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Determinants of Educational Technology Adoption in Higher Education: Evidence from Teaching Professionals in Nepal

Pravesh Pathak [1*], Suman Thapaliya [2]
[1] Department of Information Technology, Texas College of Management and IT, Kathmandu, Nepal
[2] Department of Information Technology, Lincoln University College, Malaysia

* Corresponding Author: **Pravesh Pathak**

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Abstract
The adoption of educational technology in higher education has become an increasingly critical concern for improving teaching effectiveness and learning outcomes in the 21st century. In developing countries such as Nepal, however, the integration of technology into teaching practices remains uneven despite growing investments in digital infrastructure and supportive national policy frameworks. While previous research has extensively examined infrastructural challenges and faculty readiness as barriers to technology use, limited empirical attention has been directed toward identifying the comprehensive set of determinants that shape technology adoption decisions among teaching professionals in South Asian higher education contexts.
This study investigates the determinants of educational technology adoption in higher education institutions in Nepal, with a specific focus on the perspectives of college-level teaching professionals. Grounded in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (Davis, 1989) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) (Venkatesh *et al*., 2003), a quantitative survey-based research design was employed. Primary data were collected from 68 faculty members across diverse colleges in Nepal using a structured, five-point Likert scale questionnaire. The instrument assessed five major dimensions: perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, institutional support, teacher digital competency, and external influences including policy environment and social factors.
The findings reveal that institutional support and teacher digital competency are the most significant determinants of educational technology adoption. Specifically, limited access to training programs and inconsistent technical support emerged as the most prominent institutional barriers. Perceived usefulness received the highest mean endorsement among faculty (M = 3.5), while institutional support scored the lowest (M = 2.7), indicating a critical gap between teacher motivation and enabling conditions. Student expectations were the strongest external driver of adoption (M = 3.9), while government policy support remained moderate (M = 2.9). Lack of training (reported by 76% of respondents as high-impact) and limited institutional resources (60%) were identified as the primary barriers to meaningful technology integration.
The study identifies a central "motivation-enablement paradox" at the heart of technology adoption in Nepalese higher education: faculty motivation to adopt technology genuinely exists, yet the institutional scaffolding required to convert that motivation into sustained, effective use remains critically insufficient. The study concludes that successful adoption of educational technology in Nepalese higher education requires a systemic approach that simultaneously strengthens institutional infrastructure, develops teacher digital competencies, and fosters positive perceptions of technology utility. Targeted professional development programs, improved institutional resource allocation, and coherent national ICT-in-education policies are among the key recommendations proposed.

Keywords: Educational Technology Adoption, Higher Education, Nepal, TAM, UTAUT, Teacher Digital Competency, Institutional Support, ICT Integration, Digital Pedagogy

1. Introduction

1.1. Background and Motivation

The rapid advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has profoundly transformed higher education globally, reshaping how knowledge is created, disseminated, and consumed. Educational technology — ranging from learning

management systems and multimedia platforms to AI-powered tools — has enabled innovative pedagogical methods, broadened access to learning resources, and enhanced student engagement. In Nepal, policy frameworks including the Digital Nepal Framework (2019) and the ICT in Education Master Plan (2021–2025) have emphasized digital literacy as a strategic national priority. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated the shift to technology-mediated instruction, exposing critical disparities in faculty readiness and institutional preparedness.

Despite growing investments in digital infrastructure, technology adoption among Nepalese teaching professionals remains inconsistent. Infrastructure improvements alone have not translated uniformly into changed teaching practices, pointing to behavioral, institutional, and contextual factors that mediate technology use. Most existing Nepalese studies focus primarily on infrastructure or student perspectives, leaving faculty-centered adoption determinants underexplored. This study addresses that gap through a quantitative, multi-dimensional investigation grounded in established theoretical frameworks.

