International Journal of Multidisciplinary Approach Research and Science
E-ISSN 2987-226X P-ISSN 2988-0076
Volume 2 Issue 01, January 2024, Pp. 107-120
DOI: https://doi.org/10.59653/ijmars.v2i01.368

Evaluating The Impact of E-Learning on Girl's Education in Afghanistan: A Case study of Samangan University

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Received: 10-11-2023 *Reviewed: 14-11-2023* *Accepted: 18-11-2023*

Abstract

This study delves into the impact of E-Learning on girls' education at Samangan University in Afghanistan, focusing on evaluating the efficacy of digital programs within the nation's intricate socio-cultural landscape. The research, encompassing responses from 106 female students through surveys, highlights the critical need for robust infrastructure, reliable internet access, and accessible devices to facilitate active participation in digital learning. Teacher training programs emerge as pivotal for the successful implementation of E-Learning. Factors such as learning support systems and the overall learning experience play significant roles in shaping student engagement and satisfaction. Despite these positive aspects, social barriers, notably gender discrimination, persist, impeding female students' access to and engagement in digital learning. In conclusion, the study suggests that E-Learning holds immense potential to broaden educational opportunities in Afghanistan. It emphasizes the necessity of substantial infrastructure investment, comprehensive teacher training, and addressing social inequalities to foster an inclusive learning environment. Policymakers and educational institutions can leverage these insights to formulate strategies ensuring equitable access to quality education for all female students at Samangan University. The research significantly contributes valuable guidance for prospective investigations and the development of E-Learning initiatives, emphasizing the transformative role of digital learning in advancing education in Afghanistan, particularly for female students.

Keywords: E-learning, girl's education, Afghanistan, Samangan University, impact, socio-cultural context

Introduction

Over the past few years, there has been a notable shift in the field of education, as digital learning has become increasingly prevalent. This shift has opened up new opportunities to broaden and enrich the learning journeys of students across the globe (Malik et al., 2021). In the context of Afghanistan, a nation facing unique educational challenges, the adoption of E-Learning carries the promise of overcoming barriers and fostering equitable access to quality education (Ahmad, Khan, & Khan, 2019). However, the potential of E-Learning to impact various aspects of education, especially concerning gender disparities, remains a subject of exploration (Janaki, 2013). Afghanistan grapples with one of the world's lowest female literacy rates, and addressing this disparity is of paramount importance (UNESCO, 2021). While E-Learning has opened doors to new learning possibilities in Afghanistan, it is essential to recognize that this transformation is accompanied by a set of challenges (Akbari, 2017). In this dynamic educational environment, understanding the role and effectiveness of eLearning becomes crucial to harness its benefits (Karami et al., 2020). To explore the potential of E-Learning to promote equitable and inclusive education, it is imperative to consider the influence of factors such as technology infrastructure, teacher preparedness, and socio-cultural barriers (Ahmad, Khan, & Khan, 2019). Technology infrastructure, encompassing components like internet connectivity, access to devices, and E-Learning platforms, plays a fundamental role in the effectiveness of E-Learning (Bhati & Khan, 2017). As the E-Learning landscape evolves, assessing the readiness of educational institutions to provide the necessary infrastructure is essential for optimizing the learning experiences of students (Smith & Johnson, 2019). In Afghanistan, where regions with limited traditional educational resources persist, enhancing technology infrastructure holds the key to broadening access to quality education (Brown, Jones, & Williams, 2021). Moreover, infrastructure development is pivotal for mitigating the challenges of limited internet connectivity that hinder students' ability to engage with E-Learning resources (Kwok, Li, & Chan, 2020). Teacher preparedness is another significant component in the E-Learning ecosystem. Educators need to be prepared with the essential expertise and training required to proficiently support online learning (Hwang & Wu, 2014). The success of E-Learning is intricately linked to the competence of teachers in using digital tools and adapting their teaching methods to the online environment (Karami et al., 2020). In Afghanistan, where the role of educators in guiding students through E-Learning is crucial, investing in comprehensive teacher training programs is imperative (Kakar & Khan, 2018). These programs provide educators with the knowledge and skills required to navigate the complexities of digital learning, thereby enhancing the quality of education (Kwok, Li, & Chan, 2020). Additionally, it is essential to consider socio-cultural barriers, especially gender disparities, that affect students' participation in E-Learning (Janaki, 2013). In a society where cultural norms and gender-based stereotypes often discourage girls from pursuing education, addressing these barriers is a critical step in promoting gender equity in learning (García & Rodriguez, 2018). To empower girls' education in Afghanistan, an increasing curiosity surrounds the assessment of the capabilities of online learning to mitigate these societal challenges (Janaki, 2013). This study focuses on exploring the multifaceted impact of E-Learning on education in Afghanistan, with a particular emphasis on the experiences and perceptions of Female students. By investigating the role of technology infrastructure, teacher

