Impact of Exam-Oriented Education System on Undergraduate Students’ Cognitive, Affective and Psychomotor Competencies

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Abstract
There is a growing concern regarding learners' incompetencies due to the prevalent exam-oriented education systems in many countries worldwide. This quantitative research aimed to investigate the impact of exam-oriented education on students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies. The study employed Bloom's theoretical framework, based on the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. A survey questionnaire was administered to a sample of 200 BS English students from a private sector university in Pakistan to collect data for the perceived impact of exam-oriented education on their competencies in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. The results revealed that exam-oriented education negatively affected students' competencies across all three domains. Specifically, in the cognitive domain, the participant students reported a lower ability to think critically, creatively, and analytically. In the affective domain, students reported lower emotional intelligence and motivation to learn. Lastly, in the psychomotor domain, students reported a reduced ability to demonstrate and apply practical knowledge. This study emphasized the need to reassess the effectiveness of exam-oriented education systems to develop alternative approaches that could promote a more holistic development of undergraduate students' competencies. The findings have important implications for policymakers, educators, and practitioners involved in designing and implementing educational policies and practices.

Keywords: Affective competence, cognitive competence, exam-oriented education, holistic development, learners' competencies, psychomotor competence.
Introduction:

The negative impacts of an exam-oriented education system on students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor (CAP) competencies have been a growing concern. The exam-oriented system places a heavy emphasis on rote memorization and regurgitation of information, leading to limited opportunities for critical thinking, creativity, and the holistic development of students' competencies. It is reported by some researchers that rote learning hampers students' ability to think critically, creatively, and analytically (Fadhlullah & Ahmad, 2017; Tan, 2015; Yusuff, 2015). Students are often taught to memorize information without truly understanding its application or relevance in real-life situations. This shallow learning approach inhibits the development of higher-order cognitive skills and the ability to connect knowledge across different domains.

Moreover, the pressure to perform well in exams takes a toll on students' mental health and emotional well-being. Studies have shown that students in exam-oriented education systems experience high levels of stress and anxiety (Ahmad, Gul, & Zeb, 2022; Yikealo, Tareke, & Karvinen, 2018). This chronic stress negatively affects their affective competencies, including motivation, self-esteem, and emotional intelligence. Students may become demotivated, lose interest in learning, and develop a fear of failure, further hindering their overall development. In addition to cognitive and affective competencies, the exam-oriented education system often overlooks the development of psychomotor competencies. Practical skills, hands-on experiences, and opportunities for creativity and innovation are limited in an environment focused on standardized exams (Scardamalia, Bransford, Kozma, & Quellmalz, 2011). Students are rarely provided with platforms to apply their theoretical knowledge in practical settings, inhibiting their ability to demonstrate and apply their learning to real-world scenarios.

Pakistan's education system is often criticized for being exam-oriented, with a primary focus on passing exams rather than acquiring knowledge and developing competencies. In this context, several studies have shed light on the impact of the exam-oriented education system on students' CAP competencies. Malik and Hassan (2022) highlighted the system's overemphasis on lower order cognitive abilities, neglecting the nurturing of affective and psychomotor competencies. Ahmad, Gul, and Zeb (2022) found that students in the Pakistani education system experience heightened stress and anxiety due to the exam-
oriented approach. This chronic stress adversely affects their affective competence, including motivation and self-esteem. Hillson and Mohamad (2020) emphasized the system's neglect of psychomotor competence, hindering students' practical skills and creativity. Therefore, it is essential to investigate the impact of the exam-oriented education system on students' CAP competencies in Pakistan and explore alternative approaches that prioritize a holistic development of learners. By understanding the challenges and shortcomings of the current system, policymakers, educators, and practitioners can design and implement educational policies and practices that foster the overall growth and competence of undergraduate students.