1.2. Research Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are:

1. To identify the key determinants influencing educational technology adoption among teaching professionals in Nepalese higher education.
2. To assess the role of institutional support and teacher digital competency in shaping technology adoption behavior.
3. To analyze the influence of perceived usefulness and ease of use on faculty adoption intentions.
4. To examine the role of external factors — government policy, peer influence, and student expectations — in driving or constraining adoption.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Theoretical Frameworks

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) proposed by Davis (1989) [7] remains the most widely applied framework for studying technology adoption behavior. TAM posits that two core beliefs — perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) — are the primary antecedents of users' behavioral intention to adopt a technology. PU refers to the degree to which a user believes a system enhances job performance; PEOU refers to the degree to which using the system is free from effort. Subsequent extensions (TAM2, TAM3) incorporated subjective norms, voluntariness, and computer self-efficacy, enriching the model's explanatory power (Venkatesh & Bala, 2008) [25]. TAM-based studies in higher education consistently confirm that faculty perceptions of usefulness and usability significantly predict adoption intentions (Teo, 2011; Scherer *et al*., 2020) [22, 20].

Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)

UTAUT (Venkatesh *et al*., 2003) [26] synthesizes eight prior adoption theories into a consolidated model with four primary constructs: performance expectancy (paralleling TAM's PU), effort expectancy (paralleling PEOU), social influence, and facilitating conditions. UTAUT has demonstrated strong predictive validity across cultural and educational contexts globally, with gender, age, and voluntariness acting as important moderators (Alshehri *et al*., 2019; Sabi *et al*., 2016) [3, 19].

Diffusion of Innovation Theory (DOI)

Rogers' (2003) [18] Diffusion of Innovation Theory complements TAM and UTAUT by explaining how technologies spread through social systems over time. DOI identifies five innovation characteristics that influence adoption — relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability — and categorizes adopters as innovators, early adopters, early/late majority, and laggards. In higher education, DOI explains why adoption rates are often skewed, with a minority of faculty driving initial uptake while others lag due to complexity or compatibility concerns (Ertmer, 1999) [9].

2.2. Key Determinants

Institutional support — encompassing digital infrastructure, training programs, technical assistance, and incentive policies — is consistently identified as the most powerful enabler or inhibitor of technology adoption (Tondeur *et al*., 2021; Ertmer *et al*., 2012) [23, 10]. Research shows that limited access to hardware, unreliable internet, and the absence of structured professional development are the most pervasive institutional barriers globally (Pelgrum, 2001; Almaiah *et al*., 2020) [15, 2].

Teacher digital competency — defined as the skills, knowledge, and attitudes required to effectively integrate digital technologies in teaching (Redecker, 2017) [17] — is an equally critical individual-level determinant. Low digital self-efficacy reinforces technophobia and adoption resistance (Bandura, 1986) [4]. In Nepal, limited access to pre-service and in-service digital skills training is a primary contributor to low faculty competency (Sharma & Pokharel, 2022) [21].

Beyond individual and institutional factors, external influences — national policy environments, peer professional networks, and student expectations — exert meaningful normative and mimetic pressure on adoption behavior. Rapidly rising student digital literacy in Nepal is emerging as a significant motivator for faculty adoption (MoEST, 2021), while weak policy implementation translates aspirational frameworks into limited practice-level change (Bates, 2019) [5].

3. Methodology

A quantitative, cross-sectional survey design was employed to examine the determinants of educational technology adoption among teaching professionals across Nepalese public and private higher education institutions. Purposive and convenience sampling strategies were combined to recruit 68 faculty members through institutional email networks and professional WhatsApp groups.

The structured questionnaire — grounded in validated TAM, UTAUT, and DigCompEdu scales — covered six thematic sections: (i) demographic and professional background; (ii) frequency and type of technology use; (iii) institutional support; (iv) teacher digital competency; (v) perceived usefulness and ease of use; and (vi) external influences and barriers. All attitudinal items used a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

Mean scores were interpreted as: 1.00–1.80 (very low); 1.81–2.60 (low); 2.61–3.40 (moderate); 3.41–4.20 (high); 4.21–5.00 (very high). Content validity was ensured through theoretical grounding; internal consistency was confirmed

via Cronbach's alpha (all scales > 0.70). The study adhered to established ethical standards; participation was voluntary and responses were fully anonymized.

