Faculty Perspectives on Online Teaching in Higher Education: A Qualitative Approach to Understand Faculty Members' Challenges and Experiences

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Abstract

This study explored faculty members' perspectives on online teaching in higher education and described, analyzed, and interpreted faculty members challenges and experiences of teaching online courses. Participants were twelve (12) faculty members who have taught online courses or currently teach online courses. Data was collected from 60-minutes semi-structured interview sessions, 78 open-ended questions, three research driving questions, background questionnaire, and personal artifacts from faculty members. Five major themes with subthemes, 15 code categories, and code co-occurrences emerged from the data collection, field notes, memos, and data analysis. However, not all of the code categories were replicated by all of the faculty members who teach online. Results suggested that plagiarism was the least mentioned by only ten faculty members. Followed by plagiarism was the category of evaluation, which was the second least, mentioned by the faculty members who participated in this research study. The co-occurrences of categories were reliant on the experiences of faculty members who teach online in higher education. All twelve faculty members shared obstacles that co-occurred with the categories of professional development, distance education, instruction, curriculum, and assessment. Results are discussed in terms of highlighting the important components that institutions should consider to effectively train and support faculty members who teach online courses to advance and improve instructional curriculum.

Keywords:

Distance Education, Online Teaching, EdTech, Curriculum, Instruction, Learning, Higher Education

Introduction

Online teaching best practices differ from traditional classroom instructional approaches (Young et al., 2017). Students enroll in online courses due to the convenience of low-priced tuition rates, being able to schedule classes around work, and the convenience of learning at a distance (Joseph, 2014; Quayson, 2017). For institutions, online teaching has become an economic benefit to cut costs, increase revenues, and employ cheap laborers (Moore & Kearsley, 2011). Young et al. (2017) argued that online teaching and virtual learning have dramatically changed postsecondary education and it promises more transitions in the future, and novel changes which cannot be even imagined at present. When higher education institutions fail to recognize faculty perspectives on online teaching, faculty productivity and the structure of online teaching become a challenge for institutions (Bonk, 2006; Young et al., 2017). Students pursue alternative ways to enroll in affordable higher education degree programs and faculty members teach online courses to increase their salaries by learning modern technologies and creating effective learning communities (Simonson et al., 2011; Thomas & Stritto, 2021).

Distance education and web-based trainings were expected to increase in 1998 from $550 million to $11.4 billion in 2004 (Urdan & Weggen, 2000). Online coursework has now expanded across universities and colleges (Seaman et al., 2018). Institutions with robust online offerings are more likely to thrive during educational emergencies (Hill, 2021). In the case of COVID19 pandemic, institutions across the globe experienced educational emergencies with teaching and learning capacity. A recent survey of chief academic officers revealed that there were skepticisms about the effectiveness of e-learning among faculty members, especially the skepticisms exacerbated among faculty members who had never taught online (Allan et al., 2016). In a survey conducted by Jaschik and Lederman (2019), over 50 percent of faculty who teach online relied on their fellow faculty colleagues for advice and support even though few had limited experience teaching online. Kroger (2020) described that faculty members may still resist teaching online or participate in future e-learning opportunities. However, the trends in e-learning are to increase the options for educational attainment for students (Alexander et al., 2019; Allen et al., 2016).

Review of Literature

Online teaching and distance education courses are expected to increase significantly in the next decade as innovative technology and web-based inventions would ease faculty challenges as well as increase student learning and enrollment (Glickman et al., 2013). Institutional leaders must evaluate faculty challenges and provide developmental tools for faculty members to teach online courses (Bohan & Perrotta, 2020; Schrum, 2011). The quality of online teaching and distance education courses are dependent on the oversight of institutional leadership (Price et al., 2013; Young et al., 2017). Institutions must have professional development plans for faculty members to transition to teach online and overcome barriers to instructing students (Thomas & Stritto, 2021). Educational technology modalities should be improved to manage online teaching and learning that give students options to earn degrees and certifications (Johnson et al., 2016). An estimated 1,100 colleges and universities surveyed show that 53.6 percent concur that online teaching is critical to their long-term strategy and sustainability (Allen & Seaman, 2004; Henckell, 2007).

