

Received : 30 July 2024, Accepted: 27 August 2024

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33282/rr.vx9i2.73>

Effectiveness, Challenges, and Opportunities of “EaSTE” online training course for English teachers at Govt. Schools in Punjab

Kashif Gull¹, Muhammad Arqum², Minhaj Ahmad Khan³, Zaheer Ahmad⁴, Dr. Muhammad Arfan Lodhi⁵

¹M.Phil Scholar Department of English NCBA&E University Bahawalpur
Assistant Education Officer, Bahawalpur

²M.Phil Scholar Department of English NCBA&E University Bahawalpur
IELTS Professional Trainer

³M.Phil Scholar Islamia University of Bahawalpur
Assistant Education Officer, Bahawalpur

⁴M.Phil Scholar Islamia University of Bahawalpur
Assistant Education Officer, Bahawalpur

⁵Dr. Muhammad Arfan Lodhi* Higher Education Department (Collegiate Wing) Punjab, Pakistan
E-Mail: samaritan_as@hotmail.com (Corresponding Author)
Corresponding Author: *Dr. Muhammad Arfan Lodhi E-Mail: samaritan_as@hotmail.com

Abstract

The aim of this study is to identify and analyze the challenges and opportunities faced by educators during the online training of the "English as a Subject for Teachers and Educators" initiative, while evaluating the program's effectiveness in enhancing English language teaching competencies in Punjab. Additionally, the study seeks to provide insights and recommendations for policymakers and educational stakeholders to improve training practices. A self-structured questionnaire was used as a survey form to collect authentic data. A random sample of 500 teachers was selected to gather data through the online survey. Data obtained from the participants was analyzed using simple descriptive statistical techniques, such as percentages. The findings show that the EaSTE training program faces significant challenges, including inadequate technical support, accessibility issues, and a need for improved course structure and content delivery. While there are opportunities for enhancing assessment methods and integrating technology, the program's effectiveness is hindered by gaps in alignment with learner goals, insufficient feedback mechanisms, and a lack of engaging content. Addressing these challenges is crucial for improving learner outcomes and overall program effectiveness. In conclusion, significant challenges for educators, including technological barriers and inadequate

course design, hinder effective online training. Despite opportunities for personalized language learning skills and collaboration, the program's effectiveness in enhancing English teaching competencies is compromised by unreliable assessments and feedback. This necessitates improvements in curriculum quality and instructor support to achieve better educational outcomes.

Key words: EaSTE; Online Training; Elementary School Educators (ESE); QAED training academy

1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

In the 21st century, globalization has significantly intensified the competitive landscape in Pakistan, rendering the ability of organizations to effectively attract, develop, and retain talent a critical priority for sustaining competitiveness on a global scale (Chuang, 2013). Concurrently, the education system in Pakistan, particularly in Punjab, confronts substantial challenges stemming from evolving educator demographics and the accompanying skill gaps within the educational sector. Over the past decade, this transformation has been notably characterized by the increasing prevalence of online education and training modalities. While these innovations present considerable opportunities for enhancing educational access and flexibility, they also introduce formidable challenges that must be addressed to ensure the system's efficacy. The shift towards digital platforms necessitates a reevaluation of pedagogical approaches and the professional development of educators, who must adapt to new technologies and teaching methodologies. The future will see online training and will demand changes in traditional teaching or training methods. Pakistan, as a developing country, is undergoing a process of transformation, including in its educational system. One aspect of this transformation is the mode of training, which, as is often the case at the outset, presents challenges and opportunities as well as its effectiveness. Furthermore, the disparities in technological infrastructure across urban and rural areas exacerbate existing inequities, necessitating targeted interventions to bridge these gaps. As Punjab navigates this complex landscape, it becomes imperative to foster a collaborative framework among educational institutions, policymakers, and industry stakeholders to cultivate a skilled workforce capable of thriving in an increasingly interconnected world. Ultimately, addressing these multifaceted challenges will be essential for enhancing the quality and relevance of education in Punjab, thereby positioning it more favorably within the global arena.

Numerous non-governmental organizations (NGO's) and government institutions have actively collaborated in Punjab to enhance the skills of educators, equipping them with contemporary global knowledge and competencies and some of them are international such as UNICEF and British Counsel. A significant focus of these initiatives is English language learning and teaching, as English serves as a global lingua franca and plays a pivotal role in the educational framework of Pakistan. Among the key performers in this endeavor is the Quaid-e-Azam Academy of Educational Development (QAED), which operates under the Directorate of Staff Development (DSD). In partnership with the British Council, QAED has launched a

program entitled "English as a Subject for Teachers and Educators" (EaSTE) on 30 March, 2022. Punjab Education and English Language Initiative (PEELI) offered another such training from July 2017 to June 2019, which aimed at enhancing the capacity of primary teachers in teaching the English language and to monitor its success in the classroom from the outset, ensuring that positive changes in teaching and learning occur, while actively involving students in the process. To further this goal, the initiative seeks to engage as many teachers as possible through a digital platform, thereby minimizing expenses and eliminating the need to remove teachers from their classrooms during training sessions. This training program initiated in January 2023 and scheduled to conclude in August 2024, this program represents a comprehensive effort to elevate the teaching standards in Punjab. QAED Lahore has undertaken the responsibility of physically training lead trainers, selected language experts from the education department who in turn facilitate the training of master trainers, specifically Assistant Education Officers (AEOs). This dual-mode training approach incorporates both physical and online modalities, thereby ensuring a flexible and accessible learning environment. Primary teachers follow five self-access online courses available on a specially created Learning Management System (LMS). They do the courses at regular intervals on the platform, which is monitored by Assistant Education Officers (AEOs), who are mentors to the primary school teachers. Each course takes six-weeks to complete, and the five courses are spread over a period of two years. The courses are in line with specific competencies built into the curriculum and course books teachers are using, ensuring that the course content is of practical use to them. While they are following the online course, teachers deliver lessons using input from the online component, doing activities suggested on the platform with their students. AEOs visit each school twice a month to observe, mentor and evaluate the progress of the English language teachers as they deliver lessons to their students. Each AEO also leads an online Community of Practice through webinars and forums where teachers can get extra support and connect with their peers. The activities extend over two years allowing time to measure positive change in the teachers' capacity and learners' response (British Council). To further enhance the learning experience, educators are encouraged to utilize the QAED app, which offers access to online videos, instructional sessions, and assessment tests. The program is structured into five modules, with each module encompassing a four-month training period designed to systematically build educators' competencies. By fostering a robust framework for professional development, the EaSTE program not only aims to enhance the proficiency of educators in English language teaching but also strives to contribute to the overall improvement of the educational landscape in Punjab, thereby equipping future generations with the essential skills needed to thrive in a globalized world.

1.2 Rationale of the study

This study stems from the increasing reliance on online training programs in the context of educational reform in Punjab, particularly within the framework of the "English as a Subject for Teachers and Educators" (EaSTE) initiative. As globalization intensifies the demand for English proficiency and English language teaching, it is imperative to assess the effectiveness of online training modalities in equipping educators with the necessary skills and knowledge according to demand of modern world. This study aims to identify the specific challenges faced by teachers during online training, including technological barriers, pedagogical adaptations, and engagement issues. Additionally, it seeks to explore the opportunities presented by online training, such as flexibility in learning, access to diverse resources, and the potential for

collaborative professional development. By investigating these dimensions, the study contributes valuable insights into the effectiveness of the EaSTE program, informing policymakers and educational stakeholders about best practices and areas for improvement. Ultimately, this research aspires to enhance the quality of English language instruction in Punjab, thereby addressing the broader educational needs of the region in an increasingly interconnected world.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What specific challenges do educators face during the online training of the "English as a Subject for Teachers and Educators" (EaSTE) initiative, particularly regarding technological barriers, pedagogical adaptations, and levels of engagement?
2. What opportunities do online training modalities provide for educators in terms of learning flexibility, access to diverse educational resources, and collaborative professional development?
3. How effective is the EaSTE program in enhancing English language teaching competencies among educators in Punjab, and what insights can be drawn for policymakers and educational stakeholders regarding best practices and areas for improvement?

1.4 Significance of the study

This study lies in its potential to enhance educator training, maximize online training opportunities, and inform policy and practice. By identifying and analyzing the specific challenges faced by educators during the online training of the "EaSTE" initiative, the research provides valuable insights that can inform the design of more effective training programs in the context of Punjab (Pakistan). Understanding technological barriers, pedagogical adaptations, and engagement levels enables stakeholders to address these issues, thereby improving the overall training experience for educators. Furthermore, exploring the opportunities presented by online training modalities highlights the potential benefits of flexibility, resource accessibility, and collaborative professional development. This understanding can lead to the optimization of online training frameworks, ensuring that educators can leverage these advantages to enhance their teaching practices and student outcomes. Lastly, evaluating the overall effectiveness of the EaSTE program yields critical insights for policymakers and educational stakeholders. By assessing the impact of the program on English language teaching competencies, the study contributes to evidence-based decision-making, guiding future initiatives and investments in educator training. Additionally, the recommendations derived from the findings assist in refining current practices, ensuring that the educational needs of Punjab are met in an increasingly globalized context.

2. Literature Review

Education plays a crucial role in the development of any nation, akin to the importance of a mother to her child. It paves the way for a promising and secure future, contributing to a stable life. Education is fundamental for everyone, as it empowers individuals to discern right from wrong (Sohil et al., 2023). In Punjab, government primary school teachers, like their counterparts in private schools, have participated in cascade training programs designed to equip teacher trainers with skills for activity-based lessons and child-centered classrooms. This training

includes English language instruction and enhances pedagogical skills through both monolingual and bilingual approaches. Despite various language policies introduced by successive governments since the country's independence, the implementation of these policies regarding English language education and pedagogical skills has been inadequate. Mushtaq (2021) has accurately highlighted the challenges and the level of English proficiency in Pakistan, particularly in relation to global standards, as it pertains to the PEELI initiative.

