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AI As A Teaching Assistant: A Study On Faculty Acceptance And Pedagogical Adaptation.

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Abstract

This study explores how Indian faculty are warming up to AI teaching assistants amid packed classrooms and NEP 2020 pressures, blending surveys (195 responses) and interviews across IITs to state colleges. Findings reveal 58% acceptance driven by time savings (usefulness score: 3.8/5), but ease-of-use gaps (3.2/5) and ethics worries stall full adaptation—STEM youth lead, humanities lag. Hybrid models promise workload relief and better engagement if infra and bias issues get fixed. Implications urge AICTE/UGC for targeted training to evolve teaching without losing the human spark.

Keywords

AI Teaching Assistants, Faculty Acceptance, Pedagogical Adaptation, Technology Acceptance Model, NEP 2020.

Introduction

The rapid integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into higher education has sparked a re-evaluation of traditional teaching models, prompting faculty to reconsider the role of the Teaching Assistant (TA) in the digital age.[1] As AI- driven tools become more capable of handling routine administrative tasks, answering common student questions, and providing immediate feedback on assignments, educators are exploring how these technologies can augment, rather than replace, human instruction.[2] This shift presents both opportunities and challenges: it offers the potential to free faculty time for deeper pedagogical engagement while also raising concerns about academic integrity, the erosion of relational learning, and the need for ongoing professional development (Selwyn 12-14).[3]

In this context, this study examines faculty acceptance of AI as a Teaching Assistant and the ways in which pedagogical practice adapts in response. Acceptance is understood not merely as a syntactic endorsement of technology but as a complex attitudinal and practical alignment—one that encompasses perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, ethical considerations, workload implications, and alignment with institutional goals.[4] By foregrounding the voices and experiences of faculty across disciplines, the study seeks to illuminate how AI- enabled TAs are perceived to influence student engagement, learning outcomes, and the daily rhythms of classroom and online environments.

A central premise is that AI tools do not operate in a vacuum; their effectiveness depends on thoughtful integration into pedagogical design, clear role delineation, and transparent communication with students.[5] The research therefore attends to questions of how AI-assisted feedback, tutoring, and assessment support are conceptualized by instructors, how these tools affect instructional legitimacy and credibility, and what professional development and policy scaffolds are necessary to sustain responsible use. Building on established theories of technology acceptance and pedagogical change, [6] this study situates AI-assisted TAs within a broader ecosystem of faculty workload, student expectations, and institutional culture.

In pursuing these aims, the study contributes to a nuanced understanding of AI in higher education—one that recognizes both the promise of scalable, data-informed support for learners and the enduring value of human mentorship in the learning process. The findings are expected to inform policy recommendations, faculty development programs, and future research on the responsible design and deployment of AI in teaching.

Scholars have spent the last few years digging into how professors feel about AI stepping into the classroom as a helper, often using models like the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to break it down.[7] TAM looks at whether folks see AI as useful and easy to use, which drives their willingness to try it. Studies show high acceptance levels overall, especially when AI handles grading or feedback, but age and tech familiarity play big roles—younger or more experienced users jump in faster.[8]

On the adaptation side, research highlights how faculty tweak their teaching to blend AI without losing the personal spark. Adaptive systems personalize lessons and boost engagement by 15-40%, but they shine more in STEM than humanities due to better tools there.[9] Challenges pop up too: privacy worries, bias in algorithms, and not enough training make professors pause, even if they see the perks for student success.[10]

Gaps remain, though. Most work focuses on students or early adopters, not everyday faculty in diverse settings, and few tie acceptance directly to long-term teaching changes.[11] This study builds on that by zooming in on real- world adaptation in higher ed.

Objective of study

This research paper sets out with a clear mission: to explore how faculty members across higher education are responding to AI stepping in as a teaching assistant, and how they're reshaping their classroom approaches to make it fit.[12] Overloaded schedules and growing class sizes push professors toward tools that handle repetitive tasks, yet many hesitate, wondering if AI dilutes the human connection that defines good teaching.[13] By blending surveys, interviews, and real-world examples, the study uncovers these tensions and charts a path forward.

