

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Educational reform in practice: A dual perspective of policy outcomes for students and faculty

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Abstract: Higher education reforms have drawn a lot of attention from throughout the world, especially in light of policy initiatives meant to increase employability, accessibility, and inclusivity. Reforms like the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 in India place a strong emphasis on outcome-based education, digital integration, and transdisciplinary learning. However, how these innovations are perceived by important stakeholders—faculty and students—will determine how effective they are. This study looks at the results of recent changes to educational policies from the views of both teachers and students at Bengaluru, Karnataka's higher education institutions. Data was gathered from 200 participants (100 faculty members and 100 undergraduate and graduate students) chosen through purposive sampling from particular institutions using a cross-sectional quantitative research approach. Google Forms was used to administer structured questionnaires with a five-point Likert scale. Stakeholder perceptions of the efficacy of the reform were assessed using one-sample t-tests. The results show that while faculty members report greater workload and implementation issues, students perceive notable increases in accessibility and diversity. The report emphasizes the need for inclusive and balanced reform initiatives by highlighting a gap between policy goals and actual implementation. It supports stakeholder-centered policy evaluation and offers policymakers and institutional administrators practical insights to enhance the efficacy and sustainability of educational changes.

Keywords: Educational reform, Policy outcomes, Student perspective, Faculty perspective

Introduction

Improving employability, global competitiveness, and the quality of higher education all depend on educational reform (Dill, 2013; Datnow, 2020). The goal of modern policies like India's National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, outcome-based education frameworks, digital learning projects, and skill development programs is to match academic systems with inclusive growth goals and labor market demands (Gupta & Zhao, 2024; Nix et al., 2023). Although flexibility, interdisciplinary learning, and skill development are emphasized in these reforms, stakeholder experiences play a major role in their efficacy (Burch, 2007). Despite frequently encountering difficulties with workload, training, and institutional support, faculty members are essential in putting policy into reality (Harris et al., 2017; Datnow, 2020). Conversely, students assess reforms based on learning outcomes quality, employability, and accessibility (Mitra, 2012). Even while stakeholder participation is becoming more and more important in policy, there is still little empirical data that looks at teacher and student viewpoints at the same time. To ascertain whether reforms accomplish desired results without placing undue obligations on stakeholders, it is imperative to close this gap.

Objectives

This study aims to examine the challenges faced by faculty and students in adapting to policy-driven reforms, evaluate stakeholder perceptions of reform effectiveness, assess outcomes related to accessibility,

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quality, and inclusivity, and provide evidence-based recommendations for improving educational policy implementation.

Literature Review

Research on educational reform highlights the complex interaction between policy design and implementation realities. Institutional and policy analyses emphasize that reforms often encounter capacity constraints and contextual variations influencing outcomes (Cohen et al., 2018; Burch, 2007). Teacher-centered studies indicate that professional beliefs, workload, and institutional support significantly shape reform adoption and sustainability (Datnow, 2020; Harris et al., 2017; Gupta & Zhao, 2024). Concurrently, student-focused research underscores the importance of incorporating student voice to enhance policy responsiveness and equity (Mitra, 2012). Empirical evidence also demonstrates that assessment reforms and curriculum restructuring require strong faculty engagement and training to achieve intended learning outcomes (Berry & Adamson, 2011; Nix et al., 2023). However, existing literature predominantly examines either faculty or student experiences independently, leaving limited understanding of their combined influence on policy effectiveness.

Research Gap and Hypotheses

Research gap

Only a few studies have taken a dual-stakeholder approach, despite the fact that educational reform implementation has been the subject of much research. Studies by Nix et al. (2023) and Gupta and Zhao (2024), for example, mostly concentrate on teacher experiences while indirectly taking institutional and stakeholder elements into account. In a similar vein, Mitra (2012) stresses student voice without considering the ramifications for faculty effort. A thorough assessment of the efficacy of reform is hampered by this lack of integrated analysis. In order to close this gap, this study looks at both student result perceptions and faculty workload difficulties at the same time.

