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Experienced Faculty's Online Teaching Readiness Post-Pandemic

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Scholarship of Discovery

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the readiness of university faculty for online/distance learning (ODL) after two semesters of pandemic-driven remote teaching. We focused on faculty with prior ODL course design and online teaching experience, examining various aspects of their readiness: comfort with risk, identity disruption, teaching norms, equity and tenure norms, and lifestyle readiness. We also explored how these factors related to age, years of teaching experience, and ODL course design experience, as well as the connections between lifestyle readiness and other readiness aspects. We surveyed 114 experienced faculty at a U.S. research university, achieving a 56% response rate. Our findings revealed that while faculty felt comfortable with ODL risks, they expressed uncertainty regarding identity disruption, teaching norms, equity and tenure norms, and lifestyle readiness. This suggests that even experienced faculty may not have felt fully prepared for ODL post-pandemic. While age and teaching experience weren't significant factors, prior ODL course design experience proved crucial, differentiating faculty readiness levels. Furthermore, lifestyle readiness showed significant positive correlations with other readiness aspects, highlighting its importance. This study's holistic view of faculty ODL readiness offers valuable insights for university administrators and faculty developers to better support experienced faculty in online teaching.

KEYWORDS

online distance learning, faculty readiness, faculty development, course design, lifestyle readiness

HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE

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INTRODUCTION

The popularity of Online/Distance Learning (ODL) has continued to increase and expand in higher education institutions even after the Pandemic (Simunich et al., 2024). In the U.S., the percentage of undergraduate students enrolled in some or exclusively online courses at four-year institutions remained above half (52.9%) in the Fall of 2022 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2023). With ODL's growing popularity, faculty readiness is crucial, as it impacts both satisfaction (Bolliger & Wasilik, 2009) and student learning experiences (Frass et al., 2017). However, the problem is that faculty may lack the confidence and competencies to teach ODL effectively (Martin et al., 2019). Therefore, studying faculty readiness is important for ensuring adequate institutional support for faculty.

The inquiry into whether faculty are prepared to teach ODL is often investigated through technology acceptance (Li, 2022; Wingo et al., 2017), competencies (Chan & Tse, 2022; Martin et al., 2019), and attitudes towards teaching with technologies (Phan & Dang, 2017; Mercado, 2008). The scope of the faculty's ODL readiness has expanded in light of the influence of the Pandemic. The abrupt shift from in-person to ODL instruction requires faculty's knowledge about technology, virtual connection with students, and patience, care, and empathy for students (Mishra et al., 2020). In Naidoo et al. (2022), the authors pointed out that faculty members tended to compromise their professional lives to pivot to ODL. More studies should investigate the multifaceted aspects of readiness to provide comprehensive support for faculty (Cutri & Mena, 2020; Cutri et al., 2020; Zgheib et al., 2023). For example, Cutri and Mena (2020) recommended considering cultural and affective factors that may play a significant role in faculty's ODL readiness. Readiness related to these factors was expanded into four dimensions - comfort with risk, identity disruption, teaching norms, and equity and tenure norms, which are further explored by Cutri et al. (2020).

Another facet of faculty ODL readiness is lifestyle readiness, which encompasses technology use in daily life, workspace location, access to technology support, and flexibility, all of which are facilitated by the online environment (Gay, 2016). Before the Pandemic, faculty demonstrated lower readiness in this area (Cruz & Catura, 2020). At the start of the Pandemic, faculty work hours decreased significantly (Gordon & Presseau, 2022). Even after adapting to online teaching, lifestyle readiness remained lower than technological and pedagogical readiness (Briones, 2021). Given the long-term shift toward ODL, examining lifestyle readiness remains essential.

Purpose of Study and Research Questions

Previous studies (Briones, 2021; Cutri & Mena, 2020; Cutri et al., 2020) suggested further conceptualising faculty readiness comprehensively by including readiness in affective and cultural factors (comfort with risk, identity disruption, teaching norms, equity and tenure norms) and lifestyle readiness. It

remains unclear whether faculty members' multifaceted ODL readiness is influenced by their ODL course design experience, especially when they have already gained experience with ODL in the previous two semesters (i.e., spring 2020 and fall 2020). Given the limited exploration of faculty's multifaceted ODL readiness, this study aims to assess faculty's ODL readiness, specifically among those with experience in ODL course design and online teaching. Unlike previous studies on faculty readiness, this study focuses on participants who may be better prepared for ODL due to their prior course design experience. Additionally, the study was conducted just before in-person classes resumed, when faculty with limited prior online teaching experience had gained some exposure during the COVID-19 pandemic. By examining this specific group at a pivotal moment, the study contributes to the literature on multifaceted ODL readiness among faculty with ODL course design experience and some online teaching experience.