2.1 English Language Teaching

The history of English Language Teaching (ELT) and learning English as a Second Language (ESL) and Foreign Language (EFL) has evolved through various practices (Ali Alghamdi et al., 2019). This evolution reflects the development of different approaches and methods aimed at addressing the needs of English language instruction (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). Contemporary ELT methods have replaced outdated practices to tackle challenges that impede effective language learning and usage. Traditional methods, which focused heavily on translation and rote memorization of language rules, often fell short of achieving the primary goal of effective communication. In contrast, modern approaches emphasize enhancing students' abilities to use the language in real-life contexts (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Wright, 2010).

2.2 English Language Training

Training and development encompass the structured, continuous initiatives within organizations aimed at enhancing employee performance and personal growth through various educational methods and programs. In the context of English language training, these efforts are particularly vital as they equip employees with essential communication skills that are increasingly necessary in today's globalized workplace. In modern education system, English language training has become a multifaceted endeavor, addressing a wide spectrum of needs. This includes targeted instruction for educators or teachers related language skills, such as pedagogical and knowledge skill, as well as broader professional development that focus on enhancing overall development. Effective English language training programs often incorporate a variety of educational methods, such as interactive workshops, online courses, and immersive language experiences. These approaches not only help employees improve their language skills but also foster confidence in using English in real-life situations, whether in meetings, presentations, or written correspondence. Moreover, education department recognize that investing in English language training can lead to significant benefits, including improved teacher skill, enhanced teacher students relation, and increased competitiveness in the global education world. As the demand for effective communication in English grows, the role of English language training within educator's development programs is more critical than ever. It not only supports individual career advancement but also contributes to the overall success and adaptability of the organization in a rapidly changing business environment. Therefore Pakistani Government started some English language training programs for primary schools teachers. Punjab was the first province in Pakistan to tackle the deficiencies in its in-service teacher training system by introducing a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) model for primary teachers in 2006. This model was based on a cascade approach and included cluster training sessions. Nearly a decade later, in 2017, the Government of Punjab recognized the need to update its existing CPD model and restructured the system to focus on monitoring the impact

of CPD on student learning outcomes (SLOs). As part of this overhaul, assistant education officers (AEOs) were hired to visit schools every two weeks. Their role involved assessing students and observing teachers to identify those in need of additional support, who would then be referred to subject specialists at the cluster centers. Identified teachers were scheduled to meet with these specialists once a month for ongoing CPD, while a month-long training program was offered at the cluster centers during the summer holidays, totaling approximately 240 hours of training annually. In 2017, first well organized English training program was started by the name of PEELI in the Punjab.

2.2.1 PEELI: Punjab Education and English Language Initiative

In July 2017, the Government of Pakistan launched the Punjab Education and English Language Initiative (PEELI) aimed at training primary school teachers. This initiative was developed in collaboration with the British Council and the Quaid-i-Azam Academy for Educational Development (QAED). The primary goal of the training was to enhance the English language proficiency, teaching methods, and leadership skills of primary school teachers in Punjab. To achieve these objectives, the program utilized innovative approaches, including face-to-face training, online projects, and various sessions of Continuous Professional Development (CPD) covering all subjects across 36 districts in Punjab. This initiative was designed as a three-year project, concluding in 2020. (www.britishcouncil.pk/programmes/educationp, www.qaed.edu.pk/pages/contents/116).

Sir Vernon Ellis, the chairperson of the British Council, stated that the Punjab Education and English Language Initiative (PEELI) is anticipated to significantly enhance education in Punjab, leading to improved educational outcomes. According to a British Council spokesperson, PEELI focuses on boosting the capabilities of primary school teachers to effectively teach English as a second language and as a medium of instruction. This is achieved by equipping teachers with the necessary skills, knowledge, and practical experience to foster child-centered and activity-based English learning through a cascade training model (Nadeem et al., 2024). The project includes various training sessions aimed at enhancing language fluency (2017), leadership skills (2017), communication skills (2018), and pedagogical guidelines (2019). Its overarching goal is to make a significant contribution to student learning outcomes. PEELI encompasses six key components: training, licensing, content and materials development, institutional capacity building, monitoring and evaluation, and policy and research. The Punjab Education and English Language Initiative (PEELI) comprise several key components designed to enhance the quality of education. The first component, Training, focuses on improving the skills and knowledge of teachers, teacher educators, and leaders to promote Activity Based Learning in English (ABLE). The second component, Licensing, introduces globally recognized courses and sessions for educators, ensuring they meet modern educational standards through updated linguistic knowledge. The third component, Content and Materials, provides essential resources for teachers and educators, facilitating the digitalization and broadcasting of training sessions for School Based Continuous Professional Development (CPD). Institutional Capacity Building, the fourth component, aims to empower the Quaid-i-Azam Academy for Educational Development (QAED) to disseminate world-class resources that promote English language

learning in primary classrooms. The fifth component, Monitoring and Evaluation, focuses on generating authentic and unbiased data on performance and progress, providing valuable insights to collaborators and participants. Finally, the sixth component, Policy and Research, engages all participants in evidence-based practices during their Continuous Professional Development activities in primary schools. Together, these components work to elevate the standards of English language education in Punjab. The PEELI training program emphasizes the enhancement of four key communication skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Listening is the ability to focus and interpret messages from others, which is essential for effective interaction between learners and educators, as noted by Miller (2003) and Renukadevi (2014). To aid understanding, PEELI incorporates bilingual activities in both English and Urdu. Speaking, which involves articulating thoughts, is crucial for effective communication, as it conveys meaning through tone and inflection (Baker & Westrup, 2003; Orade, 2012). In primary classrooms, speaking is vital for giving instructions and engaging students in English activities (Bashir et al., 2011; Tsou, 2005). PEELI promotes English fluency through interactive activities that blend listening and speaking, beginning each session with refresher exercises that requires verbal engagement. Reading, defined as the cognitive process of interpreting symbols to extract meaning (Paris, 2005), is essential for learning, as students often acquire knowledge through reading (Morgan & Fuchs, 2007; Schatschneider et al., 2004). Early exposure to reading can enhance creativity and vocabulary development (Gove et al., 2011). While PEELI has not yet implemented term-based activities, educators are encouraged to model correct pronunciation and involve students in presentations that improve comprehension and vocabulary. Writing is considered a fundamental communication skill, serving as a reliable method for expression and record-keeping (Kellogg, 2008; Langan, 2001). In PEELI sessions, participants receive modules to complete various activities and are encouraged to articulate their learning through writing, including the formulation of specific learning outcomes (SLOs) and questions for their peers. Overall, PEELI aims to comprehensively develop these communication skills among both educators and learners. PEELI training conducted physically but over the past decade, this transformation has been notably characterized by the increasing prevalence of online education and training modalities. While these innovations present considerable opportunities for enhancing educational access and flexibility, they also introduce formidable challenges that must be addressed to ensure the system's efficacy.

2.3 Online training

An online training system is a digital platform designed to deliver educational content and training programs via the internet, allowing participants to access learning materials, engage in interactive sessions, and complete assessments at their own pace and convenience (Singh & Thurman, 2019). This system can encompass various formats, including video lectures, webinars, discussion forums, and e-learning modules, making it a flexible and accessible option for learners. In Pakistan, the need for such a system is particularly urgent due to several factors. Many regions face geographical and infrastructural challenges that restrict access to quality educational resources, and online training can bridge this gap by providing remote access to necessary materials and expertise. Traditional training methods often struggle to accommodate large participant numbers, while online systems can easily scale to reach thousands of teachers nationwide, ensuring a broader impact. Additionally, online training is cost-effective, reducing expenses related to travel and venue hire, which makes professional development more

affordable for educators. The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the necessity for adaptable learning solutions, and online training can quickly adjust to changing circumstances, allowing educators to continue their professional development without interruption. Furthermore, as the education landscape evolves, ongoing training is essential for teachers to stay updated with new methodologies, curricula, and technologies, and online platforms provide an effective means for continuous learning. In response to this need, Punjab has introduced an online training program after Covid-19 when whole world moved from traditional mode to technological mode specifically focused on teaching English as a subject, aimed at enhancing the English language skills of teachers and improving the overall quality of English instruction in primary schools. This "English as a Subject for Teachers and Educators" program equips educators with the skills and knowledge necessary for effective English teaching, combining theoretical knowledge with practical applications to ensure that what they learn can be implemented in the classroom. The curriculum includes modules on language proficiency, pedagogical strategies, assessment techniques, and the integration of technology in teaching, all tailored to address the specific challenges faced by teachers in Punjab. The interactive online format fosters engagement through live sessions, discussion forums, and collaborative projects, creating a sense of community among educators who can share best practices and support one another. Participants undergo regular assessments to evaluate their understanding and application of the material, with constructive feedback from facilitators helping them refine their teaching methods. By focusing on English language instruction, the program aims to enhance teachers' language skills, improving their professional performance and future opportunities, aligning with the broader goals of the Punjab Education and English Language Initiative (PEELI) to uplift educational standards across the province.

2.4 Training (EaSTE) Overview and Objectives

These outlines give structure and approach for EaSTE designed to enhance English language teaching skills among educators also with objectives. The program consists of four main modules and 6 units in each module, each with specific units that address essential aspects of language instruction. The framework ensures comprehensive coverage of the necessary skills and knowledge for effective teaching.

1. Objectives and Goals

- Enhance educators' proficiency in oral communication, reading, critical thinking, language focus, and writing skills.
- Equip teachers with practical strategies to engage primary level learners.
- Facilitate continuous professional development through assessment and feedback.

2. Needs Assessment

- Conduct surveys and interviews with educators to identify gaps in their current teaching practices.
- Analyze student performance data to determine areas needing improvement in language skills.
- Gather feedback on preferred learning styles and training formats from participants.

