



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Management

A STUDY ON PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS TOWARDS ONLINE TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN BIKANER CITY

KEY WORDS: Teacher opinion, experience and challenges, online teaching, higher education

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ABSTRACT

The study aims at analyzing the teacher's opinion about and experiences with online classes. The work tries to explain the perception of online teaching, their comfortability, support received and challenges faced during online teaching. The survey was carried out using the data collected by preparing structured questionnaire for teachers in Bikaner district in Rajasthan. Moreover, the COVID – 19 pandemic has added to the relevance of online classes, hence it is necessary to understand the opinion and experiences of teachers regarding online teaching.

INTRODUCTION

Online teaching is a prominent research topic for the last three decades, but the online study programmes were still scarce. But as we can see that the emergence of COVID-19 pandemic in the year 2020 has turned the life of people upside down and it has added to the relevance of online classes. Online classes are prevalent in all sectors of education and so is in higher education as well. (Hofer et al., 2021).

COVID-19 pandemic has led to institutions to take measures to limit disruption to education by necessitating a move to online teaching. (*Survey on online and distance learning – Results 2020*). Teachers had no choice but to shift from face-to-face classes to online and distance classes. (Marek et al., 2021).

The online teaching offers obvious advantages as continuity, flexibility and mutual support. But teachers had to adjust to online teaching and hence faced difficulties in ensuring that students take part in classes online (*Survey on online and distance learning – Results 2020*).

This transition phase come with lot of barriers for teachers, where it happened suddenly without having prior preparation. Educators have used online platforms to reach out to students, webinars have become temporary classrooms, parents have been asked to monitor at home and students have been deprived of social interaction between peers. All media or tools that can be presented by new real, turned into a visual medium due to distance limitations. (Rosalina et al., 2020)

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study teachers opinion about online teaching in higher education.
2. To examine the challenging experiences of teachers in online teaching process.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a descriptive research which utilized frequency and simple percentage. The sample taken for this study is Five (5) technical and non technical institutes running UG and PG courses in Bikaner city. Purposive sampling was employed to select these institutes. The sample size for this study is one hundred twenty five (125). The responses were collected proportionately from five selected institutes (twenty-five respondent from each institute). The instrument for the data collection was questionnaire.

The questionnaire was divided into two broader aspects of - teacher's opinion about online teaching in higher education and challenging experiences of teachers in online teaching process. Structured and dichotomous or two-point questionnaire was used.

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The data collected through survey are analyzed under two broader points. The point one describes teacher's opinion about online teaching in higher education. The point two shows challenging experiences of teachers in online teaching process.

Point 1: Teachers opinion about online teaching in higher education

This section reports respondents' answers to ten particulars related to teacher's opinion about online teaching in higher education. The following Table 1 presents teachers' responses against each statement.

Table 1: Teachers opinion about online teaching in higher education

S. No.	Particulars	Agree		Disagree	
		Freq	%	Freq	%
1	The technology involved in online teaching is not confusing.	99	79.2	26	20.8
2	I am familiar with effective pedagogy for online teaching.	73	58.4	52	41.6
3	My colleagues talk positively about online teaching.	88	70.4	37	29.6
4	I believe that the absence of face-to-face interaction with students is not a disadvantage.	24	19.2	101	80.8
5	The campus administration recognizes the effort required to teach online.	44	35.2	81	64.8
6	Online teaching does not take more time than classroom teaching.	102	81.6	23	18.4
7	My department values online teaching.	42	33.6	83	66.4
8	There is sufficient opportunity to experiment with the technology for teaching online	33	26.4	92	73.6
9	There is sufficient opportunity to observe other faculty using technology for online teaching	39	31.2	86	68.8
10	The campus administration values online teaching.	35	28	90	72

Source: (UAlbany Faculty Survey on Online Teaching and Learning), Researchers Computation 2020

The result in table 1 shows that teachers agree and are very much positive about their technology understanding (79.2%), their familiarity with effective online teaching pedagogy

(58.4%), their colleagues positive approach towards online teaching (70.04%), their opinion that online teaching takes less time than classroom teaching (81.6%).

The table 1 also depicts that the teachers disagree and are not positive about the absence of face-to-face interaction with students not being a disadvantage (80.8%), that campus administration recognizes the effort required to teach online (64.8%), that their department values online teaching (66.4%), that there is sufficient opportunity to experiment with the technology for teaching online (73.6%), that there is sufficient opportunity to observe other faculty using technology for online teaching (68.8%), that the campus administration values online teaching (72%).

Point 2: Challenging experiences of teachers in online teaching process.

This section reports respondents' answers to the fourteen particulars related to challenging experiences of teachers in online teaching process. The following Table 2 presents teachers' responses against each statement.