Online teaching shares the common characteristics of traditional face-to-face teaching (Frisby et al., 2013). Recently, online teaching has primarily focused on educational technologies, students' experiences, and online learning communities; however, faculty perspectives and experiences have not been researched (Bohan & Perrotta, 2020; Naylor & Nyanjom, 2020). Often, when it comes to teaching online, faculty members are left alone to choose which pathway they would like to pursue in their professional development (Bohan & Perrotta, 2020; Marasi et al., 2020). When online teaching first emerged in higher education, faculty and institutional leaders had little to no idea of the economic benefits and or whether distance education could be considered an alternative to traditional face-to-face teaching (Cain & Philip, 2013). Online teaching has rapidly gained popularity in faculty unions; therefore, it can no longer be considered a fad as faculty members with advanced education credentials increasingly teach online courses (Henckell, 2007).

Online teaching has become a complex puzzle for higher education institutions to solve in the era of changes in educational policies (Moore, 2012). Online teaching models have focused on computer-mediated technologies, which often create additional responsibilities and workload for

faculty members and institutions in higher education (Bejerano, 2008). During educational emergencies, faculty members become optimistic about the promise of online education (Cengage, 2021). However, such educational emergencies can lead institutions to make rapid changes to their faculty roles, faculty workload, available technologies, and instructional curriculum (Cutri & Mena, 2020). Educational leaders in institutional departments must consider their faculty perceptions and experiences when allowing them to transition to teach online and faculty members must also think creatively about using trends in online teaching to identify anticipated learning opportunities for students (Adams Becker et al., 2018).

Everson (2009) systematically reflected on the challenges of online teaching, specifically that it demands faculty members to share ideas, collaborate, and commiserate about the online teaching experience. Bull (2013) pointed to the role of an effective online teacher as a valuable learning coach with the capability to develop prominent levels of competency and confidence. There are effective tools that exist in online teaching but are not always accessible to teachers or students (Cutri & Mena, 2020; Everson, 2009). Higher education institutions need to create a supportive online community such as large groups, small groups, and individual work experiences to improve faculty productivity and interest in teaching online (Boettcher, 2013; Young et al., 2017). When faculty members are faced with barriers and challenges in the online classroom, students are the ones that must teach or coach faculty members to deal with the features of online education (Quayson, 2017).

When looking at trends in online teaching in higher education, institutions must caution to evaluate information carefully even if it means seeking additional expertise, knowledge, and feedback on ideas from seasoned faculty members who teach online or have taught online courses (Adams Becker et al., 2017; Quayson, 2017; Young et al., 2017). Researchers like Hafsa (2019) and Saunders et al. (2020) argued that higher education institutions must focus on faculty perceptions and experiences in the online teaching process. Still, Hafsa (2019) and Mansbach and Austin (2018) highlighted that it is impossible for institutions to achieve their goals in e-learning without seeking their faculty support on how to improve online courses and programs. Higher education institutions must increasingly make use of the e-learning space by training and supporting faculty members to make use of online platforms to gain technical knowledge and skills

(Dello Stritto & Thomas, 2021; Quayson, 2017).

There are more students who exclusively enrolled in online education for educational attainment, which means that there are more opportunities for faculty members to teach online across various institutions (Quayson, 2017). Over three million students in 2003 were estimated to enroll in all distance education courses offered by community colleges and four-year institutions; however, in 2012, over 2.6 million students enrolled in distance education courses, and there was a 32 percent increase in web-based courses from 1995 to 1998, which doubled distance learning courses and programs (U.S. Department of Education, 2014, 2003, 1999). In 2012, the percentage of students enrolled exclusively in distance education courses was 12.5 percent (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Although online teaching could be a new phenomenon at higher education institutions, the type of faculty members who hold leadership positions in such institutions are mid-career and advanced, which is vital for institutions to thoroughly analyze the perspectives and experiences of faculty with more experience to support the early-career and junior faculty members to teach online (Baker & Manning, 2020).

Methodology

The research design, qualitative methodology, sampling, population, recruitment, data collection, ethical considerations, and data analysis were the components to examine, explore, and identify the challenges of online teaching and faculty perspectives. The data collection and data analysis were not manipulated and non-experimental but were exploratory-descriptive and contextual. I interviewed twelve (12) faculty members who have taught online or currently teach online courses. The research data were reliant on semi-structured interviews, 78 open-ended questions, and three research driving questions. Qualitative research is an interpretive method that allows researchers to focus and understand the meaning of participants' experiences and examine their experiences with data to find a recurring patterns or themes to support the research study (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Merriam, 2009). The philosophical worldview for this study was constructivist. Adu (2019) explained that constructivists contend that we individually construct ideas (i.e., knowledge or reality), making sense of our environment as we interact with people, places, objects, and situations.

