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RESEARCH ARTICLE

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# Examining Innovative Pedagogies for Engaged Learning at a Public Sector University in Balochistan: A Quantitative Study at the University of Loralai

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**Abstract:** There is a strong need to shift the paradigm of higher education from passive learning in lecture halls to active learning. The relation between innovative pedagogical approaches and student engagement at University of Loralai, Balochistan is studied through Quantitative approach. The study used a sample of 250 students and 36 faculty members, structured questionnaires were developed to measure the perceptions of innovative pedagogies and implementation barriers, as well as the level of student engagement. Results show moderate levels of readiness for pedagogical innovation among faculty (Mean = 3.28), but that there are significant barriers to innovation such as resource constraints (Mean = 4.12), large class sizes (Mean = 4.08), and limited opportunity for faculty development (Mean = 4.15). Correlation analysis showed a strong positive relationship between innovative pedagogy adoption and student engagement ($r = 0.724$, $p < 0.01$). Regression analysis indicated that innovative pedagogies significantly predict student engagement ($\beta = 0.681$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 46.4% of the variance. The study contributes to understanding pedagogical innovation in resource-constrained, geographically peripheral contexts and provides evidence-based recommendations for institutional transformation.

**Keywords:** Examining, Innovative Pedagogies, Engaged Learning, Higher Education

## Introduction

In today's world, the pressure is greater than ever for higher education institutions to change their pedagogical methods. Students reported that adverse economic conditions, loss of motivation and uncertainty over the quality of in-person taught sessions were reasons to opt out of in-person taught sessions (Yoshikawa, 2025). Although traditional didactic teaching methods are commonly used, they do not get students involved in learning, which lowers students' retention rates (Nottingham Trent University, 2026). Meanwhile, employers seek students who have problem-solving, collaboration, critical thinking and disciplinary knowledge as well (Steele, 2025).

In the largest province of Pakistan, Balochistan, a pedagogic innovation becomes an attractive option. The province faces unique challenges that hinder educational reform – infrastructure problems, language, socioeconomic inequities and major resource shortages. The study on Higher education in Balochistan shows that the assessment systems are largely time-based as opposed to skill-based, having standardized examinations and recollection-based examinations as their primary assessment methods (Shaheen & Saeed, 2025). However, rote learning is a huge concern at the tertiary level, where factors like subject-centred

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curriculum, too broad content of courses, discouraging attitudes of teachers towards conceptual learning and race of marks are identified as key contributors to rote learning (Journal of Positive School Psychology, 2023).

## Literature Review

The University of Loralai (UoL), which was established in remote areas of Balochistan under the public sector in 2012, plays an important role in the promotion of higher education in less developed and far-off regions of Balochistan. Students' learning strategies revealed that they have emotional-social support learning strategies; also, students' learning strategies showed that they liked collaborative learning rather than rote memorization learning (Iqbal, Faizi & Kamran, 2022), which reflects a collectivist culture of Pakistani students. Cultural orientation becomes a basis for innovative pedagogies that are collaborative.

This study explores the relationship between innovative pedagogical approaches and student engagement within the context of the University of Loralai, which is an area that has been rarely addressed in empirical studies of pedagogical innovation occurring in geographically distant and resource-poor areas.

### Theoretical Foundations of Engaged Learning

Concepts of engaged learning and innovative pedagogies are based on existing theories in education. According to Kolb's experiential learning theory, learning is primarily through reflection, conceptualization, experimentation, and doing or experiencing (Yoshikawa, 2025). A transformative learning theory emphasizes the change in one's perspective or identity that can occur with learning (Yoshikawa, 2025). Competence is developed when learners participate in authentic communities, and the social constructivist approach and Lave & Wenger's "Legitimate Peripheral Participation" and "Communities of Practice" are offered as frameworks.

Self-Determination Theory (SDT) provides foundations for the design of motivation. Innovative pedagogies actively foster autonomy, competence and relatedness in learners by allowing students to choose, develop skills and engage in collaborative learning—all aspects that should be embedded within SDT (Steele, 2025). Knowles' theory of andragogy also provides guidance to pedagogical design for adults, particularly with regard to structuring flexibility and making things relevant and practical.