**Literature Review:**

Some recent studies have investigated the impact of an exam-oriented education systems on the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies of students (Ahmed et al. (2021; Khan, 2021; Macauley, Laprino, & Brudvig, 2022; Rahman, 2020; Zaidi & Arif, 2020). Exam-oriented education systems have been widely implemented in many countries for several decades, emphasizing testing and exams as the primary means of assessing students' knowledge and skills. While this approach may have some benefits, such as promoting academic rigor and accountability, it also has significant drawbacks that can hinder the development of undergraduate students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains.

**Theoretical Framework:**

In this study, Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom et al., 1956; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2021) was used as a conceptual framework to understand cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies. Bloom's taxonomy was a widely accepted framework for categorizing learning objectives into cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. The cognitive domain involved knowledge acquisition, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. The affective domain encompassed attitudes, values, and emotional states, while the psychomotor domain focused on physical skills and abilities. This theoretical framework was feasible to conceptualize the three domains of learning. In the cognitive domain, the impact of an exam-oriented education system was assessed by measuring students' acquisition and retention of knowledge, comprehension and application
of knowledge, critical thinking ability, and analytical and evaluative skills during exams. The impact on cognitive competence was analyzed based on students' self-perceived performance in exams. In the affective domain, the impact of an exam-oriented education system was measured by assessing students' attitudes toward learning, motivation, self-esteem, and emotional states. The impact on affective competence was analyzed based on students' self-perceived performance in exams. In the psychomotor domain, the impact of an exam-oriented education system was evaluated by assessing students' physical skills and abilities, including hand-eye coordination, dexterity, and balance. The impact on psychomotor competence was analyzed based on students' self-perceived performance in exams.

In this regard, some researches reported the effects of exam-oriented education systems on undergraduate students' CAP competencies, by providing the following insightful references.

**Exam-Oriented Education System and Cognitive Competence:**

The cognitive domain involved knowledge acquisition, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Bloom et al., 1956; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2021). International research indicated that an exam-oriented education system could have detrimental effects on learners' cognitive competence, such as critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Machts, Kaiser, Schmidt, & Moeller, 2016). One study found that students exposed to a test-oriented education system exhibited lower levels of creativity and higher levels of anxiety (Shi et al., 2021). Qin et al. (2022) conducted a survey to investigate the relationship between high-stakes exams and students' cognitive development in China. Their study revealed that high-stakes exams had a negative impact on students' cognitive development, particularly in their ability to think critically and creatively. Badejo et al. (2021) surveyed secondary school students in Nigeria to explore the impact of an exam-oriented education system on their cognitive competence. The findings indicated that exam-oriented education had adverse effects on students' critical thinking skills and their ability to solve real-world problems. Travers, Morisano, and Locke (2014) reported that an exam-oriented education system often resulted in a focus on memorization and regurgitation of information, hindering deeper understanding of the subject matter. Consequently, students' ability to apply their knowledge in real-world situations and develop critical thinking and
problem-solving skills was limited. Lounsbury and Steele's (2010) survey study found that students within an exam-oriented education system reported lower levels of critical thinking and problem-solving skills compared to students in a more student-centered education system. In Pakistan, the exam-oriented education system has been associated with a dearth of cognitive competence among learners. Some studies showed that learners in an exam-oriented system tended to rely on rote learning rather than critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Khan, 2021; Khan & Ali, 2020; Rahman, 2020). Furthermore, the exam-oriented system emphasized memorization of information rather than understanding and application, thus impeding learners' cognitive development (Zaidi & Arif, 2020).