This qualitative research study did not interfere with participants' workload to teach their online courses. The semi-structured interviews and open-ended questions allowed me and the participants the option to take different paths during interview sessions to explore the research questions, discussions, and methods in the research study (Merriam, 2009). I manually transcribed the audio-recorded semi-structured interviews and coded the research data (Saldana, 2016) by using handwritten note cards, a copy/paste function in Microsoft Word to discover recurring patterns and themes. I closely analyzed participants' interview transcripts verbatim and line-by-line to discover recurring themes with sub-themes. I followed Miles and Huberman (1994) data analysis procedures of data reduction (extracting the essence), data display (organizing for meaning), and drawing conclusions (explaining the findings). As suggested by Yin (2009), the theoretical method to review the data collections were in place before I conducted this qualitative research study.

The primary purpose of this qualitative research study was to discover ideas through participants' experiences to recognize the challenges of teaching online and faculty perspectives on online teaching in higher education. I used the inductive approach for this research study to formulate abstraction, concepts, or theories. Emphatically, the settings (e.g., location, institution, and office) of the twelve faculty members were considerable aspect for me to become intimately endowed with faculty members' perspectives on online teaching in higher education. The three driving questions that guided this research study are: (1). What motivates faculty members to teach using the online medium at the college level? (2). To what extent does the teaching philosophy of distance learning influence the strategies professors use in engaging and effectively teaching students online? (3). What are faculty perspectives on the essential characteristics of online learning to promote effective online teaching and retention in higher education? I obtained permission from each faculty member's university and department chairs to conduct this research study with one of their faculty members who teach online. Signed original hard copy consent forms from both the faculty members and their department heads was required. Participation in the research study was voluntary and at any time, the research participants could withdraw their consent without penalty. No participant withdrew from the research study. Twelve faculty members and their department heads were initially contacted by e-mail correspondence for

permission to conduct this research study in their institutions. The transcription confidentiality agreement, the National Institute of Health Office of Extramural Research certificate of human subject course "Protecting Human Research Participants" completion with certificate number 1469222, and the Institutional Review Board approval were obtained.

The demographic of the twelve (12) faculty members were from undergraduate and graduate levels in the United States. All faculty members that participated in the study were tenured and had at least one (1) year of experience with online teaching. Five participants were female professors at the graduate level and seven participants were male professors with five teaching at the graduate level and two teaching at the undergraduate level. The faculty members were in various career fields, which range from education, health science, physical science, exercise science, educational psychology, counseling psychology, mental health, and higher education. I identified participants from a purposive sampling strategy by grouping participants according to preselected criteria relevant to the research topic and questions on online teaching in higher education. The preselected criteria were based on educational level, years of experience teaching online courses, expertise on distance education, scholarly publications, advanced tenured positions, type of institution, location of institution, semester workload, years of experiences with computer technology, and reputation of institutions. Faculty members and their department chairs were contacted via e-mail to request participation in the study. The geographical locations of the institutions were in suburban and urban settings in the East Coast of the United States.

Ten days prior to the semi-structured interview, I sent participants an email to confirm the mutually arranged date, time, and location of the interview. During the interview sessions (approximately 60 minutes), I collected artifacts in personal documents such as course syllabus, resumes, and copies of student evaluation, and public online program documents on distance education and online courses that were available on faculty members' institutional websites. Faculty members completed a background pre-interview questionnaire (approximately 30 minutes). The settings of the semi-structured interviews took place in the faculty members' offices, convenient preferred locations, and in the departments where the online courses were administered. I took copious notes during and after the interview sessions. Once the interviews

were conducted and all the necessary documents or artifacts were collected, I categorized the data by major themes with sub-themes, related subcategories, descriptor charts including specific demographic information, and co-occurrence analysis of subcategories. By manually transcribing, I ensured reliability and trustworthiness of data collected for the 15 code categories, code co-occurrences, and discovered five major themes with sub-themes. After the research findings were analyzed, I reviewed the current empirical knowledge and interconnected it to the 15 code categories, code co-occurrences, and the emerged five major themes with sub-themes.

