are not familiar with proper planning for online learning. Similarly, one of the most important prerequisites of becoming an online learner is knowing how to become an autonomous learner because if students can take responsibility of their own learning, they can achieve accomplishments in advanced learning. According to this study, there are many tertiary level learners who do not have the quality of autonomous learning.

Moreover, technological factors do not lessen their interests for collecting e-learning resources because majority of them know e-learning management technology and they are capable of using internet sources for getting additional learning resources for the subject matters they feel they do not comprehend properly. The general research findings specify regarding many learners who have adequate equipment skills for pursuing the online lessons but there are a number of learners among them who require help because sometimes they are unable to follow online lessons as they do not have required technical abilities. However, some learners are able to make use of technological devices but they are not competent users of learning management systems required for online programs and they need training on online learning management systems.

This study suggests that training sessions can be arranged for technologically challenged learners at the starting of any academic session. It also repeatedly refers to the very important factor of autonomy from learners that influences the willingness intensity of learners because in online learning contexts students are frequently asked to complete their course works by themselves and anticipated to develop their proficiencies. According to this study, if any higher education institution wants to shift its education system, it should confirm that learners are ready to adjust with latest form of education. Finally, the preference for offering online courses is increasing in tertiary level institutions so if any tertiary level institute wants to practice online English teaching and learning, it should give effort carefully on crafting the course materials and learning management system in such a way so that learners can understand autonomous learning.

2.5 Course Design: Important Factors

Pollock (2013) explains that online teaching and offline teaching are not same and teachers should not apply same procedures for online courses that they acquire from face to face classes. Moreover, teaching practitioners are compelled to observe online teaching rigorously so that they can understand the online course structure and nature of online learning. According to this researcher, online teaching and learning are helping us to reflect on the methods and techniques that we follow for teaching and self-reflection can help us to achieve improved instruction methods that can be used in both on campus and online teaching contexts.

2.6 Cultural Challenges

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Lai (2011) focuses on cultural impact on the achievement of the improved requirements of the twenty-first century tertiary level learners due to advanced technological development. According to this study, advanced level teaching institutions should take the accountability of training their learners in such a way so that they can become lifelong learner and can achieve the aptitude to involve in self-governing education in informal environment. Similarly, higher education institutions should be aware of the fact that their learners' formal and informal technological understanding are significantly dissimilar and they should realize the semiotic connection between formal and informal education. According to this study, there is a need for changes regarding culture because institutions have challenges for employing learners' experiences of technology in informal environments to the improvement of formal learning. In addition, technological experiences of learners can have influence on the way of their learning, communication, and socialization. Similarly, it is very essential that learners require formulating skills of becoming self-governed, autonomous, constant learning habit, and they have learnt the techniques of education in informal contexts because informal learning influences formal education.

2.7 Interaction in Online Courses

Abrami, Bernard, Bures, Borokhovsk, and Tamim (2011) focus on interaction in distance education and analyze that interaction of one student with other students is not present in distance mode courses. Moreover, when students take distance courses, they do not always get the opportunity of knowing about other students' participation of the same course but in advanced formation of distance education courses allow synchronous interaction among students because students can interact through chatting and conferencing. Moreover, web-based courses can offer discussion boards as well as e-mail messaging communication facilities for asynchronous communication of learners.

This study also explains interaction between student-instructor that provides communication between instructor and participants and in distance learning and teaching context, interaction between instructor and student can be synchronous because videoconferencing and chats can be used as medium of communication. Similarly, asynchronous interaction can be offered by using e-mail and discussion boards. Learners' interaction with pursuing course contents is essential so that students can understand meaning of learning subjects and can make connection between meaning of learning and personal knowledge, and eventually can use acquired knowledge to unravel problems. According to this study, student-content interaction in web- based courses can be ensured by applying different classroom activities.

2.8 Assessment in Online Courses

McCracken, Cho, Sharif, Wilson, and Miller (2012) explain that when we design plans for online evaluations, it should focus on perception of the dissimilarities on the ways that students and educators consider about the order of procedures that take place in any online program. According to this study the formation and deliverance maintenance of online evaluation offer meticulous problems and possibilities. Online test design needs understanding of the technical settings and the designing and teaching aspects of courses. Online assessment designers should create assessment in such a way so that teachers with limited technological understanding can run academic features properly. In any online courses, designing rubrics are very essential for instructors and many teachers may find designing e-rubrics difficult so they need assistance of a designer because of technical aspects of rubrics. According to this study, online assessment design should consider assessment goals, subject-specific features, feedback, and test-transparency. Online evaluation strategic plan should counterpart with planning technology and this plan needs application of technologies in such a way so that it can assist 'formative and summative strategies.'

In any online course, students may need to take part in 'asynchronous discussions' and there are some issues that are essential issues to consider if teaching uses 'asynchronous discussions.' Firstly, decision should be made regarding the necessity of assessment of that particular discussion, and then if we assess that discussion, the techniques of assessment, type of test and results delivery system are important factors. In an e-learning environment, several types of evaluation assessment can be assisted by technological tools. Assessment planning and technological affordance are related to teachers and students in a web- based courses. Online assessment strategies are combination of relevant learning objectives, learning environments with suitable technological usage. In online formative assessments, teachers can provide instant feedback to students, and one of the most useful kinds of feedback for learners' development is individual feedback but it requires exhaustive effort when teachers provide individual, detailed, well-timed and effective feedback, and teachers can apply technological mechanisms to reduce time and effort for providing feedback in an e-learning environment. In this research four cases were presented as exemplars of planning practice in e- assessment planning development and it shows collaboration of instructional designers and faculty members.

2.9 Plagiarism in Online Education

McGee (2013) explains that academic dishonesty is one of the main concerns in every teaching-learning contexts and this assessment factor is predominantly alarming when educational institutions offer distance mode classes because in

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web-based courses teachers do not observe learners directly so students can complete their tasks autonomously. As a result, maintaining academic reliability is a major challenge for web-based education provider institutions. This study suggests that low stakes assessments can be helpful for preventing cheating in online examinations and can offer helpful contribution to learners' improvement. Moreover, one of the most important features of low stakes tests is that it does not intimidate students for their grades because they are minor in range and low stakes examinations can display appreciation of examinations by making a culture that acknowledges significance of assessment.

This study claims that though technology can create scopes for cheating in examination, it can also offer possibilities to check and prevent academic dishonesty. For example, a number of educational institutions give their students laptops for study and they set control options in laptops so that they can prevent academic dishonesty of students (Howell, Sorenson, & Tippets, as cited in McGee 2013). Furthermore, there are many options of web-based study materials that learners can use by utilizing different technological devices so not only laptops control options but also educational institutions need to apply other effective techniques so that they can execute without problems. For example, one of the verified techniques to control browser-based collaborations and internet searches is computer-controlling internet access.

2.10 Learning Outcomes and Online Courses

Lim, Yoon, and Morris (2006) describes that learning outcomes of online learning seemed to be mostly affected by online learners' motivation and involvement and suggest that instructional designers and instructors should develop outcome oriented online instruction. According to Eom, Wen, and Ashill (2006), advanced level teaching institutions have spent a lot to regularly renew their e-learning instructional teaching and learning materials, technological resources, and other facilities but majority educational institutions have not reflected on learning outcomes of online courses. This research study sheds light on learning outcomes of online programs and according to the research results, online teaching and learning are not commonly relevant to every kind of learning context and recommends that online learning preserves the ability to provide advanced form of lessons if it is designed to teach students with particular learning styles. Moreover, learning outcomes can be achieved properly if teachers can provide appropriate and useful feedback.

This study recommends that cognitive and diagnostic feedbacks can progress learning outcomes and the connection between feedback and learning outcomes is very unambiguous. Instructor's feedback can play encouraging role for many learners and the planning and teaching of online courses should integrate feedback as an important factor. Learners usually have a preference for instructor's feedback but feedback from fellow classmates is also very essential and teachers should follow proper techniques and strategies for feedback as time management becomes a fact for advanced level interaction among teachers, learners, and fellow learners. Teachers can manage time for feedback if they can design comments for providing feedback to learners and commonly asked questions databases so that they can use same feedback and answers for frequently asked question repetitively.

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2.11 Proposed Framework for Online English Program