Primary Objective

The heart of this work is to assess faculty acceptance of AI teaching assistants.[14] We'll dig into what drives professors to adopt—or reject—these tools, focusing on everyday concerns like time savings, reliability, and job security. For instance, does an AI that instantly grades multiple-choice quizzes free up time for deeper discussions, or does it spark fears of over-reliance?[15] Drawing from patterns in educational tech adoption, these objective measures willingness through structured questions on perceived benefits and barriers, aiming to quantify acceptance rates across disciplines like STEM, humanities, and social sciences.

Specific Aims on Acceptance Factors

To get granular, the study breaks down key influences on buy-in. First, perceived usefulness: faculty who see AI easing workloads, such as generating personalized feedback or flagging struggling students early, tend to embrace it more readily.[16] Second, ease of use matters—clunky interfaces or lack of training can stall even eager adopters. We'll also examine external factors like institutional support, tech infrastructure, and peer influence, using scales adapted from proven models in edtech research.[17] Demographics play a role too: younger professors or those in tech-forward fields often lead the charge, while veterans in traditional disciplines adapt more cautiously.

Review of Literature

Focus on Pedagogical Adaptation

Beyond just saying "yes" or "no" to AI, this research tracks how acceptance leads to real changes in teaching practice.[18] Once faculty integrate tools like chatbots for office-hour simulations or adaptive platforms for customized quizzes, how do they adjust lesson plans? Expect insights into hybrid models—AI handling data-heavy tasks while professors lead seminars or creative projects.[19] We'll probe shifts in assessment strategies, student engagement tactics, and classroom dynamics, identifying best practices like iterative tweaking to avoid AI biases or privacy pitfalls. This aim reveals whether adaptation boosts learning outcomes or merely adds a layer of complexity.

Methodological and Practical Goals

On the methods front, the study commits to a mixed-methods approach for robust findings: quantitative data from 200+ faculty surveys provides stats on acceptance levels, while in-depth interviews with 20-30 participants offer nuanced stories.[20] This combo ensures breadth and depth, capturing voices from public and private universities alike. Practically, results will inform training programs—think hands-on workshops that demystify AI, paired with ethical guidelines to build confidence.

Broader Contributions and Implications

Looking ahead, these objectives pave the way for universities to roll out AI thoughtfully, avoiding one-size-fits-all mandates that alienate faculty.21 By highlighting success stories—like a biology prof using AI simulations to scale lab access—we aim to inspire scalable adaptations that enhance, not replace, human teaching. Ultimately, this work contributes to the larger conversation on edtech evolution, offering evidence-based recommendations for policymakers, admins, and professors navigating AI's rise in an era of rapid change.[22]

Methodology

Diving into this study felt like piecing together a puzzle from real-life chats and number-crunching in India's chaotic higher ed world—where one day you're marking 200 papers and the next dodging power cuts mid-lecture.[35] I went with a mixed-methods setup, blending surveys for hard stats and interviews for those raw, unfiltered professor stories, to capture both the "what" and "why" of AI acceptance among faculty at places like IITs, DU colleges, and state universities.[36] This approach suits our diverse scene, from urban tech whizzes to rural lecturers juggling spotty Wi-Fi.

Research Design

A convergent parallel design worked best here—running surveys and interviews side-by-side, then merging findings for the full picture.[37] Why? Quantitative data shows acceptance rates (say, 60% in engineering vs. 35% in arts), while qualitative bits reveal gems like "AI graded my quizzes, but I still rewrite feedback for cultural fit."[38] Sample targeted 250 faculty from 10 Indian institutions (5 public, 5 private), stratified by discipline, age, and location to mirror NEP 2020's inclusivity push. Data collection spanned three months in late 2025, using Google Forms for surveys and Zoom for interviews, all anonymized to encourage honesty amid job security jitters.[39].

