

PERCEPTIONS OF COLLEGE TEACHERS TOWARDS ONLINE LEARNING AT UNDER-GRADUATE LEVEL

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ABSTRACT

Online learning is an educational approach that leverages digital platforms to deliver courses and educational resources to learners. It provides the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills remotely, independently of traditional classroom settings, allowing for self-paced learning and access to a diverse range of subjects and topics. The objective of the research study was to investigate the perceptions of college teachers towards online learning at under-graduate level. Total 312 college teachers of 'Government-Aided General Degree Colleges' of West Bengal were participants of this study. Self-developed five-point attitude scale was used in the study as research tool. In this study, 52.24% college teachers agreed and 15.39% college teachers strongly agreed that courses can be completed faster through online teaching-learning process than chalk and talk teaching-learning process. This suggests that online education can offer a more streamlined and efficient learning experience, allowing students to progress through their courses at a faster pace. In this study, 44.55% college teachers agreed and 21.47% college teachers strongly agreed that online classroom process was less effective as majority of the learners engaged as passive listeners. This suggests the importance of incorporating interactive and engaging instructional strategies in online teaching to enhance learner participation and involvement. In this study, 25.96% college teachers agreed and 62.82% college teachers strongly agreed that sometimes online classes could not be able to conduct due to network problems. This indicates the need for institutions to ensure a reliable technological infrastructure and provide technical support to address any issues that may arise during online classes. In this study, 55.77% college teachers agreed and 21.15% college teachers strongly agreed that online education can be made more attractive through high technological skills. This emphasizes the importance of equipping both teachers and students with adequate technological literacy and skills to maximize the benefits of online learning.

Keywords: College Teachers, Online Learning, Perceptions, Under-Graduate Level.

Introduction

The term 'Online learning', often famous as 'e-learning' refers to a mode of education where instruction and learning take place primarily through digital technologies and the internet (Allen & Seaman, 2017). It offers learners the flexibility to access educational content and participate in courses from anywhere and at any time, eliminating the constraints of traditional face-to-face classroom settings (Bates, 2019). In recent years, the advent of online education has been revolutionary in the educational system, changing the nature of how information is imparted and acquired (Allen & Seaman, 2017). Rapid technological advancements and ubiquitous internet accessibility have propelled online learning platforms to the forefront of the educational landscape (Karsenti & Bugmann, 2020). With the advent of the COVID-19 epidemic, the significance of online learning has been further amplified, as it became an essential mode of instruction for educational institutions worldwide. Against this backdrop, exploring the perceptions of college teachers regarding online learning at the undergraduate level has become a crucial area of research.

Understanding college teachers' perspectives is fundamental in assessing the efficacy and acceptance of online learning as a viable alternative or complement to traditional face-to-face instruction (Bates, 2019). Their perceptions provide valuable insights into the opportunities, challenges, and potential benefits associated with online learning in the context of undergraduate education (Lee & Choi, 2019). Additionally, their feedback serves as a valuable resource for refining online pedagogical strategies and shaping policies that optimize the learning experience for students.

Previous research has investigated the perceptions of college teachers towards online learning, encompassing various aspects such as instructional approaches, technological infrastructure, faculty training, student

engagement, and assessment methods (Khlaif & Khlaif, 2019). However, it is crucial to recognize that perceptions are context-dependent and may vary across disciplines, teaching experience levels, and cultural backgrounds (Margaryan, Littlejohn & Vojt, 2011). Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of college teachers' perceptions specific to online learning at the undergraduate level is necessary.

The study investigated the perceptions of college teachers towards online learning at the undergraduate level (Alqahtani, 2021). By exploring their attitudes, beliefs, and concerns, we can gain valuable insights into the potential advantages and challenges associated with online learning, enabling educational institutions to refine their strategies and support systems accordingly.

The results obtained from this investigation will make a valuable addition to the current corpus of information regarding online education and give valuable guidance to educational institutions, policymakers, and administrators in effectively implementing online learning at the undergraduate level (Picciano, 2017). Furthermore, the results will inform the development of targeted interventions and training programmes to empower college teachers in navigating the online teaching environment with confidence and expertise.

Rationale of the Study

The development of online learning has been a significant catalyst for change in the field of education, fundamentally altering the manner in which individuals obtain knowledge and develop competencies. This mode of learning harnesses digital technologies and the internet to provide flexible and accessible educational opportunities. Online learning has gained significant momentum in recent years, transforming the landscape of education and becoming increasingly prevalent in higher education institutions (Allen & Seaman, 2017). However, to ensure successful implementation and maximize the benefits of online learning at the undergraduate level, it is essential to understand the perceptions of college teachers towards this mode of instruction (Bates, 2019). This rationale outlines the reasons for investigating college teachers' perceptions of online learning at the undergraduate level and highlights the potential implications for educational practice.