4. Results and Analysis

4.1. Technology Adoption Frequency and Types

The majority of respondents reported some level of regular technology use in their teaching: 35.3% used technology regularly (3–4 times per week), 32.4% occasionally (1–2 times per week), 20.6% daily, and 11.8% rarely or never. Presentation software, online communication tools, and digital learning resources were the most commonly used technologies. While adoption is present, it has not yet reached deep daily pedagogical integration for most faculty — consistent with Rogers' (2003) [18] early-to-late majority adoption phases.

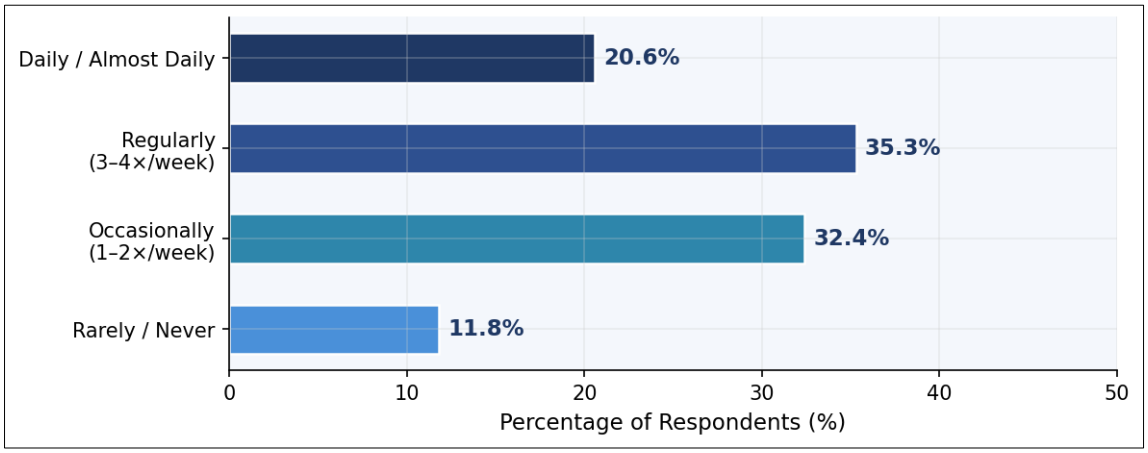

Fig 1: Frequency of Educational Technology Use Among Teaching Professionals (n = 68)

4.2. Institutional Support

Institutional support received the lowest overall mean score across all determinants (M = 2.7, moderate-low). Training program access (M = 2.4) and budget allocation (M = 2.3) were the weakest indicators. Basic digital infrastructure was moderate (M = 3.1), and institutional encouragement was present but unsystematic (M = 3.0). These patterns align with Tondeur *et al*. (2021) [23] and Pelgrum (2001) [15], who identify training deficits and resource constraints as the most pervasive institutional barriers.

Table 1: Institutional Support Indicators (n = 68)

Indicator	Mean Score	Level	Key Observation
Digital infrastructure availability	3.1	Moderate	Basic infrastructure present in most institutions
Institutional encouragement	3.0	Moderate	General encouragement; lacks systematic reinforcement
Technical support	2.7	Moderate	Support is inconsistent; response time slow
Access to training programs	2.4	Low	Training infrequent and poorly structured
Budget allocation for technology	2.3	Low	Insufficient dedicated funding for ed-tech integration