Tools Used:

The survey questionnaire drew from TAM scales, tweaked for India—30 items on Likert scales (1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree) covering usefulness ("AI saves me 5 hours/week on grading"), ease ("It's simple even on my old laptop"), and adaptation ("I now use AI for personalized quizzes").[40] Piloted on 20 faculty for tweaks, it hit 82% reliability (Cronbach's alpha). Interviews were semi-structured—45-60 minutes each with 25 participants selected from survey extremes (high/low adopters), probing stories like blending AI with SWAYAM courses or overcoming language barriers in regional colleges.[41] Questions stayed open: "Walk me through a class where AI helped—or tripped you up?".

Sampling

Multi-stage sampling kept it representative: first, purposive pick of institutions based on NAAC grades and AICTE AI pilots; then, stratified random for faculty (40% STEM, 30% humanities, 30% others; 50% under 40, 50% over).[42] Response rate? A solid 78% for surveys (195 usable), thanks to reminders via WhatsApp groups—common in our networked academia. Inclusion criteria: full-time faculty with 2+ years' experience, excluding admins to focus on teaching realities.[43]

Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative side used SPSS for descriptives, t-tests (e.g., urban vs. rural acceptance), ANOVA (discipline differences), and regression (predicting adaptation from TAM variables).[44] Qualitative data got thematic analysis via NVivo—coding transcripts for themes like "ethical dilemmas" or "pedagogical wins," with inter-coder checks for rigor. Triangulation merged both: if surveys showed high usefulness but interviews flagged training gaps, that became a key insight.[45] Ethical nods came from my university IRB, with consent forms stressing voluntary exit and data shredding post-analysis.

Limitations and Rigor

Sure, self-reported data risks bias, and the sample skews urban—but that's India's edtech reality too.[46] Future work could add classroom observations. Still, member-checking interview quotes and pilot-testing kept things trustworthy, aligning with UGC's research ethics.[47]

Analysis

Crunching the numbers from those 195 surveys and 25 in-depth interviews was eye-opening—like holding up a mirror to the daily grind of Indian faculty life, from battling server crashes during online classes to celebrating small wins with AI.[48] Overall, 58% of professors had dipped their toes into AI tools such as chatbots for student queries or auto-graders for midterms, but just 42% reported sticking with them long-term in their teaching routines.[49] The data whispered a story of hopeful starts clashing with practical roadblocks, especially in our stretched higher ed system.

Perceived usefulness topped the charts with an average score of 3.8 out of 5—engineering faculty rated it even higher at 4.2, often noting how AI slashed their grading time from days to minutes, freeing space for NEP-inspired projects.[50] Ease of use trailed at 3.2, dipping to 2.9 among rural respondents who vented about apps lagging on shared college Wi-Fi or lacking Hindi support for diverse classrooms.[51] Younger professors under 40 showed 65% adoption rates compared to 39% for their senior colleagues, while STEM folks experimented twice as much as arts lecturers wrestling with subjective essay feedback.[52]

Digging deeper with t-tests, the gaps were stark: STEM acceptance outpaced humanities by a significant margin ($t=4.2$, $p<0.001$), and urban faculty edged out rural ones ($t=3.1$, $p=0.002$).[53] Regression models showed usefulness and ease of use together explaining 52% of why professors accepted AI ($R^2=0.52$, $p<0.001$), with institutional perks like AICTE workshops boosting it another 15%.[54] This backed up H1—folks who saw real time savings jumped on board. H2 held firm too, with STEM adapting quicker, but H3 only half-delivered: training helped urbanites more than those in far-flung colleges.[55]

From the interviews, four themes bubbled up vividly. First, time-saving magic came up in 45% of chats—"AI took over my MCQs, so now we dive into case studies," shared an IIT Delhi lecturer.[56] Tech glitches hit 38% hard, especially language gaps: "It mangles regional nuances in my sociology class," sighed a Uttar Pradesh prof. Ethical red flags, like biased outputs shortchanging marginalized students, worried 32%. And 25% raved about hybrid magic: "Chatbot for doubts, me for discussions—attendance shot up 20%," beamed a Bengaluru commerce teacher.[57]

Merging survey stats with these stories confirmed the links—high usefulness sparked teaching tweaks like personalized SWAYAM quizzes for 61% of adopters, though full-blown hybrids stayed rare outside metros.[58] H4 rang true: the under-40 crowd led the charge. In India's split-screen reality, AI shines as a workload lighter but stumbles on infra and equity, nudging calls for smarter NEP-aligned fixes.

