

A STUDY ON THE ATTITUDE OF UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS TOWARDS DISTANCE EDUCATION IN NORTH 24 PARGANAS DISTRICT OF WEST BENGAL

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ABSTRACT

Distance education is the alternative way to formal education. This is a form of non-formal education. Distance education is the most suitable and dependable way out for the academic achievement of students who are unable to attend regular formal education for some reasons. In this Distance learning method, the most beneficiary or most involved community is the student. In this Distance learning system, the traditional way was correspondence learning but now-a-days it usually involves online education. There will be some possibilities to run the programme completely in distance mode by only online teaching-learning process or a combination of distance learning and traditional classroom instruction which is now called blended mode. In this Distance learning mode, e-learning, virtual classroom, G -Suit are the most common terms which include the online teaching-learning process as well. Distance learning can expand the scope of learning and access of knowledge depending on the need and capability. Distance education also provides some broader methods of communication with the help of technological tools and techniques; communication improves the quality of teaching as communication allows enhancing the benefit of this teaching-learning process. So, it is highly pertinent to know the attitude of the students. Accordingly, an attempt has been made to estimate the attitude of Under Graduate level students towards distance education in North 24 Parganas District of West Bengal.

Keyword: Non-Formal Education, Distance Education, Attitude, Under Graduate Student

INTRODUCTION

Since the last century, our society has changed significantly and so is the education system. Population explosion and restricted opportunities of conventional or face to face mode of education has compelled us to introduce various new forms of education system. One among those education systems is distance education.

In modern times, there are various types of education - informal, formal, and non-formal education. Informal education is actually incidental education without reading, or attending classes. This system of education first evolved in our society. Formal education is learning within an organized institution, with time schedules, established, curricula and syllabi taught by the teacher and learned by the learner, followed by a system of examination or evaluation. Non-formal education is a system of learners' education organized outside the formal system, with emphasis on its organized character, and its hours of learning being flexible.

Education has to be made accessible to all, irrespective of financial, social, and psychological conditions. Lifelong education has also been emphasized not only for all but also for all stages of their lives. This equalization of educational opportunities should be ensured through diversified sources and multi-point entries and democracy can transcend the entire educational system throughout the world.

Distance Education practically took roots in the seventies when more and more and more universities started institutes which offer correspondence courses. Rudder Duthie (1989) has rightly observed that so far as the demand for higher education is concerned, the formal system is unable to meet it. That is why, a large number of students take to distance education or private appearance.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- 1) To compare the attitude between Male UG level students and Female UG level students towards education.
- 2) To compare the attitude between UG level students at Urban area and UG level students of Rural area towards distance education.

HYPOTHESES

Ho 1 : There is no significant difference between the attitude of Male and Female UG level students towards distance education.

Ho 2 : There is no significant difference between the attitude of Rural and Urban UG levels students towards distance education.

KEY TERMS DEFINED

In the research problem there are three key terms used.

- 1) **Attitude :** Allport (1935) defined an attitude as “a mental and neural state of readiness, organized through experience, exerting an individual's response to all objects and situations with which it is related”. In psychology, an attitude refers to a set of emotions, beliefs, and

behavior toward a particular object, person, thing, or event. Attitudes are the result of experience or upbringing, and they can have a powerful influence over behavior.

- 2) **Under Graduate Student:** In India, the Graduation system is classified into two parts. Undergraduation (UG) and post-graduation (PG). It takes three or four years to complete an “undergraduates” degree. Undergraduate-level students mean those who are having their university degree course after the 12th class or higher secondary. Under graduation, education is education conducted after secondary education and before post-graduate education. It typically includes all the academic programs up to the level of a bachelor’s Degree.
- 3) **Distance Education:** Distance Education or long-distance learning is the education of students who may not always be physically presented as a school traditionally, this usually involved correspondence covers where the students correspond with the school via post. Today it involves online education. Distance education is defined as the practice of using correspondence, either written or virtual, to lessen.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

In this study the topic is justified on the following things:

- 1) The main goal of Distance education is to overcome barriers of place and time.
- 2) Undergraduate level students are well-known for distance education. So, the study reflects the attitude toward distance education.
- 3) Distance education has many forms, and students accepted them thoroughly. So, nowadays distance education is very much famous.
- 4) Distance education has many advantages so maximum undergraduate-level students has positive attitudes toward distance education.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Pougat & Pym (2000) stated that distance-education programs are the future of higher education. This has led to considerable debate, both for and against. Some argue that it is not worth spending huge amounts of money on infrastructure, software, training, and technological pedagogy. While reviewing the literature, we find three basic issues: for or against qualitative research, the ‘no significant difference’ debate, and criticisms of serious flaws in research design. It is concluded that more qualitative approaches are necessary and that the object of research should be not just the various media involved in ODL, but specific social sets of goals, tasks, and strategies.

Simpson (2004) reported that Distance learning can be defined as learning services. Various problems and constraints are faced in distance learning. Distance education is about information

technology that supports the learning process. Some students can't continue their studies for workload or workforce so online courses are key for keeping studying. There is much evidence that retention in distance education programs is lower than in conventional or face-to-face programs. Distance learners have unique and particular needs that require institutions to promote engagement through a range of targeted services.

Ashok (2007) stated that New Delhi distance education system by the distance teaching institutions of particular. This paper also promotes a discussion on issues that will allow us to reach shared views about what should be the future of research in India. The main objective is to review the state of the art of research in distance education. The paper discusses the institutional policy, global and national distance education research scenario, research designs, and methodology used in open and distance learning (ODL) research. The paper also seeks to promote a discussion on issues, which will allow us to reach shared views about what should be the future of research in Indian DTIs during the decades to come.

Zawacki, Backer & Vogt (2008) stated that presents a review of distance education literature to identify gaps and priority areas in distance education research passed on a validated classification of research areas. The conclusion is that distance education research is strongly dominated by issues related to instructional design and individual learning process.

According to Keles & Ozel (2010), in recent years, rapid developments in technology and the web have led to many changes in education. One of the most important changes in education is in the form of distance learning. In the distance education system developed within the scope of the study, it is ensured that the compilation of programming assignments can be easily integrated into the Moodle distance education system. Thus, the programming assignments will be collected in one place, compiled and run, and scored in the same place.

Simonson, Schlosser & Orellana (2011) stated that Distance education is defined as the various approaches for effective research is summarized, and the results of major research reviews of the field are explained in this article. Additionally, two major areas of research are included-research summaries that explained and support best practices in the field.

According to Kashap & Guruprasad (2014), distance learning will thrush people in high educational environments to share their knowledge and ideas and upgrade their qualifications for using of information communication technology (ICT) in distance learning. It also added a new dimension to improve the quality and timely information to the students. In India, nowadays, distance education is a popular tool for people who want to acquire knowledge and upgrade qualifications. We analyze the learning methodology, process, and system.

According to Ashwini & Arabis (2018), E-learning is one of the important aspects of today's world. E-learning is very easily accusable and flexible. Distance education supports the

professional development of participation in an institutional observation. E-learning is an excellent option in education, particularly when there are hindrances to traditional learning situations. For example, some people wish to continue their educations but do not live within driving distance of a college or university and don't find it feasible to relocate. E-learning provides a better learning environment in India.

Methodology of the Study

- 1. Method:** The study follows the descriptive study of survey design using hypothesis. This implies quantitative research where data is collected by the administration of the Questionnaire in number and interval level of assessment.
- 2. Data Collection Tool:** In this study a self-constructed Questionnaire comprising twenty (20) statements. This tool is based on 5 points Likert-type scale and the highest possible score would be 100 (5 x 20). Thus scale is constructed followed by 5 points Likert-type scale.
- 3. Variables:** In the present study, dependable variable is Attitude towards distance education. In the present study, independent variable are -Gender (male and Female), Area (Urban and Rural)
- 4. Sampling:** At the present study, the population includes (Male and Female) both students of the undergraduate level of West Bengal (urban and rural areas). Here purposive sampling technique which is basically based on the characteristic of the population and the objectives of the study has been adopted. There are 200 students from two different colleges - among them both urban and rural area students are taken as samples. Between 100 urban area students there are 50 male and 50 female students and between 100 rural area students there are 50 male and 50 female students.