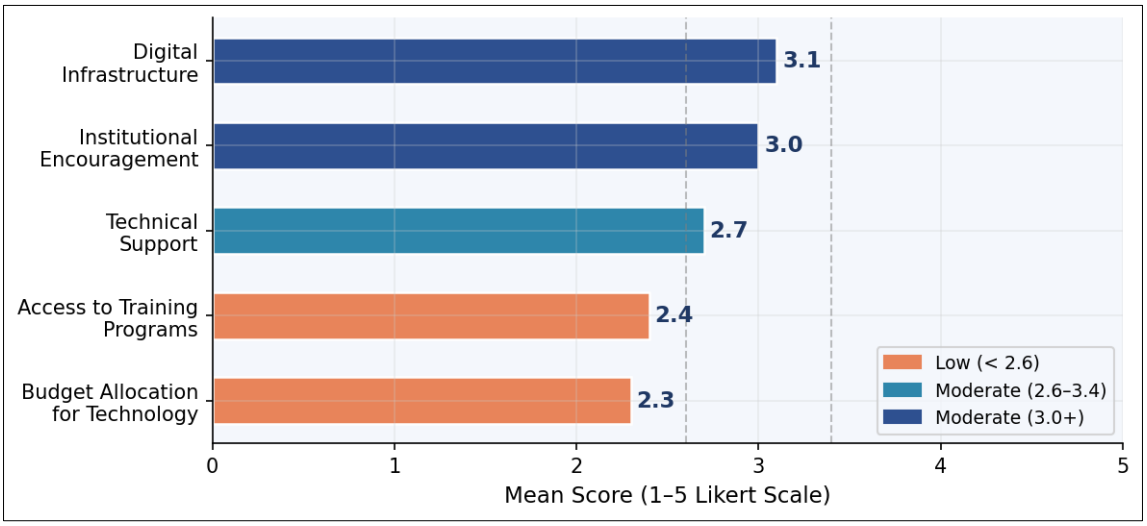

Fig 2: Institutional Support Indicators — Mean Scores on 5-Point Likert Scale (n = 68)

4.3. Teacher Digital Competency

The overall mean competency score was 3.1 (moderate), revealing a clear competency pyramid: basic digital skills are relatively strong (M = 3.8), but higher-order competencies — online content creation (M = 2.8) and data management and analysis (M = 2.6) — remain underdeveloped. This gap between foundational tool literacy and pedagogical technology literacy is consistent with Scherer *et al*. (2020) [20] and Redecker (2017) [17].

Table 2: Teacher Digital Competency Levels (n = 68)

Competency Dimension	Mean Score	Level	Interpretation
Basic digital skills	3.8	High	Comfortable with email, MS Office, internet
Confidence in technology use	3.2	Moderate	Moderate confidence; hesitancy around advanced tools
Integration of technology in teaching	3.1	Moderate	Limited to basic use; complex integration constrained
Online content creation	2.8	Moderate–Low	Few faculty create original digital learning materials
Data management and analysis	2.6	Low–Moderate	Minimal competency in data-driven teaching tools

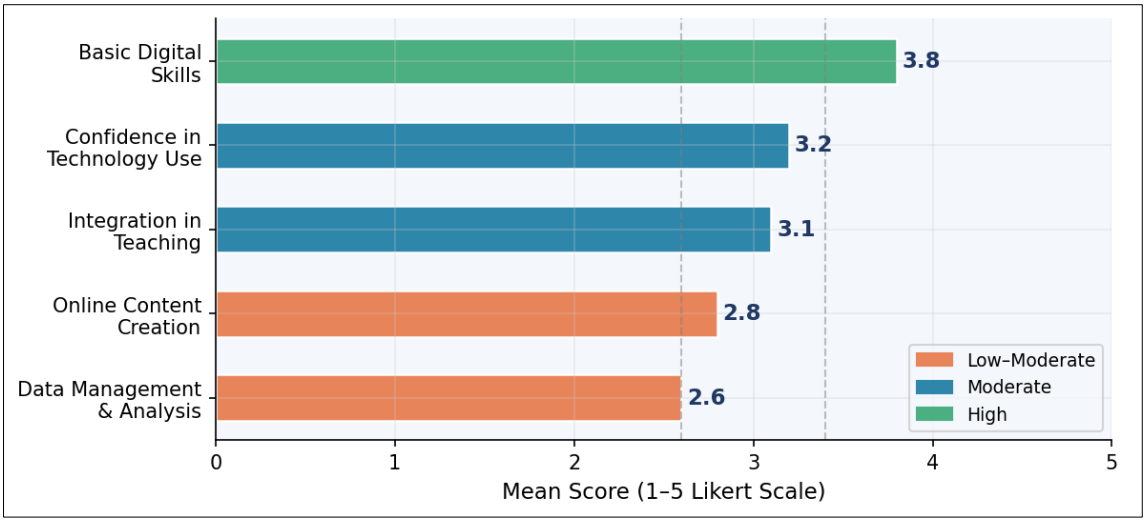

Fig 3: Teacher Digital Competency Levels — Mean Scores on 5-Point Likert Scale (n = 68)

4.4. Perceived Usefulness and Ease of Use

Perceived usefulness yielded the highest mean score in the study (M = 3.5, high): 72% of respondents agreed that technology improves teaching quality, and 68% affirmed its positive effect on student engagement. Perceived ease of use scored somewhat lower (M = 3.1, moderate), with mixed perceptions about usability and time efficiency. These results affirm TAM's dual constructs and suggest that while motivational utility beliefs are strong, practical experience of using technology remains a source of friction for a notable proportion of faculty.