Training Needs Analysis Strategies

There are multidimensional phases and strategies to undergo training needs analysis of any continuous professional development plan. The significant steps to pursue training needs analysis are given as under:

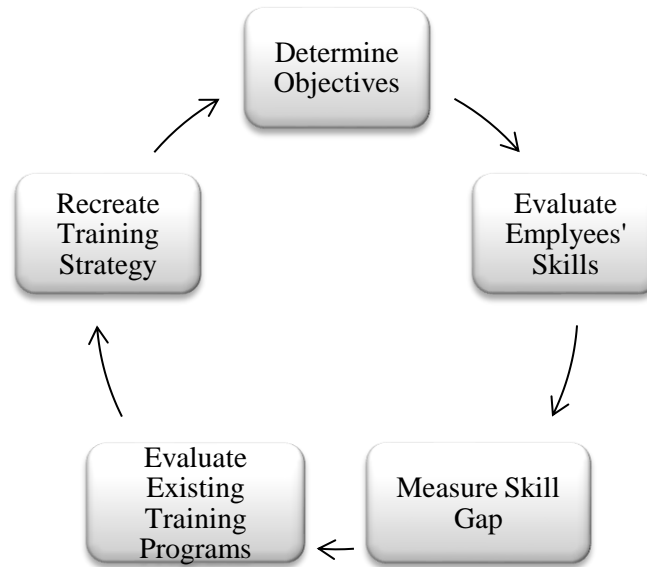


Figure 1: Training Needs Analysis (TNAs) Strategies

3. Content Development

Module 1: Oral Communication

Units: Definition of oral communication, preparation and use of activities, continuous improvement strategies, importance of oral communication, developing active listening skills, lesson planning, classroom management.

Module 2: Reading and Critical Thinking Skills

Units: Teaching reading skills for primary learners, relationship between reading and critical thinking, planning effective activities, extracting meaning from context, defining reading and critical thinking skills, assessment strategies.

Module 3: Language Focus

Units: Planning vocabulary activities, impactful grammar activities, assessment strategies for grammar and vocabulary, preparation of vocabulary and grammar activities.

Module 4: Writing Skills

Units: Importance of writing skills, preparing writing lessons and activities, stages of writing, developing effective lesson plans, assessment of writing skills.

4. Instructional Methods

Online Session: Monthly online session conducted by instructors (AEOs) according to given schedule.

Lectures: Introduce core concepts and theories for each module via recorded videos lectures.

Group Discussions: Facilitate peer-to-peer learning and sharing of best practices in community of practice (COP).

Audio recordings: Voice notes for different instructions and concept delivering.

Video lectures: Recorded video lectures for delivering basic linguistic skills.

Notes: Provision of notes in pdf form.

Activities: Activities for the assessment of learning.

Grading System: Pretests, post-test for assessment of learner. Grading system that indicates learner development by percentage.

Integrate Technology: LMS used through an app known as QAED.

5. Learning Activities

Oral Communication: Video lectures and activities to practice speaking and listening skills.

Reading and Critical Thinking: Reading notes followed by video lectures to enhance comprehension and critical analysis.

Language Focus: Vocabulary games and grammar quizzes to reinforce learning.

Writing Skills: Collaborative writing exercises where participants create lesson plans and activities.

6. Assessment and Evaluation

Formative Assessments: Quizzes and reflective tests or activities after each unit to gauge understanding.

Summative Assessments: Final tests or activities to demonstrate learning.

Grading System: Percentage indicates the progress in the module.

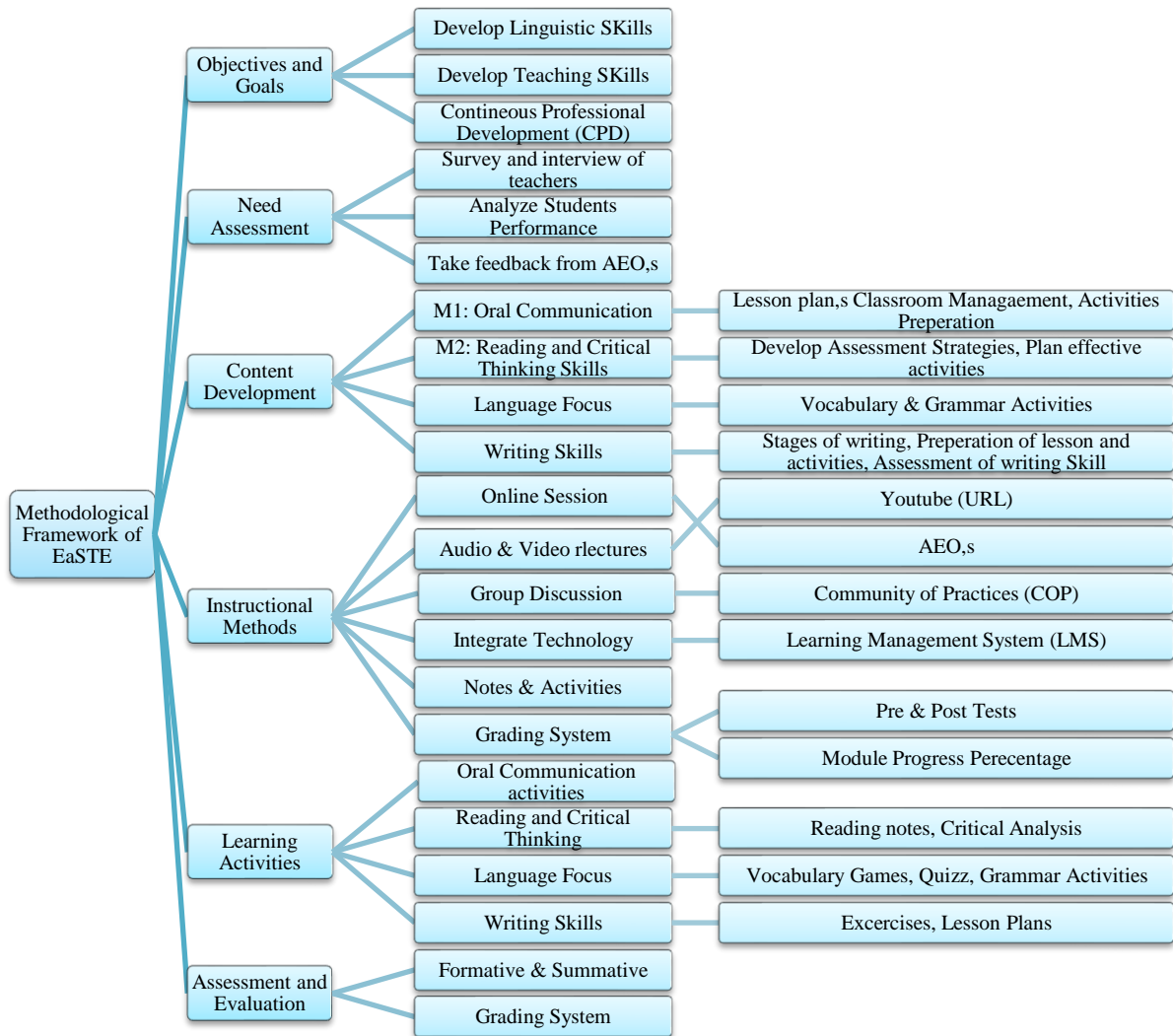


Figure 2: Organogram of the EaSTE course

3. Research Methodology

The study was a descriptive one in nature. The study was quantitative in research design. The survey method was used to collect data from the participants or respondents. Public school teachers of primary level were the population of the study. 500 primary school teachers (PST's) were selected by employing the random sampling technique. The data from the chosen sample was gathered using a self-structured questionnaire at 5 points likert scale and open-ended questions. There were 4 sections in questionnaire. The first section sought demographic information. Second section consisted of challenges, third comprised of Opportunities of training and last one section was Suggestions about training. Data was collected through online survey form. Data obtained from the respective participants was analyzed using simple descriptive statistics technique. Research tool was validated by expert and reliability was measured by Cronbach's Alpha that is .81 in this case.

