ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

A STUDY ON THE TECHNOLOGY READINESS OF ENGLISH PG ASSISTANTS

Social Science

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ABSTRACT

The growth and future of our country highly depends upon the quality of the education system. Learning through technology has now become a part of students' lifestyle. This research was undertaken to find out the technology readiness of PG English teachers working in government schools. 50 schools teachers were sampled and were administered the Technology Readiness questionnaire prepared by the investigators. The collected data was analyzed using percentage analysis and t-test. The results showed that of technological readiness of the teachers is not high and in an average it is only 30 %. Most of the teachers have an insecure feeling when using technology in their classroom. Hence the study recommends the urgent need to enhance the techno skills of teachers. Increasing technology readiness of teachers can contribute to the success of technology integration which in turn may contribute to the quality of education.

INTRODUCTION

Better education is very necessary for all to go ahead in the life and get success. It develops confidence and helps building personality of a person. School education plays a great role in everyone's life. Proper education creates lots of ways to go ahead in the future. It makes us strong mentally, socially and intellectually by increasing our knowledge level, technical skills and good position in the job. The growth and future of our country highly depends upon the quality of the education system. Students are engaging with technology constantly outside of the classroom. They like to be interactive, and learning through technology has now become a part of their lifestyle. Engaging with technology in the classroom has not only helped them learn better, but they also acquire multi-tasking skills. Technology is making learning more fun and accessible for today's students. For effective integration of technology in teaching and learning, the factor teacher readiness to use technology is a must. This study aims to find out the technology readiness of English PG Assistants in Thoothukudi District.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

During the past 20 years, technology has changed the working of the entire system of education. Information Communication Technology helps in enhancing the quality of education through blended learning by complementing the traditional chalk and talk method of teaching. If teachers are aware of the judicious use of educational technology they can create an immense transformation in the way they teach and the way the students learn through which they can enable the students acquire skills such as digital literacy, innovative thinking, creativity, sound reasoning and effective communication needed to face challenges of the 21st century. It is undeniable that teacher plays an important role in this process.

Government of India has realized the significance of integrating ICT in education. But many factors negatively affect the effective integration of technology into education system. Summak et.al. have summarized a list of challenges faced in technology integration. They are lack of computers, lack of time, technical difficulties, resistance to change, poor administrative support, low levels of computer literacy, poor training opportunities and teacher related difficulties such as negative attitudes and beliefs towards technology and unwillingness to engage with technology. Among the other factors, the investigators are interested to find out the technology readiness of English PG Assistants. Hence the study was entitled as the Technology Readiness of English PG Assistants.

Operational Definitions
Technology Readiness

Integrating technology into teaching and learning requires readiness in the part of the educator. Success on technology integration in teaching depends on teachers' willingness to adoption and attitude towards technology. In this study technology readiness refers to how English Post graduate Assistants working in the schools in Tamilnadu embrace and use new technology for teaching and learning.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population for the present study is the PG Assistants in English working in the government, government aided and private schools of Thoothukudi District. The investigators have selected 50 PG Assistants in English through simple random sampling.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To prepare a questionnaire to assess the technology readiness of English PG assistants
2. To find out the technology readiness of English PG assistants
3. To find out if there is any significant difference in the technology readiness of English PG assistants with respect to certain background variables.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. There is no significant difference in the technology readiness of English PG assistants based on their gender
2. There is no significant difference in the technology readiness of English PG assistants based on their locality of school

METHODOLOGY

The investigators prepared a questionnaire to assess the technology readiness of teachers by adopting the Teacher Digital Readiness Survey prepared by Middletown Public Schools. The questionnaire consisted of 25 items which was scores under the scale: always, often, sometimes, rarely, never. The questionnaire was then distributed among 50 English PG teachers working in government school and government aided schools in Thoothukudi District. The collected data was analyzed using percentage analysis and t-test.

Data Analysis
Null Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference in the technology readiness of English PG assistants based on their gender.

Table No. Test of significant difference between Male and FemaleEnglish PG Assistants in their Technology Readiness

Gender	Number	Mean	SD	Calculated t value	Remarks
Male	12	95.75	9.88	2.83	Significant
Female	38	85.87	12.37		

(Table t value is 1.96)

Since the calculated t-value (2.83) is greater than the table value (1.96) it is found that there is a significant difference in the technology readiness of English PG assistants based on their gender.

Null Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference in the technology readiness of English PG assistants based on their locality of school

Table No.Test of significant difference between rural and urban English PG Assistants in their Technology Readiness

Locality of School	Number	Mean	SD	Calculated t value	Remarks
Rural	31	86.68	12.26	1.14	Not Significant
Urban	19	90.79	12.74		

(Table t value is 1.96)

Since the calculated t-value (1.14)is less than the table value (1.96) it is found that there is no significant difference in the technology readiness of English PG assistants based on their locality of school.

Percentage Analysis of the responses of selected items from the Technology Readiness Questionnaire

Items	Percentage of responses given by participants				
	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
I enjoy learning new mechanisms from high-tech gadgets.	32	30	20	14	4
I do things by hand than with a computer.	26	26	32	14	2
I use smart phones to search for enrichment materials to supplement the textbook.	34	34	28	2	2
I feel convenient in using PPT and Multimedia presentations to aid my teaching.	10	34	34	14	8
Technology helps me to explain difficult concepts.	40	38	18	4	0
Technological devices are not designed for use by ordinary people.	12	8	26	22	32
I feel embarrassed when I have trouble with a high-tech gadget while people are watching.	4	16	36	30	24
I can handle smart phone and computer with ease.	32	48	10	8	2
I have access to many learning apps through my smart phone.	42	22	24	6	6
Smart phone helps me to get access to various learning materials and resources.	54	28	18	0	0

INTERPRETATION

From the above table, it is clear that,

• Out of the 50 English PG assistants, 32%, 30%, 20%, 14% and 4% enjoy learning new mechanisms from high-tech gadgets; always, often, sometimes, rarely and never respectively.

