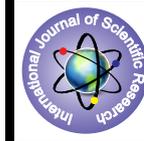


## Attitude Towards Tech-Driven Odl: The Case of Distance Teacher-Trainees



### Education

**KEYWORDS** : ICT; Teacher-Trainees; Attitude; Open, Distance and Flexible Learning

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### ABSTRACT

*ICT-driven ODL as an innovative provision of educational transaction constantly endeavours to fulfill its mission by improving the conditions of learning and supporting access to knowledge. In the info-structure environment, ODL prepares individuals for a life that requires cognitive skills, beliefs, problem solving, inquiry and other abilities. Consequently, there is a growing need to integrate and make use of emerging technologies for better output. This write-up explores the distance teacher-trainees' attitude towards tech - driven ODL. Distance teacher-trainees have considerably favourable attitude towards tech - driven ODL with hardly any difference found between a) male and female; b) urban and rural; and c) with 0-<2 and ≥2 Internet browsing experience. The analysis of the distance teacher-trainees' attitude recognizes ODL as an innovatively integrated provision of curriculum transaction promoting both online and offline learning materials.*

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### Background

With the recent technological advances, the educational establishments modify their role and modus operandi in terms of knowledge creation, dissemination and application. The new information and communication technologies have the potential to transform the conditions and process of teaching and learning remarkably. The instructional structures and activities are organized around technological tools, appliances and applications. Tech - driven open, distance and flexible learning has become significantly important as it provides open access to learning materials by transcending geographical and political boundaries.

Open and distance education in India, is emerging as an effective and need - based component of education at the school and tertiary levels (Kaul, L., 1997, p.516). Undoubtedly, in recent years, an increasing number of learners, teachers, scholars and other professionals prefer ODL institutions to improve their knowledge-base, attitude, professional skills and experiences. Open, distance and flexible learning as a support mechanism provides digital mode of content creation, sharing and publishing effectively and expeditiously. The fact to which pointed attention needs to be drawn is that educational institutions, learners, teachers and other stakeholders should be prepared to address to the enormous challenges of new information and communication technology - driven knowledge era.

### Tech-driven Open, Distance and Flexible Learning

Tech-driven open, distance and flexible learning is described as a networked provision of sharing knowledge, attitude and skills with autonomy and responsibility on the part of learners. While ICT is not a panacea for all educational problems, technologies have become essential tools for teaching and learning in any mode (Jung, I., 2005, p.22). Open and distance learning has become one of the remarkable unit of tech - driven knowledge era. Over the four decades that modern multi-media ODL has existed it has gradually joined the mainstream of higher education (Daniel, J., et al, 2008, p.7). Tech - driven open, distance and flexible educational provision provides learners quality learning resources allowing them to share experiences on a wider scale.

Given the recent technological advances, ODL helps to promote new ideas, creative minds and encourage the pursuit of higher knowledge, learning and research. Here, the concept of ODL described by Calvert can be referred to. Open and Distance Learning (ODL) is considered nowadays as the most viable means for broadening educational access while improving the quality of education, advocating peer-to-peer collaboration and giving the learners a great sense of autonomy and responsibility for learning (Calvert, 2006). Educational infrastructure and support systems have been created to help the relatively large target learning groups. Students can engage in meaningful hands-on and field-based activities using simulations, software and laboratory kits (Mawn, M.V., 2011, p.143). The potential of tech - driven ODL to make the learning resources available at low cost has attracted the institutions, academia and learning community. Over the past years, developing and implementing policies to assure the quality has become a priority of ODL institutions (Jung, I., 2007, p.51).

The attitude of clientele is very important as it is a tendency which helps them to be favourable or unfavourable towards the practices. In order to speed up the creation, dissemination and utilization of learning resources at a distance, the system of ODL has to be strengthened. Given the increased demand for open, distance and flexible learning, it becomes inevitable to find out the attitude of distance teacher-trainees towards technology - integrated open, distance and flexible learning.

### Objectives of the Study

The objectives formulated for this paper are:

- to examine the attitude of distance teacher-trainees towards tech-driven open, distance and flexible learning,
- to analyze the significant difference, if any, in the attitude of male and female distance teacher-trainees towards tech-driven ODL,
- to find out the significant difference, if any, in the attitude of urban and rural distance teacher-trainees towards tech-driven open, distance and flexible learning, and
- to study the significant difference, if any, in the attitude of distance teacher-trainees with 0-<2 and ≥2 Internet browsing experience towards tech-driven ODL.

### Hypotheses

The hypotheses formulated for the study are outlined below:

- distance teacher-trainees have considerably favorable attitude towards tech-driven open, distance and flexible learning,
- there is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female distance teacher-trainees towards tech-driven ODL,
- there is no significant difference in the attitude of urban and rural distance teacher-trainees towards tech-driven open, distance and flexible learning, and
- there is no significant difference in the attitude of distance teacher-trainees with 0-<2 and ≥2 Internet browsing experience towards tech-driven ODL.