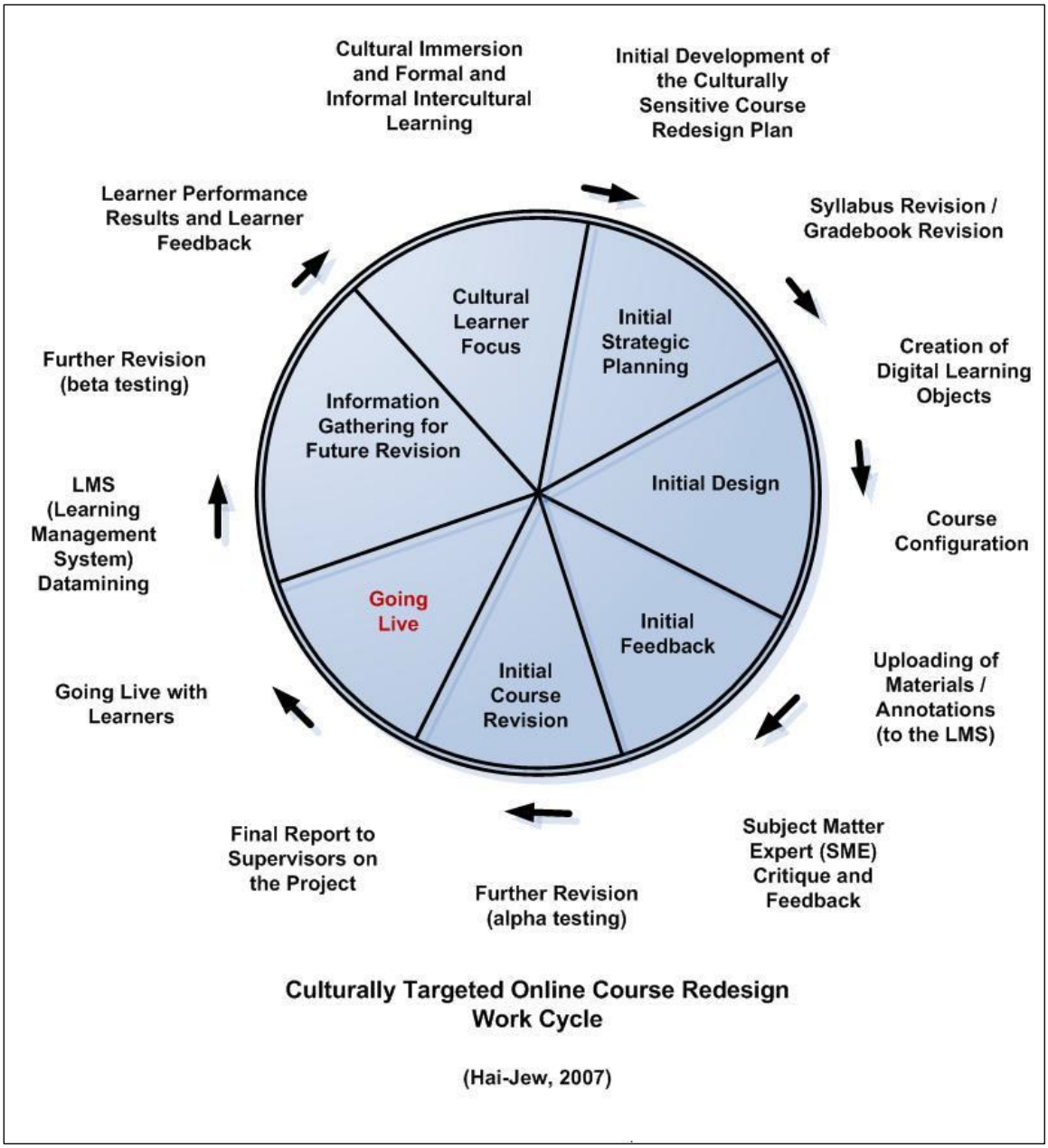


Figure 1. Online course redesign (culturally targeted)

Hai-Jew (2008) in his online course redesign (culturally targeted) model analyzes that the revamp methods are used to a course for refurbishing or retrofitting and it transmits to a revision process of the pedagogical approaches. Moreover, it involves the relevance of innovative e-learning expertise and new-fangled approaches about the planning and deliverance that can include significance to the knowledge and formulate it for further relevance to student. Education items can be incorporated further compactly through the distinct e-learning course and a superior collection can progress in the development of the curricular resources, lessons materials can be annotated for the teachers who take over the lessons, and course refurbishing must be up to dated by learner feedback about their needs.

Similarly, user-friendliness retrofitting can engage the insertion of accurately dictation and can become adaptive to moveable file. The technical string is an essential component of online education and must be measured as a

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fundamental element of the course revamping. In addition, a number of potential reproductions of classes can be useful and it can improve the ecology of the online education milieu. Every online lesson re- planning should reflect on user-friendliness, digital file volume, and planning approach about video delivery. The cultural reflection for course redesign requires knowledge about livelihood circumstances, perspectives, educational requirements, implicit principles structure, custom, and inspiring subject matter of attention.

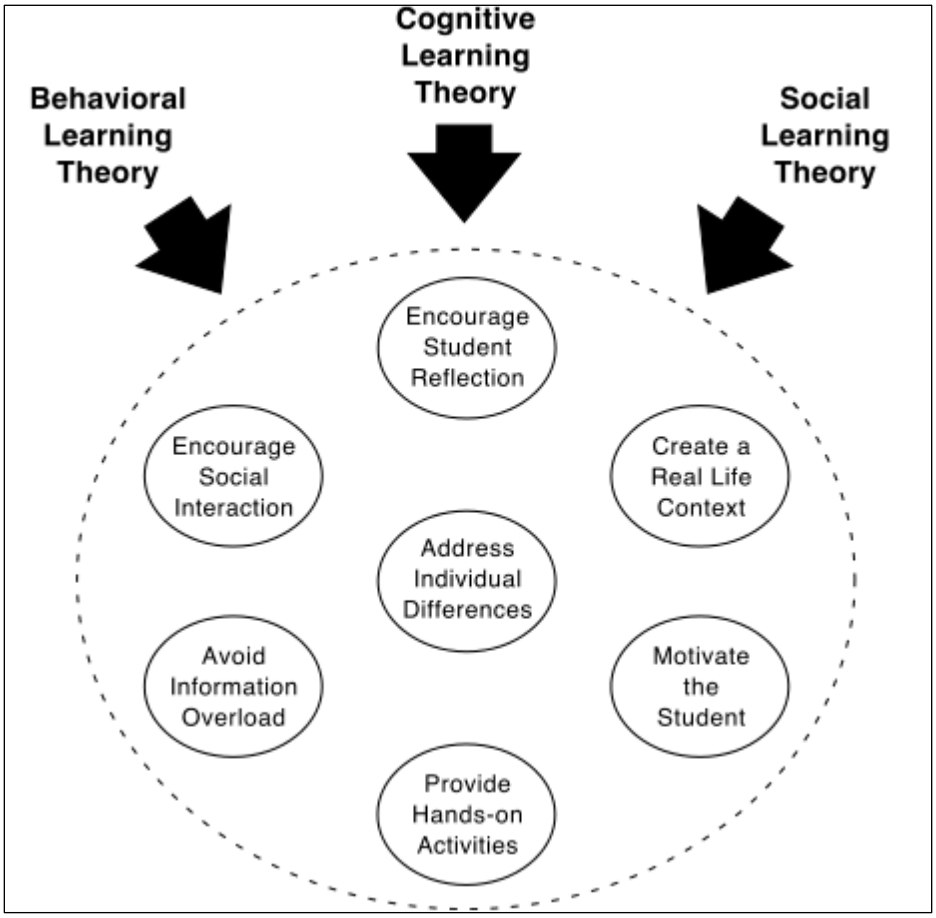


Figure 2. Online setting informational planning structure

Johnson and Aragon (2003) explores informational planning structure for online setting and according to them individual differences can be challenging in learning environment and it includes diversities in the environments of wide-ranging ability, propensity, dispensation, and application of knowledge to innovative contexts. Furthermore, every learner holds opposing views in their aptitude to complete different education activities. As a result, the common ability or inclination of the student will have an effect on their skills to achieve diverse learning outcomes. Individual differences can be dealt with by following several phases, for example: by giving course materials in multiple formats, supporting dynamic and shared communication, and by using inspiration for concentration, significance, self-assurance, and contentment.

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Figure 3. OHT training and support concept

Betts (2009) describes online human touch training and support concept that emphasizes that teachers should be affianced edification through guidance to enhance faculty participation, maintain improvement, and support with teacher and learner withholding so teachers' participation should initiate with staffing, and it should be continued through improvement of community and teachers.

According to this model, administrator of educational institutions require extending proper planning that can enhance scholarly and group community engagement for online faculty. Moreover, as soon as teachers are recruited to teach on-campus, they usually take part in mandatory training and they become part of campus community. Though, teaching fully online teachers are not coming to campus, they need to develop connection with other teachers and staffs and in this way tertiary level online education can be re-defined once they can enhance community involvement for online faculty members. Finally, the OHT concept implies that online teachers should be given chances to feel inclusion so that they can create participation, association, commitment, efficiency, and professional contentment.

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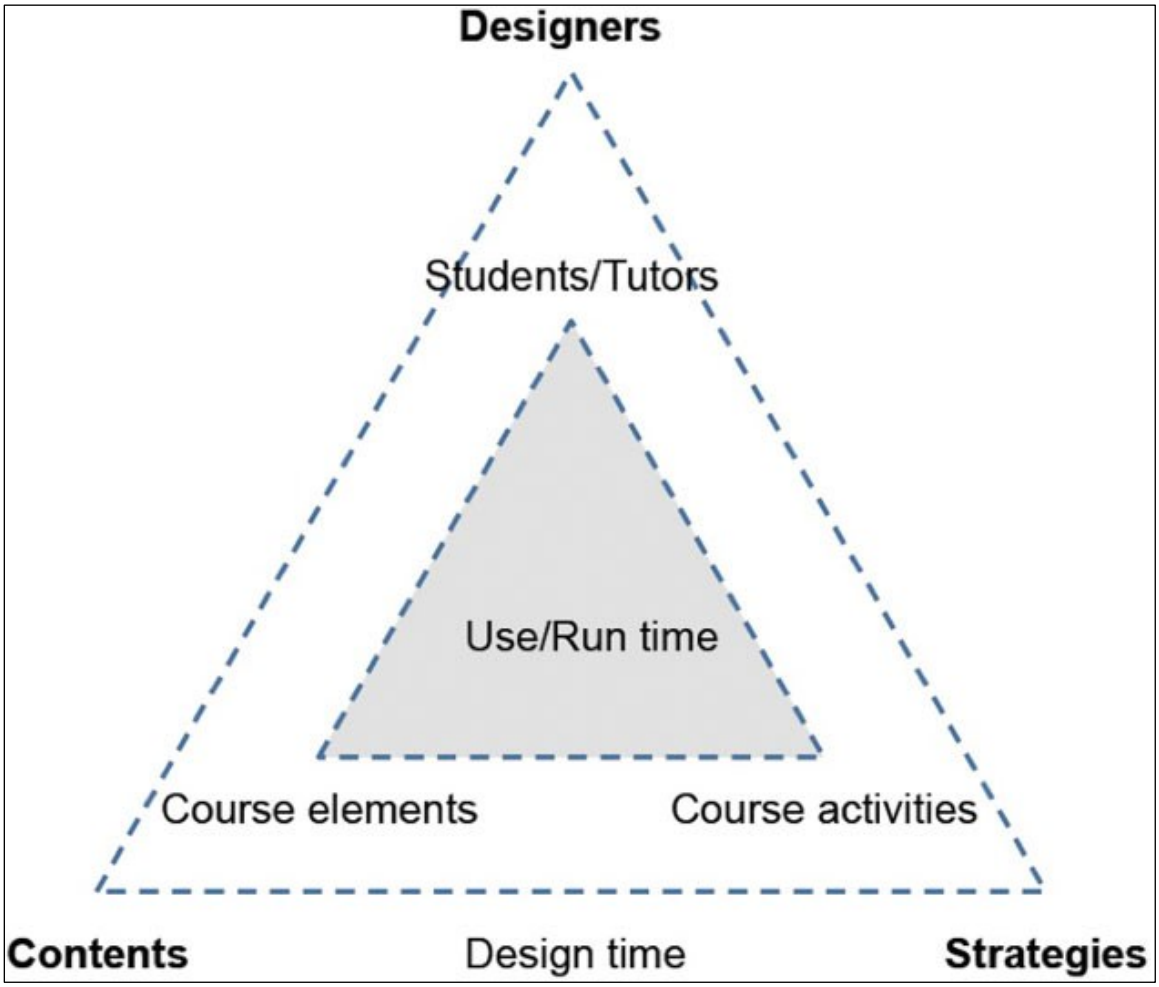


Figure 4. Time focused online learning framework

According to Rapanta and Cantoni (2013), designers can be given with important suggestions about 'who, what, and how' to think when crafting superior standard online courses by considering planning time. This concept tries to recognize the traditions in the course of which the tertiary level online course designers can lessen their detachment with the unfamiliar users of the online programs, and online course designers can interact with students and teachers for predicting users' experience. Similarly, superior outcomes and developed practices of online courses can be achieved by analyzing interaction and communication. Design time and run time of online course are related to real design procedure where designers are the major participants because they talk about the inside of the lessons and the precise approaches to relate and use/run time is the real release time of the course, where students and teachers are the main participants, because they intermingle with the contents of the online course, and reflect their precise, outlook, and approach.