Table 3: Perceived Usefulness and Ease of Use — Response Distribution (n = 68)

Item	Agree / Strongly Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)
Technology improves teaching quality	72%	18%	10%
Technology increases student engagement	68%	20%	12%
Technology saves preparation time	54%	26%	20%
Technology is easy to learn	55%	25%	20%
Technology is easy to operate	58%	22%	20%
Tools are user-friendly overall	52%	26%	22%

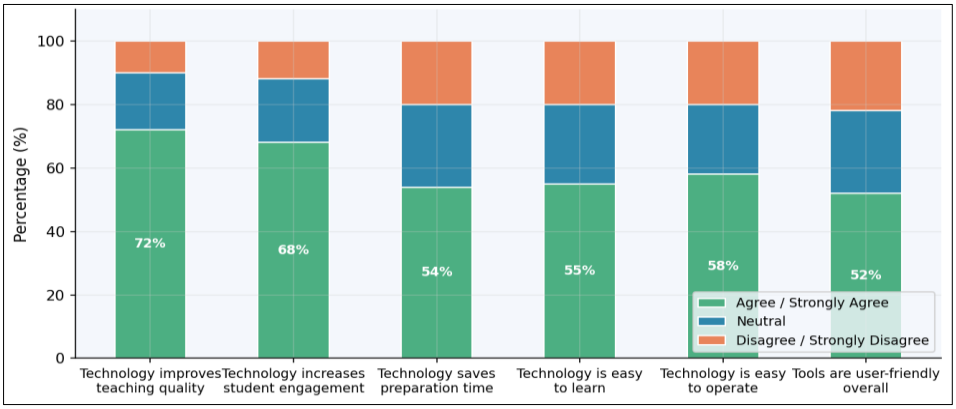

Fig 4: Perceived Usefulness and Ease of Use — Response Distribution (n = 68)

4.5. External Influences

Student expectations emerged as the strongest external influence on technology adoption (M = 3.9, high), reflecting the growing digital literacy expectations of younger learner cohorts — a trend widely noted across South Asia (MoEST, 2021). International trends in higher education (M = 3.2) and peer influence (M = 3.1) provided moderate normative pressure. Government policy support scored below the neutral midpoint (M = 2.9), indicating that while policy frameworks exist, faculty do not perceive them as providing meaningful implementation guidance or incentives — a disconnect consistent with Bates (2019) [5].

Table 4: External Influences on Technology Adoption (n = 68)

External Factor	Mean Score	Level	Significance
Student expectations	3.9	High	Strongest external motivator; students expect digital learning
International trends in higher ed.	3.2	Moderate	Global digital education movement creates indirect pressure
Peer influence / colleague adoption	3.1	Moderate	Observing peers normalizes adoption
Government policy support	2.9	Moderate–Low	Policies exist but implementation support is weak
Administrative pressure	2.7	Moderate–Low	Management expectations inconsistently communicated

