

ATTITUDE OF REGULAR AND NON-REGULAR STUDENTS TOWARDS OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

In the present study investigator wants to find out the attitude of regular and non-regular students towards open and distance education. The objectives of the study were to find out the attitude of regular and non-regular students towards open and distance education concerning different strata. The investigator framed four null hypotheses according to the objectives of the study. A purposive sampling technique was used for sample selection and a total of 353 regular and non-regular students were selected as samples for the study. Investigator developed and standardized a tool to measure the attitude of students towards open and distance education. After the collection of data, 't' test was used for testing hypotheses. Out of four hypotheses, three hypotheses were accepted and one was rejected. So, it was found that there existed mode (regular and non-regular), gender-wise and stream-wise significant differences and there found no existed locality-wise significant difference among the students with respect to their attitude towards open and distance education.

Keywords: Regular, Non-regular, Student, Open and Distance Education.

Introduction

As a form of non-formal education open and distance education is fast becoming an accepted and integral part of the mainstream of education systems in both developed and developing countries. India is the second largest population country in the world. Due to overpopulation and poverty, most of the people are uneducated. Due to the largest population in India, regular mode of education does not provide to all people and formal education is not sufficient for covering education for all. Open and distance education is a tool to overcome such challenges. Distance education solves urgent based issues (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020). Open and distance education provides many opportunities in developing countries like India for the realization and spread of education. Open and distance education and regular mode education is a similar and popularized concept in India. Open and distance education is popularized from time to time. It is a learner-centred, upgraded, self-learning-based education where the learner can learn based on their thinking, needs and ways. All aspects of distance education, including admission to examinations are flexible (Ahamad & Aqil 2015). Students from all over the world have open access to the hybrid and extensive interactive courses offered by many universities through distance education. (Grandzol, 2006). Like formal education distance education is not restricted to age, class, qualification and regular attendance for degree. It explores interest, motivation and self-passing among learners. Open and distance learning needs skills upgrading and teaching more and more subjects at a distance; no need to attend regular classes, students can attain anywhere from the world. Distance education is expressed daily, and open universities play an important role in the education system (Ahamad & Aqil 2015). For the successful implementation of the programmes for the target group, it is necessary to investigate the attitude of the students. So, in this present study investigator wants to investigate the attitude of regular and non-regular students towards open and distance education.

Review of Related Literature

Sharma (2017) observed on attitude and perception of postgraduate students towards Distance Learning to find out the attitude and perception of postgraduate students. A descriptive survey approach was used for the study. The sample consisted of 120 IGNOU students and a purposive sampling technique was used. The findings indicated that found no significant difference in attitude and perception between the male and female postgraduate students towards distance learning and found a significant difference in attitude and perception between the urban and rural postgraduate towards distance learning.

Ahamad & Aqil (2015) investigated on attitudes towards distance education among graduate students to compare the attitudes of engineering and B. Sc. students towards distance education. 200 graduate students were considered as a sample. The self-made questionnaire was used for data collection. Findings indicated that found no difference in male and female graduate students' attitude towards distance education.

Kaban (2021) examined the attitudes of university students towards distance education. Survey method as well as quantitative method was used in this present study. A total of 764 university students were selected as sample. The Attitude Scale towards Distance Education was used for data collection. Results indicated that attitude towards distance education differ in terms of gender and grade level of students.

Objectives of the Study

The following are the objectives of the present study:

- To find out the attitude of regular students towards open and distance education with respect to different strata (gender, locality and streams).
- To find out the attitude of non-regular students towards open and distance education with respect to different strata (gender, locality and streams).

Hypothesis of the Study

According to the objectives of the study, researcher formulated following hypothesis:

- H_{0.1}: There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of attitude towards open and distance education between Regular and Non-regular students.
- H_{0.2}: There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of attitude towards open and distance education between Male and Female students.
- H_{0.3}: There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of attitude towards open and distance education between Rural and Urban students.
- H_{0.4}: There exists no significant difference in the mean scores of attitude towards open and distance education between Arts and Science students.

Methodology of the Study

Researcher used quantitative method and Descriptive Survey approach for conducting the present study.

Variables: Researcher determined main variable of the present as:

- Attitude of Regular and Non-regular students.