Research Methodology

3.1 Methodology

This study takes into account the prospects and difficulties of an online English program in Bangladeshi private universities. This research followed mixed method as data collection and analysis required both qualitative and quantitative methods. Mixed methods justify different possibilities and interpretations that this kind of study can offer and as all methods have strength and weakness, so the integration of the both methods reduces the limitation. It helps to determine validity of data and analyze several categories of instruments and creates triangulation of data by

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designing methodical combination of different directions of research to meet required accuracy. For proper research analysis, the instruments of this research include online questionnaire for students and teachers, online interview for students and teachers, and online focus group discussion for students. As the participants had practical experiences of online teaching and learning, they were able to reflect required sincere responses.

3.2 Participants

[Q: Questionnaire I: Interview FGD: Focus Group Discussion D: Dhaka K: Khulna M: Male F: Female S: Student T: Teacher]

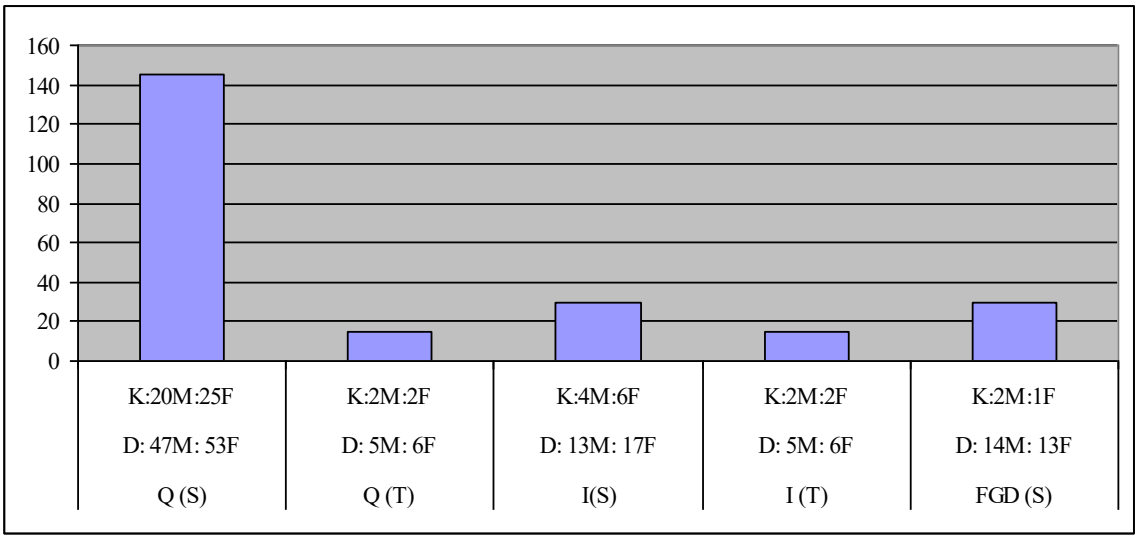


Chart 1. Description of the sample of the study

The subjective random sampling process was followed for conducting this research and all participants were from five private universities in Bangladesh and among these five universities four were from Dhaka city and one from divisional city Khulna because only capital city is not enough for adequate online learning scenario of Bangladesh as lack of amenities outside Dhaka affect online learning settings. For students' questionnaire, one hundred and forty five students participated (sixty seven male and seventy eight female students) and forty students were interviewed (seventeen male and twenty three female) and all students have exposure to online learning. In addition, fifteen teachers were involved in teachers' questionnaire and interview (seven male and eight female) and all of them have online teaching experience at the university level as this kind of study requires responses regarding practical challenges and recommendations of online education. For focus group discussion, thirty students were divided into two groups and among them sixteen were male and fourteen were female participants and all of them completed their online courses.

3.3 Instrument

Online questionnaire, online interviews, and online focus group discussion were used as measuring instruments and they helped to measure online learning related factors. In the students' and teachers' questionnaire, there were fifteen questions for participants where they provided their opinions. Moreover, to ensure content validity, the questionnaire was mock-tested by teachers and students and it helped to avoid irrelevant content for assessment. There were ten interview questions for students and teachers. Interviews were online based where students and teachers responded thoroughly so that they could provide relevant information for research objectives and responses were recorded and interview process followed both structured and unstructured method and they assisted to ensure authentication of the given responses. For focus group discussion, there were seven main questions followed by some necessary follow up questions for finding participants' beliefs and experiences regarding online learning and participants were asked follow up questions to ensure and both explicit and follow up questions facilitated to lower reliability issues. The objective of focus group discussion was to identify detailed information that was not gained from other instruments and it helps to provide well-built validity.

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3.4 Data Collection Procedure

First of all, online permission was sought for collecting responses from five private universities and as private universities in Bangladesh were going through online education process so they were willing to cooperate fully to achieve adequate and relevant responses. Both questionnaire and interview questions did not challenge teachers as they were pre-checked though students were given detailed instructions for their understanding of what they were required to do to obtain proper responses. It seemed that all participants enjoyed their experience as contents reflected their issues of teaching and learning partnership. Moreover, focus group discussion was held online with permission and students participated in discussion were given basic instructions of focus group discussion. At first participants were introduced to the topic and students were instructed to use English language but later they were suggested to use Bangla whenever necessary. As a moderator, I asked clarification questions for better response and it took thirty minutes for discussion and opinions and as a facilitator I also took notes.

3.5 Data Analysis

This section discusses the results of the present study from questionnaire, interviews, and focus group discussion. Likert scale was used for questionnaire analysis and this scale has five points (1-5): Strongly Disagree: 1, Disagree: 2, Neutral: 3, Agree: 4, and Strongly Agree: 5. The excel charts in-depth and excel advanced formulas and functions and T-test were used for data analysis. The qualitative data have been analyzed by categorizing various factors, classifying comparisons and contrasts, and tabulating percentages. It represents both narrative interpretations and thematic analysis.

Data were divided into three groups for analysis:

- Group: (A) : challenges of the online English academic program at the tertiary level of Bangladesh
- Group: (B) : online English education can improve the existing standard of university learning level
- Group: (C) : English academic programs influence the treatment of the traditional learning culture

4. Results

4.1 Results of the Students' Questionnaire

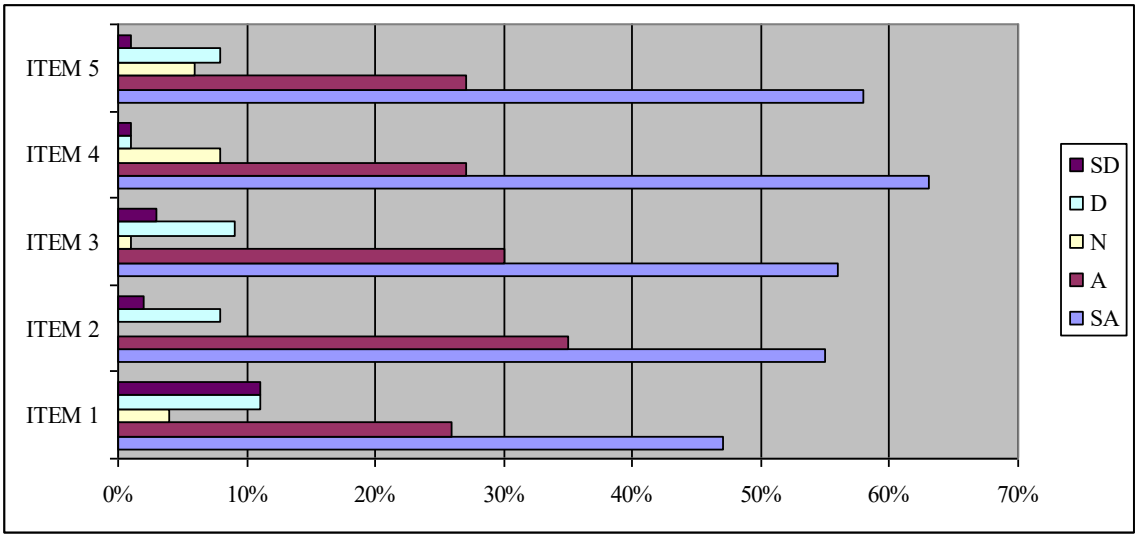


Chart 2. Challenges (students' response)

In chart 2, challenges and issues of the online English academic program at the tertiary level of Bangladesh are presented. The results reveal that majority of the students in item 01, (47% strongly agreed and 26% agreed) stated that online English program is challenging in Bangladesh because of learning culture and assessment process. Similarly, majority (56% and 63%) believed that students need more internet facilities and technological skills for participation in online classes (item 3 and 4). Almost all the students (55% strongly agreed and 35% agreed) stated that plagiarism is a common problem in online examinations (item2) and in response to item 5, majority (58%

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strongly agreed and 27% agreed) believed that online learning should be more planned and organized from private university authority and this item has the highest average mean score of 4.3.

