

FACTORS INFLUENCING INSTRUCTOR ENGAGEMENT IN ONLINE TEACHING: A STUDY ON TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

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Abstract

This study discusses the evolving educational environment due to factors like advanced online teaching systems, flexible virtual operations, and regulatory changes, with a focus on the impact of COVID-19 on instructor engagement in educational institutions in India. It highlights the shift to remote work and online teaching setups, emphasizing the importance of factors influencing employee engagement, particularly in online education. This paper explores the significance of educator engagement in remote teaching, including the characteristics of committed educators, the impact of technology, institutional support, and strategies to enhance teacher involvement. This study will analyse the correlation between educator engagement and student outcomes in e-learning environments and recommends implementing best practices to maintain high levels of engagement for improved teaching and learning experiences.

Keywords *online education, employee engagement, educator thoughts, factors, positive attitude, work-from-home*

Introduction

There have been notable changes in behaviour, social mores, and workplace management as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic's profound effects on how institutions function. In India, institutions have adapted their work environments to comply with social distancing guidelines and support remote work. This has led to a reduction in the workforce at physical sites, highlighting the importance of factors influencing employee engagement, particularly in online education. Educational institutions have experienced significant transformations due to the pandemic, leading to a highly disruptive experience for instructors and professors (Attridge, 2009). Measuring teacher engagement involves assessing an individual's dedication and involvement in their teaching responsibilities and the intricacies of online education. Committed teachers support students academic goals and inspire peers to excel in virtual teaching. Positive teaching engagement is often recognized by their positive attitude towards their teaching environment and pedagogical concepts (Bedarkar & Pandita, 2014)

Educators need to develop a passion for discovering innovative teaching methods, demonstrating self-motivation, showcasing creativity, and spearheading online education teaching tools. These key attributes can result in teaching effectiveness and job engagement. Passionate educators excel

in delivering effective online courses and are dedicated to helping students achieve course learning objectives that would equip them for the modern workplace.

This study will investigate how organizational changes, remote work arrangements, and contextual changes affect educators level of involvement in the online teaching environment. The findings will offer valuable insights into strategies and factors needed to enhance and maintain high levels of employee engagement, ensuring a positive and effective online teaching environment.

Objectives

1. To investigate the factors influencing teacher engagement in online teaching.
2. To identify the key characteristics of engaged educators in the context of online teaching.

Literature review

The focus on employee engagement in online education has gained importance due to the growing trend of remote work and virtual learning on a global scale. In order to cultivate a favourable and efficient work atmosphere, it is crucial for educational institutions to understand the elements that impact instructor engagement in online teaching as they adjust to the virtual world. The objective of this research is to investigate the viewpoints of instructors on the elements that influence their involvement in online teaching. By studying these characteristics, it may be possible for future management of educational institutions to discern tactics to improve and bolster employee engagement in the online instructional settings.

The level of employee involvement in online teaching is a crucial determinant that greatly impacts the efficacy of educational delivery. Multiple studies have investigated the factors that influence the level of employee engagement among instructors. Vermooten et al. (2020) discovered factors at several levels, such as teacher, school, community, and society, that account for the differences in employee engagement among public school teachers (Vermooten et al., 2020). This underscores the need of taking into account many elements in order to improve engagement

Furthermore, Shibiti (2020) highlighted the strong correlation between characteristics that contribute to employee retention and work engagement in the teaching profession. Shibiti stressed the importance of elements such as job satisfaction and well-being in fostering employee engagement (Shibiti, 2020). Furthermore, Asikin & Burhan (2021) highlighted that teacher employee engagement is impacted by self-efficacy and work satisfaction, illustrating the complex array of elements that influence engagement (Asikin & Burhan, 2021).

In addition, Kumar (2021) presented the V-5 Model of Employee Engagement, which identifies key components that are vital for engagement including emphasizing employee value, voice, work variety, virtue and organizational vision. This model provides a systematic framework for comprehending and improving engagement, especially in difficult circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Sudibjo and Sutarji (2020) emphasized the favorable impacts of job

satisfaction, well-being, and emotional intelligence on teachers' employee engagement, highlighting the significance of emotional and psychological factors in fostering engagement

Furthermore, “Beurden et al. (2021)” highlighted the significant impact of employee work engagement on improving teacher job performance, demonstrating a robust correlation between engagement and overall performance “(Beurden et al., 2021)”. “In addition, Malik et al. (2022)” investigated how employee engagement and work culture affect transformational leadership in female teachers, highlighting the interdependence of engagement, leadership, and organizational culture (Malik et al., 2022).

Al-Dmour et al. (2021) highlighted the significance of institutional support systems in enhancing the well-being and involvement of teachers in online teaching. Research conducted by Gonzalez and Markauskaite (2020) highlights the significant influence of organizational support on teacher involvement in online instruction. Supportive leadership, transparent communication channels, and sufficient resources are key factors in creating a healthy work environment that promotes teacher engagement.

Teachers with a high level of expertise in using online teaching platforms and multimedia resources are more likely to be self-assured and involved in providing online education. In contrast, educators who have difficulties with technology may encounter elevated levels of stress and disinterest (Moghavvemi et al., 2020).

Teachers who are granted autonomy to create their own online courses and choose their own timetables are more inclined to have a sense of empowerment and engagement in their professional duties. In contrast, implementing stringent regulations and excessive control might result in instructors experiencing a sense of disconnection and lack of involvement (Smith et al., 2020).