• Out of the 50 English PG assistants, 26%, 26%, 32%, 14% and 2% prefer to do things with hand than with a computer; always, often, sometimes, rarely and never respectively.

• Out of the 50 English PG assistants, 34%, 34%, 28%, 2% and 2% use smart phones to search for enrichment materials to supplement the text books; always, often, sometimes, rarely and never respectively.

• Out of the 50 English PG assistants,10%, 34%, 34%, 14% and 8% feel convenient in using PPT and Multimedia

presentations to aid teaching; always, often, sometimes, rarely and never respectively.

• Out of the 50 English PG assistants, 40%, 38%, 18% and 4% find technology helpful in explaining difficult concepts; always, often, sometimes, and rarely respectively.

• Out of the 50 English PG assistants, 12%, 8%, 26%, 24% and 32% consider that technological devices are not designed for use by ordinary people; always, often, sometimes, rarely and never respectively.

• Out of the 50 English PG assistants,4%, 16%, 36%, 30% and 24% feel embarrassed when they have trouble with a high tech gadget while other people are watching; always, often, sometimes, rarely and never respectively.

• Out of the 50 English PG assistants, 32%, 48%, 10%, 8% and 2% can handle smart phones and computers with ease; always, often, sometimes, rarely and never respectively.

• Out of the 50 English PG assistants,42%, 22%, 24%, 6% and 6% use learning apps through their smart phone; always, often, sometimes, rarely and never respectively.

• Out of the 50 English PG assistants, 54%, 28% and 8% use smart phones to access various learning materials and educational resources; always, often and sometimes respectively.

FINDINGS

• There is significant difference in the technology readiness of English PG assistants based on their gender.

• There is no significant difference in the technology readiness of English PG assistants based on their locality of school.

• With respect in enjoying learning new mechanisms from high-tech gadgets 32% always enjoy, 30% often enjoy, 20% sometimes enjoy, 14% rarely enjoy and 4%; never enjoy.

• With respect to preferring to do things with hand than with a computer 26% always prefer, 26% often prefer, 14% sometimes prefer, 32% rarely prefer and 2%; never prefer.

• With respect to using smart phones to search for enrichment materials to supplement the text books 34% always use, 34% often use, 28% sometimes use, 2% rarely use and 2% never use.

• With respect to convenience in using PPT and Multimedia presentations to aid teaching 10% always feel convenient, 34% often feel convenient, 34% sometimes feel convenient,14% rarely feel convenient and 8% never feel convenient.

• With respect in finding technology helpful in explaining difficult concepts 40% always find helpful, 38% often find helpful, 18% sometimes find helpful and 4% rarely find helpful.

• 12% of the teachers always consider that technological devices are not designed for use by ordinary people and 8% often consider, 26% sometimes consider, 24% rarely consider and 32% never consider that technological devices are not designed for use by ordinary people.

• 4% of the teachers always feel embarrassed when they have trouble with a high tech gadget while other people are watching, 16% often feel, 36% sometimes feel, 30% rarely feel and 24% never feel embarrassed when they have trouble with a high tech gadget while other people are watching.

• With respect in handling smart phones and computers with ease 32% are always with ease, 48%, are often with ease10%, 8% are sometimes with ease and 2% are rarely with ease in handling smart phones and computers with ease.

• 42% of the teachers always use learning apps through their smart phone, 22% often use, 24% sometimes use, 6% rarely use and 6% never use learning apps through their smart phones.

• 54% always use smart phones to access various learning materials and educational resources, 28% often use and 8%sometimes use smart phones to access various learning materials and educational resources.

DISCUSSION

Integrating ICT in the educational process is very important in the educational scenario today. This study proves that there is significant difference between male and female teachers in their technology readiness. When compared to that of female, male

teachers have more time to use technology. Male teachers demonstrated a higher readiness than their female counterparts in many studies. Male teachers' attitude towards computer technology is more positive than female teachers (Etmer et al., 1999). In terms of location in the present study there is no significant difference between rural and urban teachers working in the government and government aided institutions with regards to integration of technology in the teaching and learning process. But in some studies rural teachers showed higher insecurity scores than urban teachers.

The present study shows that the level of technological readiness of the teachers is not high and in an average it is only 30 %. Most of the teachers have an insecure feeling when using technology in their classroom. Though several in service trainings are given for teachers they are not confident enough to use technology voluntarily. Multimedia projector and interactive whiteboards are available in most of the schools and still teachers are keeping themselves away from the technological gadgets.

RECOMMENDATION AND CONCLUSION
Teachers should be helped to embrace technology to create 21st century learners. Creative thinking and critical thinking skills can be developed only when the students are trained in an innovative environment. The school education department must train and assess the skills of teachers in using technology in their classroom teaching. Best gadgets can be given for classroom usage. Hands on experience must be provided to develop the skills of teachers. Practice makes one perfect and more training must be given.

Increasing technology readiness of teachers can contribute to the success of technology integration which in turn may contribute to the quality of education.

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