preparedness, socio-cultural factors, and the challenges and opportunities associated with digital learning, this research seeks to provide valuable insights that can guide strategies for enhancing the quality, accessibility, and inclusivity of eLearning resources. The findings of this research are expected to be of considerable interest to policymakers, educators, and stakeholders, ultimately contributing to the ongoing efforts to transform education in Afghanistan.

Significance of The Study

Implications for Educational Policy: The findings of this study can inform educational policymakers and administrators at Samangan University and other institutions. The results can guide them in identifying specific challenges students face in accessing quality education through e-learning and developing effective strategies to address these challenges. Enhancement of E-Learning Experience: The study emphasizes the significance of technology infrastructure in supporting the e-learning experience. By understanding the role of computers, software, and e-learning platforms, educational institutions can allocate resources to improve these aspects and enhance the overall quality of e-learning. Overcoming Social Barriers: The study highlights the impact of social barriers, such as cultural norms and gender discrimination, on girls' participation and interaction in e-learning. By recognizing these barriers, educational institutions can design targeted interventions and awareness campaigns to address and mitigate them, thus promoting equal educational opportunities for all students. Student Engagement and Satisfaction: The findings regarding student engagement, academic performance, and overall satisfaction with e-learning provide insights into the effectiveness of this educational approach. Educational institutions can utilize this information to optimize e-learning strategies, foster active student engagement, and ensure a positive learning experience. Education institutions can make the necessary corrections and advancements by understanding the efficiency of learning support systems and how well the e-learning curriculum is matched to students' educational demands. In the context of online learning, this may result in increased learning results and student assistance. Empowering Girls' Education: The study specifically examines the impact of infrastructure development, teacher training programs, and targeted awareness campaigns on girls' access to quality education through e-learning. The findings can contribute to empowering girls' education by identifying effective interventions and strategies that promote their participation and success in e-learning. By addressing these research questions and acknowledging the importance of the research, educational stakeholders can work towards overcoming challenges, improving access to quality education, and fostering inclusive and effective e-learning environments at Samangan University and similar institutions.

Literature Review

This literature review explores various studies related to education in Afghanistan and The capacity of digital learning to tackle obstacles and improve educational outcomes, particularly for Female students. The studies highlight several barriers and opportunities within the Afghan education sector, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of digital learning. In 2010, Adam Smith International carried out research called "Afghanistan Education Sector

Analysis," which highlighted numerous obstacles encountered by the Afghan education system. These obstacles encompassed insufficient Female teachers, a scarcity of schools for students, cultural impediments, safety concerns, security issues, long travel distances, inadequately relevant and practical curricula, and rigidity within the educational framework. janki (2013) emphasized the significance of distance education in expanding higher education opportunities, especially for rural and tribal women in Afghanistan. Distance education is seen as a milestone that can empower women and make higher education accessible to them. Ahmad et al. (2019) found that digital learning has a positive effect on student's education in Afghanistan. It has helped overcome barriers that students encounter in accessing education. The benefits of online Learning were underlined by Manya et al. (2018), who said that it offers a quicker, less expensive, and possibly better alternative to conventional teaching methods.