Table -1: Sample Distribution Table

Area	No. of the male student	No. of female students	Total
Urban	50	50	100
Rural	50	50	100
Total	100	100	200

Data Analysis

The collected data are edited, coded, classified, and tabulated. After tabulation, the data is analyzed by using a statistical package for attitude toward distance education of undergraduate-level students. The data is presented using description to find out the significant difference in attitude towards distance education.

Description and Interpretation

A measure of central tendency is a single value that attempts, to describe a set of data by identifying the central position within that set of data. As such, a measure of central tendency is sometimes called a measure of central location. They are also closed as summary statistics. The mean, and mode is all valid central tendency. By using mean, median, and mode- the normally of the collecting data has been shown. Also, Descriptive statistics are used to show whether there is an area-wise difference among secondary students. Here, the attitude on inclusive teacher's programs between Rural and urban areas is investing by using t-test.

At the 5% level of significance and degree of freedom 28, t value is 21.71. If calculating t value is < 21.71 then Null Hypothesis is accepted.

At 1% level of significance and degree of freedom 28, t value is 1.70. If calculating t – value is > 1.70 then Null Hypothesis is rejected.

Table-2: Calculating table for central tendency of attitude score of teachers on Male & Female

N-100	Central Tendency	Value
Mean (x)	66	
Median (me)	64.5	
Mode (mo)	61.5	

From the above table, it is clear that the Mean, Median, and Mode are near, equal. Therefore, the distribution of scores of Secondary school students of Male and Female teachers are normally Distributed.

Score	F
30-39	10
40-49	20
50-59	40
60-69	60
70-79	30
0-79	30
90-99	10

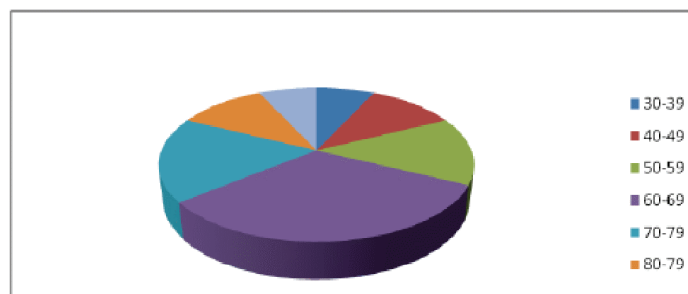


Fig. 1: Pie chart of central tendency of attitude score of Students (Male & Female)

Table-3: Calculating table for central tendency of attitude score of Students of Rural and Urban Area. SSSS

N-100	Central Tendency	Value
Mean (x)	63	
Median (me)	62.83	
Mode (mo)	62.49	

From the above table, it is clear that the Mean, Median, and Mode are near, equal. Therefore, the distribution of scores of Secondary school teachers by Rural and Urban teachers is normally distributed.

Score	F
30-39	10
40-49	30
50-59	40
60-69	60
70-79	30
80-79	20
90-99	10

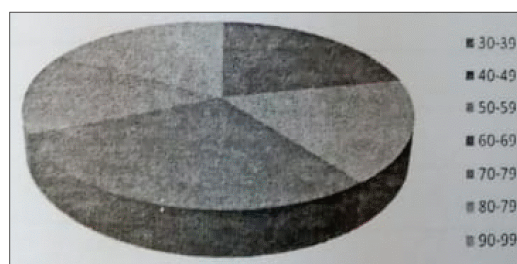
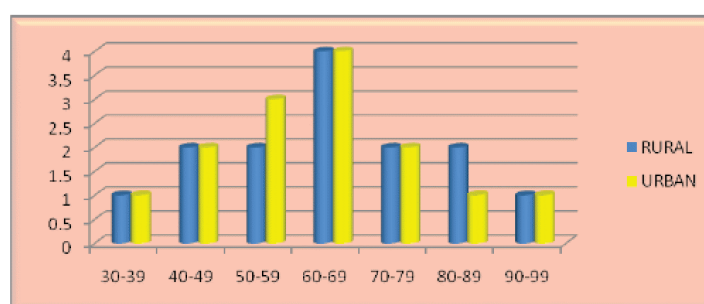