Table 2: Challenging experiences of teachers in online teaching process

S. No.	Particulars	Agree		Disagree	
		Freq	%	Freq	%
1	I have adequate access to technology (computers, software, stable internet connection, etc.)	105	84	20	16
2	Students have adequate access to technology (computers, software, stable internet connection, etc.)	58	46.4	67	53.6
3	I am able to easily communicate with students	50	40	75	60
4	Students do not have low levels of digital competence	97	77.6	28	22.4
5	I am able to involve disaffected (dissatisfied) students	28	22.4	97	77.6
6	I am able to involve students from socially disadvantaged homes	26	20.8	99	79.2
7	I am able to keep all students motivated and engaged	60	48	65	52
8	I am able to convert activities and content into online learning	67	53.6	58	46.4
9	I am able to assess students progress	35	28	90	72
10	I am able to prepare content for online learning	68	54.4	57	45.6
11	There is adequate direction or support given by the institute for online teaching	33	26.4	92	73.6
12	I do not believe that there is increased workload and stress working from home	18	14.4	107	85.6
13	There is sufficient opportunity for time management and organization in online teaching	16	12.8	109	87.2
14	Overall there have been no challenges in online teaching	05	4	120	96

Source: (Survey on online and distance learning – Results 2020), Researchers Computation 2020

The results in table 2 determines the teachers have experienced a lot of challenges in online teaching. Teachers

disagree that students have adequate access to technology (53.6%), that they are able to easily communicate with students (77.6%), that they are able to involve disaffected students (60%), that they are able to involve students from socially disadvantaged homes (79.2%), able to keep all students motivated and engaged (52%), that they are able to assess students progress (72%), that there is adequate direction or support given by the institute for online teaching (73.6%), that they do not believe that there is increased workload and stress working from home (85.6%), that there is sufficient opportunity for time management and organization in online teaching (87.2%), that overall there have been no challenges in online teaching (96%).

LIMITATIONS

The study provides, from teachers' point of view, relevant information regarding the way the educational process took place in five higher educational institutions in Bikaner city. The study has some limitations. One limitation is represented by the fact that the sample was non-probabilistic and the result cannot be generalized. It would be useful to broaden the sample to make comparisons in the fields of study and also conduct longitudinal study that would help to see how institutions and teachers [teaching style and methods] adapted to exclusive online teaching and also surveying students' perspective (Coman et al., 2020). The researcher was unable to directly survey students about their experience, so relied on teachers' perspectives. (Marek et al., 2021)

RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations are based on the findings of this study; 1. 70.4% of respondents mentioned that higher education institutions must provide theory based training and mentoring to faculty concerning online teaching pedagogy and instructional design.

2. 76.8 % of respondents mentioned that converting a face-to-face course to online often requires considerable modification of lesson plans, schedules, and learning activities. This training must be performed not just in the phase of crisis but rather as a longer-term professional development for the faculty.

3. Most of the teachers (80%) in this study used instructional technology that was familiar to them, but over half (64.8) of them did not use a campus provided LMS. Although in some cases there may have been no such system. This implies the need for more ongoing training in the use of educational technology as a standard part of professional development, as opposed to waiting for crisis to occur.

4. 92.8% teachers are of the view that offline and online class both have their advantages and disadvantages and both must be maintained as the mode of teaching the students. Hence online teaching and learning have more important role to play in future but it cannot be a replacement of face-to-face classroom teaching.

CONCLUSION

The study has explored the opinion about and challenging experiences of higher education faculty in Bikaner city in 2020. The teaching style sees a major shift as the teachers transformed their offline classes to online classes in short notice and as they taught in that mode for the rest of the semester.

Higher education institutions should not lose sight of the wealth of experiences that students acquire from higher education which are beyond the scope of the actual classes. Although the faculty in this study described their students as largely neutral or ready to change their learning behaviors in light of pandemic, many students disengaged from the online

classes because they miss having a face-to-face conversation and learning in a classroom setting, and longed for the campus social environment. Living independently from parents, social relationships, time management and other factors are essential part of the higher education learning experience. For students these personal growth and development experiences cannot easily be replicated in online delivery of classes.

The researchers hope that this baseline look at the experiences of higher education teachers after the rapid conversion of classes to online teaching will help academecia to better understand the dynamics of the transition and the long-term consequences. (Marek et al., 2021). Hence it can be concluded that it is very tricky to completely transit to online teaching. Of course, there are advantages to online teaching and learning that cannot be ignored but there is the need to be aware of the hindrances towards the online teaching to take corrective measures to overcome the hurdles. (Kulal & Nayak, 2020).

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