Hypotheses

H₁ - Faculty members perceive significant challenges and increased workload due to educational policy reforms.

H₂ - Students perceive significant improvement in accessibility and inclusivity, but not in the quality of learning, due to recent educational reforms.

Methodology

A cross-sectional descriptive-analytical research design was used in the study. Purposive sampling was used to gather data from 200 participants—100 faculty members and 100 students—from particular higher education institutions in Bengaluru, Karnataka, India.

Inclusion Criteria

- Faculty with at least 1+ year of teaching experience in post-reform implementation
- Students enrolled in undergraduate and postgraduate programs who are exposed to recent reforms

Exclusion Criteria

- Participants without any exposure to recent policy changes
- Administrative staff members and non-academic personnel

Structured questionnaires constructed on a five-point Likert scale were administered through Google Forms.

Findings of the study

Faculty Perspective

H_0 - Faculty members do not perceive significant challenges or workload changes due to educational policy reforms.

H_1 - Faculty members perceive significant challenges and increased workload due to educational policy reforms.

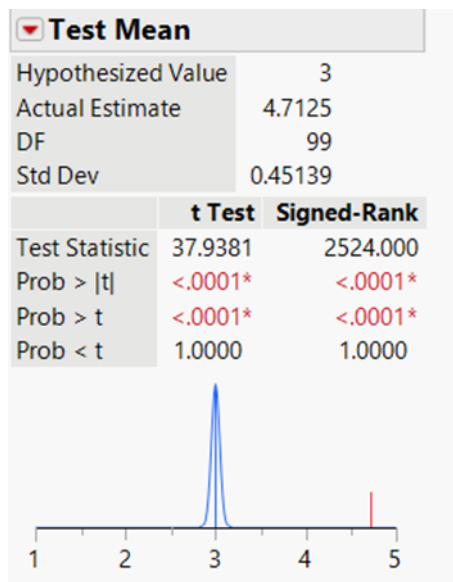


Figure 21: T-test for faculty POV

Data Analysis

In this case, a One-Sample t-test was performed in JMP using a hypothesized mean of 3, which denotes a neutral opinion about the difficulties and workload associated with educational changes.

Table 1: Values of t-test for faculty POV

Statistic	Value
Hypothesized Value	3
Actual Mean Estimate	4.7125
DF (Degrees of Freedom)	99
Standard Deviation	0.45139
t-Statistic	37.9381
p-value (Prob > t)	<.0001*

Interpretation

The observed mean perception score of faculty members (Mean = 4.71) is substantially higher than the proposed neutral value of 3, according to the findings of the one-sample t-test. This significant disparity indicates that faculty members strongly believe that obstacles and workload have increased as a result of educational reforms. The results are statistically significant and not the result of random variation, as indicated by the high t-statistic (37.9381) and very low p-value (< 0.0001). These results, which emphasize issues with workload management, training requirements, and institutional support systems, unequivocally show that the adoption of policies has put a great deal of strain on professors. As a result, the null hypothesis is disproved, demonstrating that faculty members believe that educational reforms present serious difficulties.

Student Perspective

H_0 - Students do not perceive any significant improvement in accessibility, quality, or inclusivity due to recent educational reforms.

H_2 - Students perceive significant improvement in accessibility and inclusivity, but not in the quality of learning, due to recent educational reforms.

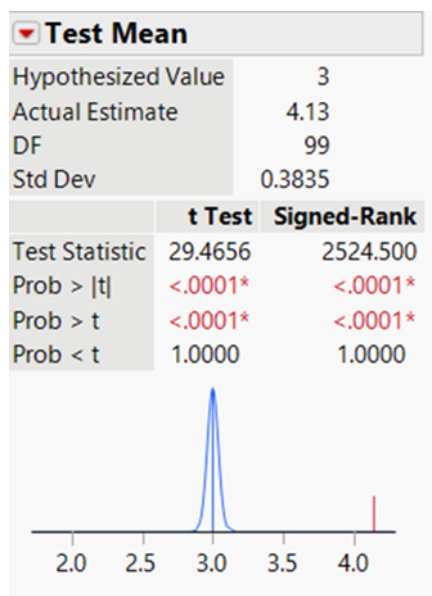


Figure 22: T-test for student POV

Data Analysis

In this case, a One-Sample t-test was performed in JMP using a hypothesized mean of 3, which denotes a neutral opinion on the difficulties and workload associated with educational changes.