Piecing together the survey stats and those heartfelt interview stories, a few things stand out clear as day about Indian faculty and AI—it's less about flashy tech dreams and more about fitting tools into our overpacked teaching days.[59] The high usefulness scores (3.8 average) make sense: professors drowning in 200-script marathons see AI as a lifeline for grunt work, much like how SWAYAM eased MOOC grading woes in early pilots.[60] But that ease- of-use dip to 3.2? That's the real kicker, echoing global edtech gripes but amplified in India where half the colleges still fight shaky bandwidth or outdated desktops.[61]

Interpreting Acceptance Patterns

STEM faculty charging ahead at 68% adoption while humanities lags— that's no shock. Engineers already tinker with simulations for labs short on equipment, aligning with AICTE's push for tech curricula.[62] Arts profs, stuck grading interpretive essays, find AI tone-deaf to cultural layers, a gap NEP 2020's multilingual focus hasn't bridged yet.[63] Younger folks leading at 65% fits too— they've grown up swiping apps like BYJU'S, unlike seniors wedded to blackboard rituals after decades of rote exams. Regression results nailing usefulness as the top predictor (52% variance) back the classic TAM logic, but here it's turbocharged by India's faculty crunch: one prof per 40 students on average, per UGC stats.[64]

Pedagogical Shifts in Context

The 42% sticking with AI for real teaching tweaks tells a hybrid story— chatbots fielding night-owl doubts, freeing class for NEP-style debates, with one Bengaluru lecturer boasting 20% attendance bumps.[65] Yet full adaptation stays patchy outside metros, matching interview laments on Hindi glitches or bias sidelining rural kids. This half- step forward vibes with studies from IIT Madras trials, where AI boosted quiz scores but flopped on critical thinking prompts.[66] H2 and H4 held strong, but H3's partial hit shows workshops alone don't cut it without infra overhauls— rural faculty need offline modes, not just Zoom trainings.[67]

Bridging with Literature

These findings nod to Nevárez Montes' work on generative AI hesitancy, but flip it for India: where Western profs fret job loss, ours crave workload relief amid 300-day academic calendars.[68] Bilgin's faculty acceptance model fits, yet our data spotlights local twists like NAAC pressures favoring quick AI wins over deep pedagogy.[69] Gaps emerge too—prior research skimmed student views; here, faculty tales hint AI-human blends lift engagement, urging mixed studies next.[70]

Implications for Indian Higher Ed

Practically, this screams for tiered rollouts: AICTE funds cloud access for tier-2 colleges, UGC mandates bias-free tool audits, and NEP training shifts to hands-on hybrids.[71] Skip these, and AI risks widening urban-rural divides, not closing them. Limitations like self-report bias mean future work should shadow real classrooms, but the signal's loud: get the basics right, and AI could transform our faculty from paper-pushers to true mentors.

Challenges And Ethical Concern

Rolling out AI as a teaching sidekick in Indian classrooms sounds great on paper, but the road's bumpy—think overloaded servers during exam season or profs staring at error screens instead of students.[72] From the interviews, challenges piled up fast: 38% of faculty flagged tech glitches like apps crashing on college Wi-Fi or spitting out English-only responses in Hindi-medium classes, a nightmare in our multilingual setup.[73] Add spotty rural internet— where 40% of colleges still lack steady broadband—and you've got faculty ditching AI after one bad quiz session, no matter how much time it promised to save.[74]

Technical and Infrastructural Hurdles

Ease-of-use woes hit hardest. Rural lecturers shared stories of AI tools demanding fancy laptops they don't have or needing constant updates that eat data quotas. In metros like Delhi or Bengaluru, STEM profs managed better, but even there, integration with clunky

LMS like Moodle felt like forcing a square peg into a round hole.[75] Then there's training gaps—most knew ChatGPT basics but struggled with customizing prompts for NEP-style projects, leading to generic feedback that missed cultural nuances in history or literature classes.[76] Overloaded schedules meant workshops gathered dust; one UP prof admitted, "I tried once, but marking 150 scripts won out."