### Contemporary Pedagogical Approaches

SCALE-UP (Student Centred Active Learning Environment with Upside Down Pedagogies) is a pedagogical approach that changes the way the students are taught and how teachers teach by replacing the lecture course with a student-centred active learning environment. At Nottingham Trent University, the intervention was evaluated and seen to have a positive impact on progression and attainment and on student engagement (Nottingham Trent University, 2026). The focus is on active and collaborative learning, with students working in pairs and trios to solve problems and delve deep into the material (Love, 2025).

Engaged Immersive Learning (EIL) is a holistic approach to combating the passivity in lecture-based learning. EIL is composed of four design elements: an environment-driven learning space, participation trajectory aligned with legitimate peripheral participation, dialogue design with generative AI as a collaborative partner and practice-based assessment (Yoshikawa, 2025).

There have been positive outcomes for the students' academic performance with the flipped classroom approaches. The study conducted by the researchers in Balochistan and Quaid-i-Azam universities revealed that students could perform better by completing homework and assignments in class sessions and watching video lectures at home, and students preferred flipped learning over traditional lectures (Sultana et al., 2022). Based on the results of the research conducted in the field, the flipped classroom model was found to have a positive effect on the academic learning outcomes of students, and it was also found that the students' motivation increased as a result of the flipped classroom (Sultana et al., 2022).

Problem-Based Learning (PBL), which places students in the driver's seat of their learning, uses ill-defined problems, authentic to professional practice, to engage students (Steele, 2025). Research findings indicate that extended involvement in PBL results in greater depth of understanding, metacognition, and intrinsic motivation (Steele, 2025).

The pedagogical practices in Balochistan are as follows:

The studies in the field of higher education in Balochistan indicate a number of challenges. Issues of interaction of learners and the quality of education perceived in online modules were brought to light in a study about paradigm shift to e-learning during the COVID-19 period in Balochistan universities (Hussain & Khan, 2025). The change towards skill-based assessment is acknowledged as a pressing need, and research indicates that skill-based assessment is a good predictor of student learning outcomes while time-based assessment has a significant negative impact (Shaheen & Saeed, 2025).

In the University of Loralai, the study of learning strategies showed that most students showed inclination towards the learning strategy of emotional-social support, which includes collaborative learning, discussing lessons with classmates, and requesting support from teachers (Iqbal, Faizi & Kamran, 2022). This preference is indicative of the collectivist nature of Pakistani culture and indicates the basis for a collaborative learning approach that emphasizes active learning.

The study on rote learning at the University of Loralai revealed several factors that facilitate surface learning, such as having a subject-centered curriculum, too much course content breadth, discouraging attitude of teachers towards conceptual learning, and the mark of race (Journal of Positive School Psychology, 2023). The results show the importance of pedagogical innovation in order to change the concept of memorization to understanding.

## Conceptual Framework

This study has a conceptual framework that assumes that the use of innovative teaching methods such as active learning, collaborative learning, problem-based learning and technology-enhanced learning has a positive effect on student engagement based on the literature. The framework also recognizes institutional support, faculty readiness and resource availability as mediating factors in the adoption of pedagogical innovation and its effectiveness.

## Objectives

1. To assess the current state of pedagogical practices at the University of Loralai
2. To identify barriers to implementing innovative pedagogies at the University of Loralai
3. To examine the relationship between innovative pedagogical approaches and student engagement
4. To determine the predictive power of innovative pedagogies on student engagement
5. To identify strategies for enhancing pedagogical innovation at the University of Loralai

## Hypotheses

1. **$H_1$:** There is a significant positive relationship between innovative pedagogical approaches and student engagement at the University of Loralai.
2. **$H_1$:** Innovative pedagogical approaches significantly predict student engagement at the University of Loralai.
3. **$H_0$:** There is no significant difference in perceptions of pedagogical innovation based on gender.
4. **$H_1$:** Faculty readiness is positively associated with adoption of innovative pedagogies.
5. **$H_1$:** Resource availability is positively associated with implementation of innovative pedagogies.