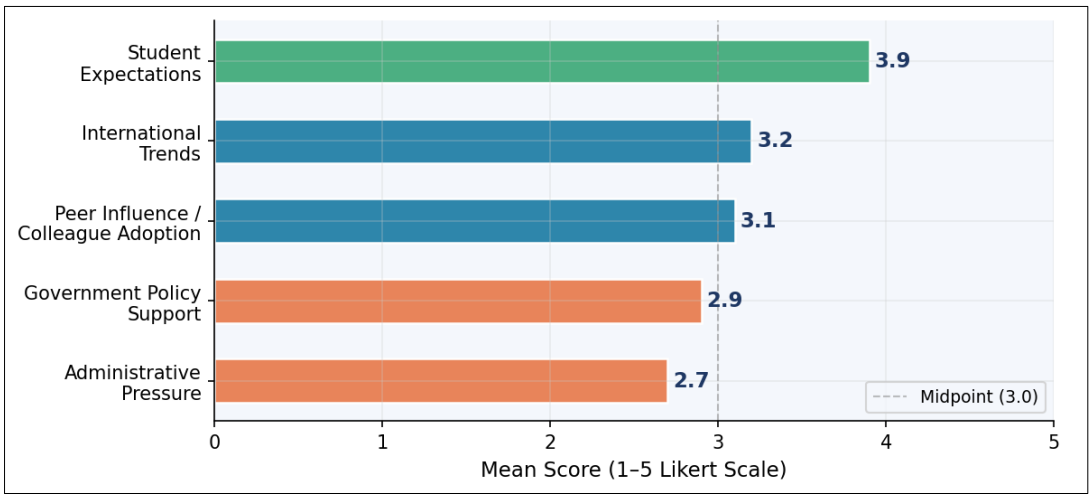

Fig 5: External Influences on Technology Adoption — Mean Scores (n = 68)

4.6. Challenges and Barriers

Lack of training was the most frequently cited high-impact barrier (76%), underscoring a critical human capital gap. Limited institutional resources (60%) and technical issues (53%) compound this training deficit. Time constraints were moderate (47%), while attitudinal resistance to change — though present — was reported as high-impact by only 35% of respondents, confirming that faculty motivation is not the primary obstacle to adoption.

Table 5: Challenges and Barriers to Technology Adoption (n = 68)

Barrier	% High Impact	Severity	Implication
Lack of training	76%	Critical	Primary capacity gap; structured PD urgently needed
Limited institutional resources	60%	High	Equipment, internet, and software shortfalls persist
Technical issues	53%	High	Reliability and connectivity problems frequent
Time constraints	47%	Moderate	Workload leaves little time for tech learning
Resistance to change	35%	Moderate–Low	Attitudinal barrier present but not dominant

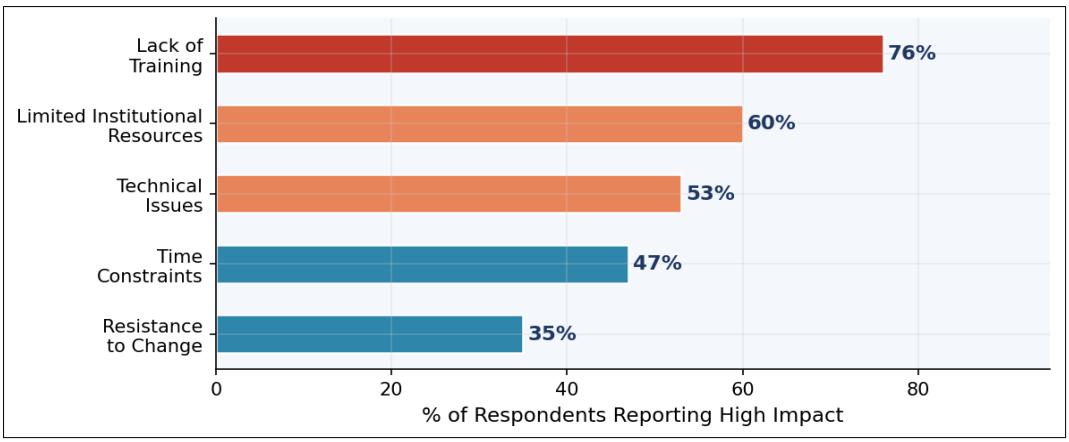

Fig 6: Challenges and Barriers to Technology Adoption — % Reporting High Impact (n = 68)

4.7. Summary of Key Determinants

The comparative summary (Figure 7 and Table 6) reveals an important paradox: faculty are highly motivated by perceived usefulness (M = 3.5) and responsive to student-driven external pressures (M = 3.2), yet the institutional conditions required to sustain adoption (M = 2.7) are comparatively weak. This motivation-enablement gap is the central policy challenge for educational technology integration in Nepalese higher education.