3.1 Conceptual Framework

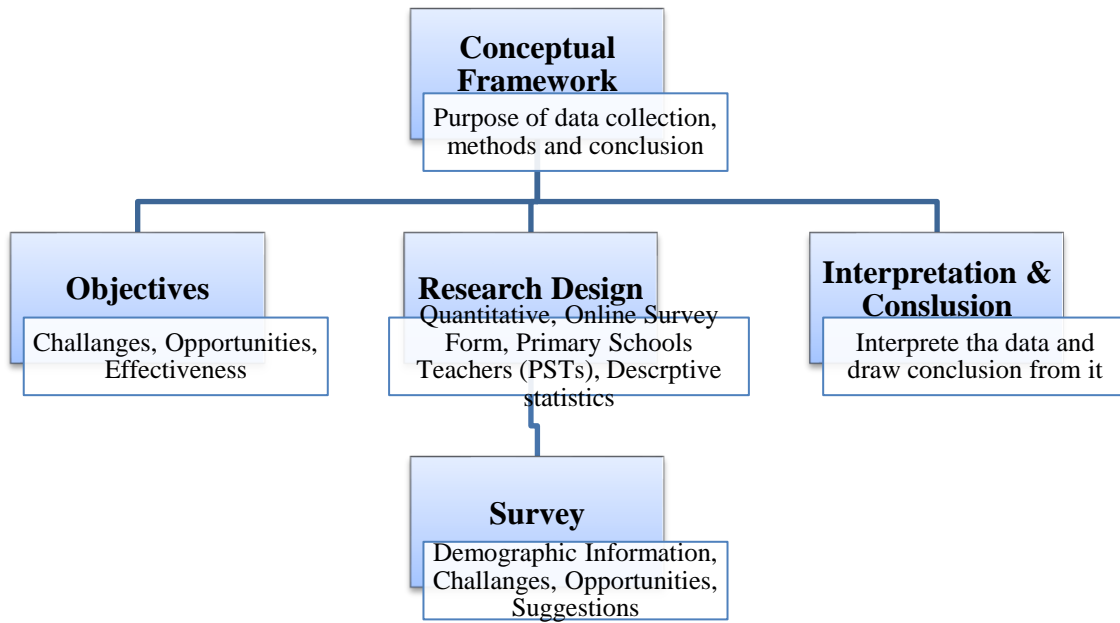


Figure 3: Conceptual Framework

3.2 Analytical Framework

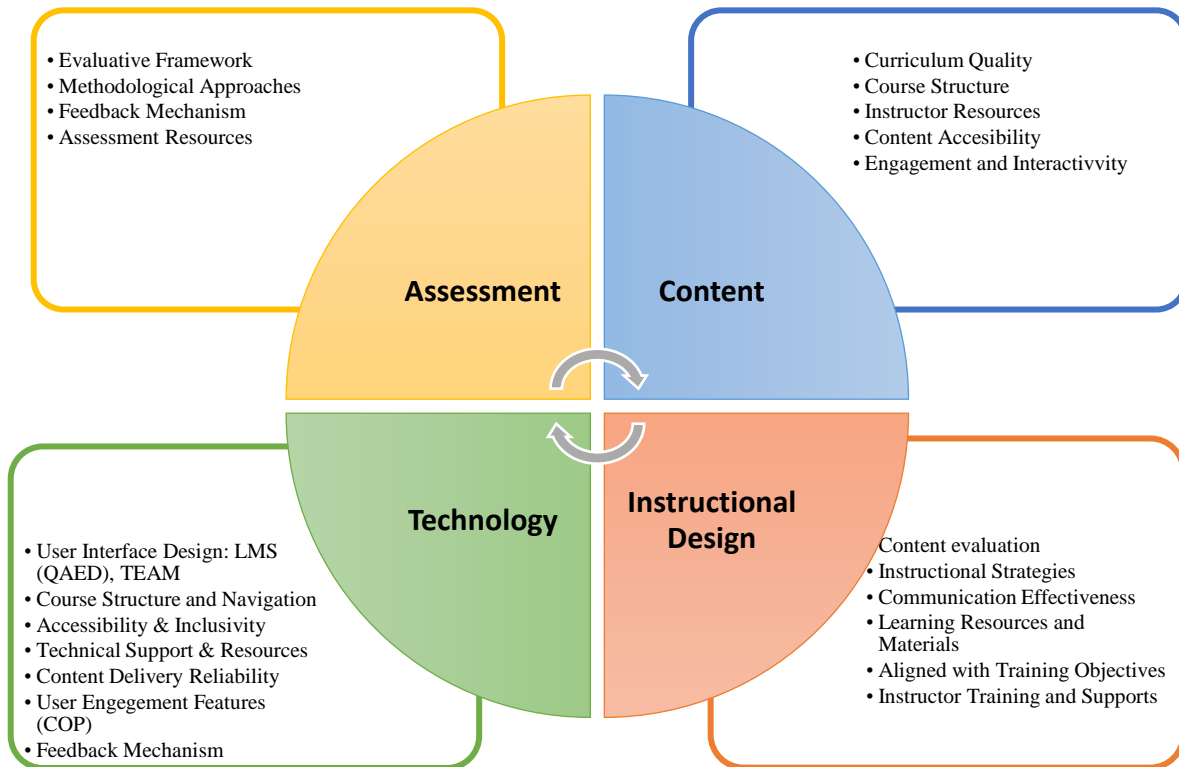


Figure 4: Analytical Framework for Challenges

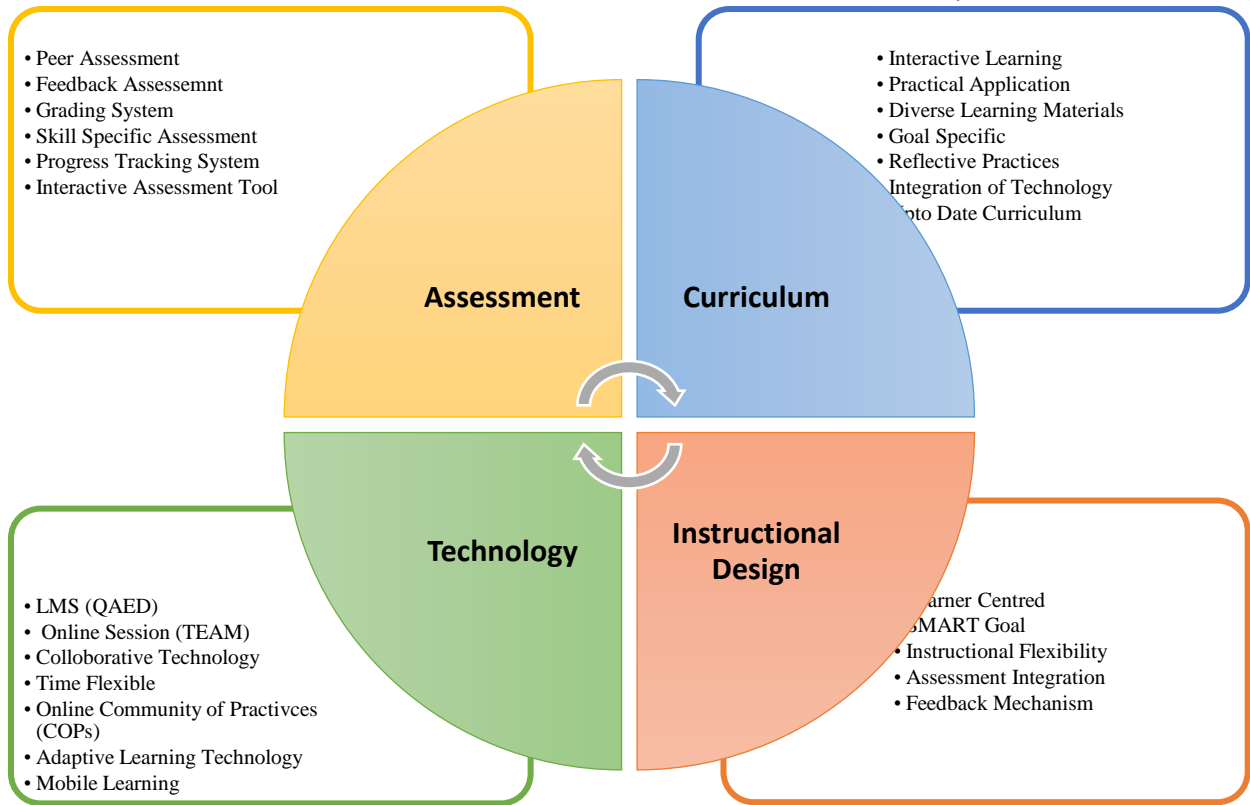


Figure 5: Analytical Framework for Opportunities

4. Analysis

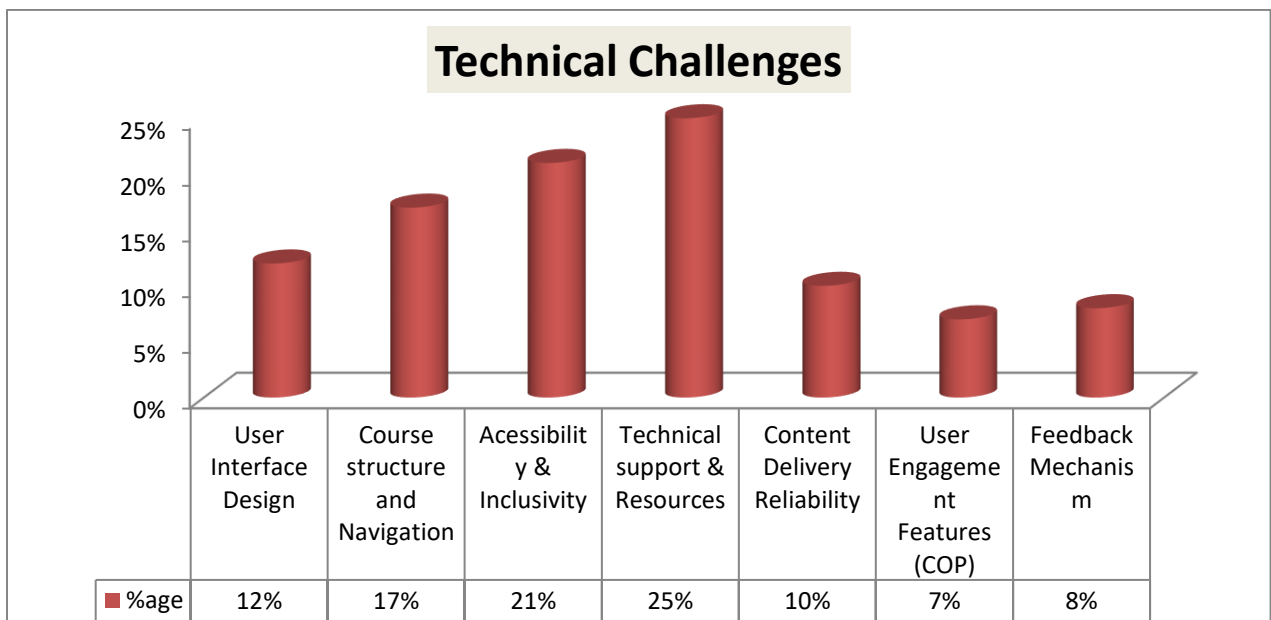


Figure 6: Technical Challenges

The Figure 6 indicates the technical challenges faced by learners in the context of EaSTE training, represented as percentages. It illustrates that the most significant challenge identified by learners is Technical Support & Resources, accounting for 25%. This suggests that a lack of adequate technical support and resources poses a major issue for users. Following closely is Accessibility & Inclusivity at 21%, underscoring the necessity of ensuring that training materials are accessible to all learners, regardless of their abilities. Course Structure and Navigation emerges as another notable challenge at 17%, suggesting that users experience difficulties in how courses are organized and navigated, thereby indicating a need for improved course design. User Interface Design is noted at 12%, which, while still relevant, is less significant compared to the other challenges, indicating that the interface may be functional but could benefit from enhancements. Content Delivery Reliability is highlighted at 10%, showing that ensuring consistent and reliable content delivery is a concern, albeit a lower priority than the aforementioned issues. The Feedback Mechanism ranks as the least significant challenge at 8%, suggesting that while feedback systems are important, they may currently be less problematic than other areas. Lastly, User Engagement Features (Communities of Practice - CoP) are noted at 7%, indicating that while enhancing engagement features is a lower priority, it still warrants attention. Overall, the key challenges in educational technology are primarily related to technical support and accessibility, followed by course navigation, user interface, content reliability, feedback mechanisms, and user engagement features.