To increase trustworthiness in the data collected, the final report of the data was sent to participants for review, further input, corrections, and clarification. In addition, I had a panel of three content experts with Doctorate degrees who also teach online reviewed the final data report to avoid any errors and one content expert with two decades of instructional design experience reviewed the final report. I mailed a $20 gift card to participants after the interview transcripts were e-mailed to participants for review and feedback. The gift card was an appreciation from me to participants for participating in the research study. Few of the faculty members respectfully declined the gift card. There were no known risks for participants' involvement in this research study. All documents, information collected, institutions' identity, and recorded interviews for this study were treated confidentially. Participants' information was stored in a locked file cabinet at my home office with the key only accessible to me. All digital documents were password protected. I assigned pseudonyms/code names for participants and their institutions. In addition, I transcribed the audio tapes and signed a confidentiality form that no information would be shared with anyone during and after the study was completed. No prejudice would have been shown had a faculty member wished to discontinue participation. No participant withdrew from participating in the research study. At no time during this study did participants face any physical, psychological, social, legal, employment, or financial risks. There was no conflict of interest, deception, or ethical issues that existed for me as the principal investigator/researcher or any of the faculty members involved in the research study.

Results and Discussions

Five major themes with subthemes, 15 code categories, and code co-occurrences emerged from the data collection, field notes, memos, and data analysis of the research study. The 15 coded

categories included the following: (a) convenience; (b) assessment; (c) accountability; (d) distance education; (e) structure of courses/programs; (f) obstacles; (g) administrative planning; (h) curriculum; (i) instruction; (j) professional development; (k) evaluation; (l) feedback; (m) technological support/social networking; (n) communication/interaction; and (o) plagiarism.

The five major themes that surfaced/emerged from the data collections are included in the following order from the highest response to the lowest: 1. Structure of courses and programs, 2. Administrative planning, 3. Convenience, 4. Communication and interaction, and 5. Technological support and social networking.

The sub-themes that emerged from the field notes, data collection, and data analysis are included in the following format from the five major themes: 1. Teaching and learning outcome, 2. Management, 3. Time commitment, 4. Interesting discussions, and 5. Delivery method.

THEME 1.: Structure of courses and Programs
SUBTHEME: Teaching and learning outcomes