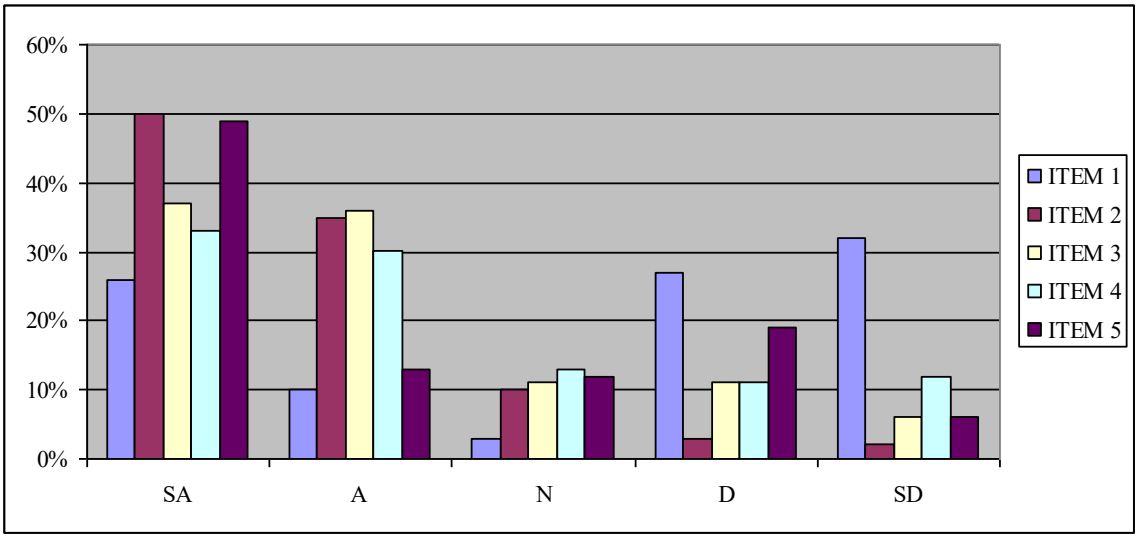


Chart 3. Learning level (students' response)

Chart 3 shows five items that illustrate students' response to the online education and its positive impact on the standard of university learning level. This chart shows contradictory findings because in item 1, majority (27% and 32%) disagreed that online learning can have positive impact on higher education, however other four items show positive impacts of online learning on higher education as in item 5, majority (49% strongly agreed) believed that that students attendance is more in online courses than traditional courses. Similarly, item 2 and 3 which ask that online English program can fulfill working students' desire for higher education and students from outside Dhaka can get equal opportunity of learning show that majority (50% and 37% strongly agreed) agreed with the two statements. Finally, item 4 shows that majority (33% strongly agreed) believe that students receive more assistance from administration in online program and this section has the average mean score of 3.8.

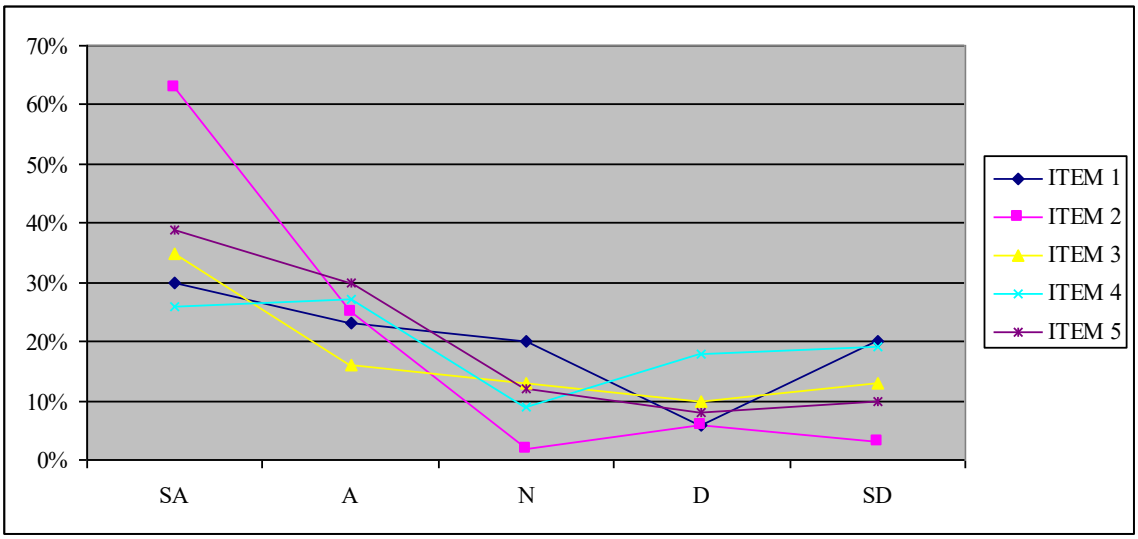


Chart 4. Traditional learning (students' response)

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The results of chart 4 show that English academic programs can positively influence the treatment of the traditional learning culture as can be seen from students' responses to the item 1 and 2 where majority of (30% and 63% strongly agreed) learners believe that traditional syllabus should be changed and students need to change their traditional learning habits when they join online program. Similarly, in response to item 3 and 5 that ask need-assessment of students is essential for online courses and students' success in online learning depends on e-learning and style and strategies majority (35 % and 39% strongly agreed) supported these two statements. However, majority in item 4 (26 % strongly agreed and 27% agreed) replied that learning materials are not more accessible and organized in online course and this section has the lowest overall mean score of 3.6.

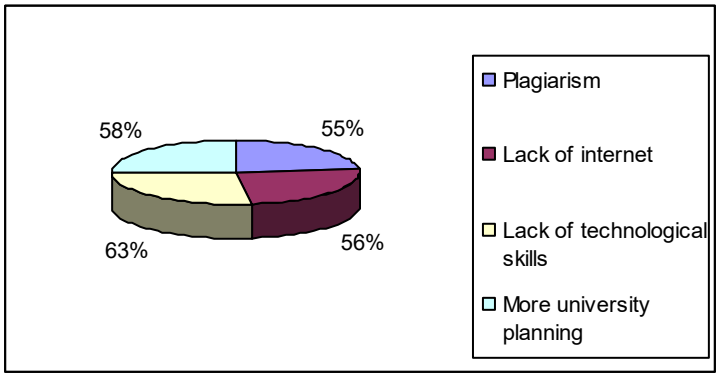


Chart 5. Major findings (students' response: R1)

In summary, plagiarism (55%), lack of internet (56%), technological skills (63%), and university planning (58%) lead to the major findings of first research question.

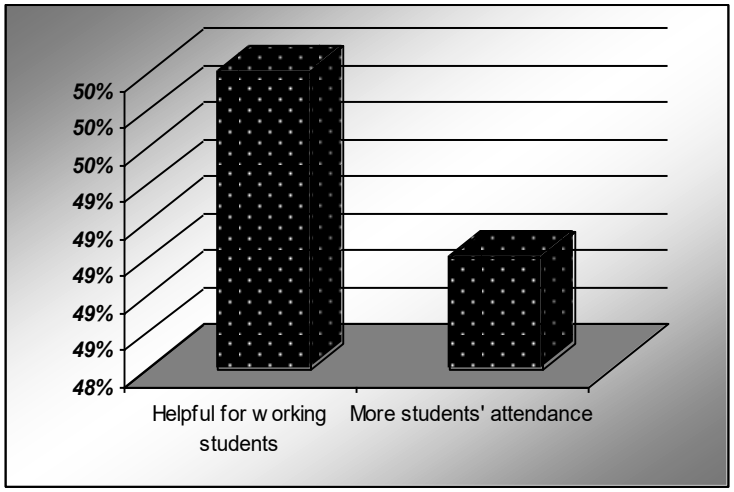


Chart 6. Major findings (students' response: R2)

The major findings of second research question indicate that online English education can enhance the standard of university learning level because it is useful for working students of universities (50%) and can ensure more students' attendance (49%).

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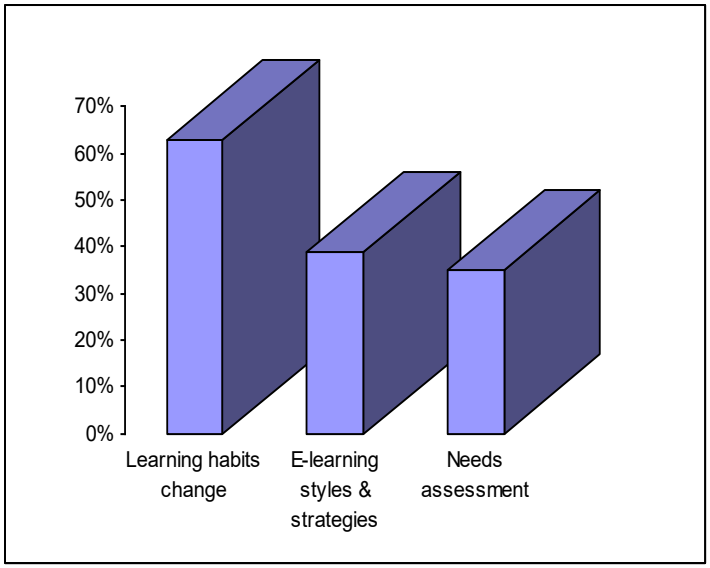


Chart 7. Major findings (students' response: R3)

In conclusion, learning habits change (63%), e-learning styles and strategies (39%), and need assessment (35%) in online English academic programs can influence the treatment of the traditional learning culture of Bangladesh.