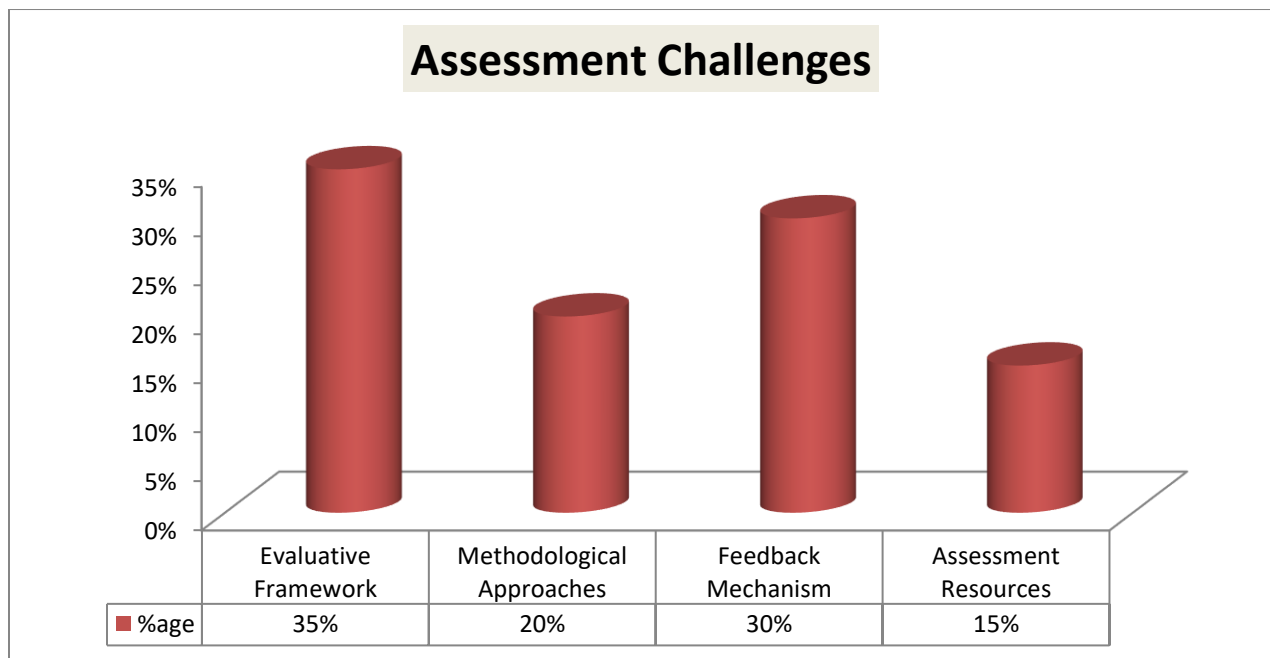


Figure 7: Assessment Challenges

The Figure 7 illustrates the assessment challenges encountered by participants in the EaSTE training program, represented as percentages. The most significant challenge, as identified by 35% of the participants, lies in the Evaluative Framework, indicating potential shortcomings within the framework that may lead to unreliable or insufficient assessments. Following this, 30% of the learners expressed dissatisfaction with the Feedback Mechanism, highlighting the

need for a more robust feedback system that effectively informs learners about their areas for improvement. Methodological Approaches contribute to 20% of the assessment challenges, suggesting that the current assessment methods are inadequate and need revision to ensure a more sound evaluation process. Additionally, 15% of the challenges relate to Assessment Resources, indicating that there is room for improvement in the availability and quality of resources used in assessments. Overall, the data points to significant issues in the framework, feedback, methodology, and resources, which require targeted interventions to improve the effectiveness of assessments in the training program.

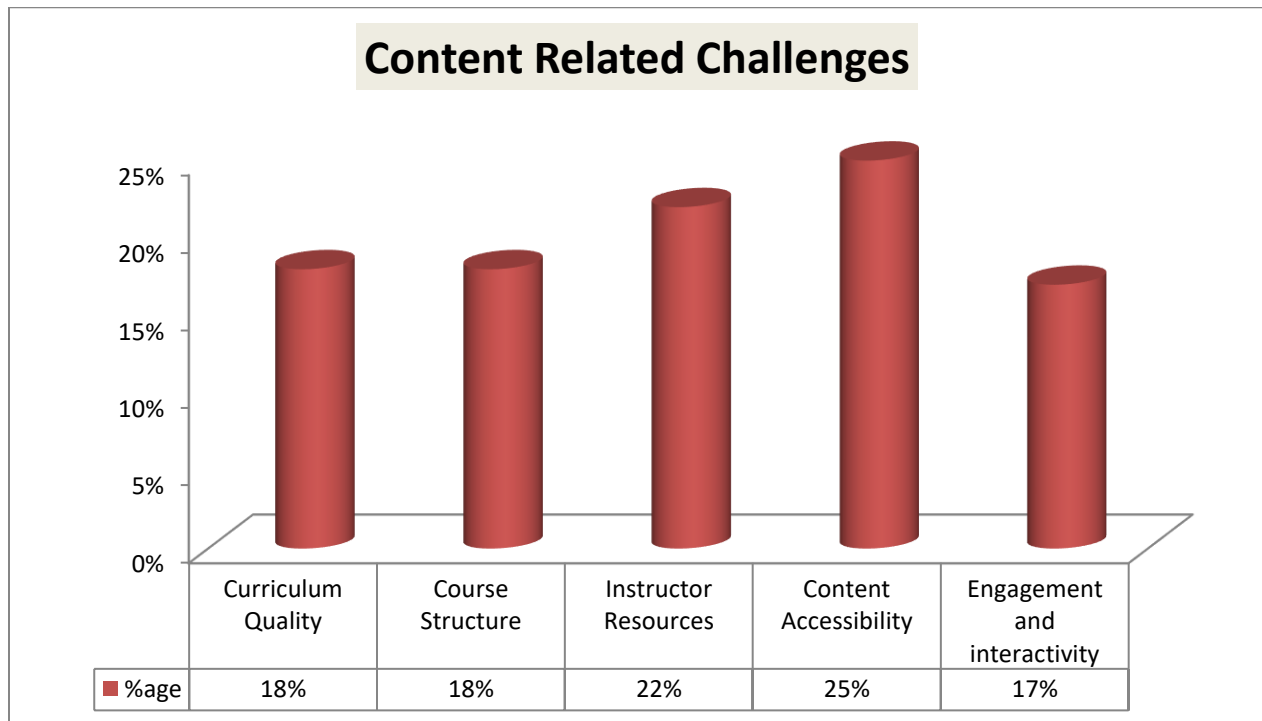


Figure 8: Content Related Challenges

The Figure 8 highlights the content-related challenges faced by learners in the EaSTE training program, represented as percentages. The most significant challenge, identified by 25% of the participants, is Content Accessibility, suggesting that difficulties in accessing training materials are a major concern. Following this, 22% of the challenges are attributed to Instructor Resources, indicating a need for better materials or support from instructors to facilitate the learning process. Both Curriculum Quality and Course Structure represent 18% of the challenges, implying that there are concerns regarding the quality of the curriculum and the organization of the courses, with potential areas for improvement in course design and content delivery. Engagement and Interactivity, at 17%, indicate that a lack of engaging content and opportunities for interaction may hinder the learning experience. Overall, the data points to significant content-related issues in accessibility, instructor resources, curriculum quality, and learner engagement, all of which require focused attention to enhance the effectiveness of the training program.

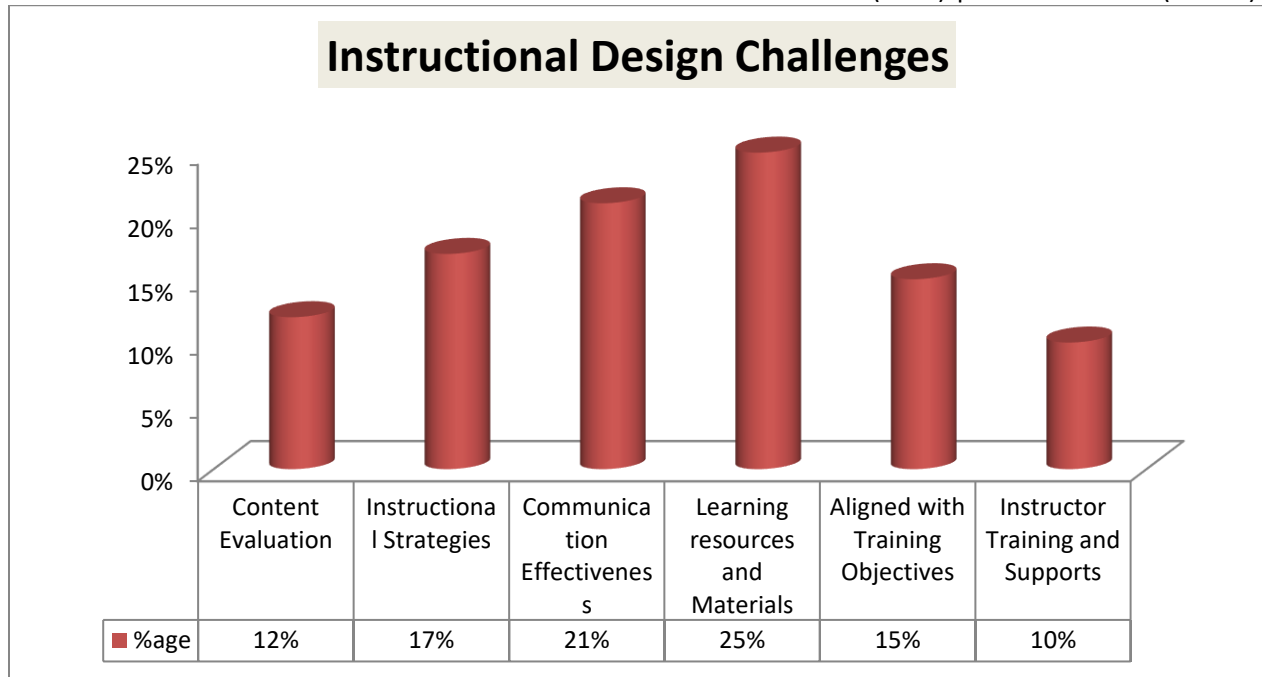


Figure 9: Instructional Design Challenges

The Figure 9 illustrates the instructional design challenges faced by learners in the EaSTE training program, represented as percentages. The most significant challenge, identified by 25% of participants, relates to Learning Resources and Materials, highlighting the need for improvements in the quality and availability of learning materials. Communication Effectiveness follows closely at 21%, indicating that issues with clear communication and interaction during the training process significantly impact learners. Instructional Strategies, accounting for 17%, suggest that the methods used for teaching and delivering content could be optimized to better support the learning experience. Aligned with Training Objectives, at 15%, shows that a notable portion of learners feel the training content is not fully aligned with their goals or objectives. Content Evaluation, which stands at 12%, reflects concerns over the methods used to assess the quality and relevance of the training materials. Finally, Instructor Training and Support, at 10%, indicates that while this area is less of a concern, there is still room for improvement in ensuring instructors are properly equipped and supported to deliver effective training. Overall, the key instructional design challenges are centered on improving learning materials, communication, instructional strategies, and alignment with training objectives.