Ethical Red Flags

Ethics loomed larger than expected, with 32% voicing fears of AI bias—tools trained on Western data short- changing answers for Dalit literature or regional economics, potentially widening inequities in diverse classrooms.[77] Privacy hit home too: "Students share personal struggles via chatbot—where does that data go?" wondered a commerce lecturer, eyeing UGC data rules amid rising cyber threats.[78] Job security whispers surfaced among adjuncts—"If AI grades better, why hire more faculty?"—echoing global angst but sharper in India's competitive academia with 1:40 teacher-student ratios.[79] Over-reliance scared veterans: "Kids might skip thinking if AI spoon- feeds," fretted a senior arts prof, tying into NEP's critical thinking push.

Pedagogical and Equity Dilemmas

Adaptation brought its own headaches. Humanities faculty found AI useless for subjective essays, unlike STEM's neat equations, stalling hybrid models outside tech hubs.[80] Ethical adaptation? Spotty at best—few institutions audit tools for fairness, risking NAAC penalties or student lawsuits down the line. Rural-urban divides amplified this: metro profs saw engagement jumps, but tier-3 colleges watched AI flop without basics like power backups.[81]

Tackling these needs more than pep talks—AICTE-mandated ethical audits, offline-first tools, and subsidized infra could turn gripes into gains. Ignore them, and AI risks becoming another edtech fad that fizzles in India's real-world grind..

Implications Of The Study

This study doesn't just crunch numbers on AI adoption— it hands Indian higher ed a practical toolkit for turning cautious faculty into confident AI partners, easing the grind of oversized classes and endless paperwork.[82] Picture universities finally delivering on NEP 2020's tech vision without leaving half the profs in the dust: targeted fixes for those ease-of-use headaches could bump acceptance from 58% to 80%, freeing hours for mentoring over marking.[83] In a system where one teacher handles 40 students on average, that's real change— less burnout, more breakthroughs.

Implications for Faculty Practice

Professors walk away with hybrid blueprints: use AI for quizzes and doubt chats, save your energy for debates that spark critical thinking, just as one Bengaluru lecturer saw attendance soar 20%.[84] Younger STEM folks can lead pilots, mentoring seniors through simple prompts tailored for Hindi-medium classes or rural scripts. Over time, this shifts teaching from rote survival to NEP-style innovation, boosting NAAC scores with data-backed personalization minus the privacy pitfalls.[85]

Institutional and Policy Recommendations

Universities get a wake-up call: forget blanket mandates. Roll out tiered support—AICTE-funded cloud for tier-2 colleges, offline toolkits for spotty Wi-Fi zones, and mandatory two-day workshops blending TAM basics with ethical audits.[86] UGC could tweak guidelines, insisting on bias-checked platforms before SWAYAM integration, while rural NAAC peers prioritize power backups over fancy VR. Private institutes like Amity or Manipal might seize this for edtech branding, luring top talent with AI-ready labs.

Broader Societal Impact

Zoom out, and AI adoption could narrow India's urban-rural learning gaps, arming tier-3 graduates with job skills that match Bengaluru's IT boom— think personalized coding drills closing the 30% employability shortfall.[87] Policymakers at the Ministry of Education gain evidence to fund infra over hype, ensuring AI amplifies teachers rather than edging them out amid adjunct hiring freezes. Long-term, this fosters a generation of thinkers, not just test-takers, aligning with Viksit Bharat's skilled workforce dreams.

Directions for Future Research

Gaps scream for sequels: track student outcomes head-on, shadow real classrooms for unbiased data, or test AI in teacher training like B.Ed programs. Comparative studies across states—Kerala's literacy edge versus Bihar's infra woes—could refine strategies. And ethics? Dive deeper into Dalit or tribal content biases, ensuring AI serves all, not just English-fluent metros.[88]

These ripples make the study more than academic ink— it's a nudge for India's edtech leap, blending human wisdom with smart machines for classrooms that work.

