



A Study On Perception Of Digital Platforms Among Assistant Professors In Kunnamkulam

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ABSTRACT

Integration of digital platforms into education has changed teaching and learning tremendously. This study explores the perceptions of teaching professionals towards digital platforms especially in colleges. The study aims to understand their awareness level, usage patterns, benefits, and challenges of using digital platforms in academic activities. The data is collected through survey with a questionnaire collected from assistant professors of different institutions. The study examines the extent to which digital tools are used for instructional delivery, communication, assessment, and improving academic performances. Findings indicate that even though most educators acknowledge the potential of digital platforms to improve teaching effectiveness and student engagement, problems regarding digital literacy, institutional support, and technological reliability, cost etc. exists there. This study highlights the need for training, infrastructure development, and policy formulation to foster more effective and inclusive digital integration in higher education settings.

Key Words: *Digital platforms, Perception, Learning*

INTRODUCTION

Digital platforms have emerged as vital tools reforming the way knowledge is delivered. Digital platforms have changed instructional practices and improved teaching learning experiences to a great extent. Learning Management Systems (LMS) and virtual classrooms, collaborative tools and AI-driven content delivery, etc. are used in higher education in a widespread manner. As institutions increasingly integrate technology into their operations, the perception of teaching professionals towards these digital platforms becomes a critical factor influencing their effective adoption and utilization.

Understanding how educators perceive the benefits, challenges, and overall impact of digital platforms is essential for fostering meaningful integration and enhancing teaching outcomes. The factors such as digital literacy, institutional support, and prior experiences may significantly affect the success of technology-enhanced learning environments. This study aims to explore the perceptions of teaching professionals in higher education regarding

digital platforms, throws light on the positive and negative impact, opportunities, of digital platforms in higher education.

OBJECTIVES

- To know socio economic status of Assistant Professors using digital platforms
- To understand assistant professors' perceptions regarding the effectiveness of digital platforms.
- To identify the perceived challenges of using digital platforms in academic work among assistant professors.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study follows descriptive research design. Both primary and secondary data used for the study. Primary data is collected by using structured questionnaire filled by a sample size of 150 Assistant Professors from seven colleges in Kunnankulam area. Convenient sampling method is used for the study. Secondary data is collected from books, journals and articles.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Akash Gupta (2023) evaluated the perception of teachers and students towards digitalization in education in terms of quality. Survey method was used for this study and data has been collected from 382 respondents by using a convenience random Sampling method to fetch in Mumbai with the help of a structured questionnaire. The study revealed that there is no significant relationship between gender and preferred mode of education, respondents' profile and challenges faced in digital education and respondents' profile and preferred mode of examination during online education

Afam Uzorka et al., (2023) have examined about modern technology adoption and professional development of lecturers to study about what do lecturers need in order to make technology an integral part of their teaching process to enhance the delivery of instruction, and to facilitate the development of knowledge, skills, and abilities. A qualitative research design was conducted using 89 participants and they said that professional development is self-directed and ongoing and they would like to seek professional development opportunities.

P. S. Aithal and Shubhrajyotsna Aithal (2023) have studied about the use of digital pedagogies to fully explore and comprehend the dynamic intersection between digital technology, pedagogical innovation, and faculty development within the higher education. Exploratory research methodology is used. The results showed that through digital pedagogies for online instruction, technology plays a critical role in empowering both instructors and students.

Bushra Faridi and Dr. Shahla Shabeeh Shaheen (2024) have investigated the extent of teachers' use of online learning platforms and educational apps for professional development. This is a qualitative approach researcher used purposive sampling method. Many respondents participated in professional development workshops and online courses focused on effectively using online learning platforms. This training has greatly influenced their perceptions and practices by giving them a deeper understanding of the platform's features, instructional strategies, and best practices for engaging students. It has enhanced teachers' confidence while using the platforms effectively.

Mebrate Bekele Feyisa et al., (2024) investigated about perception of the implementation of digital technology as an element of quality teaching and learning. This study deployed a quantitative method. 188 samples were taken and data collected through questionnaire. The descriptive result depicted that most university teachers agreed that technology-assisted teaching and learning is an element of quality teaching and learning.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Perception

Perception is the process by which individuals organize and interpret sensory information to give meaning to their environment. It involves selecting, organizing, and interpreting sensory data which we obtain from the five senses. This process shapes our understanding of the world and guides how we interact with it. Understanding our perceptions of others is much important as it influence how we interact with them, shaping our attitudes, feelings, and ultimately, our behaviour towards them.

Digital platforms

Digital platforms are business models that use online infrastructure to facilitate interactions between groups. Examples include social media channels, online marketplaces. It is a software based online infrastructure that facilitates interactions among users. It enables users to connect, share information, and conduct business. It relies on various technologies like cloud computing, data analytics, and mobile computing to function effectively. Digital platforms have revolutionized various industries. Platforms can be categorized based on their core function, such as transactional platforms, data-centric platforms, and integration platforms.