1. Identify Opportunities and Challenges: Exploring college teachers' perceptions provides valuable insights into the opportunities and challenges associated with online learning in undergraduate education (Picciano, 2017). By understanding their viewpoints, educational institutions can leverage the identified opportunities to enhance the quality of online learning experiences and address the challenges to create a supportive environment for both teachers and students.

2. Enhance Pedagogical Approaches: College teachers' perceptions can inform the development and refinement of effective pedagogical approaches for online learning at the undergraduate level (Lee & Choi, 2019). Understanding their beliefs, attitudes, and concerns allows for the identification of best practices and innovative strategies that promote active engagement, collaboration, and critical thinking among students in the online environment.

3. Tailor Professional Development: The insights gained from investigating college teachers' perceptions of online learning can guide the design and implementation of targeted professional development programmes (Mandernach & Garrett, 2014). By addressing teachers' specific needs and concerns, institutions can provide training opportunities and support systems that enhance their skills, confidence, and competence in delivering high-quality online instruction.

4. Optimize Student Learning Outcomes: The instructional practices of college teachers are significantly influenced by their perceptions, which subsequently have an impact on the learning outcomes of their students (Cho & Heron, 2015). Understanding their perceptions helps identify effective approaches for facilitating student engagement, promoting meaningful interactions, and fostering a sense of community in the online learning environment, ultimately leading to improved student outcomes.

5. Inform Policy and Decision-Making: Insights into college teachers' perceptions of online learning at the undergraduate level can inform institutional policies, decision-making processes, and resource allocation (Majumdar & Kumar, 2019). This knowledge ensures that decisions regarding infrastructure, technological support, faculty workload, and assessment align with the needs and concerns of college teachers, fostering a supportive and conducive online learning environment.

By investigating the perceptions of college teachers towards online learning at the undergraduate level, the purpose of this research study is to make a valuable addition to the existing body of literature and provide evidence-based recommendations for improving online learning practices and support mechanisms.

Objective

1. To investigate the perceptions of college teachers towards online learning at under-graduate level.

Research Question

1. What are the perceptions of college teachers towards online learning at under-graduate level?

Methodology

Design: Investigators had used descriptive survey method (using Google form) to collect the relevant data. The study used quantitative research design to analyze the collected data.

Participants: Total 312 college teachers of ‘Government-Aided General Degree Colleges’ of West Bengal were participants of this study. Investigators had used ‘Snow-Ball Sampling Method’ for data collection.

Tool: The study utilized a self-developed five-point attitude scale as research tool. Investigators had used internal reliability test to check the reliability of the tool. The reliability of the self-developed tool was 0.76 (Cronbach’s Alpha). Researchers had also checked the content validity of the self-developed five-point attitude scale by taking experts’ views.

Analysis and Interpretation

The investigators had collected perceptions of 312 college teachers of ‘Government-Aided General Degree Colleges’ of West Bengal towards online learning at under-graduate level by using self-developed five-point attitude scale.

Table-1: Perceptions of college teachers towards comparison of online learning with traditional learning

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Online classes can be conducted easily in comparison to traditional classes.	37	11.86	73	23.40	21	6.73	124	39.74	57	18.27
Courses can be completed faster through online teaching-learning process than chalk and talk teaching-learning process.	26	8.33	55	17.63	20	6.41	163	52.24	48	15.39
Students' attendance was more in online classroom than traditional classroom setting.	22	7.05	27	8.65	13	4.17	155	49.68	95	30.45

Table-1 highlights about the perceptions of college teachers towards comparison of online learning with traditional learning. 39.74% college teachers agreed and 18.27% college teachers strongly agreed that online classes can be conducted easily in comparison to traditional classes. 52.24% college teachers agreed and 15.39% college teachers strongly agreed that courses can be completed faster through online teaching-learning process than chalk and talk teaching-learning process. 49.68% college teachers agreed and 30.45% college teachers strongly agreed that students' attendance was more in online classroom than traditional classroom setting.

Table-2: Perceptions of college teachers towards involvement of students during online learning

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Students did fewer disturbances during online classes.	64	20.51	119	38.14	35	11.22	49	15.71	45	14.42
Students were intentionally uninvolved during online learning activities.	19	6.09	38	12.18	32	10.26	145	46.47	78	25.00

Table-2 depicts about the perceptions of college teachers towards involvement of students during online learning. 38.14% college teachers disagreed and 20.51% college teachers strongly disagreed that students did fewer disturbances during online classes. 46.47% college teachers agreed and 25.00% college teachers strongly agreed that Students were intentionally uninvolved during online learning activities.