**Exam-Oriented Education System and Affective Competence:**

The affective domain of learning included attitudes, values, and emotions (Bloom et al., 1956; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2021). An exam-oriented education system can also have a negative impact on learners' affective competence, such as motivation, self-esteem, and self-efficacy (Zeidner, 2014). One study found that students who were exposed to a test-oriented education system had lower levels of self-esteem and were more likely to experience stress and anxiety (Zhao, Selman, & Haste, 2015). Another study found that students who were more exam-oriented had lower levels of emotional intelligence and empathy (Liu et al., 2020). Janjua, Khan and Mukhtar (2022) reported that exam-oriented education had a negative impact on affective competence of medical students in Pakistan. A recent study by Barzegar and Fereidooni (2021) examined the relationship between high-stakes exams and Iranian high school students' academic motivation. The study found that high-stakes exams had a negative impact on students' academic motivation. Further research is needed to examine this aspect of the topic in greater detail. Further, it could lead to high levels of stress and anxiety among undergraduate students. A study by Ng (2015) found that academic stress was significantly associated with symptoms of depression and anxiety among university students. Additionally, a study by Dall'Alba and Sandberg (2018) found that an exam-oriented education system could lead to a sense of detachment from learning and a lack of motivation to pursue personal interests and passions. A survey study by Purnell et al. (2016) found that undergraduate students in an exam-oriented education system reported higher levels of stress and anxiety compared to students in a more holistic education system.
Another survey study by Akinola and Aremu (2014) found that exam anxiety was a significant predictor of depression and stress among Nigerian university students. Learners in this system experienced high levels of anxiety, stress, and pressure to perform well in exams (Khan, 2021; Rahman, 2020). The system did not provide opportunities for learners to develop their social skills, creativity, and emotional intelligence (Zaidi & Arif, 2020). A study by Nasir et al. (2021) used a survey to investigate the impact of exam-oriented education on medical students' affective competence in Pakistan. The study found that exam-oriented education had a negative impact on students' emotional intelligence and empathy, which were important affective competencies for healthcare professionals.

**Exam-oriented education system and Psychomotor Competence:**

The psychomotor domain of learning included physical skills and abilities (Bloom et al., 1956; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2021). The exam-oriented education system was linked to limited opportunities for learners to develop their psychomotor competence. Although the research on the impact of an exam-oriented education system on psychomotor competence was limited, but some studies suggested that such a system might negatively impact learners' physical abilities and skills (Macauley, Laprino, & Brudvig, 2022). Further, this system could limit opportunities for hands-on learning and practical skill development. Additionally, a study by Wu, Liu, and Chen (2016) found that an exam-oriented education system could lead to a lack of confidence and competence in real-world situations that required physical skills and abilities. Pakistani learners in this system inclined to focus on theoretical knowledge rather than practical skills (Khan & Ali, 2020). The lack of practical experience and opportunities to develop skills could lead to limited job opportunities and career growth for learners (Rahman, 2020). It was found that exam stress had a negative impact on students' physical fitness, suggesting that there was a need to examine this challenge further.

Overall, the literature reported that an exam-oriented education system might have negative effects on learners' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies. However, further research could educate on the impact of such a system.
Gaps in the Literature:

Although there was a growing body of literature on the impact of an exam-oriented education system on learners' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies, but this study identified three gaps in the literature. i) Most of the studies focused on either one or two domains individually. despite the fact that these three domains were interconnected and could be reinforced effectively in integration. This aspect was endorsed by a recent study, as students who were more exam-oriented had lower levels of intrinsic motivation and were less likely to engage in deep learning (Kong et al., 2020). ii) There was limited research on the impact of exam-oriented education system on learners in tertiary education in Pakistan as most of the earlier research on this topic focused on primary and secondary education. iii) Further research was needed to examine the impact of an exam-oriented education system on learners in tertiary education in other countries. Thus, this study was an effort to address these gaps and provide a more comprehensive understanding of this topic. The research paper aimed to address the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of the exam-oriented education system on Pakistani BS English students' cognitive competence?
2. What is the impact of the exam-oriented education system on Pakistani BS English students' affective competence?
3. What is the impact of the exam-oriented education system on Pakistani BS English students' psychomotor competence?