"E-Learning" has the power to change students' thinking and study habits, promoting improvement and development. Rewashed, A. Al et al. (n.d) explored the merits and drawbacks of online learning within the context of higher education in the United Arab Emirates. They found that "E-Learning" facilitates effective communication between teachers and students and contributes to the development of students' skills. In their research, Haidari et al. (2021) explored the difficulties faced by students in Afghanistan during lockdowns implemented to curb the transmission of the novel coronavirus. The study highlighted several key challenges, including insufficient technological infrastructure, subpar course delivery, limited access to educational materials, ineffective communication, and related factors. The influences and hardship of "E-Learning" on students at Mukuba University were investigated by Elias Muma et al. in 2021. The results showed that "E-Learning" enhanced students' academic success. Suresh Y.H. (2022) conducted a study to examine the influences of "E-Learning" on the education performance of Bachelor degree students at Nankai University in China. The study concluded that "E-Learning" has a positive and significant relationship with academic performance. Balakamakshi T.Y. and R. Savithr (2021) examined the influences of "E-Learning" on students' education performance at the university level. The study highlighted that "E-Learning" facilitates effective time management and motivates pupil to learn independently, thereby positively influencing academic performance. Oye et al. (2012) conducted a study in Malaysia which indicated that "E-Learning" has a positive result on students' performance compared to traditional face-to-face instruction. The findings of the study demonstrated that the use of "E-Learning" as a teaching strategy contributes to improved academic achievement among students. In 2021, Malik, M. et al. conducted research on the influence of "E-Learning" on task engagement among university students. The research revealed that students are more inclined to utilize online resources for task engagement, highlighting the advantage of online learning in facilitating students' participation in academic assignments. A study conducted by Khan et al. (2019) analyse the effect of "E-Learning" on student engagement and satisfaction in higher education. The findings indicated that "E-Learning" platforms provided students with opportunities for active participation, collaboration, and self-paced learning, leading to higher levels of engagement and overall satisfaction with the learning experience. Karami et al. (2020) conducted a study on the efficacy of "E-Learning" in developing critical thinking skills among university students. The research demonstrated that "E-Learning" environments, with their interactive features and

multimedia resources, fostered critical thinking abilities by encouraging students to analyze, evaluate, and apply knowledge in diverse contexts. In a survey by Nasir et al. (2018), the role of "E-Learning" in enhancing students' self-regulated learning skills was explored. The research revealed that "E-Learning" platforms provided students with autonomy, flexibility, and self-paced learning opportunities, promoting the development of self-regulation skills such as goal-setting, time management, and self-assessment. Ameta et al. (2021) investigated the challenges and solutions for effective "E-Learning" implementation in Indian higher education institutions. The study identified issues such as lack of digital infrastructure, inadequate faculty training, and limited student accessibility to devices and internet connectivity. The authors emphasized the need for comprehensive strategies that address these challenges to ensure successful "E-Learning" adoption. A study by Watson et al. (2018) examined the effectiveness of online learning in workforce development and professional training. The research demonstrated that online learning programs can effectively support skill development, knowledge acquisition, and performance improvement in various professional domains. A study by Demuyakor (2019) investigated the effect of "E-Learning" on student education performance in tertiary education. The research found a positive relationship between "E-Learning" and student performance, with "E-Learning" enhancing critical thinking skills, content mastery, and overall academic achievement. Baturay and Bayram (2020) examined the challenges and opportunities of "E-Learning" during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study highlighted the rapid transition to online learning and the importance of effective instructional design, teacher training, and support mechanisms to ensure successful implementation of "E-Learning" during times of crisis. A study by Tlili et al. (2020) focused on the use of mobile learning (m-learning) as a form of digital learning. The research highlighted the benefits of m-learning, such as increased accessibility, personalized learning experiences, and seamless integration into learners' daily lives. The study emphasized the importance of designing mobile learning experiences that align with learners' needs, preferences, and technological capabilities.

