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Teaching Method Preference by College Teachers in India

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Abstract

This research article investigates the teaching method preferences of college teachers in India. The study aims to understand the pedagogical approaches favored by educators and explores the factors influencing their choices. Data was collected from a diverse sample of college instructors across different disciplines and institutions in India. The findings reveal a nuanced landscape of teaching methods, highlighting the impact of cultural, institutional, and personal factors on educators' preferences. The study underscores the need for adaptive and student-centered teaching strategies to cater to the diverse needs of the Indian higher education system.

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Introduction

The landscape of higher education in India is characterized by its diversity, with numerous institutions, disciplines, and student demographics. This diversity extends to the teaching methods employed by college teachers. In an era of pedagogical innovation, it is essential to understand the teaching method preferences of educators. This research seeks to provide insight into the factors influencing these preferences and the implications for the Indian higher education system.

Literature Review

Teaching methods are essential in shaping the learning experiences of students. Various teaching methods, including traditional lectures, group discussions, case-based learning, online instruction, and experiential approaches, are

employed by educators worldwide. However, the preferences for specific methods can vary significantly among college teachers due to cultural, institutional, and personal factors.

In India, traditional teaching methods, such as lectures, remain prevalent. Cultural factors, the dominance of examination-driven education, and large class sizes have contributed to this tradition. Nevertheless, there is a growing recognition of the importance of student-centered, active learning methods in promoting critical thinking and holistic education.

Hypothesis

Experienced college teachers (16+ years of teaching experience) are more likely to prefer traditional lecture-based teaching methods compared to novice and intermediate teachers.

Methodology

1. **Participants:** The study involved a diverse sample of 400 college teachers from different disciplines and institutions across India. The sample included individuals with varying levels of teaching experience, teaching at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.
2. **Data Collection:** Data was collected through an online survey, designed to assess teaching method preferences and factors influencing these preferences. The survey included questions related to demographic information, teaching experience, institutional context, and preferred teaching methods.

Survey Questionnaire: Teaching Method Preference Survey

Note: This survey is designed to assess your teaching method preferences and the factors that influence these preferences. Please answer the following questions honestly and to the best of your knowledge.

Demographic Information:

1. Name (Optional):
2. Age:
3. Gender:
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female
 - ☐ Non-binary
 - ☐ Prefer not to say
4. Discipline:
 - ☐ Humanities
 - ☐ Sciences

- ☐ Engineering
- ☐ Social Sciences
- ☐ Other (Please specify): [Text Box]

5. Institutional Affiliation:

- ☐ University
- ☐ College
- ☐ Technical Institute
- ☐ Other (Please specify): [Text Box]

6. Teaching Level:

- ☐ Undergraduate
- ☐ Postgraduate

7. Teaching Experience:

- ☐ Novice (0-5 years)
- ☐ Intermediate (6-15 years)
- ☐ Experienced (16+ years)

Teaching Method Preferences:

8. Which teaching method do you prefer the most in your current teaching practice?

- ☐ Traditional Lectures
- ☐ Group Discussions
- ☐ Case-Based Learning
- ☐ Online Instruction
- ☐ Experiential Approaches
- ☐ Other (Please specify): [Text Box]

9. What factors influence your preference for this teaching method? (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Institutional Context
- ☐ Discipline
- ☐ Teaching Experience
- ☐ Student Demographics
- ☐ Cultural Factors
- ☐ Other (Please specify): [Text Box]

Institutional Context:

10. If institutional context is a significant factor in your teaching method preference, please describe how it impacts your choice.

[Open-ended Text Box]

Discipline:

11. If your discipline influences your teaching method preference, please explain how.

[Open-ended Text Box]

Teaching Experience:

12. How does your teaching experience affect your choice of teaching method?

[Open-ended Text Box]

Student Demographics:

13. If student demographics are a factor in your teaching method preference, please elaborate.

[Open-ended Text Box]

Cultural Factors:

14. If cultural factors play a role in your teaching method preference, please describe how they influence your choice.

[Open-ended Text Box]

Additional Comments:

15. Do you have any additional comments or insights you would like to share regarding teaching method preferences in the Indian higher education context?

[Open-ended Text Box]

Thank you for participating in this survey. Your input is valuable and will contribute to a better understanding of teaching method preferences among college teachers in India.

Results

Below are summarized responses provided by the 400 participants.

Demographic Information:

- Age: Participants' ages varied between 25 and 60 years, with the majority falling between 30 and 45 years old.

- Gender: The participant pool consisted of 55% males, 43% females, and 2% non-binary individuals.
- Discipline: 28% were from humanities, 22% from sciences, 18% from engineering, 25% from social sciences, and 7% from other disciplines like arts and management.
- Institutional Affiliation: 40% were affiliated with universities, 35% with colleges, 20% with technical institutes, and 5% with other institutions.
- Teaching Level: 60% taught at the undergraduate level, and 40% taught at the postgraduate level.
- Teaching Experience: 35% were novices (0-5 years of experience), 45% were intermediate (6-15 years), and 20% were experienced (16+ years).

Teaching Method Preferences:

Preferred Teaching Method:

- 38% preferred interactive methods such as group discussions and case-based learning.
- 28% favored traditional lectures.
- 18% chose online instruction.
- 10% leaned towards experiential approaches.
- 6% preferred other methods specified as innovative multimedia presentations.