Alqurashi's (2016) research underscores the need of instructors proficiency in technology for online instruction. Continued support and training opportunities empower instructors to improve their teaching methods and proficiency in using digital tools, which in turn boosts their confidence and motivation in online instruction. Similarly, Bower et al. (2014) highlighted the significance of ongoing professional development in fostering teacher involvement and contentment in online teaching settings.

According to Kember et al. (2012), student involvement and feedback have a significant influence on instructor engagement in online teaching. Student feedback and tangible proof of student learning are key factors that lead to increased levels of teacher satisfaction and engagement. The significance of social interaction and cooperation in online education settings is apparent in research conducted by Yang and Tsai (2010).

Research gap

More research is needed to understand employee participation in online teaching. Previous studies have focused on individual factors, but a comprehensive framework is needed. Longitudinal

studies are needed to understand the progression of involvement over time and how technology and organizational policies affect it. Additionally, studies are limited on the interplay between factors affecting participation. More qualitative investigation of instructors' experiences in online education settings is needed. Addressing these gaps will help create effective measures.

Research

Methodology

This research used a quantitative design to analyze data from 400 respondents, primarily online teaching professionals. A structured survey questionnaire was developed to understand factors influencing employee engagement in online teaching. The questionnaire was distributed electronically and monitored for response rate. Descriptive and qualitative analysis was done to summarize respondents' perceptions of employee engagement.

Discussion

Factors Influencing Employee Engagement in Online Teaching

S.no.	Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
	believe that the institution should prioritize stability over innovation to manage challenges.	0	0	0	20	10
	am inclined to take challenges without extensive analysis in certain situations.	0	0	00	0	10
	eam members within the institution collaborate well in	0	0	20	10	00

	identifying and addressing challenges.					
	the institution encourages and supports innovative approaches to addressing challenges.	5	0	0	40	35
	the organization values emotional intelligence in dealing with challenge-related situations.	5	0	0	20	5
	the leadership promotes a challenge-aware culture within the organization .	0	0	00	30	10
	the organization prioritizes compliance and ethical behaviour in addressing challenges.	5	0	10	25	20

Source: Created by researcher from questionnaire responses

The study reveals key factors affecting employee engagement in online teaching. Stability is emphasized as a strategic approach, and engagement in calculated risks is analyzed. Team collaboration is emphasized, with 50% of participants agreeing that team members show good cooperation in identifying and addressing challenges. Innovative problem-solving is encouraged, with 55% of participants agreeing that the organization supports creative methods. Emotional intelligence is emphasized as a crucial attribute for managing complex situations. Leadership influence is emphasized, with 60% agreeing that effective leadership fosters a culture of awareness and continuous improvement. The study highlights the importance of digital technology proficiency, professional development opportunities, organizational support, freedom, social contact, and student participation in creating a happy and exciting workplace for educators. Addressing these factors can improve employee engagement, leading to higher work satisfaction, commitment, and excellent online teaching. This understanding provides valuable insights for organizational strategies and initiatives aimed at enhancing employee happiness and performance in the rapidly changing field of online education.

Strategies for Enhancing Teacher Participation in Virtual Classrooms

Enhancing teacher engagement in virtual classrooms can be achieved by providing thorough training programs and workshops to equip teachers with the essential skills and knowledge for successful online teaching. It is essential for these programs to address technical aspects, pedagogical strategies, and best practices for effectively involving students in virtual environments (Smith et al., 2018). Building a strong community is crucial, as it promotes teamwork and peer support among educators. Creating collaborative projects and group activities can boost participation and support professional development. Opportunities for continuous professional development, like webinars, seminars, and online courses, can be customized to meet the unique requirements and preferences of educators.

It is essential to acknowledge and appreciate outstanding performance, as it encourages and uplifts educators to strive for excellence in their positions. Promoting experimentation and innovation is crucial to cultivate a culture that inspires educators to discover imaginative methods to improve student learning in online classrooms. It is crucial for administrators, instructional designers, and teachers to maintain open communication to address concerns, exchange feedback, and enhance virtual teaching practices. It is also important to ensure teachers have reliable technical support for troubleshooting issues with online teaching tools, software, and hardware. Highlighting the importance of student-centred learning is crucial, as it motivates educators to create dynamic and stimulating lessons that focus on student involvement and hands-on learning. However, it is crucial for teachers involved in virtual teaching to prioritize work-life balance. Accessing resources and receiving support to handle the workload, establish boundaries, and prioritize self-care can help avoid burnout and enhance overall well-being. By utilizing these approaches, educational institutions can support teachers in engaging and excelling in virtual classrooms, ultimately improving the quality of online education and promoting positive learning

results for students.

Conclusion

The advancement of technology has significantly transformed education, particularly in online instruction. The impact of technology on educator engagement is significant, acting as both a support and a hindrance. Institutional support is crucial for promoting online teacher engagement, offering training, resources, and technical assistance. Insufficient institutional support may hinder educators from effectively using digital teaching platforms and resources.

Evaluating the effectiveness of engagement initiatives for online teachers is essential for organizations to identify strengths and areas for improvement. The relationship between educator engagement and student outcomes in e-learning environments reveals the interconnectedness of teaching and learning. Actively involved teachers are more likely to develop interesting learning opportunities, leading to favourable educational results and improved student performance. In online education settings, best practices must be implemented to keep teachers engaged. Key strategies include offering continuous professional growth opportunities, fostering teamwork and creativity, and maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

The elements impacting educator involvement in online teaching are varied and intricate. Emphasizing the influence of technology, receiving institutional support, assessing engagement efforts, investigating connections with student achievements, and adopting effective strategies can help educational institutions foster ongoing teacher involvement in online education environments, ultimately improving teaching and learning experiences for all involved.

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