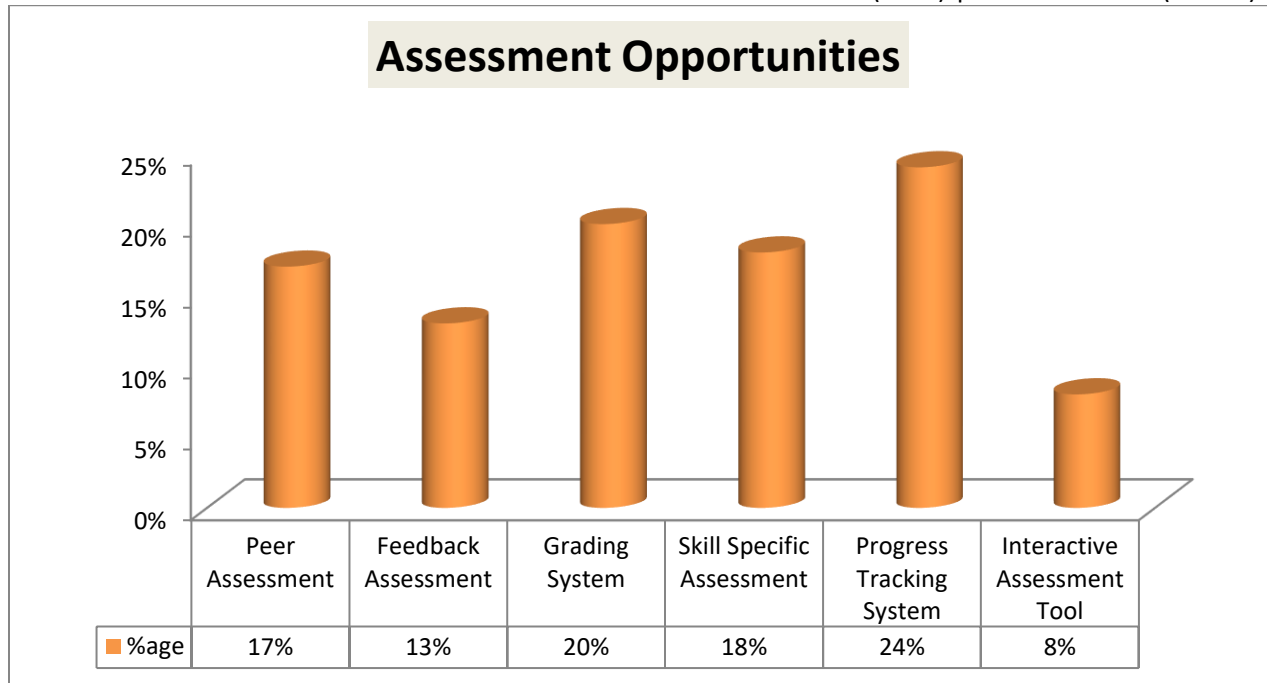


Figure 10: Assessment Opportunities

Figure 10 indicates various assessment methods utilized within the context of EaSTE training, expressed as percentages. The most significant opportunity identified is the Progress Tracking System, accounting for 24%. This highlights a strong emphasis on monitoring learners' progress, suggesting that tracking development is a priority in the training framework. Following this, the Grading System is noted at 20%, underscoring the importance of structured evaluation in assessing learner performance. The Skill-Specific Assessment ranks next at 18%, indicating a focus on evaluating individual skills pertinent to the training objectives. Peer Assessment is noted at 17%, reflecting the value placed on collaborative evaluation among learners, which can enhance learning outcomes through shared feedback. The Feedback Assessment is at 13%, suggesting that while feedback mechanisms are important, they are less prioritized compared to other assessment opportunities. Lastly, the Interactive Assessment Tool is the least emphasized at 8%, indicating that while interactive tools can enhance engagement, their current implementation may not be as robust or prioritized as other assessment methods. Overall, this illustrates that the primary assessment opportunities in the training context are centered on progress tracking and grading, followed by skill-specific assessments, peer assessments, feedback mechanisms, and interactive assessment tools. This distribution highlights the training's focus on structured evaluation and continuous progress monitoring to support learner development.

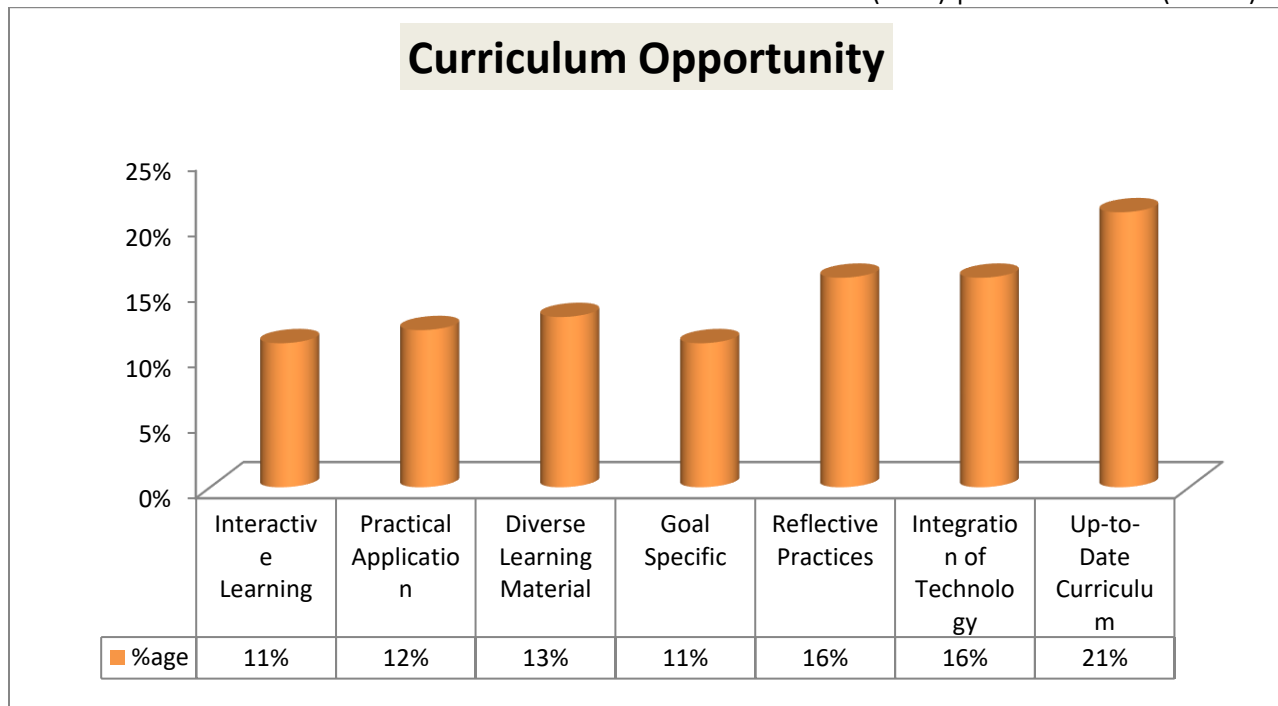


Figure 11: Curriculum Opportunity

Figure 11 indicates various aspects of curriculum-level opportunities in the EaSTE training context, represented as percentages. The most significant opportunity identified is the Up-to-Date Curriculum, which stands at 21%. This highlights a strong emphasis on ensuring that the curriculum is current and relevant, underscoring the necessity for continuous updates to meet evolving educational needs. Following this, both Reflective Practices and Integration of Technology are each noted at 16%, suggesting that fostering reflective learning and incorporating technology into the curriculum are considered important elements for enhancing the educational experience. Next, Diverse Learning Material is highlighted at 13%, indicating an effort to provide a variety of resources to cater to different learning styles and preferences. The Practical Application aspect is at 12%, emphasizing the importance of applying theoretical knowledge in practical contexts. Lastly, Interactive Learning is recorded at 11%. While this is the lowest percentage among the listed opportunities, it still signifies a commitment to engaging learners through interactive methods. Overall, the primary curriculum opportunities in the training context focus on maintaining a current curriculum, enhancing reflective practices and technology integration, and providing diverse and practical learning materials. This distribution underscores the importance of a dynamic and engaging curriculum to support effective learning outcomes.