Table 2: T-test for student POV

Statistic	Value
Hypothesized Mean	3
Observed Mean (Actual Estimate)	4.13
Sample Size (DF = 99 → n = 100)	100
Standard Deviation	0.3835
t Statistic	29.4656
p-value (two-sided)	< 0.0001

Interpretation

The observed mean score (Mean = 4.13) is substantially higher than the neutral value of 3, according to the results of the one-sample t-test. This suggests that students believe educational reforms have led to a discernible improvement in accessibility and inclusivity. These impressions are consistent throughout the sample, as indicated by the high t-value (29.4656) and statistically significant p-value (< 0.0001). However, worries about the caliber of education are still apparent despite advancements in diversity and access. The conclusion that students believe reforms are only partially beneficial is thus supported by the rejection of the null hypothesis.

Findings

The results of this study are in line with recent research emphasizing the difficulties in implementing educational reform. Increased teacher workload continues to be a major obstacle to successful reform adoption, according to studies by Datnow (2020) and Gupta and Zhao (2024). According to Nix et al. (2023), faculty members frequently suffer from implementation fatigue as a result of ongoing policy modifications. Research by Gess-Newsome et al. (2003) and Harris et al. (2017) bolsters the claim that professional development and institutional support are essential for the successful implementation of reforms. Findings from the perspective of students are consistent with Mitra (2012), who emphasizes the value of student voice in enhancing accessibility and inclusivity. Digital and flexible learning changes have

enhanced access, but they have also highlighted concerns about learning quality and engagement, according to recent studies like the OECD (2022) and UNESCO (2023) assessments. Furthermore, Berry and Adamson (2011) stress that in order to achieve the intended results, curricular and assessment modifications require significant faculty involvement. This study illustrates the disparity between the benefits of policy for students and the load on instructors by incorporating both faculty and student opinions. This dual viewpoint offers a more thorough comprehension of the efficacy of reform.

Recommendations

The results suggest that institutions should implement targeted faculty support mechanisms, including professional development initiatives and workload redistribution strategies, to mitigate implementation challenges. Continuous student feedback systems should be institutionalized to maintain improvements in accessibility while addressing learning quality concerns. Policymakers are advised to adopt phased reform implementation strategies and strengthen institutional resource allocation to ensure balanced stakeholder experiences and sustainable policy outcomes.

Limitations and Future Scope

The study is limited by its cross-sectional design, reliance on self-reported data, and restricted institutional sample, which may affect generalizability. Future research should adopt longitudinal approaches to capture evolving stakeholder perceptions, incorporate qualitative methodologies for deeper insights, and conduct comparative institutional analyses to explore contextual variations in reform outcomes.

Conclusion

By highlighting the disparate perspectives of teachers and students, the study offers important insights into the practical ramifications of educational innovations. Reforms have successfully boosted student accessibility and inclusion, but they have also made faculty members' workloads and implementation more difficult. This study's dual-stakeholder approach, which provides a more impartial assessment of policy success, is what makes it significant. The results highlight that without addressing the needs of both instructors and students, educational reforms cannot be considered successful. The study indicates that comprehensive reform measures that include teacher support mechanisms, sufficient training, and reasonable workload distribution are necessary from a policy standpoint. To close the gap between policy design and execution, institutional administrators must give top priority to resource allocation and ongoing feedback mechanisms. By proving that stakeholder alignment is crucial for long-term reform results, the study also adds to the body of scholarly literature. In order to ensure that teachers and students are actively participating in the reform process, future policies should take a participatory approach.

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