4.2 Results of the Teachers' Questionnaire

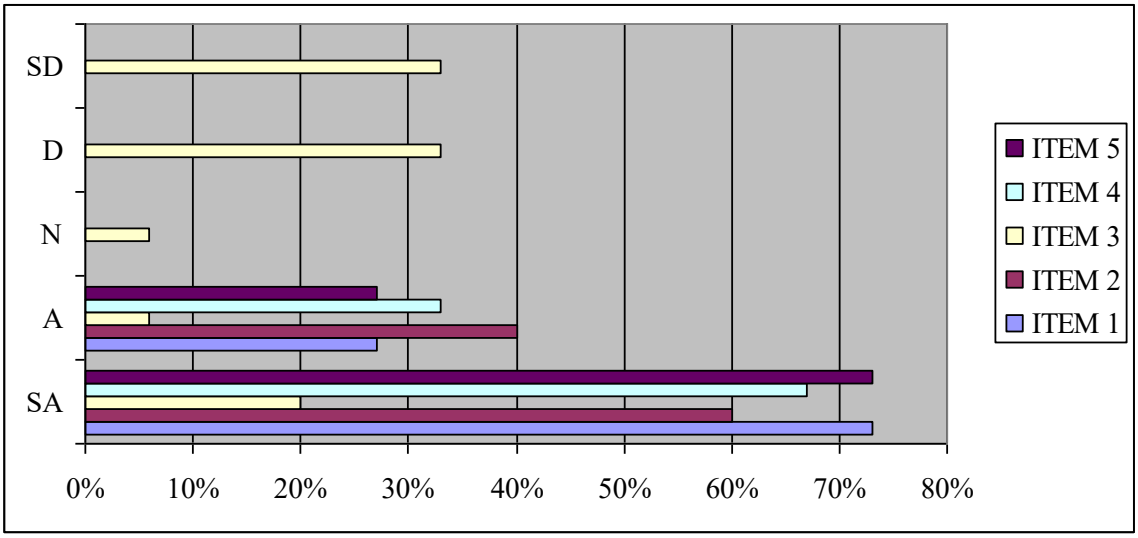


Chart 8. Challenges and issues (teachers' response)

In chart 8, teachers' responses to issues and challenges of the online English academic program at the tertiary level of Bangladesh are shown. The results indicate that majority (73% strongly agreed) of the teachers approved that online English program is challenging in Bangladesh because of learning culture and assessment process (item 1). Similarly, essential factors of online courses can be seen from teachers' responses to item 4 and 5 where majority (67% and 73% strongly agreed) of the teachers responded that teachers need professional training for conducting online courses and university need to develop e-infrastructure for online teaching. However, in response to item 3, majority (33% strongly disagreed and 33% disagreed) did not agree that learning effects are equivalent in on campus and online program. In

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item 2, majority (60 % strongly agreed) stated that plagiarism is a common problem in online examinations and this section has the highest overall mean score of 4.2.

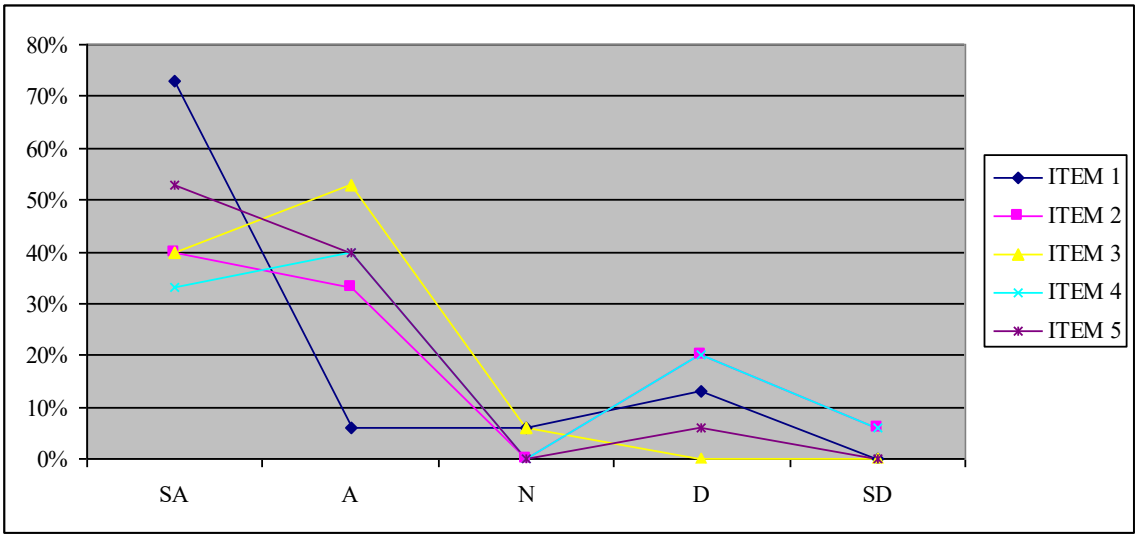


Chart 9. University learning (teachers' response)

Chart 9 has five items that reveal online English education and standard of university learning level. The results show that in item1, majority (73% strongly agreed) believed that online learning can have positive impact on higher education. Similarly, in item 2 and item 3, majority (40% strongly agreed and 53% agreed) stated that online programs can promote encouraging assessment culture and online English program can accommodate international students' participation. Finally in item 4 and item 5, majority (40% agreed and 53% strongly agreed) responded that online English program can influence positively on tertiary level teaching practices and online teaching can engage teachers with advanced teaching approaches. This section has the overall mean score of 4.12.

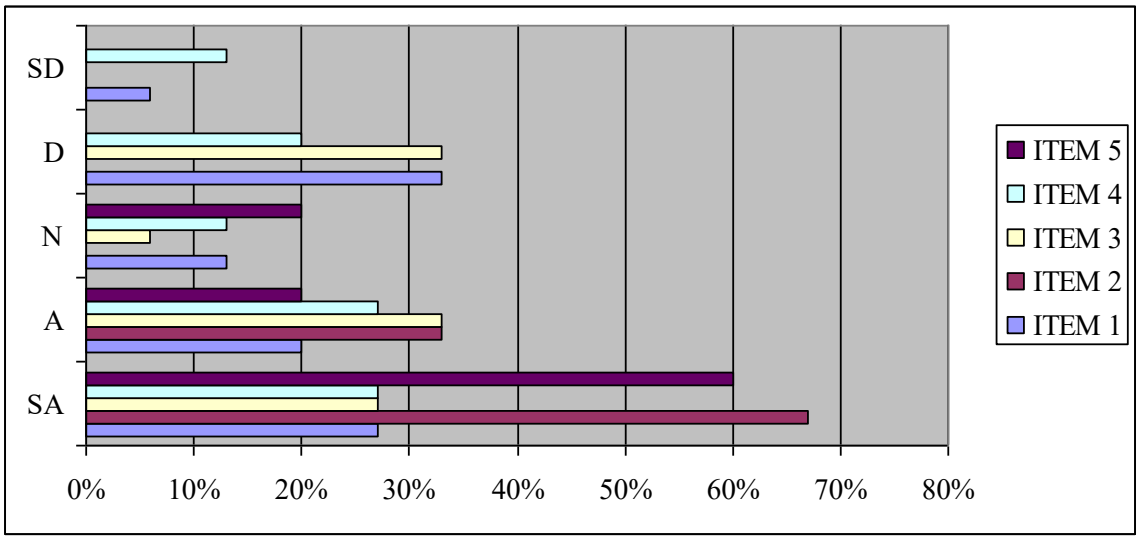


Chart 10. Traditional learning (teachers' response)

The results in chart 10 show contradictory results for the issue of whether English academic programs can positively influence the traditional learning culture. Majority of (67% strongly agreed) teachers replied that teachers need to

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develop effective e-teaching techniques for online courses (item 2) and item 3 shows contradictory responses because equal number of teachers (33% agreed and 33% disagreed) supported and opposed the statement that students' success in online learning depends on e-learning style and strategies .

Similarly, in item 1, majority of (33% disagreed) teachers replied that traditional syllabus should not be changed for online program and majority of the teachers (27% strongly agreed) agreed with item 4 which asks whether online programs require more accountability from faculty members than traditional courses. Finally, in response to item 5, majority of (60%) teachers replied that need assessment of teachers and students are necessary for online program and this section has the lowest overall mean score of 3.8.

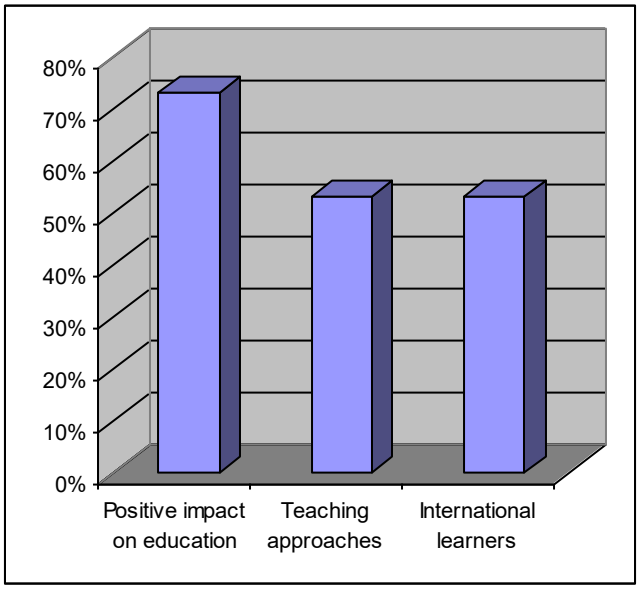


Chart 11. Major findings (teachers' response: R1)

In summary, learning culture and assessment (73%), e-infrastructure (73%), and teachers' training (67%) lead to the major findings of the first research question.

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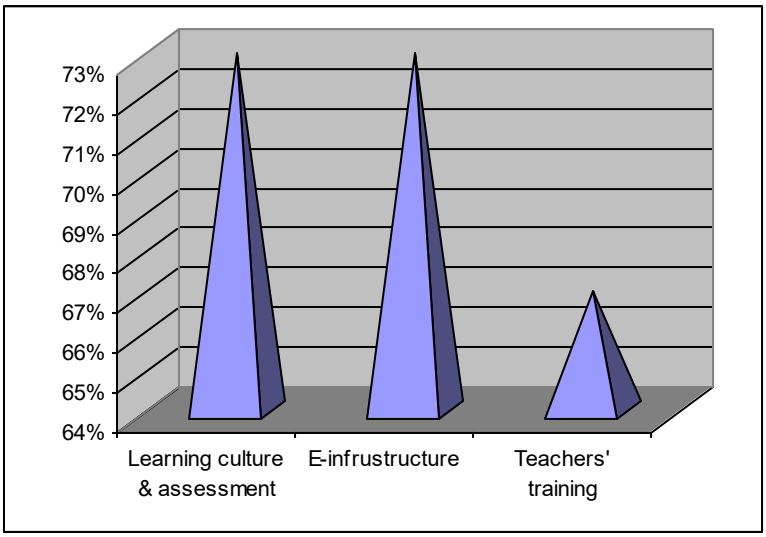


Chart 12. Major findings (teachers' response: R2)

The major findings of second research question specify that online English education can enhance the standard of university learning level because it is positive for university education (73%), enrollment of international learners (53%), and advanced teaching approaches (53%).