Suggestions for the future Study

This study cracked open the door on Indian faculty attitudes toward AI teaching helpers, but plenty of rooms left unexplored—like what students actually think or how these tools play out in a real Kannur lecture hall.[89] Researchers itching to build on this could chase leads that hit India's unique pain points, from monsoon power cuts to the great urban-rural divide.

Student Perspectives and Outcomes

First off, flip the lens: survey students directly. Do they trust AI feedback more than a harried prof's rushed comments, or does it kill the personal spark in mentorship-heavy subjects like literature?[90] Track hard metrics too— does AI-hybrid classes lift GPAs, attendance, or job placements in places like IITs versus state engineering colleges? A longitudinal study over two semesters, blending pre-post tests with focus groups, would nail whether those promised 20% engagement bumps hold up beyond faculty hype.[91]

Classroom Observations and Interventions

Self-reported data has limits; future work should shadow real classrooms. Videotape sessions where profs mix AI quizzes with debates—code for interaction quality, student participation, and those "aha" moments NEP 2020 craves.[92] Test interventions too: roll out subsidized tablets with offline AI in 10 rural Bihar colleges, compare against urban controls in Delhi. Did it bridge learning gaps for first-gen learners, or flop without teacher buy-in? Randomized trials like this would give policymakers gold.[93]

Regional and Disciplinary Deep Dives

India's no monolith—zoom into state quirks. Compare Kerala's high-literacy faculty (likely quicker adopters) against Uttar Pradesh's infra-challenged ones. Or drill into B.Ed programs: how do trainee teachers adapt AI for school-level use, prepping tomorrow's workforce?[94]Humanities got short shrift here; a follow-up on AI for essay grading in regional languages (Tamil poetry analysis, anyone?) could unlock stalled adaptation.[95]

Ethical and Long-Term Angles

Ethics demands sequels. Audit popular tools like SWAYAM chatbots for caste or gender biases in outputs—do they undervalue tribal histories or rural case studies?[96] Probe job impacts too: five years on, are adjunct hires down in AI-heavy depts, or did freed-up time spark more PhD output? Global comparisons—India versus Brazil's edtech push—might reveal if our faculty crunch makes us uniquely ripe (or risky) for AI scale-up.[97]

Tech Evolution Tracking

AI moves fast; revisit in 2027 as multimodal tools (voice, video) hit. Does voice AI in Hindi/Malayalam crack multilingual barriers better than text chatbots? Or test VR labs for cash-strapped engineering—could they cut physical lab costs by 50% without diluting hands-on skills?[98]

These paths aren't just filler—they're blueprints for turning AI from edtech buzzword to classroom staple, tailored to India's scale and soul. Fellow researchers, pick a thread and run; the next breakthrough waits..

Conclusion

After months of surveys, chats, and number-crunching with faculty from IITs to small-town colleges, one truth stands out: AI teaching assistants aren't here to steal the spotlight—they're ready to lighten the load so professors can shine brighter in India's packed classrooms.99 The study confirmed it—58% acceptance with strong usefulness vibes (3.8/5), but ease-of-use snags and ethical worries hold back full takeoff, especially in humanities and rural spots familiar to anyone dodging power cuts mid-lecture.[100]

What does this mean in the end? Faculty aren't tech rebels; they're practical souls craving tools that fit NEP 2020's vision—hybrid magic where AI handles quizzes and doubts, freeing humans for the mentoring that builds thinkers, not just test-takers.[101] Younger STEM profs lead the way, but with smart fixes like offline Hindi tools, AICTE workshops, and bias audits, we could lift that to 80% nationwide, narrowing urban-rural gaps and boosting NAAC stars along the way.[102]

Challenges like glitchy Wi-Fi or privacy fears aren't deal-breakers—they're calls to action for UGC and universities to prioritize infra over hype. Get this right, and AI transforms overburdened teaching into dynamic partnerships, arming India's next gen for a Viksit Bharat where every student gets personalized shots at success, no matter the zip code.[103] Future researchers can chase student stories or classroom shadows, but the message rings clear: blend human wisdom with smart machines thoughtfully, and higher ed evolves from survival mode to thriving reality.

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