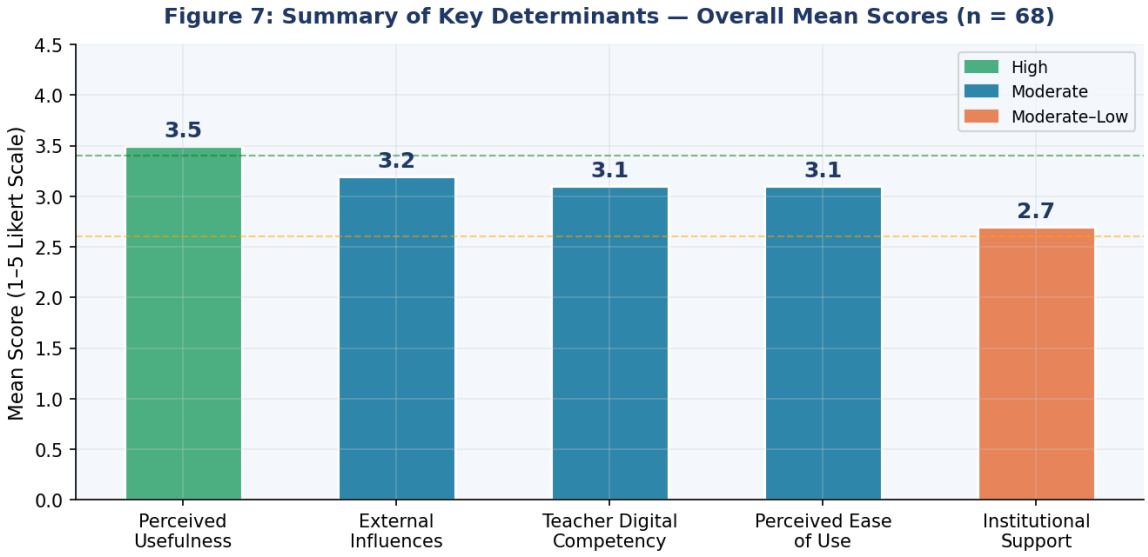

Fig 7: Summary of Key Determinants of Technology Adoption — Overall Mean Scores (n = 68)

Table 6: Comparative Summary of Key Determinants (n = 68)

Determinant	Mean Score	Level	Ranking
Perceived Usefulness	3.5	High	1st
External Influences	3.2	Moderate	2nd
Teacher Digital Competency	3.1	Moderate	3rd (tied)
Perceived Ease of Use	3.1	Moderate	3rd (tied)
Institutional Support	2.7	Moderate–Low	5th

5. Discussion

5.1. Institutional Support as the Critical Enabler

The study provides compelling evidence that institutional support — or its absence — is the most consequential structural determinant of educational technology adoption. While institutional support received the lowest mean score (M = 2.7), lack of training was simultaneously the most widely cited high-impact barrier (76%). This convergent evidence reinforces Tondeur *et al.*'s (2021) [23] meta-analytic finding that professional development and technical support are the institutional variables most strongly predictive of integration quality.

The pattern is consistent with Ertmer's (1999) [9] distinction between "first-order" barriers (external, resource-related) and "second-order" barriers (internal, belief-related). In Nepal, first-order barriers dominate — a policy-relevant finding since they are, in principle, more amenable to direct institutional intervention. Low budget allocation scores (M = 2.3) indicate that technology adoption strategies have not been adequately resourced, despite aspirational national policy goals (MoEST, 2021).

5.2. Teacher Digital Competency and the Competency Gap

The gap between basic digital skills (M = 3.8) and higher-order pedagogical integration competencies (M = 2.6–3.1) mirrors the distinction Scherer *et al.* (2020) [20] draw between "tool literacy" and "pedagogical technology literacy." Teachers know how to operate devices and applications but lack frameworks to deploy them meaningfully in instruction (Redecker, 2017) [17]. Capacity-building programs must therefore move beyond technical skill acquisition to explicitly address pedagogical design, assessment integration, and learner engagement strategies.