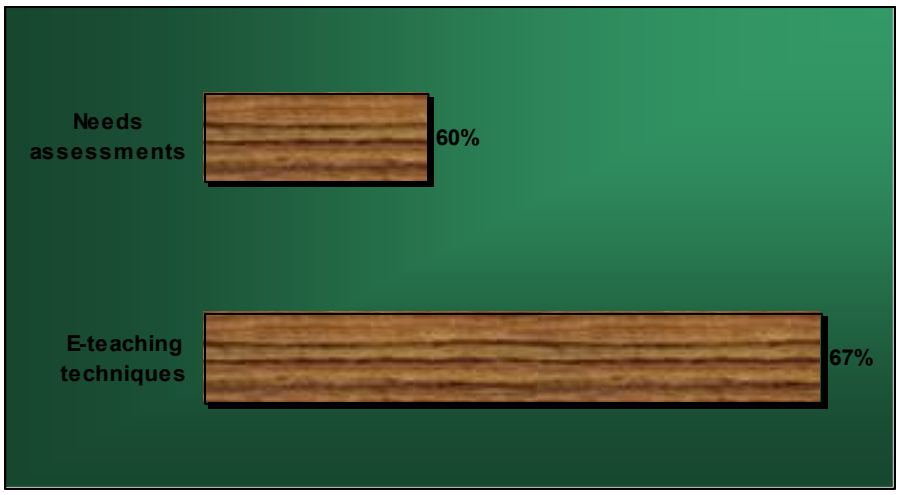


Chart 13. Major findings (teachers' response: R3)

In conclusion, e-teaching techniques (67%) and needs assessments (60%) in online English academic programs can influence the treatment of the traditional learning culture of Bangladesh.

4.3 Results of the T-test

P value and statistical significance: The two-tailed P value equals 0.0212. By conventional criteria; this difference is considered to be statistically significant.

Confidence interval: The mean of student responses minus teachers' responses equals -10.75, 95% confidence interval of this difference: From -19.64 to -1.86

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Intermediate values used in calculations: t = 2.5940, df = 14, standard error of difference = 4.144.

Student responses		Teachers' responses	
Mean	54.13	Mean	64.88
SD	8.01	SD	8.56
SEM	2.83	SEM	3.03
N	8	N	8

4.4 Results of the Students' Interview

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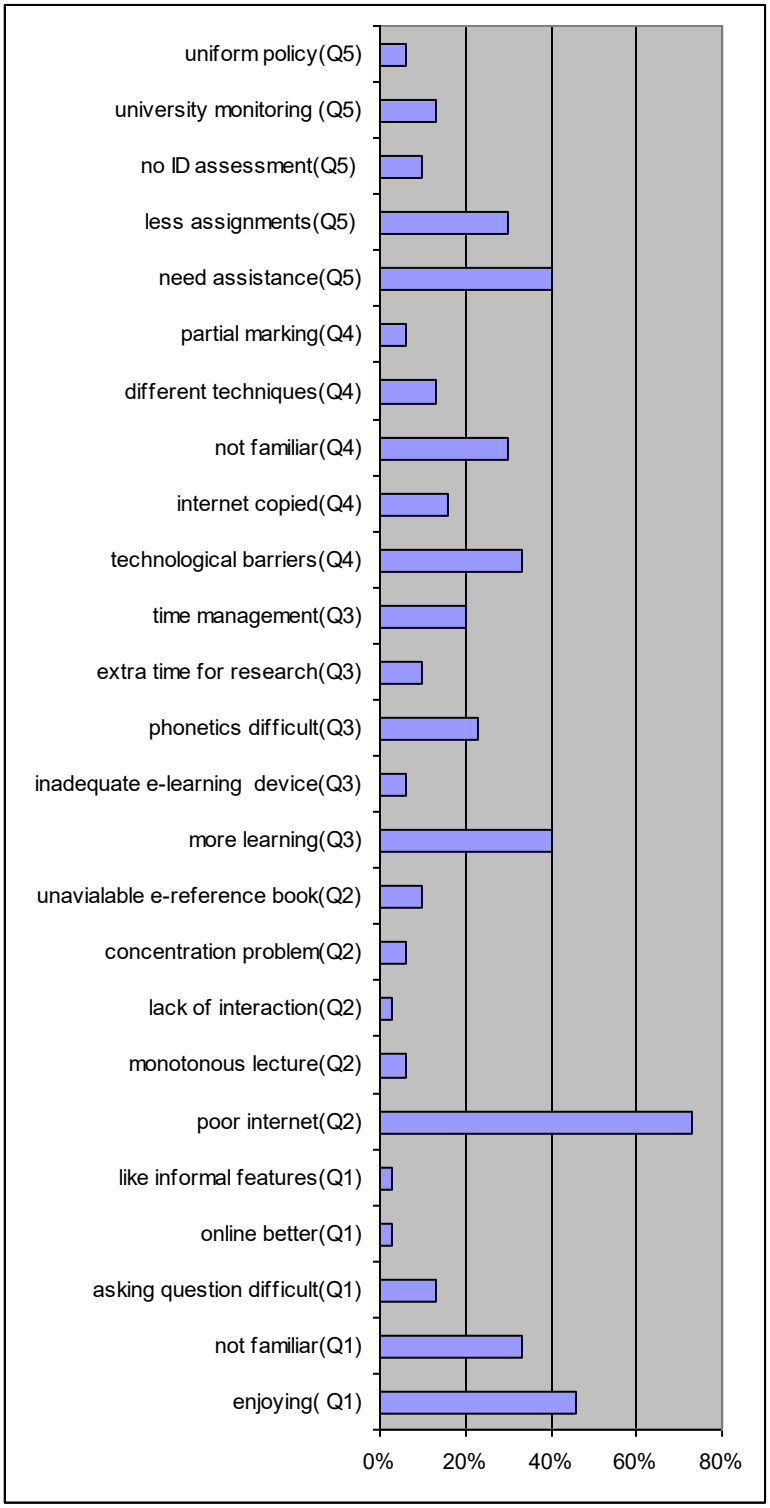


Chart 14. Summary of the students' responses to the interview

The first interview question was regarding learning experiences, in response majority 14(46%) said that they enjoy as they can attend from home districts, 10(33%) replied that they are not familiar with online systems, 4(13%) responded that asking question in class is difficult as teachers control microphone, 1(3%) claimed that online is better as they do

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not have to come in person, 1(3%) responded that he likes informal characteristic of online classes. The second question asked students about problems that the students face in online courses and in response majority 22(73%) replied that internet facilities outside Dhaka are poor, 2(6%) answered that online lectures are monotonous, 1 (3%) suggested that lack of interaction should be minimized, 2(6%) responded that concentration problem at home environment, 3 (10%) pointed out that soft copies of reference books are unavailable. Then students were asked third question about the impacts of online courses on students' learning and in response 12 (40%) stated that they are learning more for continuous assessment, 2 (6%) said that they do not have adequate online learning devices, 7 (23%) pointed out that learning phonetics is difficult in online, 3 (10%) stated that research methodology courses take extra time in online, 6(20%) answered that time management is challenging in online program.

After that students were asked fourth question about problems that they face in online examinations and in response 10(33%) agreed that technological barriers are major issue, 5(16%) pointed out that students copied from internet, 9 (30%) stated that they are not familiar with online exam systems, 4 (13%) replied that different teachers are following different techniques, 2(6%) said that they faced partial marking as teachers can identify students identity. Finally, students were asked to give suggestions for online assessment and in response 12 (40%) responded that students need assistance for e-assessment technique, 9(30%) replied that less assignments needed as overload promotes plagiarism, 3(10%) answered that without student ID assessment is important for avoidance of partial grading, 4(13%) answered that university monitoring of academic dishonesty by using software is effective, and 2(6%) suggested uniform exam policy for all courses.

4.5 Results of the Teachers' Interview

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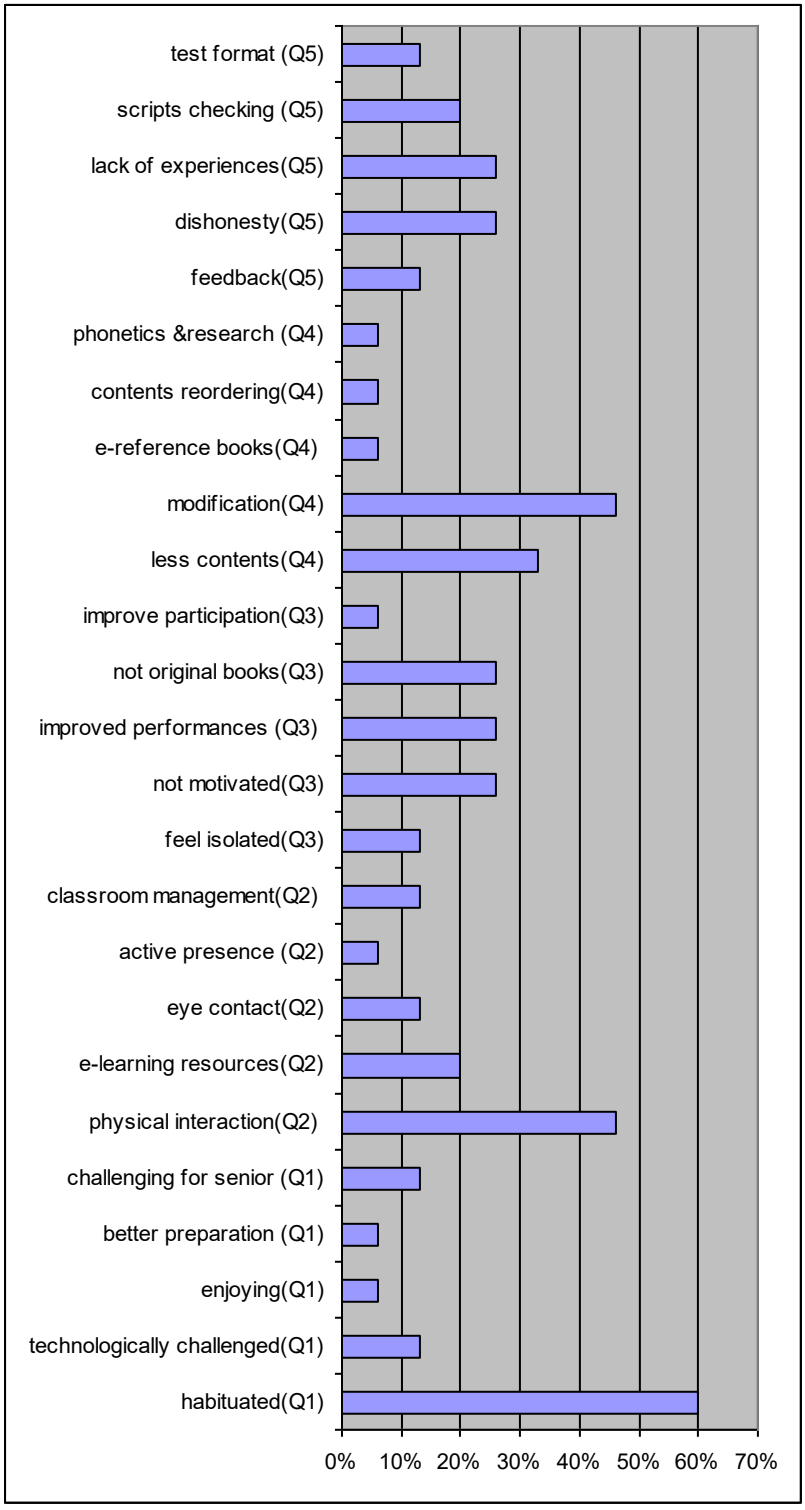


