

## **Problems Faced by Graduates of Allama Iqbal Open University in Distance Learning System: A Case of Multan Region**

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### **ABSTRACT**

The study highlights the problems of graduate students in distance education system. In fact, in this technological modern era, education has become a tool for social and economic change. People want to get education with their busy professional schedule. The objectives of the study were; 1) To identify the problems related to admission procedure and necessary guidance for admission 2) To find out the problems faced by the graduates in the study of instructional material. 3) To list the problems related to procedure of examination, graduate students' result and the procedure of getting graduation degree. The present study was a descriptive survey type. 100 B.Ed students were taken as the sample of the study. The collected data was analyzed with the mean score and extracted the results from the raw data. The study concluded that in distance education students are facilitated with admission procedure and guidance in admission but majority of the students have reservations toward B. Ed. fees that are very high. The study further determined students are satisfied with the instructional material for the B.Ed courses.

**Key Words:** Problems, Graduate, Distance learning system

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## 1. Introduction

In 21<sup>st</sup> century, education is conceived as a tool of social and economic change and it also play a vital role in national development. According to Chander (1991) education is considered as an instrument for human resource development which would ultimately contribute to economic, industrial and scientific development of a nation. Every nation has a sincere effort toward the education its future generations. But formal education system is too expensive; it cannot cope with larger population such a country as Pakistan. Even technologically developed countries are experiencing problems in financing their formal education system.

For developing countries, it is impossible to provide educational opportunities to every citizen through formal education system. In this globalized world, people are searching for the alternative system for formal education. According to Rashid (1992) distance education has been adopted throughout the world as a complement or as an alternate system to provide education to the masses. Distance education is a cheap and accessible more of education to a larger population in the country and worldwide. Distance education has emerged as a system to meet the new demands of education; it aims to democratize education which is the need of time for the developing countries (Pant, 2005).

The study was intended to assess the experiences of actual graduate distance learners and to see if graduate students' needs were being met by the program. The results and findings of the study will be presented and discussed in relation to the problems confronted by the graduate students that underpin distance education, the strengths and weaknesses of distance education. The needs of the graduate distance learners as they relate to the key issues of course material and learning support and getting of graduation degree.

## 2. Research Objectives

1. To identify the problems related to admission procedure and necessary guidance for admission.
2. To find out the problems faced by the graduates in the study of instructional material.
3. To list the problems related to procedure of examination, graduate students' result and the procedure of getting graduation degree.

## 3. Review of Literature

The learning in distance education performs mainly to serve those who cannot or do not want to make use of classroom teaching. Due to the professional commitment and family responsibilities of many distance learners often make attending conventional, face to face courses, full-time courses, with fixed timetable a rather unrealistic proposition, and the reason why adults choose distance education are primarily, Holmberg (1989) describes that the convenience, flexibility and adaptability of this distance mode of education to suit individual students' needs.

Sampson (2003) concluded in his study, students were satisfied with the choice of modules, the course material, assignment feedback and length of time given to complete the

assignment but significant problems surfaced regarding access to and provision of resource materials and issues of students support. Distance education is concerned with meeting the needs of distance learners. According to Holmberg (1986) distance teaching will support student inspiration, promote learning pleasure and efficiency if offered in a way to make the study relevant to the individual learners and their needs.

In distance education system, students face a lot of problems. Students' learning in distance education mode is quite different from that of traditional educational system. Majority of the distance education system have an experience of life and work and are part time learners. Such learners have the responsibilities of their work and families. According to Gunn (1982) the primary issue of distance learners is 'how to study' in this system (Distance Education). Robinson (1981) further described the list of difficulties confronted the distance learners;

- Lack of time due to work;
- Difficulties in concentration;
- Family and work commitments;
- Organization of time and planning;
- Lack of motivation
- Study skills, resources, anxiety & isolation

Robert (1984) pronounces that students studying at a distance education system may face such problems;

- Non-receipt of subject material
- Inability to procure texts
- Need for extensions
- Advice concerning subjects for re-enrollment
- Problems relate to examinations
- Advice on study techniques
- Advice regarding residential school procedures
- Problems in understanding subject content
- Difficulties in receiving quick and meaningful feedback
- Lack of motivation
- Lack of confidence and fear of failure
- Lack of physical resources.

#### **4. Research Methodology**

The researchers used the quantitative design for the current study. The study was survey descriptive in nature. The population of the study was the students of B.Ed. program of

Allama Iqbal Open University belonging to Multan region enrolled in the semester spring 2013. The list of B. Ed students (comprised their full names as well as their addresses) were taken from the University Regional Campus Multan. The researchers take the sample of the study as 100 participants. The researchers adopted a standard questionnaire from the study of Ali (1999) with little modification. The researchers administered the questionnaire by themselves from the participants of the study. The data was collected personally by the researchers. The data was analysis through the use of frequently used statistical tool of mean score.