## Methodology

The study used a descriptive survey design, which was quantitative in nature, to explore innovative pedagogies and student engagement at University of Loralai, Balochistan. There were 90 faculty members

and about 1600 BS students enrolled for 2023-2026. Using the purposive sampling technique, 36 faculty members (40%) and 250 students were chosen. Observations were conducted by administering five-point Likert-type questionnaires validated by experts and correlation was also carried out with the help of a pilot study, which yielded acceptable Cronbach's alpha values for both faculty and students separately. All instruments were administered and completed face-to-face and online, with informed consent, anonymity, and volunteer participation. The data were analyzed using SPSS, and descriptive statistics (frequencies, means, standard deviations) were employed, and inferential tests were used to investigate variable relationships. Ethical clearance was obtained from the institutional review body, and all responses were kept confidential to maintain participant confidentiality and integrity of research.

## Data Analysis and Results

**Table 1**

*Gender Distribution of Student Respondents*

| Gender | Frequency | % |
|---|---|---|
| Male | 185 | 74.0 |
| Female | 65 | 26.0 |
| Total | 250 | 100.0 |

*Note:* N = 250. Percentages represent the proportion of respondents by gender.

The gender distribution reflects broader patterns in Balochistan higher education, where female participation remains limited due to socio-cultural factors (Iqbal et al., 2022).

**Table 2**

*Department-wise Students*

| Department | Frequency | % |
|---|---|---|
| Education | 55 | 22.0 |
| Computer Science | 40 | 16.0 |
| English | 50 | 20.0 |
| Political Science | 45 | 18.0 |
| Zoology | 35 | 14.0 |
| Commerce | 25 | 10.0 |
| Total | 250 | 100.0 |

*Note:* N = 250. Percentages of Department-wise Students

## Current Pedagogical Practices

**Table 3**

*Presents Faculty Responses on Current Pedagogical Practices*

| Pedagogical Practice | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Lecture-based teaching | 4.35 | 0.72 | Very frequently used |
| Group discussions/activities | 3.28 | 0.89 | Often used |
| Technology integration (ICT) | 2.95 | 1.02 | Sometimes used |
| Problem-based learning | 2.82 | 0.95 | Sometimes used |
| Collaborative projects | 3.15 | 0.88 | Often used |
| Flipped classroom approach | 2.45 | 1.10 | Rarely used |
| Student-centered methods | 3.02 | 0.94 | Sometimes used |

The data indicate that traditional lecture-based teaching remains the dominant pedagogical approach, consistent with findings from previous research in Balochistan (Journal of Positive School Psychology, 2023). Flipped classroom approaches and problem-based learning are rarely employed, despite evidence of their effectiveness (Sultana et al., 2022).

### Student Engagement Level

**Table 4**

*Presents Student Engagement Scores*

| Engagement Dimension | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Behavioral Engagement | 3.52 | 0.78 | Often engaged |
| Emotional Engagement | 3.15 | 0.85 | Sometimes engaged |
| Cognitive Engagement | 3.08 | 0.92 | Sometimes engaged |
| Overall | 3.25 | 0.81 | Sometimes engaged |

Student engagement is moderate, with behavioral engagement highest and cognitive engagement lowest. This pattern aligns with findings that students demonstrate preference for collaborative learning (Iqbal, Faizi & Kamran, 2022) but may not be fully cognitively engaged in deep learning processes.

### Barriers to Innovative Pedagogies

**Table 5**

*Presents Barriers to Implementing Innovative Pedagogies*

| Barrier | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Resource constraints | 4.12 | 0.78 | Significant barrier |
| Large class sizes | 4.08 | 0.85 | Significant barrier |
| Limited faculty development | 3.98 | 0.92 | Significant barrier |
| Lack of institutional support | 3.85 | 0.95 | Significant barrier |
| Student resistance | 3.45 | 1.02 | Moderate barrier |
| Faculty resistance to change | 3.38 | 1.05 | Moderate barrier |
| Limited technology access | 4.05 | 0.82 | Significant barrier |

Resource constraints, limited technology access, and large class sizes emerge as the most significant barriers, consistent with research on higher education in Balochistan (Shaheen & Saeed, 2025; Hussain & Khan, 2025).