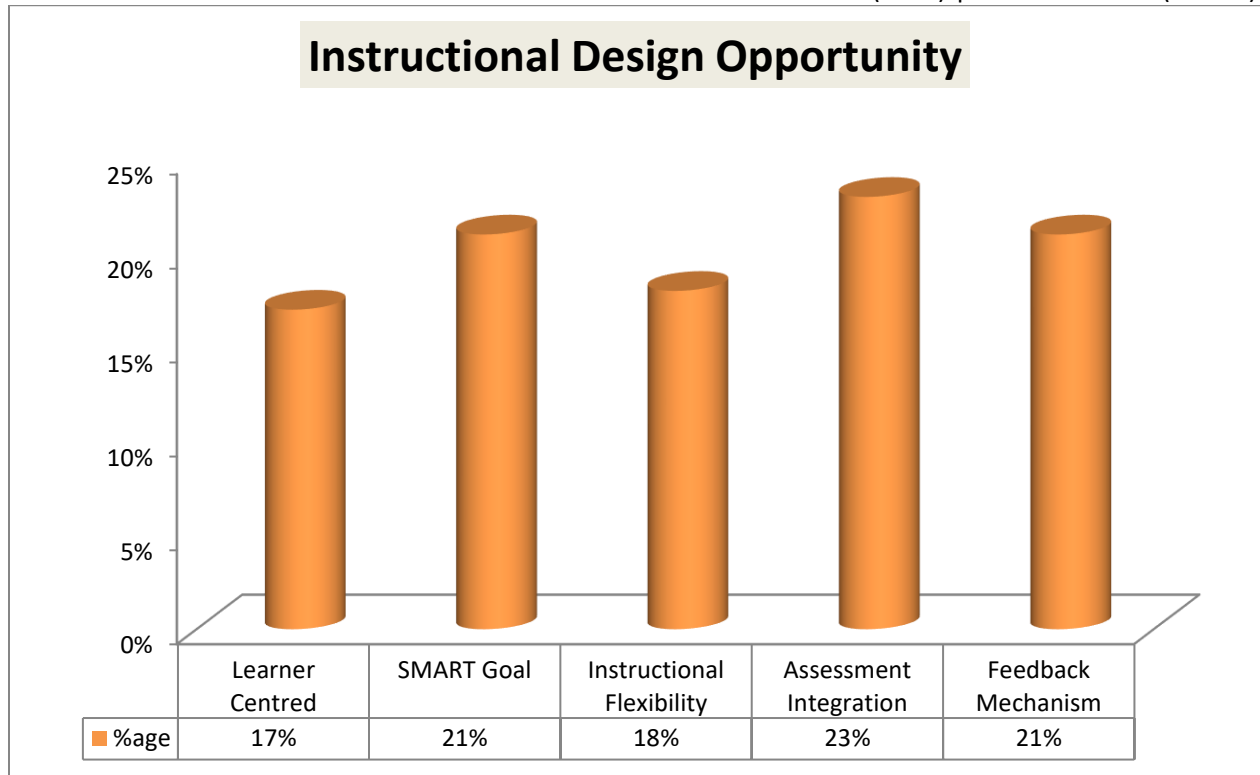


Figure 12: Instructional Design Opportunity

The Figure 12 illustrates various aspects of instructional design within the EaSTE training context as opportunities, represented as percentages. The most significant opportunity identified is Assessment Integration, which stands at 23%. This highlights the importance of effectively incorporating assessment strategies into the instructional design to ensure that learning outcomes are measured and achieved. Following this, both Feedback Mechanism and SMART Goals are each noted at 21%. This indicates a strong emphasis on providing structured feedback to learners and setting Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound goals, both of which are crucial for guiding learner progress and enhancing the overall learning experience. Instructional Flexibility is highlighted at 18%, suggesting that adaptability in instructional methods and approaches is valued to meet diverse learner needs and preferences. Lastly, Learner-Centered design is recorded at 17%, emphasizing the importance of focusing on the needs and experiences of the learners themselves. Overall, the figure illustrates that the primary instructional design opportunities in the training context prioritize assessment integration, effective feedback mechanisms, and the establishment of SMART goals, while also valuing instructional flexibility and a learner-centered approach. This distribution underscores the commitment to creating an effective and responsive learning environment.

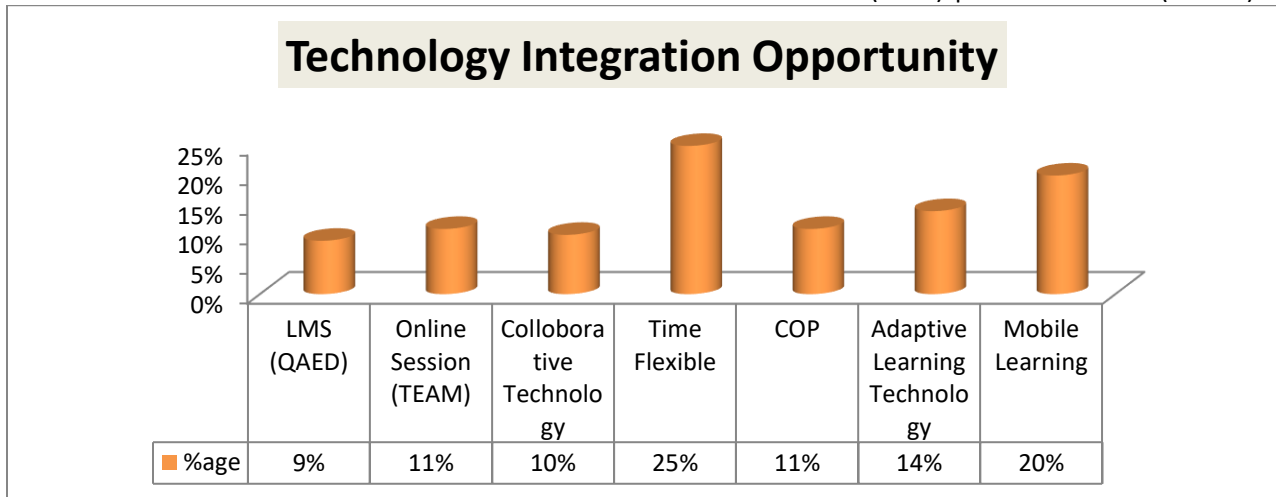


Figure 13: Technology Integration Opportunity

The data in Figure 13 highlights various aspects of technology integration within the EaSTE training context, represented as percentages. The most prominent opportunity identified is time flexibility, which stands at 25%. This reflects a strong emphasis on providing flexible learning options that accommodate learners' schedules and preferences, allowing for a more personalized learning experience. Following this, mobile learning is highlighted at 20%, suggesting a significant focus on leveraging mobile technology to facilitate learning anytime and anywhere, thereby enhancing accessibility for learners. Adaptive learning technology is noted at 14%, emphasizing the importance of using tools that adapt to individual learners' needs and progress, promoting a more tailored educational experience. Both online sessions (TEAM) and communities of practice (COP) are recorded at 11%, indicating a commitment to using collaborative technologies and online platforms for interactive learning and community engagement. Lastly, LMS (QAED) is the lowest at 9%, suggesting that while learning management systems are utilized, they may not be the primary focus for technology integration in this training context. Overall, the figure illustrates that the main technology integration opportunities in this training context prioritize flexibility in learning, mobile access, and adaptive technologies, while also recognizing the value of collaborative online sessions and communities of practice. This distribution highlights a commitment to creating a modern and accessible learning environment.

5. Findings

5.1 Challenges

The study reveals that learners face significant technical challenges in the EaSTE training program. A primary concern is the lack of adequate technical support and resources, which hinders users' ability to effectively engage with the training. Accessibility and inclusivity are also critical issues, as ensuring that all learners can access training materials is essential for a successful learning environment. Additionally, difficulties with course structure and navigation indicate a need for improved design to facilitate user experience. While the user interface design is functional, enhancements could further improve usability. Concerns about content delivery

reliability highlight the importance of consistent access to materials, and while feedback mechanisms are acknowledged, they are currently less problematic compared to other challenges. Lastly, user engagement features, though a lower priority, still require attention to foster a more interactive learning environment. In terms of assessment challenges, participants identified shortcomings in the evaluative framework as a significant issue, suggesting that current assessments may not be reliable or sufficient. There is also a notable dissatisfaction with the feedback mechanisms, indicating a need for a more robust system that effectively informs learners about their performance and areas for improvement. Methodological approaches to assessment are viewed as inadequate and in need of revision to ensure sound evaluation practices. Moreover, the availability and quality of assessment resources present another area for improvement, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to enhance the effectiveness of assessments within the training program. Content-related challenges are also prominent, with learners expressing concerns about content accessibility, which poses a major barrier to effective learning. The need for better instructor resources indicates that support from educators is crucial for facilitating the learning process. Additionally, concerns regarding curriculum quality and course structure suggest that improvements in course design and content delivery are necessary. Engagement and interactivity are highlighted as areas needing enhancement, as a lack of engaging content and opportunities for interaction can hinder the overall learning experience. Instructional design challenges further complicate the learning environment, with a strong emphasis on the need for improved learning resources and materials. Communication effectiveness emerges as a significant concern, as clear communication is vital for learner engagement and understanding. Instructional strategies used in teaching and content delivery require optimization to better support learners. There is also a perception that the training content is not fully aligned with learners' goals, which can affect motivation and outcomes. Concerns over content evaluation methods indicate a need for better assessment of training material quality and relevance. Lastly, while instructor training and support are less of a concern, there remains room for improvement to ensure that instructors are adequately equipped to deliver effective training. Overall, the key challenges across technical, assessment, content and instructional design domains highlight the need for focused improvements to enhance the effectiveness of the EaSTE training program.