Research Methodology:

This study employed a quantitative research method (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The study utilized purposive sampling techniques to select participants from the BS English department of a private sector university in an urban city in central Punjab, Pakistan. The 200 enrolled students belonged to different provinces, allowing for generalization of the results. The survey questionnaire Learners Cognitive, Affective, and Psychomotor Competencies (LCAPC) was self-designed and consisted of four sections: cognitive competence, affective competence, psychomotor competence, and demographics. The face and content validity of the questionnaire were ensured by three educationists with expertise in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). The survey questionnaire
was administered to a sample of 200 BS English students from a private sector university in Pakistan to collect data regarding the impact of an exam-oriented education on their perceived competencies in cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. The participants were asked to rate their level of competency in each domain using a five-point Likert scale. The reliability or internal consistency of LCAPC, comprising 30 survey items, was confirmed by Cronbach's alpha coefficient value of 0.7 or higher. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was: 0.79 for the cognitive competence; 0.85 for the affective competence; and 0.76 for the psychomotor competence. These values indicated good internal consistency and reliability of the survey items. The collected data were analyzed using mean and standard deviation for descriptive statistics.

**Results:**

The mean and standard deviation of the collected data for the impact of exam-oriented education system on 200 Pakistani BS English learners' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies were analysed for the results. The table listed the mean and standard deviation scores for each of the 30 items on the survey questionnaire. The responses of the participants were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (Always, Often, Sometimes, Rarely, Never).

**Table 1:** Impact of exams on BS English students' cognitive competence (N=200)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Cognitive Competence</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Unable to recall the information you learnt</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Forget what you’ve memorized for the exam</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Have poor mental ability</td>
<td>3.06</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Unable to think critically and logically</td>
<td>2.89</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Have difficulty in understanding the</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Face trouble thinking for the accurate answer</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Unable to attempt analytical questions</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Forget what you’ve memorized for the exam</td>
<td>2.85</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Unable to attempt answer related to application of problem-solving</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Unable to create new ideas/strategies/solutions for the given problems

Table 1 showed the mean scores ranged from 2.63 to 3.06, with a standard deviation range of 0.98 to 1.06. Item 3 had the highest mean score of 3.06, indicating that learners sometimes have poor mental ability. Item 1 had the lowest mean score of 2.63, suggesting that learners rarely have difficulty recalling the information they learnt. It indicated that learners reported varying degrees of difficulty in recalling information, thinking critically, understanding questions, and creating new ideas. The standard deviations ranged from 0.98 to 1.06, indicated a wide variation in participants' responses.

Table 2: Impact of exams on BS English students’ affective competence (N=200)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Affective Competence</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Encounter feelings of anxiety or nervousness</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Have low self-confidence</td>
<td>2.67</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Are fatigued and have zero motivation</td>
<td>2.76</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Are feeling an increase in stress level</td>
<td>2.96</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Encounter panic attacks</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Feel agitated for a difficult question which requires in-depth analysis</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Leave some questions on the examination as a result of stress and anxiety</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Perturbed due to incessant questions</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Are stuck by uncertainty and self-doubt</td>
<td>2.77</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Miss/skip some questions/ parts due to stress unintentionally</td>
<td>2.72</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 showed the mean scores ranged from 2.57 to 2.96. Item 4 had the highest mean score of 2.96, indicating that learners often encounter an increase in stress level. Item 2 had
the lowest mean score of 2.67, suggesting that learners rarely have low self-confidence. It suggested that learners reported experiencing anxiety, stress, low self-confidence, and fatigue during exams. The standard deviations ranged from 0.97 to 1.09, indicating a wide variation in participants' responses.