### Faculty Readiness for Innovation

**Table 6**

*Presents Faculty Readiness Indicators*

| Readiness Indicator | Mean | SD | Interpretation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Openness to change | 3.85 | 0.85 | High openness |
| Technology skills | 3.02 | 0.95 | Moderate skills |
| Knowledge of innovative pedagogies | 3.28 | 0.88 | Moderate knowledge |
| Willingness to adopt new methods | 3.78 | 0.82 | High willingness |
| Need for professional development | 4.15 | 0.72 | Strong need |
| Openness to change | 3.85 | 0.85 | High openness |

While faculty demonstrate openness to change and willingness to adopt new methods, they report moderate knowledge of innovative pedagogies and strong need for professional development. This aligns with findings from training needs analysis in Balochistan universities (Khurshid, Zia & Nawaz, 2023).

### Correlation Analysis

**Table 7**

*Pearson Correlation was Conducted to Examine Relationships between Variables*

| Variable 1 | Variable 2 | Pearson r | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Innovative Pedagogy | Student Engagement | 0.724 | 0.01 |
| Faculty Readiness | Innovative Pedagogy | 0.658 | 0.01 |
| Resource Availability | Innovative Pedagogy | 0.612 | 0.01 |
| Institutional Support | Innovative Pedagogy | 0.589 | 0.01 |

All correlations are significant at $p < 0.01$ level. The strong positive correlation between innovative pedagogy and student engagement ($r = 0.724$) supports Hypothesis H1. Faculty readiness, resource availability, and institutional support show moderate to strong positive correlations with innovative pedagogy adoption.

### Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression was conducted to determine the predictive power of innovative pedagogies on student engagement:

**Table 8**

*Model Summary*

| Model | R | $R^2$ | Adjusted $R^2$ | F | P |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | .681 | .464 | .454 | 42.85 | < 0.001 |

The regression model is significant ($F = 42.85$, $p < 0.001$), explaining 46% of the variance in student engagement ($R^2 = 0.464$). Innovative pedagogy is the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.681$, $p < 0.001$), supporting Hypothesis H2. Faculty readiness and resource availability also significantly predict student engagement.

**Table 9**

*Regression Coefficients for Predicting the Outcome Variable*

| Predictor | Unstandardized β | Standardized β | T | Significance |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| (Constant) | 0.856 | - | 3.15 | 0.002 |
| Innovative Pedagogy | 0.523 | 0.681 | 15.20 | 0.001 |
| Faculty Readiness | 0.098 | 0.125 | 2.85 | 0.005 |
| Resource Availability | 0.078 | 0.098 | 2.12 | 0.035 |
| Institutional Support | 0.065 | 0.084 | 1.89 | 0.060 |

Results of regression analysis showed that the variable of Innovative Pedagogy was significant and positively predictive for the outcome variable ($B = 0.523$, $\beta = 0.681$, $t = 15.20$, $p < .001$). Faculty Readiness also emerged as a significant positive predictor ($B = 0.098$, $\beta = 0.125$, $t = 2.85$, $p = .005$). Likewise, Resource Availability also had a positive contribution to the outcome variable ($B = 0.078$, $\beta = 0.098$, $t = 2.12$, $p = .035$). However, Institutional Support was not a statistically significant predictor ($B = 0.065$, $\beta = 0.084$, $t = 1.89$, $p = .060$). Innovative Pedagogy has the highest standardized coefficient value ($\beta = 0.681$), which shows the most significant contribution in the regression model of the predictors. In general, the results indicated that Innovative Pedagogy, Faculty Readiness, and Resource Availability were statistically significant positive predictors, while Institutional Support was not an independent significant predictor at the .05 level.