### Methodology Used

The methodology employed was descriptive research wherein

distance teacher-trainees' attitude towards tech-driven ODL with respect to their gender, locale and Internet browsing experiences were investigated. Being a case, the study is not an exhaustive one, and is restricted to the limited number of distance teacher-trainees. The methodological details like sample, tool, data collection procedure, analyzing data and statistical techniques are outlined below:

**Sample**

Keeping the objectives in view, a total of 72 teacher-trainees enrolled in two-year distance mode secondary teacher education programme at Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad were selected using simple random sampling technique. Sample consists of 33 (45.83%) male and 39 (54.17%) female respondents.

**Tool**

A five point Likert type scale developed by the investigator was used to examine the attitude of respondents towards tech - driven open, distance and flexible learning. The tool consisting of 24 items with response pattern on a five point scale was developed to illicit the required information from the subjects under investigation.

**Procedure**

As part of necessary instructions while administering the questionnaires, the respondents were assured that their answers would be kept confidential and will be used only for research purposes. Hence, the respondents were asked to give free and frank answers without hesitation. Though, no time-limit was imposed, but they were instructed to complete the questionnaire as early as possible. The data gathered from the subjects was analyzed and interpreted using suitable statistical techniques.

**Data Analyses and Interpretation**

In order to analyze and interpret data, the statistical techniques used for the present study were Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test. The data gathered was presented in the tabular form and analysis was done as per the objectives of the study. The respondents' attitude towards tech - driven open, distance and flexible learning has been discussed with the relevant tables in the following section of the study.

**Table - 1: Level of Distance Teacher-Trainees' Attitude towards Tech-driven ODL**

Sl. No.	Attitude	N	%	Mean	SD
1	High	28	38.89	110.04	3.44
2	Moderate	31	43.06	100.68	2.64
3	Low	13	18.05	91.08	4.31
Total		72	100.00		

It can be inferred from the table -1 that 38.89% of distance teacher-trainees possess high level of attitude towards tech - driven open and distance learning while 43.06% moderate level attitude and remaining 18.05% have low level of attitude. The result reveals that a significant number (38.89%) of the respondents have positive attitude towards tech-driven open and distance learning. Besides, a majority (43.06%) have a moderate level of attitude which indicates that they support and understand the considerable effects of tech - driven open, distance and flexible learning.

The significance of differences observed between means is analyzed with the help of statistical test i.e. t-test.

**Table - 2: Significance of Mean Difference - Gender-wise, Locale-wise and Experience-wise**

Sl No.	Variable	N	df	Mean	SD	t-value	Inference
Gender	Male	33	70	102.73	7.92	0.148	Not Significant @ 0.05 Level
	Female	39		102.46	7.49		
Locale	Urban	30	70	104.27	6.59	1.66	Not Significant @ 0.05 Level
	Rural	42		101.38 8.16			
Experience	0-<2	49	70	101.49	7.91	1.92	Not Significant @ 0.05 Level
	≥2	23		104.91	6.59		

Table - 2 shows that the t-value calculated for the significance of the scores of male and female respondents is 0.148 which is less than the required tabulated value for significance at 0.05 level. The null hypothesis (H0) is hereby accepted. Hence, it is concluded that there is no significant difference in the attitude of male and female distance teacher-trainees towards tech-driven open, distance and flexible learning.

It is also evident that the t-value obtained for the significance of the scores of urban and rural respondents is 1.66 which is less than the required tabulated value i.e. 1.98 for significance at 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis (H0) is accepted. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no significant difference in the attitude of urban and rural distance teacher-trainees towards tech-driven ODL.

As evident that the t-value obtained for the significance of the scores of respondents with 0-<2 and ≥2 Internet browsing experience is 1.92 which does not exceed from the required table value for significance at 0.05 level. Hence, the null hypothesis (H0) is accepted. Therefore, it is concluded that there is no significant difference in the attitude of distance teacher-trainees with 0-<2 and ≥2 Internet browsing experience towards tech-driven open, distance and flexible learning.

**Conclusion**

Tech-driven open, distance and flexible learning, once the innovation in the provisions of educational transaction, has gradually grown popularity among trainees, teachers, researchers, and other professionals. The study helps to draw the conclusions that distance teacher-trainees have considerably favourable attitude towards tech - driven open, distance and flexible learning. Gender, locale and Internet browsing experience did not tend to affect the attitude of distance teacher-trainees towards tech-driven open, distance and flexible learning.

**Educational Implications**

An expanding network of ODL with vibrant support mechanisms and its upgradation for technological integration in the country is much required. An equal need, however, be on the regulation of the standards and policy measures, is for the quality assurance in the open, distance and flexible education. The study argues that much can be learned by the growing number of ODL clientele i.e. learners and trainees irrespective of gender, locality and Internet browsing experience. The analysis emphasizes on not only the need for policy framing and strategic planning but also effective execution in order to determine and ensure effective, efficient and expeditious use of tech-driven ODL that supports increased target learning groups.

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