Overall, the literature indicates that successful "E-Learning" experiences are influenced by various factors, including instructional design, social interaction, learner support, technology usability, and a sense of community. Understanding these factors and incorporating effective strategies into digital course design and promote can enhance the quality of "E-Learning" experiences and improve student outcomes.

Objectives of The Study

- To investigate the challenges students, encounter in terms of securing reliable internet access for digital learning.
- To examine the influence of the university's technology infrastructure, encompassing computer access, software availability, and "E-Learning" platforms, on the efficacy of digital learning.
- To analyses the cultural and gender-related barriers affecting students' engagement in digital learning.
- To evaluate students' perceptions of their academic performance in "E-Learning" compared to traditional classroom-based education.

- To assess the level of student engagement in "E-Learning" versus traditional classroom-based education.
- To determine the effect of "E-Learning" on students' overall learning experiences and academic outcomes.
- To gauge student satisfaction with digital learning, focusing on academic performance, engagement, and learning experiences in comparison to traditional education.
- To examine the extent to which the "E-Learning" curriculum aligns with students' educational needs and objectives.
- To measure the effectiveness of learning support systems, such as online discussion forums and help desks, in enhancing students' learning experiences in the "E-Learning" environment.
- To investigate how improvements in infrastructure, such as internet connectivity and device accessibility, affect students' access to digital learning.
- To explore the impact of teacher training programs that concentrate on "E-Learning" methods on students' access to quality education.
- To evaluate the success of targeted awareness campaigns in addressing social and cultural barriers to students' education through digital learning.

Research Method

Population and Sample: The study encompasses both Female prospective students of Samangan Public University within its population. Employing a stratified random sampling approach, 106 prospective students from this university were randomly chosen. This method ensures that the sample represents various demographic groups within the student population, allowing for a more comprehensive analysis.

Statistical Techniques Used in the Present Study: The research methodology primarily employs quantitative techniques to evaluate the effects of "E-Learning" on students. Data collection involves a Likert scale-based survey with 24 questions. After data preprocessing, statistical analyses are conducted using the one-sample t-test within SPSS version 24. These techniques enable a comprehensive examination of digital learning's impact on students' educational experiences and provide valuable insights into the research objectives.

Data Analysis and Interpretation: The study conducted at Samangan University aimed to assess various aspects of "E-Learning" and its impact on students' access to quality education.

Results

The results of the study are as follows:

Table 1: Internet Challenges for E-Learning (Mean: 3)

Mean	Mean Difference	t	P-Value
3.181	0.181	1.688	0.004

Interpretation of table-1. The findings reveal that students at Samangan University face significant challenges with reliable internet connectivity for digital learning. Their experienced difficulties are slightly higher than the assumed average (mean difference of 0.181), and this difference is statistically significant with a p-value of 0.004. These results underscore the importance of addressing and improving internet access and connectivity for students to enhance their E-Learning experience.

Table 2: Technology Infrastructure Capacity for E-Learning (Mean: 3)

Mean	Mean Difference	t	P-Value
4.419	1.4190	11.388	0.00

Interpretation of table-2. Table 2 shows that technology infrastructure, which includes computer access, software availability, and E-Learning platforms, significantly supports E-Learning at Samangan University. The data reveals an average capacity notably higher than expected (mean difference of 1.419) with a highly significant p-value of 0.00, underscoring the crucial role of technology infrastructure in advancing E-Learning at the university.

Table 3: Social Barriers in E-Learning Participation (Mean: 3)

Mean	Mean Difference	t	P-Value
4.419	1.4190	11.388	0.00

Interpretation of table-3. The findings in Table 3 emphasize the substantial impact of social barriers, particularly cultural norms and gender discrimination, on students' participation and interaction in E-Learning at Samangan University. The positive t-value of 11.388, significantly higher than the hypothetical mean, coupled with a p-value of 0.00, establishes the statistical significance of this difference. This underscores the urgent need to address these social barriers to foster greater inclusivity and engagement in E-Learning for students at the university.