## Findings

### Current Pedagogical Landscape

The teaching methods that are used widely are traditional lectures, which are used at very high frequency (Mean = 4.35), and flipped classrooms, which are used at relatively high frequency (Mean = 2.45); problem-based learning (Mean = 2.82) is hardly used. This dominance of the traditional approach aligns with the study that found subject-centered curriculum and the negative attitudes of conceptual learning to be the factors that encourage rote learning at UoL (Journal of Positive School Psychology, 2023).

### Student Engagement

Students' engagement is at moderate level (Mean = 3.25), with the highest being behavioural (Mean = 3.52) and the lowest being cognitive (Mean = 3.08). The students' engagement levels were moderate, indicating

that students are present in learning activities, but deeper levels of engagement are not yet present, which are important for developing future skills. This is in line with the previous study conducted at UoL that revealed that students are more inclined towards emotional-social support strategies rather than cognitive strategies (Iqbal, Faizi & Kamran, 2022).

**Barriers to Innovation**

The barriers that are the most significant for the implementation of innovative pedagogies are resource constraints (Mean = 4.12), limited technology access (Mean = 4.05), and large class sizes (Mean = 4.08). The results are consistent with the study on assessment reform in Balochistan, which found that structural barriers for pedagogical transformation were the lack of ICT materials and large classes (Shaheen & Saeed, 2025).

There is a positive correlation between innovative pedagogy and student engagement ($r = 0.724$, $p < 0.01$). The results of regression analysis show that the innovative pedagogies are significant predictors of student engagement ($r2 = 46.4\%$, $\beta = 0.681$, $p < 0.001$). The study results further validate international research which shows that active, collaborative learning methods improve student engagement (Steele, 2025; Yoshikawa, 2025; Love, 2025).

**Enabling Factors**

The achievement of faculty readiness and the availability of resources were significant predictors of innovative pedagogies adoption ($\beta = 0.125$, $p = 0.005$; $\beta = 0.098$, $p = 0.035$, respectively). Faculty are also open to change in their teaching (Mean = 3.85), have moderate knowledge of innovative pedagogies (Mean = 3.28), and high need for professional development (Mean = 4.15), which aligns with the findings of training needs analysis at Balochistan universities (Khurshid, Zia & Nawaz, 2023).

**Discussion**

The predominance of traditional lecture-based teaching at UoL is in line with the situation of the higher education system in Balochistan in general. The study on rote learning at UoL revealed that factors such as subject-centered curriculum, too much breadth in the content of the courses and discouraging attitudes to conceptual learning fostered surface learning (Journal of Positive School Psychology, 2023). The dominance of lecture-based teaching is a structural problem, as big classes, lack of resources and institutional cultures that are transmission-oriented are highly prevalent.

The collaborative learning strategies usage rate (Mean = 3.15) was moderate, which indicated that there was some matching with cultural preferences. The study conducted at UoL revealed that students like emotional-social support learning strategies, which include collaborative learning and discussion with peers during lessons (Iqbal, Faizi & Kamran, 2022). This cultural orientation is the basis for creating innovative and co-creative teaching methods that take into account the existing preferences of students.

The high level of difficulties faced both in terms of resources and access to technology and large class sizes are typical of higher education settings in resource-poor, geographically marginal settings. The issues that emerged from the assessment reform research in Balochistan reported the same structural constraints: limited availability of digital tools, large classes, teacher overwork, and inadequate continuous professional development (CPD) (Shaheen & Saeed, 2025).

The challenge of policy requirements and implementation capacity is visible. Although there has been promotion of Outcome-Based Assessment by the Higher Education Commission, most of the universities in Pakistan, especially State Universities, are still time and recollection based. Likewise, the use of innovative pedagogies is widely accepted and acknowledged as vital for future skills development, but not all of them are currently available at UoL due to infrastructural and capacity restrictions.

The correlation between the use of innovative pedagogy and student interest was found to be 0.724 with β value of 0.681, which is similar to the results of international studies. The research at NTU on SCALE-UP demonstrated improvements in student engagement and benefits for progression and attainment (Nottingham Trent University, 2026). The study revealed that flipped classroom has a positive impact on the academic performance of students and motivation in Balochistan (Sultana et al., 2022).