Chart 15. Summary of the teachers' responses to the interview (part I)

The first interview question asked teachers to describe their teaching experiences in online courses, in response majority 9(60%) said that at first it was difficult now they are habituated, 2(13%) stated that teachers are technologically challenged, 1(6%) replied that they are enjoying online classes as working from home, 1(6%) stated

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that they can take better preparation for class as working from home, and 2(13%) claimed that challenging for senior faculty members. The second question was about problems that teachers face in online courses and in response to this question, 7(46%) teachers replied that lack of physical interaction creates problems, 3(20%) mentioned about unavailability of e-learning resources, 2(13%) said they cannot read students' eye contact, 1(6%) replied active presence is difficult to maintain, and 2(13%) said that classroom management is difficult as students can take leave at any time. The third question was regarding impacts of online courses on students' learning and in response, 2(13%) stated that some students do not learn as they feel isolated, 4(26%) said that students are not motivated, 4(26%) said that some students have improved their performances, 4(26%) replied that some students are reluctant to read original books, and 1(6%) claimed that some students have improved their class participations.

After that, fourth question asked teachers to give suggestions for online syllabus design and in response, 5 (33%) suggested less contents in syllabus, 7(46%) said existing syllabus with necessary modification, 1 (6%) suggested inclusion of more e-reference books, 1(6%) suggested reordering of contents, and 1(6%) said that phonetics and research should get two semesters. Next , in fifth question teachers were asked regarding problems they face in online examinations and in response to this question, 2(13%) said that giving feedback takes time, 4(26%) pointed out controlling academic dishonesty is challenging, 4(26%) stated that they have lack of e-assessment experiences, 3(20%) claimed that scripts checking is very difficult as need to check from desktop screen, and 2(13%) said that difficult to match between content and test format.

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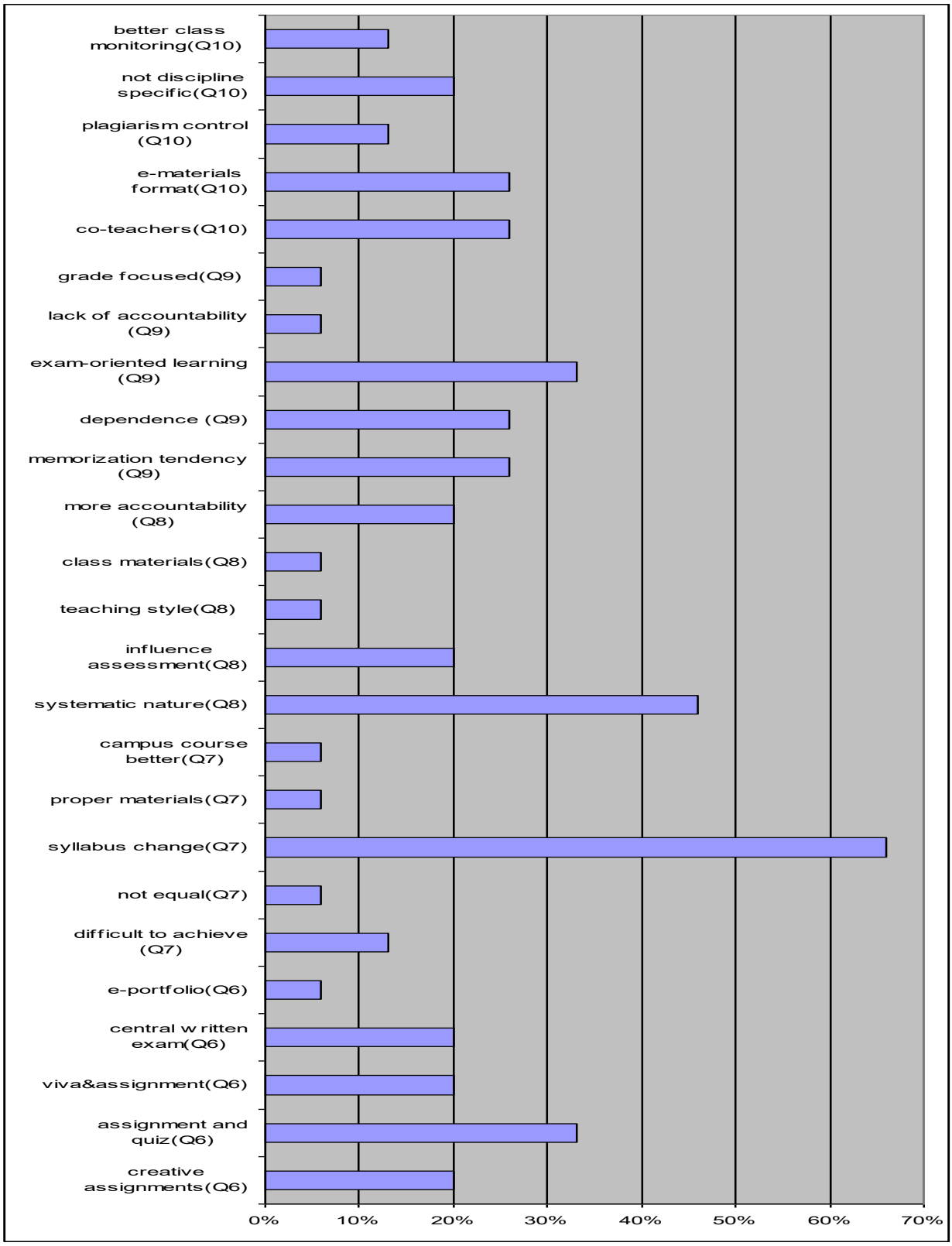


Chart 16. Summary of the teachers' responses to the interview (part II)

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The sixth question was asked about assessment process teachers prefer for online courses and in response, 3(20%) preferred creative assignments, 5(33%) suggested both assignment and quiz, 3(20%) said oral viva for students comprehension checking along with assignments, 3(20%) pointed that university should arrange central written exam, and 1(6%) suggested e-portfolio for reading and writing courses. After that seventh question was asked about impacts of e-learning program on knowledge outcomes, in reply 2(13%) said that learning outcome is difficult to achieve as course completion takes extra time, 1(6%) claimed that equal learning outcomes cannot be achieved, 10(66%) suggested that syllabus should be changed for better outcomes, 1(6%) responded that proper learning materials are essential for maximum outcomes, 1(6%) replied that on campus course is better for achieving learning outcomes. The eighth question asked teachers to give opinion on whether online English courses can improve traditional practices of tertiary level English teaching or not and in response, 7(46%) replied that yes, can because of systematic nature, 3(20%) stated that can influence tradition assessment, 1(6%) responded that online program can have dynamic and positive impact on teaching style, 1(6%) said that teachers are improving traditional class materials, 3(20%) said that online courses have more accountability than traditional courses.

In response to ninth question about the cultural barriers of online English courses, 4(26%) teachers responded that students have traditional memorization tendency, 4(26%) stated that students have dependence on teachers, 5(33%) said that traditional education has exam-oriented learning, 1(6%) claimed that lack of accountability in tertiary level teaching, and 1(6%) said that teaching and learning are grade focused. Finally, in response to last question regarding the online teaching policies those teachers have experienced from their university administration and in response to this question, 4(26%) stated that administration is monitoring as co-teachers, 4(26%) said that they have provided e-materials format, 2(13%) said that provides online plagiarism control system, 3(20%) responded that exam policies are not discipline specific, and 2(13%) replied that administrations have provided better class monitoring policy.

4.6 Focus Group Discussion

At first students were asked to give general opinion about online classes, seven students replied that they are passing their consecutive third semester without any physical presence in university campus and they are trying to adjust with online learning system and three students mentioned that they participated in online English courses before COVID-19 situation and they like online course as they think it can improve their profession skills. After that students responded to one of the central points of the research and that was the major challenges of attending online classes and in response thirteen students replied that poor internet connection is major problem for students because they depend on mobile internet connections which are not strong enough for online classes and one student mentioned that all students do not have necessary devices for online classes though private universities are providing laptops and low rate PC and financial supports. One student described her experience that reflects internet problems:

> I had to come to our main village road with my father at night to attend night shift viva examination because internet connection inside my home was so poor that I could not understand viva questions.

The third question of FGD was about different ways of participation in interaction of online classes where two students mentioned that teachers can control their speaker option so whenever they have question they can raise digital hands and teachers can give them opportunities for responses, one student said that she always writes questions in her notebooks during lecture and after lecture when teacher gives time for question then she asks questions, two students mentioned that they have chat option during class so they can ask question by using chat box, two of them mentioned that interaction is mandatory in their classes because their two course teachers do not give attendance if they do not participate in class discussion so as they have points in attendance that determine ten percent of their course grades so their classmates feel very motivated for class interaction with teachers and four participants mentioned that they can interact with fellow classmates when they are asked to work as pair or group for class work, homework, and group assignments. Then students responded to the fourth question regarding their suggestions about online course contents and four participants replied that their teachers are sometimes unable to complete all contents that they mention in course outlines, two of them said that some contents in syntax and semantics course are not teachable in online mode so their teacher only completed online teachable contents.