Fig. 2 (Pie chart of tendency of attitude score of students of Rural and Urban area)

Table-4: Calculating table for the t test area with respect to Area basis (Rural & Urban)

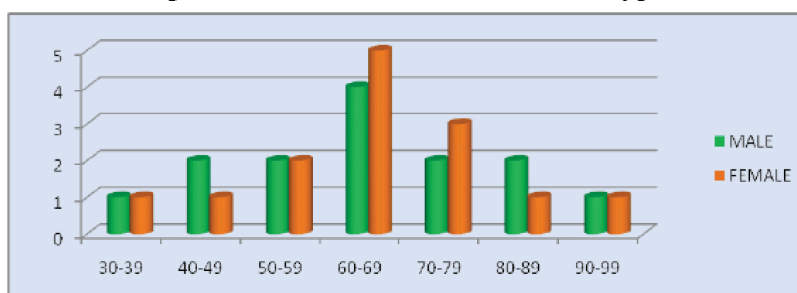
Area	X(Mean)	N	Level of significance (0.05)	Level of significance (0.01)	Calculated value For z test
Rural	64	100	1.960	2.576	4.76
Urban	62	100			

The table shows that the calculated value of t is 4.76 again the critical or table value of z from the table is 1.96 at the 5% level of significance. So the calculating value is greater than of table value t ($4.76 > 1.96$) at 5% level of significance which means Null Hypothesis is not accepted.

**Fig.3 (Bar graph of t-test area with respect to Area basis (Rural & Urban))****Table-5: Calculating table for the t-test area with respect to gender basis (Male & Female)**

Area	X(Mean)	N	Level of significance (0.05)	Level of significance (0.01)	Calculated value For z test
MALE	65	100	1.960	2.576	7.14
FEMALE	63	100			

The table shows that the calculation value of Z is 7.14 again the critical or table value of Z from the table is 1.96 at the 5% level of significance. So the calculating value is greater than table value t ($7.14 > 1.96$) at 5% level of significance which means the Null Hypothesis is not Accepted.

**Fig.3 (Bar graph of t-test area with respect to Area basis Male & Female)**

Findings of the Study

- O1. To compare the attitude between male undergraduate and female undergraduate level students towards distance education.
- Ho 1. There is no significant difference between the attitude of male and female UG level students towards distance education.

The calculated z value 7.14. So that .05 and .001 at the critical value hypothesis are not accepted. Thus, there is a significant difference in attitude toward distance education among male and female students. There existed a significant difference in the attitude of male undergraduate level students and female undergraduate level students towards distance education. The female undergraduate students showed a more positive attitude than male undergraduate level students towards distance education.

- O2. To compare the attitude between urban area undergraduate level students and rural area undergraduate level students towards distance education
- Ho 2. There is no significant difference between the attitude of Rural and Urban UG levels students toward distance education.

On the basis of analysis and interpretation of data, the following findings were drawn-

- 1) The calculated z value 4.76. So that .05 and .001 at the critical value hypothesis is not accepted. Thus, there is a significant difference in their attitude toward distance education among urban and rural area students.
- 2) There existed a significant difference in the attitude of the urban area undergraduate level students and rural area undergraduate level students towards distance education. The rural undergraduate students showed a more positive attitude than urban undergraduate level students towards distance education.

Based on the analysis and interpretation of data the following findings were drawn.

The area-wise difference between Rural and Urban among the undergraduate level students the attitude towards distance education is normal. In the area-wise difference between Male and females among the undergraduate level students the distribution of the attitude toward distance education is normal.

CONCLUSION

In this study after the data interpretation, we can say that the attitude of UG level students towards distance education varies with their gender and residential area. Firstly, the undergraduate students from both the rural and urban area do not have the same attitude toward distance education.

Secondly, both male and female undergraduate college students do not cherish the same attitude on distance education. Attitude toward distance education among the students at a higher level must be positive. They should popularize distance education and make open and distance education (ODL) effective in the 21st century. Moreover, teachers' attitudes towards distance education should also be ensured through further research.

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