The significant amount of variance in student engagement (46.4%) accounted for by innovative pedagogies indicates that there is significant room for pedagogical innovation to enhance student engagement. The leftover 53.6% variance, however, suggests that there are other factors besides institutional culture, student motivation, and external factors that also affect engagement.

Pedagogical innovation has a significant correlation with faculty readiness, with a coefficient of $\beta = 0.125$, $p = 0.005$. Faculty are open to change, but have moderate knowledge of innovative pedagogies, and strong need for professional development. This is in line with the outcomes of training needs analysis, which indicates that the teachers of universities of Balochistan are in need of professional development for creative teaching (Khurshid, Zia & Nawaz, 2023).

This finding is consistent with the experience-based finding of experienced faculty being less likely to use innovative pedagogies, which has been found in the literature about educational change. Familiarity with and commitment to traditional teaching practices may necessitate intervention and support through professional growth for experienced faculty to reconsider pedagogical innovation.

The previous studies showed that learning strategies preferred by the students at UoL are learning strategies of emotional-social type and collaborative learning (Iqbal, Faizi & Kamran, 2022), which indicates that the learning strategies should be developed based on the culture of the students in UoL. Pedagogical models should not be imported without consideration for the cultural context, and innovative pedagogies should draw on the existing preferences for collaborative learning by adding more cognitively challenging pedagogies.

## Conclusions

Traditional teaching methods are still in majority use at UoL as opposed to innovative pedagogies like Flipped classroom and Problem-based learning. This can be attributed to the general scenario of higher education in Balochistan and other structural issues like large classes and fewer resources.

The involvement of students at UoL is moderate, and the behavioral involvement is the highest while the cognitive involvement is the lowest. This indicates that there is limited depth of students' thinking around learning activities, suggesting that students do not engage more cognitively with the activities.

There are large numbers of faculty who are under-resourced, have limited technology access, have large classes, and have limited faculty development opportunities, which are significant impediments to pedagogical innovation. It is common for higher education in resource-limited, geographically marginal settings to have these barriers.

There is strong positive correlation between innovative pedagogy adoption and student engagement with $r = 0.724$. The variance in student engagement is significantly predicted by innovative pedagogies ($\beta = 0.681$, $p < 0.001$), accounting for 46.4% of the variance. This finding is consistent with national and global studies that show that active and collaborative learning practices increase student engagement.

The faculty's readiness and resources are important predictors of the adoption of innovative pedagogies. Faculty are open to change but need professional development to master knowledge of innovative pedagogies and skills that can be implemented with students.

The study adds to the knowledge about pedagogical innovation in contexts of limited resources and geographical marginalization. It shows that in difficult contexts, imaginative pedagogies can improve students' engagement as long as issues of institutional support, faculty development, and resource allocation are considered.

**Recommendations**

- Form a Teaching Excellence Center to continuously develop faculty on innovative pedagogies, especially active learning, co-operative methods, and using technology (Khurshid, Zia & Nawaz, 2023).
- Invest in computer labs, internet, learning management systems, etc. The construction of IT Hub project needs to be accelerated and expanded (Shaheen & Saeed, 2025).
- When possible, reduce class sizes to facilitate more interactive and student-centred teaching. Discuss team teaching and hiring additional faculty members in response to large classes.
- Enhance the existing student preference for collaborative learning, using collaborative learning, peer learning and emotional-social support methods in courses (Iqbal, Faizi & Kamran, 2022).
- Do not import any pedagogies blindly; develop pedagogical approaches by taking into consideration cultural characteristics of Balochistan and also incorporating innovative elements in them.
- Give specific professional development to experienced faculty to address experience gap in pedagogical change.
- Institutional Support is strengthened, such as institutional policies and leadership supporting pedagogical innovation, including recognition of teaching excellence for promotion.
- Apply collaborative learning, problem-based learning and make use of technology-enhanced teaching in courses.
- Take part in professional development events to build knowledge and skills around innovative pedagogies.
- Incorporate some more cognitively demanding learning styles with the collaborative learning styles that students prefer.
- Use technology to complement, rather than supplant, worthwhile learning experiences, and base use of technology on solid theories of learning.

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