In response to fifth question about the impacts of traditional learning habits on online learning, eleven students responded that they have to submit assignment by avoiding plagiarism issues so unlike traditional they cannot memorize and write in the exam hall rather they are trying to understand main ideas of each topic and three students mentioned that usually they read important topics just before the mid-term and final examination but now they have to submit assignments every week so they are dealing with course contents carefully as their teachers are very strict with their grading policies.

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In response to sixth question which asks students regarding their perspectives about whether university administration is more actively involved with academic activities of online courses than traditional programs or not, ten students replied that each section of their university has online help desk and they can avail any service without coming to the university physically and six participants responded that they can not only e-mail to teachers but also e-mail to administration for any course of goggle classroom directly so they are receiving more administrative services in online programs. However, two students shared that if any problem arises, sometimes department asks to talk to administration and administration advises them to discuss with coordinators and head of the department so they are confused where to go as their teachers said their universities have not developed online academic policy yet. One student complained about online payment and replied:

> Because of online payment issues, I did not get results of spring semester and I was not getting proper clarification from accounts section and department.

Last question was about students' opinion regarding whether accessing learning materials are easier in online courses or not and in response fifteen students responded that they can download and see all course materials of any course at the very beginning of the semester and one of them mentioned that she prefers online materials because she does not have to wait for photocopies from class representatives rather she can download all any time even if she misses class. Three students said that some teachers do not give adequate materials and they upload pictures of important pages from book so sometimes they have to struggle with course materials. One student expressed dissatisfaction regarding teaching materials and stated:

> I really do not understand main points of lecture sheets as sometimes teachers upload many materials on one topic and it also happens that many topics have only one link to follow that makes the situation hard for completing assignments.

4.7 Findings and Discussion

The findings of the students' questionnaire Group (A) show that online English academic program is challenging in Bangladeshi context and reveal response to the research question one that tries to explore the challenges of the online English academic program at the tertiary level of Bangladesh. This section presents that assessment, technological problems, and proper planning are major challenges of online English program in Bangladesh which make online education difficult in Bangladeshi context. Moreover, the overall results of Group (B) indicate that online English education can improve the existing standard of university learning level to a great scope because of learners' more participation, inclusion of working students', equivalent prospects for urban and rural parts of the country and for getting more administration support that is considered as a major barrier in higher education as Bangladeshi universities are still far-flung from successful education administration in traditional context. So it answers research question two regarding development of existing standard of university learning level by applying online English education. Similarly Group (C) shows that English academic programs positively influence the treatment of the traditional learning culture because traditional syllabus should be changed and students need to change their traditional learning habits when they join online program. Furthermore, need-assessment and e-learning and style have capacity of bringing effective transformation in long-established learning customs and this answers the third research question.

The findings of teachers' questionnaire reveal that online English program is challenging in Bangladesh because of evaluation and cultural issues and this section shows similarity with students' questionnaire on the similar items and also provides positive answer to the first research question. One of the most noteworthy findings of this section is it shows that learning outcomes cannot be equally achieved in online and face to face programs. It also demonstrates that professional training and e-infrastructure are essential issues of online English program. Similarly, group (B) answers research question two and shows that online English program can improve the existing standard of tertiary level learning because it can present positive examination culture and can incorporate advanced teaching approaches. One of the most significant findings of this section is almost all the teachers think that Bangladeshi private universities will get more international learners in online programs. Finally, group(C) reveals answer of research question three and it illustrates that online English academic programs can positively influence the treatment of the traditional learning culture because of e-teaching technique needs based evaluation .

The findings of the students' interviews show important factors of research questions in details as it reveals the issues of first research question that internet facilities are not adequate for all and the deprived sections of the students are an important issue that needs to be considered by private universities. Moreover, university should make students familiar with online assessment and should work on reliability and validity of online assessment to maintain students' motivation and these findings answer first research question that explores challenges and issue of online programs. Furthermore, it shows similar findings to students questionnaire regarding second research question about online

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English education and development of the standard of university learning level because students' interview responses show that as students replied that they enjoy online courses because they can participate from their places and they can acquire more knowledge because they are participating in continuous evaluation though interaction among teachers and students need to be addressed. It also shows essential factors regarding third research question about English academic programs and its influence on the treatment of the traditional learning culture of Bangladesh and one of the major findings is that traditional exam policy is not applicable for online environment and our traditional practice of academic dishonesty can be monitored by using effective software.

Findings of the teachers' interviews include new-fangled explanations regarding first research questions as teachers responses show that classroom management is very exigent in an online setting and private universities have many senior faculty members who require more assistance from private universities. There are important facts that reveal that online English education can improve the standard of university learning level to a considerable stage and answer the second research question because teachers' responses show that class monitoring system is better in online courses and university administration is actively involved with academic affairs that can promote strong education administrative practices in private universities in Bangladesh. One of the major findings regarding third research question is teachers are improving traditional teaching materials that show that online English academic programs positively influence the treatment of the traditional learning culture of Bangladesh and another important finding is this program can enhance accountability and especially can make tertiary level education more systematic.

Findings from focus group discussion show similar results with questionnaire and interviews but with reasons and clarifications from students' perspectives. It also reflects similar challenges mentioned in questionnaires and one of the ground-breaking findings is that interaction is possible in online classes if teachers can apply proper techniques that can make students motivated. It also shows that students stated understanding of the fact that they have to take responsibilities of their own learning. Finally, there are common concern factors of internet facilities and plagiarism among students.

4.8 Research Implication

From the study, it is expected that teachers, administration, students, and e-learning designers will get essential information that they need to analyze implementing online English programs in private universities in Bangladesh. This paper reflects positive responses from teachers and learners in response to prospects of online English education that emphasize potential factors for education planners and researchers of Bangladesh.

5. Conclusion

Online education is no longer an option or surprise even in a developing country like Bangladesh right now and because of pandemic private universities did not get any chance of calculating risk factors associated with online campus, however, the positive side of this sudden decision shows very important aspects of teaching and learning and that is if we have willingness to change for better education, we can make it by the active participation of all stakeholders and English departments of private universities show the prospects that despite having daunting challenges, traditional habits and cultural challenges, online English program can very positively influence higher education contexts of Bangladesh and can accommodate international students especially from other non-native English speaking countries.

Moreover, online English academic program can enhance overall features of tertiary level education in Bangladesh though before offering fully online English programs universities require careful need analysis, planning and strong e-learning settings for successful online learning procedure. Moreover, cultural barriers cannot be overlooked and English department should focus on the advantageous aspects of online course for designing and implementing fully online program as Fabry (2009) states that the online education settings give educators the extraordinary prospect to contact learners anytime and anywhere and it provides the students the chance to receive benefit of tertiary level learning because of handiness and convenience. Though online courses offer innovative backdrop for unconstrained instruction and learning opportunities, we require being aware of the difficulties that take place when crafting and improving online courses.

5.1 Recommendations

From the findings of the study, it is evident that online English program in the context of Bangladeshi private university is potential because it can enhance quality of higher education by providing e-learning opportunities. However, this study clarifies that e-learning settings, e-curriculum, and proper planning are major factors for effective learning outcomes of online English program. One of the major findings of this study is need-assessment based education research for analyzing requirements of teachers and students so that they can take challenges of adopting

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new techniques for teaching and learning. In addition, this study suggests that necessary changes in traditional methods of teaching and learning and private university should focus on e-teaching and e-learning techniques for teachers and students for e-education habit formation. Moreover, private universities are showing very positive approach towards technological advancements for e-learning facilitation as they have very promptly moved to online classes and assessments during COVID-19 pandemic but teachers need more training sessions for rigorous understanding of e-assessment because many private universities provide required session for teachers so that they can conduct their classes through goggle classrooms and other teaching platforms but faculty members also need assistance for e-assessment design, test taking, and fair evaluation procedures.

This study finds several alarming issues regarding assessment processes and evaluation of online education and recommends that evaluation process should not be uniform for all disciplines and private universities should provide guidelines for discipline specific evaluation and assessment criteria. Similarly, students do not get proper assistance from many private universities administration regarding their e-learning and e-test participation and they mainly depend on faculty members for their technological challenges but faculty members in English department need technical guidelines from university. As online programs can accommodate learners from outside Dhaka city, their internet facilities need to be considered. Though living in Dhaka city we know that we have already digitalized every corner of Bangladesh, it is evident from this study that online classes are different from internet browsing and internet facilities outside of Dhaka city are mainly dependent on mobile internet connections where attending goggle classroom and other e-learning management systems require stronger internet connection. For these reasons students sometimes miss class lecture partly so private universities can ensure recorded classes which are an effective feature of goggle classroom and other online teaching platforms, the advantage of this feature is that if teachers take classes in recorded mode, the full class will be saved automatically so if students miss any part of lecture (sometimes they are off line because of poor connection), they can watch the lecture as tutorial after the lecture and for availing these facilities students do not require any assistance or permission from teachers .

Therefore, this study recommends proper applications of e-teaching materials that require extra labor and effort from teachers but can ensure accountable and effective learning for students. This study tries to explore traditional learning habits of our learners that create impediments for learners' acculturation of learning process of online English program so this paper suggests regular counseling from private university for learners who are struggling to adjust and transform their on campus learning habits and counseling session should be conducted by the faulty members because they are the closet observant of students' struggles when they try to acculturate with innovative learning techniques. This study recommends teachers and private university authorities to assist learners so that they develop individual learning strategies that are different from traditional learning techniques and faculty members can help to develop e-learning strategies to meet the challenges that learners face in an online learning environment. Faculty members can arrange e-workshop and e-talk where they can assist.

Not only learning strategies but also understanding assessment rubrics is very important for learners because goggle classrooms and other learning management systems offer e-rubric option for online courses so teachers should take the responsibility of rubric design and if they face any problem regarding technological issues of e-rubric, university technical section can help them and teachers need to explain their e-rubric to their learners properly because in our traditional university learning contexts, sometimes private university teachers do not apply rubric for assessment process, so teachers need to clarify e-rubric so that learners understand requirements of any course. This research highly advocates transparency regarding evaluation and accountability from teachers for evaluation process. This research also advocates the anti-plagiarism assessment techniques for achieving proper learning outcomes and maintaining learners' motivation because plagiarism is a common issue in private university evaluation process, this study does not promote the idea that students are solely responsible for plagiarism rather proper assessment design and teaching technique can prevent plagiarism.

Acknowledgment

This paper was supported by the 2nd CGS-FES Fellowships on the Future of Education (2019-20).

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