5.2 Opportunities

The study identifies various assessment methods utilized within the EaSTE training framework, emphasizing the importance of monitoring learners' progress through a robust Progress Tracking System. This focus on tracking development indicates a commitment to structured evaluation, with the Grading System also playing a crucial role in assessing learner performance. Skill-specific assessments are prioritized to ensure that individual skills relevant to the training objectives are effectively evaluated. Peer assessments are valued for their potential to enhance learning outcomes through collaborative evaluation and shared feedback among learners. While feedback assessments are recognized as important, they are less prioritized compared to other methods. Interactive assessment tools, although acknowledged for their potential to engage learners, are currently not as emphasized in the training context. Overall, the assessment opportunities highlight a strong focus on progress tracking and grading, reinforcing the importance of continuous monitoring to support learner development. In the curriculum context, the study reveals significant opportunities for improvement, particularly in maintaining

an up-to-date curriculum that meets evolving educational needs. Reflective practices and the integration of technology are also emphasized as vital components for enhancing the learning experience. The provision of diverse learning materials aims to cater to various learning styles, while practical application of theoretical knowledge is underscored as essential for real-world relevance. Although interactive learning is noted as the least emphasized opportunity, it still reflects a commitment to engaging learners through dynamic methods. Overall, these curriculum opportunities indicate a focus on creating a relevant and engaging educational framework that supports effective learning outcomes. Regarding instructional design, the study highlights the importance of integrating assessment strategies into the overall instructional framework to ensure that learning outcomes are effectively measured. Structured feedback mechanisms and the establishment of SMART goals are crucial for guiding learner progress and enhancing the overall educational experience. Instructional flexibility is valued to accommodate diverse learner needs, while a learner-centered approach emphasizes designing instruction that focuses on the experiences and requirements of the learners. This distribution of instructional design opportunities underscores a commitment to fostering an effective and responsive learning environment. In terms of technology integration, the study identifies a strong emphasis on providing time flexibility in learning options, allowing learners to engage with content at their own pace. Mobile learning is highlighted as a significant focus, enabling access to educational resources anytime and anywhere, thus enhancing accessibility. The use of adaptive learning technology is recognized for its potential to personalize the educational experience based on individual learner needs. Collaborative online sessions and communities of practice are also valued for facilitating interactive learning and community engagement. While Learning Management Systems are utilized, they are not the primary focus of technology integration in this context. Overall, the technology integration opportunities reflect a commitment to creating a modern, flexible, and accessible learning environment that meets the needs of all learners.

5.3 Effectiveness

The effectiveness of the EaSTE training program assessed through various dimensions, starting with the alignment of training objectives. The program demonstrates a commitment to evaluating learner performance through structured progress tracking and grading systems; however, challenges related to content alignment with learners' goals indicate gaps that need to be addressed to enhance motivation and outcomes. Feedback mechanisms play a crucial role in learner development, yet existing systems are perceived as inadequate. This dissatisfaction underscores the necessity for a more robust feedback system that offers timely and constructive insights, which could significantly improve the training's overall effectiveness. Performance metrics, emphasizing skill-specific assessments and peer evaluations, reflect a commitment to monitoring learner progress; however, the study highlights shortcomings in the evaluative framework, suggesting that current assessments may not reliably measure learner capabilities. Engagement levels are impacted by challenges such as a lack of interactive content and user engagement features, indicating that enhancing dynamic content and fostering a more interactive learning environment is critical for improving learner involvement and satisfaction. The ability of learners to apply skills in real-world contexts is essential for measuring training effectiveness. While the curriculum emphasizes practical application, concerns regarding content accessibility and course structure may hinder this application, necessitating easier navigation and access to training materials. The curriculum itself presents opportunities for improvement, particularly in

maintaining relevance and integrating technology, yet challenges in quality and structure signal a need for revisions. Instructor effectiveness is vital for training outcomes; while there are concerns about resources and support, improvements in instructional strategies and communication could enhance the learning environment. Additionally, a commitment to continuous improvement is evident, although many challenges remain unaddressed, particularly in technical support and content delivery. By focusing on iterative improvements based on feedback and performance metrics, the program can enhance its effectiveness. Overall, while the EaSTE training program has identified several areas for improvement, addressing significant challenges—such as strengthening feedback mechanisms, improving curriculum quality, enhancing engagement strategies, and ensuring alignment with learner objectives—will be essential for better supporting learner development and achieving educational goals.

6. Implications of the Study

The implications of the study on the challenges and opportunities of teachers' online training in the "English as a Subject for Teachers and Educators" (EaSTE) initiative in Punjab is significant for various stakeholders:

1. **Policy Development:** Policymakers should consider the identified challenges, such as technological barriers and curriculum quality, when designing and implementing training programs. This could lead to more targeted policies that address specific needs and improve the overall effectiveness of teacher training initiatives.
2. **Resource Allocation:** Educational authorities should allocate resources to enhance technical support and infrastructure, ensuring that educators have access to reliable tools and materials. This investment is essential for creating an effective online learning environment.
3. **Curriculum Improvement:** The study highlights the need for an updated and relevant curriculum that aligns with educators' goals and incorporates reflective practices and technology. Continuous curriculum evaluation and adaptation can enhance the learning experience and ensure it meets current educational demands.
4. **Focus on Continuous Improvement:** The commitment to continuous improvement should be embedded in the training program's framework. Regular feedback loops and iterative enhancements based on learner experiences can help address ongoing challenges and refine the training process.
5. **Research and Evaluation:** Future studies should continue to explore the effectiveness of online training programs, focusing on long-term impacts and best practices. Ongoing research can inform adjustments and innovations in teacher training initiatives.

7. Conclusion

The study on the "English as a Subject for Teachers and Educators" (EaSTE) initiative reveal a multifaceted landscape of challenges and opportunities for educators involved in online training. Educators face significant technological barriers, notably inadequate technical support and resources, which hinder effective engagement with the training. Issues related to course structure and navigation also highlight a need for improved design to enhance user experience.

The study emphasizes that while there are opportunities for flexibility and access to diverse educational resources, the effectiveness of these modalities is compromised by content-related challenges and a lack of engaging instructional design. Despite these challenges, the EaSTE training program offers opportunities for collaborative professional development and the potential for personalized learning experiences through adaptive technologies. However, the effectiveness of the program in enhancing English language teaching competencies among educators in Punjab is called into question due to shortcomings in assessment reliability and feedback mechanisms. These insights suggest that policymakers and educational stakeholders must prioritize improvements in curriculum quality, assessment strategies, and instructor support to align training with educators' goals and enhance learner motivation. Overall, while the EaSTE initiative demonstrates a commitment to structured evaluation and continuous improvement, addressing the identified challenges such as enhancing user engagement, refining assessment methods, and ensuring content accessibility will be crucial in realizing the program's full potential and achieving effective educational outcomes. This approach will not only support educator development but also contribute to the broader goals of English language education in the region.

8. Recommendations for Future Research

1. Researcher will investigate the effects of specific technological improvements on teacher engagement and learning outcomes within the EaSTE program. This could include evaluating the effectiveness of a redesigned LMS, user interface enhancements, and the integration of interactive tools.
2. Researcher will conduct research focused on developing and implementing effective assessment methods and feedback mechanisms that align with teachers' professional development needs. Understanding how these elements influence teacher confidence and perceived value in the training can provide critical insights for program improvement.
3. Researcher will explore the impact of incorporating collaborative learning experiences on teacher motivation and engagement. This research will assess the effectiveness of peer-to-peer interactions and group activities in fostering a supportive learning environment and enhancing skill acquisition.

References

- Ali Alghamdi, Y., Alghamdi, A., & Alsolami, T. (2019). English Language Teaching: Historical Overview, Current Issues and Suggestions for Enhancing Speaking Proficiency in EFL Contexts. *English Language Teaching: Historical Overview, Current Issues and Suggestions for Enhancing Speaking Proficiency in EFL Contexts* (June 2019). *Arab World English Journal (AWEJ)* Volume, 10.
- Baker, J., & Westrup, H. (2003). *Essential speaking skills*. A&C Black.
- Bashir, M., Azeem, M., & Dogar, A. H. (2011). Factor effecting students' English speaking skills. *British journal of arts and social sciences*, 2(1), 34-50.
- Chuang, S. F. (2013). Evaluating training and development practices in Taiwan: Challenges and opportunities. *Human Resource Development International*, 16(2), 230-237.

- Gove, M., Vacca, J. A. L., Vacca, R. T., Burkey, L. C., Lenhart, L. A., & McKeon, C. A. (2011). *Reading and learning to read*. Pearson.
- Kellogg, R. T. (2008). Training writing skills: A cognitive developmental perspective. *Journal of writing research*, 1(1), 1-26.
- Langan, J. (2001). *College writing skills with readings*. New York.
- Miller, L. (2003). Developing Listening Skills with Authentic Materials. *ESL magazine*, 6(2), 16-18.
- Morgan, P. L., & Fuchs, D. (2007). Is there a bidirectional relationship between children's reading skills and reading motivation?. *Exceptional children*, 73(2), 165-183.
- Mushtaq, T. (2021). A Critical Evaluation of PEELI Project Run by the Punjab Government of Pakistan and British Council. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences*, 11(3), 1080-1098.
- Nadeem, H. A., Saadi, A. M., & Fatima, N. (2024). PEELI training and professional development of primary school teachers. *Authorea Preprints*.
- Oradee, T. (2012). Developing speaking skills using three communicative activities (discussion, problem-solving, and role-playing). *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity*, 2(6), 533.
- Paris, S. G. (2005). Reinterpreting the development of reading skills. *Reading research quarterly*, 40(2), 184-202.
- Renukadevi, D. (2014). The role of listening in language acquisition; the challenges & strategies in teaching listening. *International journal of education and information studies*, 4(1), 59-63.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and methods in language teaching*. Cambridge university press.
- Schatschneider, C., Fletcher, J. M., Francis, D. J., Carlson, C. D., & Foorman, B. R. (2004). Kindergarten prediction of reading skills: a longitudinal comparative analysis. *Journal of educational psychology*, 96(2), 265.
- Singh, V., & Thurman, A. (2019). How many ways can we define online learning? A systematic literature review of definitions of online learning (1988-2018). *American Journal of Distance Education*, 33(4), 289-306.
- Sohil, F., Tasneem, S., Sial, Z. A., Hussain, M., Yasmin, S., Rafiq, H., & Sohail, M. U. (2023). PERCEPTIONS ABOUT PEELI TRAINING FROM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEACHERS OF DISTRICT MULTAN. *Russian Law Journal*, 11(3), 3189-3196.
- Tsou, W. (2005). Improving speaking skills through instruction in oral classroom participation. *Foreign Language Annals*, 38(1), 46-55.
- Wright, W. E. (2010). *Foundations for teaching English language learners: Research, theory, policy, and practice*. Philadelphia, PA: Caslon Publishing.