A digital platform for education is an online space that offers educational services or tools. It uses technology to deliver content, assessments, and other learning-related resources. These platforms can be used by students, teachers, and educational institutions to enhance learning experiences, improve accessibility, and streamline various educational processes. Social media platforms connect people and allow for content sharing. Knowledge platforms distribute and manage informational content.

With today's technological growth, instructors must learn to use various gadgets, such as smartphones and tablet computers. Teachers must also be equipped with all available online resources to ensure that their materials are alive, engaging, and up to date. The students, parents, and teachers use technology to improve education. The students become interested when the teacher delivers instructions using different kind of instructional materials. New smart devices such as phones and tablets are element in the ease of access and faster learning. Learning apps, such as animation, games, or AI-powered systems designed exclusively for edutainment, are also included. Schools and educational institutions realize the value of comprehensive student and instructor performance data as they extend their usage of virtual classrooms, e-learning platforms, and online exams.

Types of digital platforms used in education

- Learning Management Systems (LMS): Moodle, Blackboard, Canvas, Google Classroom etc. used in teaching, course content delivery, grading, student interaction
- Research & Collaboration Tools: Mendeley, ResearchGate, Zotero, Google Scholar, overleaf etc. used in research sharing, citation management, academic networking, writing
- Communication Platforms: Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet, Slack etc. used in online meetings, virtual classrooms, departmental communication
- Publishing & Dissemination Platforms: Academia.edu, SSRN, institutional repositories etc. used for sharing academic publications and increasing research visibility
- Assessment & Survey Tools: Google Forms, Microsoft Forms, Kahoot, etc. used for quizzes, student feedback, peer evaluations.
- AI and Productivity Tools: ChatGPT, Grammarly, Notion, etc. used for writing support, project management, automation.

Digital platforms and assistant professors

Digital platforms offer numerous tools and resources that can greatly benefit assistant professors in their teaching, research, and administrative tasks. These platforms can help communication, improve learning experiences, and provide access to valuable resources and communities.

Digital Platforms for Teaching and Learning

- Learning Management Systems (LMS): Platforms like Canvas, Blackboard, and Moodle provide a centralized space for course content, assignments, communication, and student interaction.
- Video Conferencing: Tools like Zoom, Google Meet, and Microsoft Teams facilitate virtual lectures, office hours, and collaborative work.
- Interactive Whiteboards: Platforms such as Miro and Mural enable dynamic brainstorming, collaborative note-taking, and visual organization.
- Online Assessment Tools: Platforms like Grade scope and Crowd mark streamline the grading process and provide detailed feedback.
- Educational Games and Quizzes: Tools like Kahoot, Quizizz, and Booklet can be used to create engaging and interactive learning activities.
- Reference Management Software: Tools like Zotero and Mendeley help organize research papers, citations, and bibliographies.
- Data Analysis and Visualization Tools: Software like R, Python, and Tableau enable data analysis, statistical modelling, and the creation of visualizations.
- Online Collaboration Platforms: Platforms like Google Drive, Dropbox, and OneDrive facilitate file sharing, document collaboration, and project management.
- Email and Messaging Platforms: Tools like Gmail, Outlook, and Slack are essential for communication with students, colleagues, and institutions.

- Social media and Networking Platforms: Platforms like LinkedIn can be used to connect with other academics, share research, and build a professional network.
- Online Learning Communities and Forums: Platforms like Edmodo and ResearchGate provide opportunities for professional development, knowledge sharing, and peer support.
- Note-Taking Apps: Evernote, OneNote, and Google Keep help organize notes, ideas, and research materials.
- Document Creation and Editing: Google Docs, Microsoft Word, and Overleaf (for LaTeX) are useful for creating and editing documents, presentations, and reports.

Advantages of using digital platforms by assistant professors.

Digital platforms offer numerous benefits for assistant professors, including enhanced communication, improved collaboration, doing administrative tasks, and access to learning resources. These platforms also facilitate personalized learning experiences and professional development opportunities.

- Improved Communication: Digital tools allow for more effective and organized communication with students and colleagues.
- Virtual Discussion Forums: Virtual forums encourage interaction between students and the professor.
- Centralized Resource Management: Learning Management Systems (LMS) provide a central hub for course materials, assignments, and announcements which helps to both teacher and student.
- Tailored Learning Experiences: Digital platforms enable teachers to personalize learning, assessments, and feedback, meeting individual student needs and learning styles.
- Access to Resources and Professional Development: Digital platforms provide opportunities for continuous professional development and staying updated.
- Global Perspective: Digital platforms facilitate access to global resources and perspectives, broadening students' horizons.
- Reduced Paperwork: Digital platforms minimize the need for paper-based materials, leading to cost savings.
- Time Savings: Automating administrative tasks frees up valuable time.

DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1 PERSONAL PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Personal factors	Groups	Percentage %
Gender	Male	38.67
	Female	61.33
Age	Below 30	33.33
	31 – 40	40
	41 – 50	20
	Above 50	6.67
Educational Qualification	Master's Degree with NET	58.67
	MPhil	26.67
	PhD	14.67
Types of institution	Government	21.33
	Aided	36
	Private	42.67
Discipline	Arts	60
	Applied Sciences	15
	Natural Science	25
Years of teaching experience	Less than 2 years	16
	2 -5 Years	46.67
	6- 10 Years	25.33
	Above 10 Years	12
	Total	100

(Source: Primary data)

Interpretation

The above table shows the demographic variables of respondents. The table shows that 61.33% of respondents are female and rest are male. Based on the variable age, 40% respondents had in age group 31-40 and 33.33% belongs to below 30 age group and only 6.67% belongs to above 50 age group. The variable educational qualification shows that 58.67% had master's degree with NET and only 22% have Ph.D. The variable type of institution shows that 42.7% are from private institutions and only 21.33% respondents are from government institutions. The variable discipline shows 60% respondents are from arts discipline and 15% are from applied sciences field and 25% was from natural sciences. The variable years of teaching experience shows 46.67% have 2-5 years of teaching experience and only 12% have experience for more than 10 years.

Table 2 **Computation of weighted mean**
Perception regarding effectiveness of digital platform

Factors	Weight	5	4	3	2	1	Total	Weighted	Rank
	Rank	1	2	3	4	5	15	Mean	
Teaching interactive and engaging		114 570	26 104	4 12	2 4	4 4	694	46.27	III
Planning and Delivering lectures		112 560	30 120	2 6	4 8	2 2	696	46.4	II
Institutional supports		100 500	34 136	8 24	6 12	2 2	674	44.93	VIII
Access to material and resources		94 470	48 192	2 6	4 8	2 2	678	45.20	VI
Ability to conduct and share research		50 250	44 176	10 30	36 72	10 10	538	35.86	XII
Flexibility in time location		98 490	38 152	10 30	3 6	1 1	710	47.33	I
Collaboration with peers		92 460	48 192	6 18	2 8	2 2	680	45.33	V
Improve the overall quality of teaching		100 500	34 136	12 36	2 4	2 2	678	45.20	VI
Better engagement with students		90 450	42 168	10 30	6 12	2 2	662	44.13	X
Integration of digital tools in technical and research		110 550	30 120	6 18	2 4	2 2	694	46.26	IV
Improve communication		90 450	46 164	10 30	3 6	1 1	651	43.4	XI
Students' positive response		96 480	38 152	10 30	2 4	4 4	670	44.66	IX
Total		5730	1812	162	148	34	8025	534.97	

(Source: primary Data)

Interpretation

The above table shows that the most of the respondents ranked first “flexibility in time and location” with mean value 47.33 which shows that the flexibility in time and location while using digital platforms is relatively significantly than other uses. “Planning and delivering lectures “ ranked second with a mean value 46.4. “students positive response is ranked 9 with mean score 44.66. Access to materials and resource and improve overall quality of teaching got similar rank with mean 45.20.

FINDINGS

- Related to the demographic variables, the most of the respondents are female.
- Majority of respondents were under the age group of 31-40 regarding age group.
- Majority of respondents possessed master's degree qualification with NET as their educational qualification.
- Most of the respondents worked in private institution as related to type of institution they work.
- Most of the respondents had experience of 2-5 years regarding years of experience.
- Related to discipline, majority of respondents were from arts discipline.
- Regarding the test of weighted mean the results showed that the flexibility in time and location was important than other benefits or uses of digital platforms.
- Ability to conduct and share research was ranked last in weighted average mean test.
- Access to material and resources and improve the overall quality of teaching got similar ranks as their perception regarding effectiveness of digital platforms.

SUGGESTIONS

- Institutional support should be given to make use of digital platforms for the betterment of academic performance of both teacher and students.
- Training should be given to use digital platforms to improve the usage in research.
- Training should be given to improve technical skill among assistant professors in colleges.
- Awareness program should be given to academicians, assistant professors, parents and society so that resistance to change can be avoided

CONCLUSION

Digital platforms need to be aware of the issue of usability and technical support, which were the main complaints reported by the professors. In view of the above-mentioned, it is possible to observe that the introduction of digital platforms brought significant changes in the educational scenario. This study has addressed the educational platforms and investigated the perception of assistant professors. In this work benefits and challenges of using digital platforms are assessed by means of this study institutions can pay attention to other indicators when formulating their strategies and take into consideration the answers given by the professors.

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