Table 3: Impact of exams on BS English students’ psychomotor competence (N=200)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Psychomotor Competence</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Are unable to answer the required question properly</td>
<td>2.78</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Face problems in retaining the course material</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Are unable to apply the concepts due to cramming</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Require much more effort to answer the simple questions</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Unable to follow the instructions to answer the questions</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Unable to apply theoretical knowledge to answer the conceptual questions</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Unable to organise answers of the questions</td>
<td>2.81</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Unable to attempt answers of the questions on time</td>
<td>2.90</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Lack proactive approach to answer the questions</td>
<td>2.79</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Unable to justify the concepts with examples in attempting answers</td>
<td>2.87</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 showed the mean scores ranged from 2.75 to 2.90. Item 2 had the highest mean score of 2.90, indicating that learners often face problems in retaining the course material. Item 5 had the lowest mean score of 2.75, suggesting that learners rarely have difficulty
following the instructions to answer the questions. It indicated that learners reported facing difficulties in applying course concepts, retaining material, following instructions, and organizing answers. The standard deviations ranged from 0.98 to 1.04, indicating a wide variation in participants' responses. The demographics of the participants reported that there were 153 females and 47 males in the English department. Based on the provided data, the percentage and mean scores of respondents for each item in the questionnaire were analyzed. There were 76.5% female and 23.5% male students. Overall, the results indicated that the participant students’ perceived levels of competence in the three domains ranged from lower to moderate. They faced more difficulties in exercising higher-level CAP competencies as compared to lower-level CAP competencies due to an exam-oriented education system. Hence, exam-oriented education had a negative impact on cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies of BS English learners in Pakistan.

Discussion:

This study investigated the impact of an exam-oriented education system on the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies of BS English learners in Pakistan. The findings were consistent with the driving theory of Bloom's taxonomy (Bloom et al., 1956; Anderson & Krathwohl, 2021) as it was supported by the new evidence in different context. Moreover, the findings of this study were aligned with some recent studies which utilized Bloom's Taxonomy to examine the impact of an exam-oriented education system on undergraduate students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies. For example, Ahmed et al. (2021) applied Bloom's Taxonomy to analyze the impact of high-stakes exams on the cognitive and affective competencies of medical students in Pakistan, and found a negative impact on these competencies. Jafari et al. (2021) used Bloom's Taxonomy to investigate the impact of exam anxiety on the cognitive and psychomotor competencies of nursing students in Iran, revealing a negative impact on these competencies. Hence, Bloom's Taxonomy was established as a valuable theoretical framework for analyzing the effects of exam-oriented education system on undergraduate students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies.
Regarding the findings of cognitive competence, this study reported participants' difficulty in recalling information and applying them to real-world situations. Previous studies indicated that an exam-oriented education system impacted negatively on undergraduate students' CAP competencies. In particular, the system was found to hinder critical thinking and problem-solving skills and creativity (Machts, Kaiser, Schmidt, & Moeller, 2016). A study by Mackatiani (2017) found that exam-oriented education systems could lead to students adopting a surface-level approach to learning, which focused on memorizing information rather than understanding concepts deeply. This, in turn, might lead to lower levels of critical thinking and problem-solving skills. A study by Meng, Tang, & Wu (2021) investigated the relationship between high-stake exams and students' cognitive development in China. The study found that high-stake exams had a negative impact on students' cognitive development, particularly in their ability to think critically and creatively. Some studies in the Pakistani context also endorsed this finding that exam-oriented education systems promoted rote learning and memorization, while neglecting the development of critical thinking and problem-solving skills (Ahmed, 2018; Li, 2020). The exam-oriented education system in Pakistan placed a great deal of emphasis on knowledge-based objectives, such as remembering and understanding information. This focus on exams and test scores often led to superficial learning and a lack of critical thinking skills.