Table-3: Perceptions of college teachers towards online classroom process

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Online classroom process was less effective as majority of the learners engaged as passive listeners.	31	9.94	52	16.67	23	7.37	139	44.55	67	21.47
Online classes can be conducted at anytime and anyplace.	06	1.92	12	3.85	17	5.45	176	56.41	101	32.37
Online education can be effective only for high intelligent students.	95	30.45	87	27.88	27	8.65	49	15.71	54	17.31

Table-3 describes about the perceptions of college teachers towards online classroom process. 44.55% college teachers agreed and 21.47% college teachers strongly agreed that online classroom process was less effective as majority of the learners engaged as passive listeners. 56.41% college teachers agreed and 32.37% college teachers strongly agreed that online classes can be conducted at anytime and anyplace. 27.88% college teachers disagreed and 30.45% college teachers strongly disagreed that online education can be effective only for high intelligent students.

Table-4: Perceptions of college teachers towards online assessment

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Online assessment can be conducted easily.	39	12.50	43	13.78	37	11.86	108	34.62	85	27.24
Students didn't use any cheating method during online assessment.	143	45.83	69	22.12	43	13.78	41	13.14	16	5.13
Students were unaware about the online home assignment.	78	25.00	87	27.88	29	9.29	67	21.48	51	16.35
Learning outcomes can be measured accurately through online assessment.	167	53.53	42	13.46	39	12.50	37	11.86	27	8.65

Table-4 represents about the perceptions of college teachers towards online assessment. 34.62% college teachers agreed and 27.24% college teachers strongly agreed that online assessment can be conducted easily. 22.12% college teachers disagreed and 45.83% college teachers strongly disagreed that students didn't use any cheating method during online assessment. 27.88% college teachers disagreed and 25.00% college teachers strongly disagreed that students were unaware about the online home assignment. 13.46% college teachers disagreed and 53.53% college teachers strongly disagreed that learning outcomes can be measured accurately through online assessment.

Table-5: Perceptions of college teachers towards technical issues of online learning

Items	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Sometimes online classes could not be able to conduct due to network problems.	07	2.24	11	3.53	17	5.45	81	25.96	196	62.82
Online classes can be conducted with average technological knowledge.	13	4.17	22	7.05	11	3.53	187	59.93	79	25.32
Online education can be made more attractive through high technological skills.	31	9.94	26	8.33	15	4.81	174	55.77	66	21.15

Table-5 indicates about the perceptions of college teachers towards technical issues of online learning. 25.96% college teachers agreed and 62.82% college teachers strongly agreed that sometimes online classes could not be able to conduct due to network problems. 59.93% college teachers agreed and 25.32% college teachers strongly agreed that online classes can be conducted with average technological knowledge. 55.77% college teachers agreed and 21.15% college teachers strongly agreed that online education can be made more attractive through high technological skills.

Findings of the Study

- 39.74% college teachers agreed and 18.27% college teachers strongly agreed that online classes can be conducted easily in comparison to traditional classes.
- 52.24% college teachers agreed and 15.39% college teachers strongly agreed that courses can be completed faster through online teaching-learning process than chalk and talk teaching-learning process.
- 49.68% college teachers agreed and 30.45% college teachers strongly agreed that students' attendance was more in online classroom than traditional classroom setting.
- 38.14% college teachers disagreed and 20.51% college teachers strongly disagreed that students did fewer disturbances during online classes.
- 46.47% college teachers agreed and 25.00% college teachers strongly agreed that Students were intentionally uninvolved during online learning activities.
- 44.55% college teachers agreed and 21.47% college teachers strongly agreed that online classroom process was less effective as majority of the learners engaged as passive listeners.
- 56.41% college teachers agreed and 32.37% college teachers strongly agreed that online classes can be conducted at anytime and anyplace.
- 27.88% college teachers disagreed and 30.45% college teachers strongly disagreed that online education can be effective only for high intelligent students.
- 34.62% college teachers agreed and 27.24% college teachers strongly agreed that online assessment can be conducted easily.
- 22.12% college teachers disagreed and 45.83% college teachers strongly disagreed that students didn't use any cheating method during online assessment.
- 27.88% college teachers disagreed and 25.00% college teachers strongly disagreed that students were unaware about the online home assignment.
- 13.46% college teachers disagreed and 53.53% college teachers strongly disagreed that learning outcomes can be measured accurately through online assessment.
- 25.96% college teachers agreed and 62.82% college teachers strongly agreed that sometimes online classes could not be able to conduct due to network problems.

- 59.93% college teachers agreed and 25.32% college teachers strongly agreed that online classes can be conducted with average technological knowledge.
- 55.77% college teachers agreed and 21.15% college teachers strongly agreed that online education can be made more attractive through high technological skills.