5.3. Perceived Usefulness, Ease of Use, and the Motivational Asset

The finding that perceived usefulness (M = 3.5) consistently outperforms ease of use (M = 3.1) is consistent with TAM's prediction that PU is a stronger determinant of adoption intention than PEOU (Davis, 1989; Teo, 2011) [7, 22]. That 72% of faculty agree technology improves teaching quality represents a fundamentally positive attitudinal foundation. This motivational asset can be leveraged to drive adoption if practical usability and training barriers are simultaneously addressed. The discrepancy between high usefulness beliefs and moderate ease-of-use perceptions likely reflects a gap between aspirational and experiential technology encounters — consistent with Kirkwood and Price's (2014) [13] observation that technology's pedagogical promise is frequently undermined by poor implementation and insufficient technical support.

5.4. External Influences and the Policy-Practice Disconnect

The emergence of student expectations as the strongest external influence (M = 3.9) reflects a generational dynamic increasingly documented in global higher education literature

(Prensky, 2001) [16]. As digital-native students enter higher education with elevated expectations, faculty face normative isomorphic pressure (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) [8] that can strategically leverage student agency as a driver of institutional change. Conversely, the low score for government policy support (M = 2.9) reveals a well-documented disconnect between policy rhetoric and practice: ambitious national frameworks fail to produce classroom-level change without adequate implementation support, funding, and accountability mechanisms (Bates, 2019; Hew & Brush, 2007) [5, 12].

5.5. The Motivation-Enablement Paradox

A cross-cutting theme of this study is the "motivation-enablement paradox": faculty are genuinely motivated to adopt educational technology, yet the institutional conditions required to convert that motivation into sustained, effective use are markedly deficient. Similar paradoxes have been documented in Ghana (Agyei & Voogt, 2021) [1], Malaysia (Ghavifekr & Rosdy, 2015) [11], and Sub-Saharan Africa (Sabi *et al*., 2016) [19], but the Nepalese manifestation points to specific structural failures that require targeted redress. The implication is clear: technology adoption initiatives should not prioritize awareness-raising or motivational campaigns — faculty motivation already exists. Instead, priority must be given to systematic investment in institutional enablers: structured professional development, improved infrastructure, and sustained technical support.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1. Conclusion

This study examined the determinants of educational technology adoption in higher education institutions in Nepal, drawing on survey data from 68 teaching professionals and grounded in TAM, UTAUT, and DigCompEdu frameworks. The findings reveal a nuanced adoption landscape: positive motivational foundations exist, but significant structural and institutional deficits constrain effective technology use. Faculty broadly perceive technology as useful and are sensitive to student expectations, yet these positive dispositions are undermined by critical gaps in institutional support — particularly the severe shortage of structured training and insufficient resource allocation. Teacher digital competency is adequate at the basic skill level but underdeveloped in higher-order pedagogical integration.

At the heart of these findings lies the motivation-enablement paradox: faculty motivation exists, but institutional scaffolding is insufficient to convert it into sustained, effective technology use. Addressing this paradox requires a systemic approach that simultaneously invests in institutional infrastructure, professional development, supportive policies, and cultural change. While this study makes an important empirical contribution, future research should employ larger, nationally representative samples, longitudinal designs, and mixed-method approaches combining quantitative surveys with qualitative institutional case studies.

6.2. Recommendations

Table 7: Evidence-Based Recommendations for Educational Technology Adoption

#	Recommendation	Key Actions
1	Strengthen Institutional Training Programs	Design structured, progressive PD programs from foundational digital literacy to advanced pedagogical integration. Establish dedicated annual budgets monitored against adoption indicators.
2	Invest in Technical Infrastructure & Support	Ensure reliable internet, up-to-date hardware, and dedicated IT support units with rapid response capacity. Implement preventive maintenance and contingency plans.
3	Develop a National Digital Competency Framework	Adapt the European DigCompEdu framework to the Nepali context, with clear benchmarks, certification pathways, and institutional recognition for competency milestones.
4	Promote Context-Appropriate Technologies	Prioritize low-bandwidth-friendly, locally relevant platforms with strong local-language support and proven usability in low-resource environments.
5	Align Policy with Practice	Accompany ICT-in-education policies with concrete implementation plans, dedicated funding streams, and regular monitoring of adoption indicators at institutional and national levels.
6	Leverage Student Expectations Strategically	Create formal student feedback mechanisms that allow technology preferences and learning experience assessments to inform institutional planning and faculty development priorities.

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