Regarding the findings of affective competence, this study reported that the pressure to perform well in exams could lead to increased stress, anxiety, and other negative emotions. These findings were aligned with a study by Cheng et al. (2019) for increased depression and stress due to exams. Another study by Li, Li, and Tian (2020) found that undergraduate students in an exam-oriented education system reported higher levels of anxiety, depression, and stress compared to students in a more student-centered education system. The study also found that students in the exam-oriented system had lower levels of self-esteem and life satisfaction. A study by Khan and Siddiqui (2021) explored the relationship between exam anxiety and academic performance among Pakistani undergraduate students. The study found that exam anxiety was negatively correlated with academic performance and positively correlated with depression and anxiety symptoms. A study by Nasir et al. (2021) used a survey to investigate the impact of exam-oriented education on medical students' affective competence in Pakistan. The study found that exam-oriented education had a
negative impact on students' emotional intelligence and empathy, which are important affective competence for healthcare professionals.

In terms of the findings related to psychomotor competence, this study highlighted several challenges that students faced in applying what they had learned to practical situations. Wu and colleagues (2021) investigated the impact of an exam-oriented education system on the formation of professional identity among Chinese medical students. The study found that such a system was negatively associated with the development of a professional identity and led to a focus on test performance rather than on the development of clinical skills. Xiong, Jiang, and Wang (2021) found that students in an exam-oriented education system had lower levels of physical activity and higher levels of sedentary behavior compared to students in a more holistic education system. The study also found that students in the exam-oriented system had poorer health-related quality of life.

The discussion on the relevant studies revealed that exam-oriented education systems could lead to reduced academic achievement, increased exam anxiety and stress, and a focus on test performance over personal and professional development.

This study had limitations regarding the research method. While the survey research method provided valuable insights into the impact of exam-oriented education systems on learners' competencies, it had limitations such as potential response bias, and limited scope for in-depth exploration of the topic. Therefore, survey method could be complemented with a qualitative research method to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of exam-oriented education on learners' competencies.

**Conclusion:**

In conclusion, this study was an addition to the growing body of literature related to the negative impact of exam-oriented education system on CAP competencies of BS English students in Pakistan. Specifically, such a system led to lower levels of critical thinking and problem-solving skills, higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, and lower levels of performance and application in practical situations. These findings were important because they highlighted the need for reforms in the Pakistani education system to address the negative impact of exam-oriented approaches on students' competencies. Furthermore, there was a need for a student-centered education system that prioritizes the overall competencies.
of students for lifelong learning, rather than just their performance on exams. Such systems could promote learning to emphasize deep understanding and critical thinking, while also supporting students' emotional and practical performance. Overall, the evidence suggested that the exam-oriented education system might be counterproductive in the long term, as it could negatively impact students' academic and personal growth. Therefore, it was important for stakeholders, especially educators, policymakers, and teachers, to consider the broader impacts of such education systems and work towards creating more holistic and inclusive learning environments.

The recommendations of the study were offered in the perspective of the findings of the study.

a. Promote a student-centered approach to learning: Education systems should prioritize a student-centered approach that emphasizes deep understanding and critical thinking rather than simply memorization for exams. This could be achieved by implementing active learning strategies that encourage students to engage with the material in meaningful ways.

b. Provide training for educators: Educators should be trained in pedagogical approaches that promote critical thinking and problem-solving, as well as in strategies for supporting students' emotional and performance levels.

c. Assess students' performance holistically: Instead of relying solely on exam results, education systems should assess students' performance holistically, taking into account factors such as creativity, communication skills, and problem-solving ability. In this regard, formative assessments, portfolios, projects/assignments could be supplemented to summative assessments.

Overall, these recommendations aimed to create more holistic and inclusive education systems to prioritize the overall competence of students for lifelong learning. By adapting these strategies, education systems could ensure that undergraduate students' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies were not negatively impacted by an exam-oriented approach. Innovative and student-centered approaches, such as project-based learning, peer assessment, and self-assessment, could be employed as alternative assessment methods to promote students' critical thinking, creativity, and motivation (Khan & Fatima, 2021; Saifuddin & Uzair, 2021). Educators and policymakers need to take these findings into account when designing education systems to promote lifelong learning skills. For
future study, a mixed-methods research was proposed to investigate the impact of the exam-oriented education system on learners' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor competencies.

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