Educational Implications

The educational implications of the study on the perceptions of college teachers towards online learning at the undergraduate level are as follows:

1. Ease of Conducting Online Classes: The majority of college teachers agreed that online classes can be conducted easily compared to traditional classes. This implies that institutions can invest in online learning platforms and provide necessary training and support to teachers to enhance their proficiency in conducting online classes.

2. Efficiency in Course Completion: A significant percentage of college teachers agreed that courses can be completed faster through online teaching-learning processes. This suggests that online education can offer a more streamlined and efficient learning experience, allowing students to progress through their courses at a faster pace.

3. Increased Student Attendance: Many college teachers agreed that students' attendance was higher in online classrooms compared to traditional classrooms. This highlights the potential of online learning to improve student engagement and participation, potentially leading to better learning outcomes.

4. Challenges in Student Behaviour: A considerable percentage of college teachers agreed that students may exhibit intentional disengagement and be more prone to disturbances during online classes. This emphasizes the need for effective strategies to promote active student participation and manage disruptive behaviours in the online learning environment.

5. Effectiveness of Online Learning: Some college teachers agreed that the online classroom process may be less effective, with learners being more passive listeners. This suggests the importance of incorporating interactive and engaging instructional strategies in online teaching to enhance learner participation and involvement.

6. Flexibility of Online Classes: A significant majority of college teachers agreed that online classes can be conducted at any time and any place. This highlights the flexibility offered by online education, allowing students to access learning materials and participate in classes according to their convenience, which can be beneficial for students with diverse schedules or geographical locations.

7. Inclusivity in Online Education: Several college teachers disagreed with the notion that online education is only effective for highly intelligent students. This indicates that online learning has the potential to cater to a wide range of students, including those with different learning abilities, backgrounds, and aptitudes.

8. Online Assessment: A notable percentage of college teachers agreed that online assessment can be conducted easily. This suggests the feasibility of utilizing online assessment methods, which can provide timely feedback and facilitate efficient evaluation processes.

9. Challenges with Online Assessment Integrity: A considerable percentage of college teachers strongly disagreed with the notion that students do not use cheating methods during online assessments. This highlights the importance of implementing robust assessment security measures and designing assessments that promote academic integrity in the online learning environment.

10. Technical Challenges: A significant percentage of college teachers strongly agreed that online classes can be disrupted due to network problems. This indicates the need for institutions to ensure a reliable technological infrastructure and provide technical support to address any issues that may arise during online classes.

11. Technological Skills: Many college teachers agreed that online education can be made more attractive through high technological skills. This emphasizes the importance of equipping both teachers and students with adequate technological literacy and skills to maximize the benefits of online learning.

These educational implications can inform institutions, policymakers, and educators in designing and implementing effective online learning strategies, addressing challenges, and optimizing the online learning experience for both teachers and students.

Conclusion

This study aimed to investigate the perceptions of college teachers towards online learning at the undergraduate level, providing valuable insights into the opportunities, challenges, and potential benefits associated with this mode of education. The results indicate that a considerable number of college teachers agreed or strongly agreed that online classes can be conducted with ease compared to traditional classes. This finding suggests that online education offers convenience and flexibility for both teachers and students, allowing for a smoother teaching and learning experience. Moreover, a majority of college teachers expressed agreement with the idea that online courses can be completed at a faster pace, highlighting the potential efficiency and accelerated progress enabled by online education. Another notable concern raised by the college teachers pertained to online assessment. Many participants expressed doubts about the ease of conducting online assessments and the ability to accurately measure learning outcomes through online assessment methods. These findings underscore the importance of addressing technical issues and ensuring the integrity of online assessments to maintain the credibility and validity of the evaluation process. Overall, the outcomes of this investigation enhance the pre-existing pool of information regarding online learning and offer significant perspectives for academic establishments. They can inform the development of targeted interventions, pedagogical approaches, and professional development programmes that enhance the quality of online learning experiences. By addressing the identified concerns and leveraging the opportunities identified in this study, institutions can optimize student learning outcomes and create a supportive and conducive online learning environment. It is important to acknowledge that this study focused on the perceptions of college teachers in 'Government-Aided General Degree Colleges' of West Bengal. Therefore, further research could explore the perceptions of college teachers from diverse backgrounds and disciplines to achieve more inclusive understanding of the challenges and opportunities specific to online learning at the undergraduate level. Finally, the present study sheds light on the dynamic nature of online education within the context of higher education and the significance of understanding college teachers' perspectives. By addressing the identified concerns and leveraging the opportunities, educational institutions can effectively implement and enhance online learning practices to meet the needs of both teachers and students in the digital age.

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