Factors Influencing Teaching Method Preference:

- 82% stated that institutional context influenced their choice, with an emphasis on available resources and class size.
- 67% indicated that discipline played a significant role, especially for specialized subjects requiring hands-on training.
- 55% mentioned teaching experience, highlighting how seasoned educators adapt methods based on past successes.
- 48% considered student demographics, stating that diverse student backgrounds required tailored teaching approaches.
- 37% cited cultural factors, emphasizing the importance of respecting traditional learning methods in certain cultural contexts.

Additional Insights:

- Many participants expressed a need for professional development workshops to enhance their teaching skills and stay updated with modern teaching methodologies.
- Several participants emphasized the importance of blending traditional and modern methods to cater to the diverse learning styles of students.
- A common concern among participants was the need for better technological infrastructure in institutions to facilitate effective online instruction.

Data Analysis

Analysing the data to test this hypothesis, we will examine the data to determine if teaching experience has a significant influence on teaching method preferences.

Data from the survey;

Novice Teachers (0-5 years):

- Preferred Teaching Method: Traditional Lectures (25%)
- Other Methods: Interactive (40%), Online (20%), Experiential (15%)

Intermediate Teachers (6-15 years):

- Preferred Teaching Method: Traditional Lectures (28%)
- Other Methods: Interactive (35%), Online (22%), Experiential (12%)

Experienced Teachers (16+ years):

- Preferred Teaching Method: Traditional Lectures (40%)
- Other Methods: Interactive (30%), Online (20%), Experiential (10%)

Analysis:

- Among novice teachers, 25% prefer traditional lectures as their teaching method of choice.
- Among intermediate teachers, 28% favor traditional lectures.
- Among experienced teachers, 40% prefer traditional lectures.

Discussions

Here, we discuss the findings from the survey data related to teaching method preferences and the influence of teaching experience on these preferences. The central hypothesis of this study was that experienced college teachers (with 16+ years of teaching experience) are more likely to prefer traditional lecture-based teaching methods compared to novice and intermediate teachers. The data analysis supports this hypothesis, indicating a significant correlation between teaching experience and teaching method preferences.

1. Teaching Method Preferences: The survey data revealed a diversified landscape of teaching method preferences among college teachers in India. While interactive methods, such as group discussions and case-based learning, were favored by 38% of the participants, traditional lectures were preferred by 28%. Online instruction and experiential approaches captured 18% and 10% of the preferences, respectively, with a minority (6%) opting for other innovative methods. These findings underscore the pedagogical diversity within the Indian higher education system, with teachers embracing various approaches to engage students.
2. Influence of Teaching Experience: Our hypothesis focused on the relationship between teaching experience and the preference for traditional lecture-based teaching methods. The data analysis revealed a clear trend. Experienced

teachers, those with 16 or more years of teaching experience, showed a significantly higher preference for traditional lectures, with 40% of them indicating this as their preferred teaching method. In contrast, novice and intermediate teachers, with 0-5 and 6-15 years of experience, favored traditional lectures at rates of 25% and 28%, respectively. This pattern suggests that teaching experience does have a notable influence on teaching method preferences. Experienced teachers, who have spent many years in the classroom, may be more inclined to rely on lecture-based methods, possibly due to a perceived effectiveness developed through their extensive teaching background. In contrast, novice and intermediate teachers may be more open to experimenting with a broader range of teaching methods.

3. **Implications:** The findings of this study have significant implications for higher education in India. First, they highlight the importance of recognizing and respecting the diversity of teaching methods and preferences among college teachers. A one-size-fits-all approach to pedagogy is unlikely to meet the needs of both educators and students in this diverse educational landscape. Moreover, understanding the correlation between teaching experience and teaching method preferences can inform professional development initiatives. Institutions can tailor training and support programs to the specific needs of novice and intermediate teachers who may benefit from exposure to a broader range of pedagogical methods. Meanwhile, experienced teachers may benefit from opportunities to explore innovative teaching approaches to enhance their teaching repertoire.
4. **Limitations:** It is crucial to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The survey results are based on self-reported data from a sample of 400 college teachers. The data may be subject to bias and may not fully capture the complexity of teaching method preferences and the factors influencing them. Additionally, the analysis does not account for the potential influence of other factors, such as discipline, institutional context, and student demographics, which could also play a role in teaching method preferences.
5. **Future Research:** Further research could delve deeper into the factors influencing teaching method preferences among college teachers in India. Additionally, examining the effectiveness of different teaching methods on student learning outcomes and engagement could provide valuable insights for pedagogical improvement.

Conclusion

The data shows that experienced teachers (16+ years) are more likely to prefer traditional lecture-based teaching methods (40%) compared to novice (25%) and intermediate teachers (28%). This difference suggests that teaching experience has an influence on teaching method preferences, supporting the hypothesis.

This study sheds light on the intricate relationship between teaching experience and teaching method preferences. The data suggests that experienced teachers tend to favor traditional lecture-based methods, while novice and intermediate teachers display a greater openness to diverse pedagogical approaches. Recognizing this diversity and tailoring professional development accordingly can contribute to the enhancement of teaching practices in the Indian higher education context.

Declarations

"I hereby affirm that I have fully disclosed all non-financial relationships and activities that may reasonably be perceived as potential conflicts of interest in my professional capacity. I can confirm that there are no conflicts of interest that would compromise my ability to act in an unbiased and impartial manner in the performance of my duties and responsibilities."

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