

Teachers' Influence in Online Education

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Abstract: The levels and methods of using them to achieve quality education vary and are dependent on the various factors associated with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) policy and their practices in education, even prior to the closure of schools and universities as a preventive measure against the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, Honey et al. (2000) suggest that understanding the forms of interaction between teachers, students, and technologies is crucial in order to produce favorable results in the inclusion of educational technology. The application of ICT has resulted in a paradigm change in the connection between teachers and students.

Keywords: Quality education, Information and Communication Technology

The Pandemic COVID-19-induced shift in teaching and learning to an online delivery modality has become a fundamental feature of the global education system. However, the levels and methods of using them to achieve quality education vary and are dependent on the various factors associated with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) policy and their practices in education, even prior to the closure of schools and universities as a preventive measure against the COVID-19 pandemic. In this regard, Honey et al. (2000) suggest that understanding the forms of interaction between teachers, students, and technologies is crucial in order to produce favorable results in the inclusion of educational technology. The application of ICT has resulted in a paradigm change in the connection between teachers and students. Teachers' perspectives on teaching, their ICT knowledge and abilities, and their teaching approaches all play an important part in successfully and effectively integrating ICTS into classroom teaching and learning. In this context, Erstad (2010) stresses the role of the teacher as more of an adviser, critical conversation partner for students, and leader for certain topic areas in his research in Norway. This suggests that the teacher is encouraging more learning freedom. Teachers utilize ICT to alter their interactions with pupils. In this regard, Scardamalia (2002) believes that the role of instructors in utilizing ICT in language instruction should be to promote learners' learning outcomes. Teachers, in this sense, utilize ICT to improve their personal work and professional growth and for developing and creating new strategies, thinking, reflecting on practice and engaging the students in several meaningful activities and tasks for better learning outcomes.

Teachers are the keys to transfer the teacher centred approach into learner friendly learning through technology based teaching. Duraku and Hoxha (2020) state that teachers' perspectives on teaching methodology has been proven to influence the level of technology integration in the classroom and are also expected to play significant role on successful implementation of online learning. Online teaching and learning should try to support the learners' needs and expectation rather than delivering the subject matter only from teachers' perspective even if the courses are not ICT friendly and are not designed in such a way in the context of Nepal.

Moreover, Palmer et al. (2009) suggest security, level of self-satisfaction, the time and dedication of both teachers and students needed to implement the changes as the major factors that determine the quality of online education (as cited in Ibrahim et al., 2013). Changes in the education system that occur as a result of either preventive strategies against pandemic COVID or as part of regular educational improvement may not be easily accepted by the concerned stakeholders in the sense that such changes may produce something that is not normal or regular practiced. In this line, Ibrahim et al. (2013) acknowledge that changes in educational patterns may produce resistance among or among a group of individuals who are uninterested in change and prefer to retain the status quo. Furthermore, the institution, its culture, policies, and support for both professors and students are important elements in determining the quality of online or remote education (Per and Kitson, 2014). Online education may have only good aspects but it may

have drawbacks according to the context and course. Hebebcı, Bertiz, & Alan (2020) find that teachers and students had both positive and negative attitudes towards distance education whereas Serhan (2020) finds that students had a negative attitude toward the use of Zoom.

All these literatures imply that the success of online education and change in educational management system depend upon teachers' dedication, motivation, time, support and technological knowledge and skills.

As per the policy of the government, the academic institutions have begun online education in their practices. As a part of promoting online education to facilitate face to face mode, and providing access to quality higher education to mass people through open and distance learning mode, Tribhuvan University established Open and Distance Education Centre in 2015 with the aim of providing access to quality higher education through open and distance learning mode for the students who cannot attend the regular class (TUODEC, 2015) though very few students got enrolment in this program.

The COVID-19 pandemic urges the university to implement online education in its all the faculties and departments. As a result, Tribhuvan University has declared implementing online education as preventive measure of academic loss. It has introduced online classes guideline, provided it domain email account for the teachers and students, and also trained both teachers and students in using MS Team as an official software for teaching, learning, emailing and doing any tasks related to the university (TU,2020). Similarly, Nepal Open University which used to have online mode of teaching and learning even before the pandemic promoted its technological competencies and running its regular programme. Other universities like Kathmandu University, Pokhara University, Mid- Western University, Far-Western University and almost all the schools and colleges have been practicing online teaching and learning to keep and run educational activities functional and not to make possible academic loss created by the closure as preventive measures against COVID-19. In this context, the present study is an attempt to investigate the effect of online education in terms of its benefits from teachers' and students' perspectives in higher educations. Moreover, it also tries to explore their suggestions as the possible strategies to be adopted during and even after the pandemic COVID-19 for making online mode of teaching and learning more effective and successful as a paradigm shift in the deliver mode of education system of higher educations.

This study used a constructivist method as its theoretical framework to investigate instructors' and students' perceptions on online education in terms of its advantages, obstacles, and viable ways to be used in higher education during and after the pandemic COVID-19. Online education must be interactive in order to facilitate effective and successful teaching and learning. According to Lou (2005), the fast expansion and development of ICTs in teaching and learning has given rise to numerous constructivist-based methodologies such as problem-based learning, interactivity, case-based learning, and task-based learning. Constructivist theory based methodologies and approaches are more student centered, promote group works, pair works and project works that can promote communicative ability, and they are process based focusing on inferring meaning, forming opinions and developing critical thoughts.

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