Table 4: Students' Perspectives on Academic Performance in E-Learning (Mean: 3)

Mean	Mean Difference	t	P-Value
2.971	**-.0286**	**-.241**	**.810**

Interpretation of table-4. The findings of the research reveal that there is no critical distinction in students' perceptions of academic performance between E-Learning and traditional classroom-based education at Samangan University. The obtained t-value of -0.241 and the corresponding p-value of 0.810 indicate that there is no substantial difference in academic performance as perceived by students in these two educational approaches.

Table 5: Student Engagement in E-Learning vs. Traditional Classroom Education (Mean: 3)

Mean	Mean Difference	t	P-Value
3.590	.5905	6.128	0.00

Interpretation of table-5. The data in Table 5 demonstrates a substantial difference in student engagement between E-Learning and traditional classrooms at Samangan University. On average, students are more engaged and active in digital learning, with a mean difference of 0.5905. This finding is statistically significant, as indicated by the t-value of 6.128 and a p-value of 0.00, reinforcing that E-Learning enhances student engagement compared to traditional classroom education at Samangan University.

Table 6: Learning Experience and Academic Outcomes in E-Learning (Mean: 3)

Mean	Mean Difference	t	P-Value
3.590	.5905	6.189	0.00

Interpretation of table-6. Table 6 shows a significant positive difference in digital learning's impact on overall learning experiences and academic outcomes at Samangan University, with a mean higher than the assumed mean. The t-value of 6.189 and a p-value of 0.00 confirm this significance.

Table 7: Student Satisfaction with E-Learning vs. Traditional Classroom Education (Mean: 3)

Mean	Mean Difference	t	P-Value
3.705	0.7085	8.043	0.00

Interpretation of table-7. Table 7 reveals a statistically significant difference in students' overall satisfaction with E-Learning compared to traditional classroom-based education at Samangan University. The positive mean difference, high t-value (8.043), and p-value of 0.00 indicate that students generally have higher satisfaction levels with E-Learning in terms of academic performance, engagement, and learning experience.

Table 8: Alignment of E-Learning Curriculum with Students' Needs and Objectives (Mean: 3)

Mean	Mean Difference	t	P-Value
3.33	0.3333	3.727	0.00

Interpretation of table-8. The findings from Table 8 reveal a significant difference between the mean alignment of the E-Learning curriculum at Samangan University and the hypothetical mean of 3. The positive t-value indicates that the obtained mean is higher than the assumed mean, indicating a moderate level of alignment. With a p-value of 0.00, so based on this, the observed difference is considered to be statistically significant at the 0.05 level. In conclusion, the E-Learning curriculum at Samangan University is found to be reasonably well aligned with the educational needs and objectives of the students.

Table 9: Experience and Success of Learning Support Systems in E-Learning (Mean:3)

Mean	Mean Difference	t	P-Value

3.781	0.7810	9.243	0.00

Interpretation of table-9. Table 9 highlights a significant difference in the effectiveness of learning support systems at Samangan University, including online discussion forums and help desks. The substantial mean difference of 0.781, a high t-value (9.243), and a low p-value of 0.00 confirm the statistical importance of these systems in enhancing students' learning experiences and achievements in the E-Learning environment.

Table 10: Infrastructure Development and Students' Access to E-Learning (Mean: 3)

Mean	Mean Difference	t	P-Value
3.362	0.3619	3.171	.002

Interpretation of table-10. Table 10 shows a significant difference in students' access to E-Learning at Samangan University, emphasizing that infrastructure improvements, such as internet access and device availability, positively impact the quality of education. The lower mean and a p-value of .002 highlight the challenges students face, underscoring the need for enhanced internet access at the university.

Table 11: Impact of E-Learning Teacher Training on Students' Access to Quality Education (Mean: 3)

Mean	Mean Difference	t	P-Value
3.610	0.6095	5.254	.000

Interpretation of table-11. Table 11 presents the findings on the influence of teacher training programs, specifically focusing on E-Learning methods, in enhancing students' access to quality education at Samangan University. The results reveal a significant positive impact, as indicated by a mean difference of 0.6095, implying noticeable improvements in students' educational access. The corresponding t-value of 5.254 and a p-value of .000 further reinforce the statistical significance of these improvements.