THEME 2.: Administrative Planning
SUBTHEME: Management

THEME 3.: Convenience
SUBTHEME: Time commitment

THEME 4.: Communication and Interaction
SUBTHEME: Interesting discussions

THEME 5.: Technological support and social networking
SUBTHEME: Delivery method
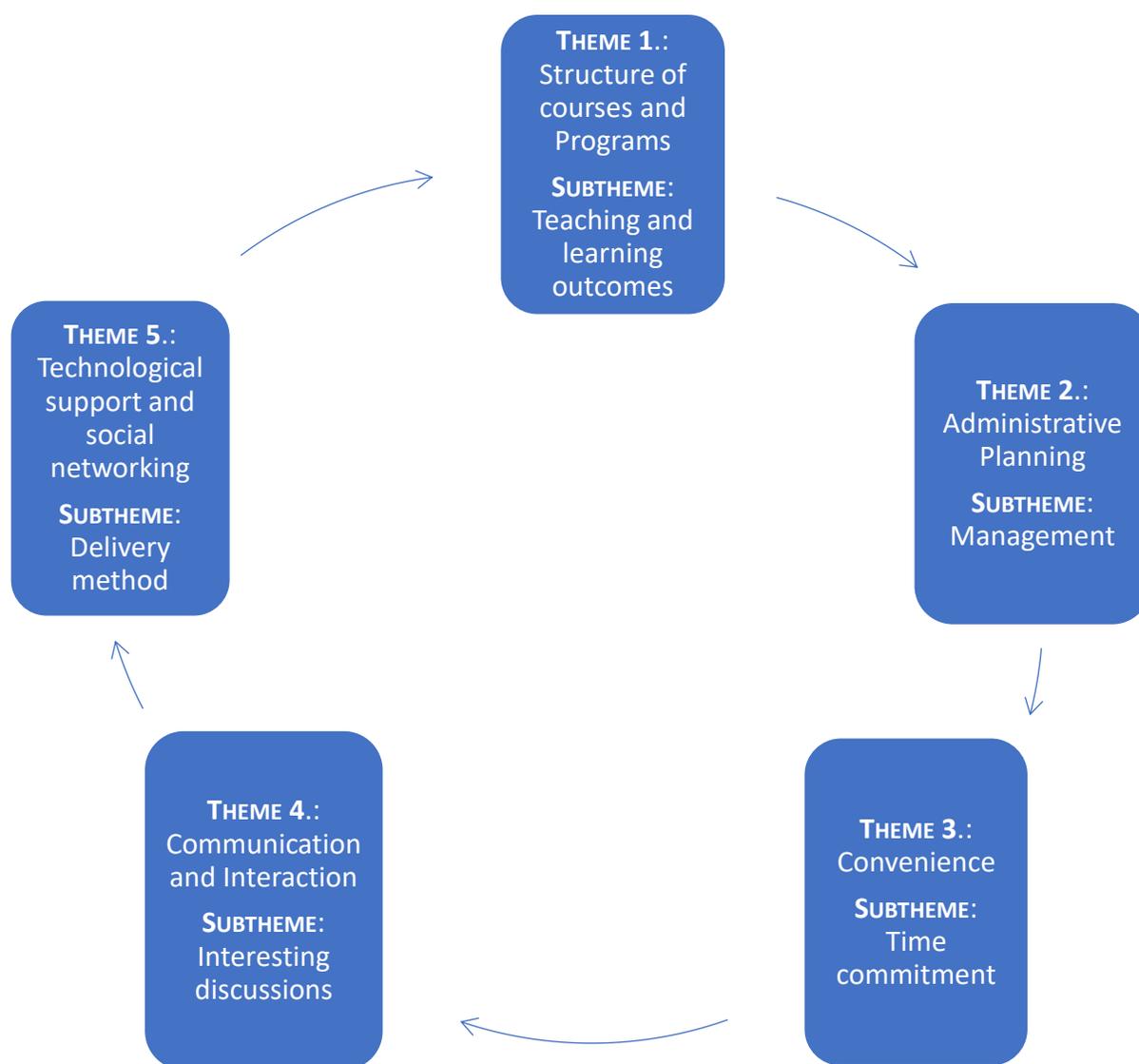
*Five themes and subthemes that emerged from the research data collection.

Table 1 detail the initial 15 code categories followed by Table 2, which illustrates the five major themes that emerged from the data analysis. Table 3 exemplifies the code co-occurrences of this research study. The numbers in the code categories represent the number of occurrences each faculty member repeatedly mentioned each category.

Table 1

Code Categories

FACULTY	CONVENIENCE	ASSESSMENT	ACCOUNTABILITY	DISTANCE EDUCATION	STRUCTURE OF COURSES/PROGRAMS	OBSTACLES	ADMINISTRATIVE PLANNING	CURRICULUM	INSTRUCTION	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	EVALUATION	FEEDBACK	TECHNOLOGICAL SUPPORT/SOCIAL NETWORKING	COMMUNICATION / INTERACTION	PLAGIARISM	TOTALS
F1	12	10	11	17	18	14	16	14	17	14	11	11	14	14		193
F2	14	9	11	12	14	10	17	9	10	10	8	9	13	11	5	162
F3	8	7	6	8	11	10	13	9	9	7	6	6	9	6	4	119
F4	10	7	6	6	10	6	10	8	8	6	6	6	10	8		107
F5	11	10	8	14	14	8	15	14	12	12	8	8	12	14	4	164
F6	10	8	7	10	12	7	10	9	9	8	6	8	10	11	6	131
F7	12	10	8	10	11	8	10	9	9	8	7	8	10	11	5	136
F8	11	8	7	9	10	6	10	9	8	8	7	8	9	10	4	124
F9	13	8	8	10	12	7	10	10	10	9	7	8	10	12	6	140
F10	14	10	9	10	12	8	11	10	10	10	8	9	11	13	6	151
F11	14	8	7	8	11	8	12	9	10	8	7	8	11	9	4	134
F12	14	7	7	9	11	8	11	10	11	8	8	8	10	11	6	139
Totals	143	102	95	123	146	100	145	120	123	108	89	97	129	130	50	

As presented in Table 1, the major key point of the data analysis is the prevalence of high occurrences indicated in the totals by code categories and each faculty member. Reliant on the nature of the semi-structured interviews of faculty perspectives on online teaching in higher education, few of the code categories were not replicated by all faculty members who teach online in this study.