## 5. Data Analysis

Data analysis of the research is as under;

**Table 1 Problems related to admission procedure and necessary guidance for admission**

S. No.	Statements	Mean Score
1.	The admission forms were easily available.	3.34
2.	Prospectus provided necessary information about admission, procedure of study and program of study	3.92
3.	Admission forms were simple and understandable	4.37
4.	The admission criteria was appropriate	3.87
5.	The criteria for admission was high	2.95
6.	The information about next semester was provided well in time	3.51
7.	Period for submission of form was appropriate	4.06
8.	Regional campus provide necessary guidance for admission	3.05
9.	Main campus provide necessary guidance for admission	3.51
10.	Admission fee was high	4.02

Table 1 indicates the problems of distance education learners related to admission procedure and necessary guidance for admission. The mean score of the table increases from 2.95 to 4.37 that reveals students of distance education have the opinion regarding the high criteria for admission in B.Ed is moderate. Majority of the students have the view that B.Ed. admission forms are simple and understandable and prospectus also provided information about admission procedure and program of study. Respondents also having the view that B. Ed. admission criterion are high. Majority of the respondents of the study reveals that main

campus provides necessary guidance for admission and it is also revealed that fee for B. Ed was high.

**Table 2 Problems faced by the graduates in the study of instructional material**

S. No.	Statements	Mean Score
11.	Objectives were clearly stated in units	3.80
12.	The content covered the unit objectives	3.54
13.	The content of each course was relevant to the demands of course	3.45
14.	The length of each unit was appropriate	3.38
15.	Each unit was understandable without the help of tutor/teacher	2.71
16.	The presentation of the material was interesting, attractive and logical	3.24
17.	Activities were induced at appropriate places in the units	3.55
18.	The assignment questions were clearly stated	3.87
19.	The language of the material was easy, simple and understandable	3.35
20.	Duration of the workshop was appropriate	3.51

Table 2 shows the problems of distance education learners regarding instructional material for study. The mean score of the table increases from 3.24 to 3.87 that reveals students of distance education have the views that the unit objectives are clear and concise as well as the contents of the unit covered the objectives of the unit and content of the course was relevant to the demands of the course. Majority of the students mentioned that assignment questions were clearly stated. Going toward the item in the questionnaire regarding duration of workshop, majority of the respondents respond that duration of the workshop was appropriate.

**Table 3 Problems related to examination, result and getting graduation degree**

S. No.	Statements	Mean Score
21.	Examination centers were appropriate	3.53
22.	The conduct of examination was fair and peaceful	3.86
23.	The question papers were well printed and according to the course content	4.15
24.	The questions were clear and understandable	4.15
25.	The result was declared within three months	2.84
26.	The result slips were sent to students immediate on declaration of result	2.97
17.	Getting the result corrected was very difficult	3.01
28	The procedure to get detailed marks sheets and degree was simple and easy	2.23
29.	Certificate/degree forms were easily available	2.54
30.	Adequate information for getting the certificate/degree was available with the students	2.43

Table 3 shows the problems related to examination, results and getting graduation degree. The mean score of the table increases from 2.23 to 4.15. The mean score (3.86 and 3.53) shows that examination centers were at appropriate distances from their residences and centers are peaceful. Respondents have the perception that question papers were well printed and according to the course content and the questions are clear and understandable. The respondents disagree with the statements that the procedure of getting detailed marks sheet and degree was simple and easy. The respondents are bit confused about the information for getting the certificate/degree was available with students.

## **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION**

It was found that prospectus provided with necessary information toward admission procedure and program of study. Majority of the students revealed that admission criteria were appropriate but the admission fee was high. Second objective of the study, extract the findings from the study that respondents were agreed toward the clarity of objectives and book content covered the unit's objectives. It is also found that majority of the respondents agree with the statement that assignment questions have clarity. Respondents of the study satisfied with the duration of workshop and having the view that workshop duration was

appropriate. It is found that examination centers are at appropriate distance and are peaceful. Majority of the students have the views that question papers were well printed and from the course contents as well as the questions in the question paper were very clear and comprehensive. The respondents have viewed that they are facing problems and hurdles in getting their detailed marks sheets and degree. The students are confused about the information for getting certificates/degrees. The study concluded that Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad is providing facilitations to its B. Ed. students to its maximum. The University is facilitating its students toward admission procedure and guidance for admission but B. Ed students have some reservations toward B.Ed fees that are very high. The study determined that majority of the students are satisfied with the instructional material for B. Ed. course of the AIOU, Islamabad. Finally, study concluded that university is facilitating the students in the sense of examination centers, question papers and course content in the question papers. Students are tangled about the information for getting the certificate/degree and procedure of getting marks sheets and degree from the university.

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