Categorical variables:

- Gender (Male and Female)
- Locality (Rural and Urban)
- Streams (Arts and Science)

Sample: A total number of 353 from 179 regular and 174 non-regular students in different Universities were used as a sample. The judgemental sampling technique was employed to choose the samples and data was collected by the standardized questionnaire. The sample distribution is shown in table 1:

Table 1: Showing the sample's distribution

Streams		Regular Students		Non-regular Students		Total
		Arts	Science	Arts	Science	
Locality	Rural	M-20	M-23	M-21	M-22	86
		F-21	F-24	F-22	F-20	87
	Urban	M-23	M-21	M-24	M-23	91
		F-25	F-22	F-21	F-21	89
Total		89	90	88	86	N= 353

M= Male, F=Female

Tool Used:

Investigator developed a questionnaire to measure attitude towards open and distance education. A total of 40 test items were chosen after item analysis. When the items were determined to be sufficiently important for the current investigation and the Cronbach Alpha technique was used to measure reliability and validity, then the investigator finalized the questionnaire.

Definition of Terms:

Attitude: In this study investigator used the term 'attitude' positive and negative views of students towards open and distance education.

Regular Student: In this study investigator used the term ‘regular’ are students who were getting education from regular mode in different Universities in India.

Non-regular Student: In this study investigator used the term ‘non-regular’ are students who were getting education from open and distance modes in different open Universities in India.

Analysis and Interpretations of Data

After gathering data, the investigator used several descriptive and inferential statistics to analyse and interpret the data. Researchers employed descriptive statistics like Mean, Standard Deviation (SD), Standard Error of Mean (SEm), and inferential statistics like a 't'-test to compare regular and non-regular students among the variables under investigation in the current study.

Table 2: Attitude of regular & non-regular students towards open & distance education

<i>Mode</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SEm</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>'t' value</i>
Regular	179	113.69	8.66	0.64	351	4.12**
Non-regular	174	117.65	9.39	0.71		

****Significant at 0.01 level**

The estimated 't' value in Table 2 above was determined to be significant, hence the related null hypothesis (Ho.₁) was rejected. Therefore, it can be inferred that between regular and nonregular students there is a significant difference in the mean score of attitudes towards open and distance education. The mean value for non-regular students compared to regular students was higher.

Table 3: Attitude of male & female students towards open & distance education

<i>Gender</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SEm</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>'t' value</i>
Male	177	114.55	8.64	0.65	351	2.20*
Female	176	166.69	9.60	0.72		

***Significant at 0.05 level**

The estimated 't' value in Table 3 above was determined to be significant, hence the related null hypothesis (Ho.₂) was rejected. Therefore, it can be inferred that between male and female students there is a significant difference in the mean score of attitudes towards open and distance education. The mean value for female students compared to male students was higher.

Table 4: Attitude of rural & urban students towards open & distance education

<i>Locality</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SEm</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>'t' value</i>
Rural	173	115.16	8.85	0.66	351	0.93
Urban	182	116.07	9.50	0.71		

The estimated 't' value in Table 4 above was determined not to be significant, hence the related null hypothesis (Ho.₃) was accepted. Therefore, it can be inferred that between rural and urban students there is no significant difference in the mean score of attitudes towards open and distance education. The mean value for urban students compared to rural students was higher.

Table 5: Attitude of arts & science students towards open & distance education

<i>Streams</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>SEm</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>'t' value</i>
Arts	177	117.37	9.81	0.73	351	3.62**
Science	176	113.88	8.19	0.62		

****Significant at 0.01 level**

The estimated 't' value in Table 4 above was determined to be significant, hence the related null hypothesis (Ho₄) was rejected. Therefore, it can be inferred that between arts and science students there is a significant difference in the mean score of attitudes towards open and distance education. The mean value for arts students compared to science students was higher.

Findings of the Study

After analysis of the hypothesis investigator found the following findings:

- Found that there was a significant attitude score difference in the mean towards open and distance education between regular and non-regular students. The mean value for non-regular students compared to regular students was higher.
- Found that there was an important difference between male and female students' attitudes about open and distance education. The mean value for female students compared to male students was higher.
- Found that there was no significant difference between rural and urban students' attitude towards open and distance education. The mean value for urban students compared to rural students was higher.
- Found that there was an important difference between arts and science students' attitudes towards open and distance education. The mean value for arts students compared to science students was higher.

Conclusion

An important element of the current education system is open and distance education. Based on the above results investigator concluded that the majority of sampled students had positive attitude towards open and distance education and non-regular students had favourable attitude than the regular students. The attitude towards open and distance education among female students was more positive than that of male students. Compared to the rural students, urban students had a more favourable attitude toward open and distance education. In comparison to science students, those studying the arts showed a more favourable attitude toward open and distance education. The present study helps to know about the attitude of regular and non-regular students towards open and distance education among different strata. The results of this study will be helpful to teachers, policymakers, educators and other academicians to improve open and distance education in future.

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