Plagiarism was the least mentioned by only ten faculty members. Followed by plagiarism was the category of evaluation, which was the second least, mentioned by the faculty members

who participated in the research study. In the process to understand the data and analyze, faculty members' background information and years of experiences teaching online were reviewed to understand the challenges that faculty members face teaching online in higher education.

The code categories related to the five major themes that rated least in high occurrences included plagiarism, evaluation, accountability, feedback, obstacles, assessment, professional development, curriculum and instruction and distance education. However, Instruction and distance education categories tied with the same rate of high occurrences. The co-occurrences were reliant on the experience that each faculty member had with online teaching in higher education. As a shared common interest in online teaching, all twelve faculty members shared obstacles that co-occurred with categories of professional development, distance education, instruction, curriculum, and assessment.

Table 2 shows the five major themes that occurred when the researcher interviewed the twelve faculty members. The occurrences of the five major themes indicate the major concerns and challenges for faculty teaching online in higher education.

Table 2

Five Major Themes

FACULTY	STRUCTURE OF COURSES/PROGRAMS	ADMINISTRATIVE PLANNING	CONVENIENCE	COMMUNICATION/ INTERACTION	TECHNOLOGICAL SUPPORT/SOCIAL NETWORKING
F1	18	16	12	14	14
F2	14	17	14	11	13
F3	11	13	8	6	9
F4	10	10	10	8	10
F5	14	15	11	14	12
F6	12	10	10	11	10
F7	11	10	12	11	10
F8	10	10	11	10	9
F9	12	10	13	12	10
F10	12	11	14	13	11
F11	11	12	14	9	11
F12	11	11	14	11	10
TOTALS	146	145	143	130	129

Convincingly, the data analysis and code categories revealed the category of technological support/social networking rated the lowest occurrence out of the five major themes. The category of structure of courses/programs rated the highest. As online teaching in higher education is

heavily depended on technological support and social networking skills, this research finding stunned the researcher, particularly when technological support/social networking is the backbone of online teaching in higher education. The level of technology skills plays a vital role in online teaching for faculty members in higher education. Delivery method is the sub-theme of technological support/social networking theme. Faculty members with advanced interpersonal skills add value to online teaching.

Furthermore, during the data analysis, I interestingly discovered the category of administrative planning rated the second highest major theme, which indicates online teaching in higher education is heavily depended on institutional administrative planning for faculty members. The faculty members interviewed vocalized the importance of administrative planning not only for faculty members, but also for students as well. Management is the sub-theme of administrative planning theme. Faculty members verbalized the importance of administrative planning related to structure of courses/programs as indicated in (Table 3) code co-occurrences.

Structure of courses/programs rated high in the emerged five major themes with a sub-theme of teaching and learning outcome. The frameworks for institutions to identify and create online learning environment in higher education are the content of the course, the learning activities, and the learning support for students. Convenience rated the third highest major theme with a sub-theme of time commitment. Faculty members teaching online courses must first know themselves, become a team player, and determine their own philosophy for teaching and learning, as well as serve as learners' liaison. Communication/interaction rated the fourth highest major theme with a sub-theme of interesting discussions. In distance education, the roles of faculty members, technology, and institutional support are fundamental.

Table 3

Code Co-occurrences

	CONVENIENCE	ASSESSMENT	ACCOUNTABILITY	DISTANCE EDUCATION	STRUCTURE OF COURSES/PROGRAMS	OBSTACLES	ADMINISTRATIVE PLANNING	CURRICULUM	INSTRUCTION	PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	EVALUATION	FEEDBACK	TECHNOLOGICAL SUPPORT/SOCIAL NETWORKING	COMMUNICATION/INTERACTION	PLAGIARISM	TOTALS
CONVENIENCE		7	7	16	16		16	14	14	7		6	18	18		139
ASSESSMENT	7		8	12	14	9	12	11	10	11	8	7	10	11	6	136
ACCOUNTABILITY	7	8		13	15	9	14	12	13	8	7	7	13	12	7	145
DISTANCE EDUCATION	16	12	13		15	9	15	10	11	11	7	8	12	11	6	156
STRUCTURE OF COURSES/ PROGRAMS	16	14	15	15		8	12	11	11	10	9	9	13	12	7	162
OBSTACLES		9	9	9	8		7	7	7	8	5		5	6	6	86
ADMINISTRATIVE PLANNING	16	12	14	15	12	7		9	9	8	6	8	12	12	5	145
CURRICULUM	14	11	12	10	11	7	9		13	7	7	6	11	10	5	133
INSTRUCTION	14	10	13	11	11	7	9	13		7	6	8	11	11	6	137
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT	7	11	8	11	10	8	8	7	7		8	9	11	10	4	119
EVALUATION		8	7	7	9	5	6	7	6	8		8	7	9	6	93
FEEDBACK	6	7	7	8	9		8	6	8	9	8		11	12		99
TECHNOLOGICAL SUPPORT/SOCIAL NETWORKING	18	10	13	12	13	5	12	11	11	11	7	11		17	7	158
COMMUNICATION INTERACTION	18	11	12	11	12	6	12	10	11	10	9	12	17		6	157
PLAGIARISM		6	7	6	7	6	5	5	6	4	6		7	6		71
TOTALS	139	136	145	156	162	86	145	133	137	119	93	99	158	157	71	