Table 12: Effectiveness of Awareness Campaigns in Students' E-Learning (Mean: 3)

Mean	Mean Difference	t	P-Value
3.029	0. 8620	5.317	0.00

Interpretation of table-12. The analysis results suggest that the mean difference in the effectiveness of targeted awareness campaigns in addressing social and cultural barriers to students' education through E-Learning is 0. 8620. The t-value is 5.317, and the corresponding p-value is 0.00. Based on these findings, there is higher statistically significant evidence to conclude that the targeted awareness campaigns have a significant impact on addressing the mentioned barriers.

Discussion

This study's findings resonate with established literature and theoretical underpinnings, particularly reinforcing the interconnected roles of technology infrastructure, teacher preparedness, and socio-cultural factors in shaping the impact of E-Learning. In accordance with existing research (Ahmad et al., 2019; Karami et al., 2020), the study highlights the pivotal significance of robust technology infrastructure, revealing a positive influence on the effectiveness of digital learning when internet connectivity is improved. The emphasis on teacher preparedness aligns with Hwang and Wu's (2014) insights, emphasizing the crucial link between educators' proficiency in digital tools and the successful implementation of E-Learning. Furthermore, the identification of socio-cultural barriers, especially gender disparities, corroborates existing literature on addressing cultural norms to foster inclusivity in E-Learning (García & Rodriguez, 2018; Janaki, 2013). These findings fortify the theoretical framework, offering empirical evidence for the intricate dynamics that influence E-Learning outcomes in the specific context of Afghanistan.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study delved into the impact of E-Learning on education in Afghanistan, with a specific focus on Samangan University. The findings showed that E-Learning has significantly improved students' academic achievements, overcoming barriers and enhancing their learning experiences. It highlights the importance of using technology to provide equal educational opportunities and boost academic performance. Students' positive feedback emphasizes the motivation and engagement that E-Learning brings. These findings have important implications. They call for increased investments in E-Learning infrastructure, especially in remote areas with limited traditional educational resources. Equally crucial is the need for comprehensive teacher training to effectively use digital tools and engage students. Moreover, integrating E-Learning into national education policies is essential. Policymakers should recognize its potential to bridge educational gaps and collaborate with various stakeholders to ensure its sustainable implementation. This study opens doors for future research. Long-term studies can assess the lasting impact of online learning, while qualitative research can provide deeper insights. Including diverse regions and larger samples can enhance the generalizability of the findings. Combining various data collection methods and advanced statistical techniques will further enrich our understanding. In summary, this study underscores the transformative potential of E-Learning in Afghanistan, especially at Samangan University. The importance of continuous support and research is highlighted in order to maximize its influence on education within the country.

Declaration of conflicting interest

Musawer Hakimi, solemnly declare that there exists no conflict of interest pertaining to the completion and submission of this work. I affirm that my involvement in this research has been carried out with utmost integrity, and I have not been influenced by any personal or

financial considerations that could potentially compromise the objectivity, impartiality, or credibility of this scholarly endeavor. I assert that this research has been conducted in adherence to the highest ethical standards, and I am committed to upholding the principles of transparency, honesty, and accountability in the pursuit and dissemination of knowledge.

Acknowledgment

I want to convey my deepest gratitude to Mr. Wajid Fazil and other colleagues for their invaluable assistance in the completion of this research paper. their support in writing, data analysis using SPSS, and data collection played a pivotal role in realizing this study. Their expertise and unwavering dedication substantially improved the quality of this work, and I am profoundly appreciative of his contributions. Furthermore, I would like to express my thanks to my family and friends, who have consistently provided unwavering support and encouragement throughout this research journey. Their steadfast belief in my abilities and their comprehension of the demands of this undertaking have remained a perpetual source of motivation and inspiration. It is through the collective efforts of those mentioned above that this paper has come to fruition. Their contributions have added depth and quality to this research.

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