Overall, the categories of administrative planning and accountability were tied in the number of shared responses in the code co-occurrences. The researcher was not alarmed because administrative planning and accountability are vital importance for faculty members to teach online courses/programs in higher education. Faculty members teaching online in higher education rely heavily on administrative planning and accountability of institutional resources. The structure of courses/programs, technological support/social networking, communication/interaction, distance education, administrative planning, accountability, convenience, assessment, curriculum, and instruction were often mentioned in cycle by the faculty members who were interviewed. The highest rated co-occurrences category is structure of courses/programs. The faculty members who were interviewed varied in their perspectives and attributed the highest related responses to the

structure of online courses/programs in higher education. Faculty members commented that structured online courses/programs and technological support and social networking skills make it more convenient and accessible to teach online courses/programs in higher education.

Professional development in the perspectives of faculty members interviewed provided a platform for institutions to train and effectively evaluate faculty who teach online. Structure of courses/programs occurred with the highest rated number of coded responses. I found the theme of structure of courses/programs to be effective for institutions to enhance curriculum and instruction, assessment, accountability, and feedback for administrative planning and institutional leadership on faculty perspectives on online teaching in higher education. Surprisingly, the co-occurrences of structure of courses/programs with technological support/social networking were rated high. The faculty members who participated in the research study suggested that an effective online teaching strategy is an accumulation of structure of courses/programs, technological support, communication/interaction, and technological support/social networking skills, which makes online teaching credible. The code co-occurrences categories of obstacles and plagiarism were rated with lower numbers. However, this suggests to institutions to depend on the structure of courses/programs, accountability, communication/interaction, and administrative planning to ease the challenges of online teaching in higher education for faculty members.

Summary and Implications

For this study, it is important for institutional leaders across higher education institutions to utilize the research findings to model their online courses and programs including actively and effectively training and supporting faculty members in meetings and professional development activities. Institutions need to focus on faculty concerns and perceptions of the social presence in online teaching as linked to advanced computer-mediated educational technologies (Frisby et al., 2013). Institutions need to navigate the tools to facilitate faculty members to delve deeper into distance education (Quayson, 2017; Young et al., 2017).

Institutions need to pair their novice faculty members with experienced faculty members to mentor, train, and support them to successfully teach online courses in higher education (Baker & Manning, 2020). Researchers like Jaschik and Lederman (2019) explained that most faculty members rely on their colleague's advice to effectively navigate the online teaching

environment. Kroger (2020) argued that the challenges of online teaching may not be appealing for novice faculty members to transition to teach online. Departmental leaders should not let faculty members choose their own professional development pathways in online teaching, but faculty members should be guided, trained, and supported with care and direction to ease the barriers and challenges of teaching online (Bohan & Perrotta, 2020; Marasi et al., 2020).

In conclusion, Self-reflection is vital for faculty members who teach online as well as their knowledge of navigating innovative technology to instruct students is fundamental for institutions to succeed in distance education. Institutions need to ensure quality in online education curriculum and instruction. Faculty members need to explore the challenges on online teaching and strategies to expand their knowledge on the technical features of teaching online. Institutional leaders and policymakers must assist faculty members who teach online courses to pay special attention to the challenges of teaching online and provide effective strategies to ease the barriers of teaching with educational technologies. Effective discussions about faculty members capacity to teach online and student learning needs in distance education should be the topics in departmental and professional development meetings. Department chairs and program chairs must do their best to improve upon the weaknesses of faculty members who struggle to teach online by mentoring them on their instructional designs and the delivery methods faculty members use or adopt to teach online.

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