Moreover, we examined the relationships between faculty members' multifaceted ODL readiness and their age, years of teaching experience, and level of ODL course design experience. Additionally, we examined the relationship between faculty lifestyle readiness and other ODL readiness sub-constructs. The research questions are:

- What are faculty perceptions regarding multifaceted ODL readiness (comfort with risk, identity disruption, teaching norms, equity and tenure norms, and lifestyle readiness) when they have previous ODL course design experience?
- What are the relationships regarding faculty's overall multifaceted ODL readiness levels between age, years of teaching experience, and level of ODL course design experience?
- What are the relationships between faculty's lifestyle readiness and their readiness in affective and cultural factors (comfort with risk, identity disruption, teaching norms, equity and tenure norms)?

This study aims to understand the readiness of faculty with ODL course design experience, the influence of ODL readiness on individual difference factors, and the relationship between the readiness constructs, in the hope of assisting stakeholders to identify new learning opportunities for faculty development and to inform higher education leadership about professional development plans for supporting faculty in the ODL environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Prior studies have explored faculty readiness for ODL in higher education settings before and during the Pandemic (Cutri & Mena, 2020; Cutri et al., 2020; Gay, 2016; Maraqa et al., 2022; Olivares et al., 2021). Instead of constraining readiness to confidence or competence, Cutri and Mena (2020) conducted a literature review on 44 research studies regarding faculty readiness for ODL,

noting that online teaching elicits intense personal emotions, primarily due to the professional vulnerability it creates. This is because the digital transformation of higher education is fundamentally altering academic culture and the long-held perception of faculty as infallible experts, leading to a sense of professional exposure. Since teaching online requires a significant amount of time, it can also impact faculty members' identities as researchers, as publishing research holds a higher status in academic culture, and less emphasis is placed on teaching (Cutri & Mena, 2020). From their perspectives, scales should consider affective factors such as identity disruption and inform faculty development, emphasizing the vulnerabilities that faculty members experience during their transition to new instruction. As Cutri and Mena (2020) pointed out, such affective factors conflict with the traditional academic and cultural factors that prioritize rationality over emotions and emphasize the expert role of faculty, norms that have been challenged as faculty transition to an ODL setting.

Building on the Cutri and Mena (2020) study, Cutri et al. (2020) conducted a mixed-methods study to examine both affective and cultural factors influencing faculty during their transition to online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic. They piloted an instrument consisting of four constructs: Comfort with risk, identity disruption, teaching norms, and equity and tenure norms.

Two of the constructs – comfort with risk and identity disruption, address the affective factors. Comfort with risk is related to whether faculty are willing and confident to step out of their comfort zone for teaching. Faculty who scored higher on this construct may be more comfortable with trying new teaching practices and demonstrating creativity and flexibility. Identity disruption examines faculty members' sense of identity as both experts and researchers. Faculty who felt their expert role was significantly challenged by their transition to ODL tended to score higher on this construct.

The other two constructs focused on cultural dimensions. Teaching norms capture faculty's challenges to traditional instruction, efforts to develop student autonomy, and attentiveness to students. Faculty members with higher scores on this construct tend to demonstrate less conformity to traditional teaching methods and have greater emphasis on promoting student autonomy. Equity and tenure norms influence instructors' approaches to fostering equity and their dilemmas regarding tenure and promotion. Faculty who believed that equity and tenure norms are issues in their transition to ODL tended to have higher ratings on this construct.

To develop and validate the instrument, Cutri et al. (2020) sought feedback from an expert panel to improve content validity. Thirty faculty members from a U.S. university completed the survey, which included items rated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Reliability coefficient for the overall scale was acceptable ($\alpha = 0.71$). Descriptive results showed that identity disruption and equity and tenure norms had lower means than other constructs. Qualitative results indicated that the transition to ODL

was just one of the many challenges they experienced. This was further supported by a later study (Maraqa et al., 2022), which suggested that the level of effort to transform and deliver ODL courses was high.

Faculty's lifestyle readiness is also an important consideration. According to Gay (2016), lifestyle readiness assesses whether faculty have a suitable location for extended periods, whether they have uninterrupted time to work, whether they are using technologies to communicate with other online users, and their value or need for flexibility. In Gay's (2016) study, faculty with online teaching experience (N = 208) completed a 39-item questionnaire on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The scale items were deemed reliable based on Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.70$). Descriptive results indicated that faculty scored lower on lifestyle readiness (M = 4.42) than technology readiness (M = 4.64), another readiness construct examined in the same study. These findings highlight a gap in lifestyle readiness as a part of the faculty's overall ODL readiness. Echoing Gay (2016), subsequent research has revealed that faculty continued to report low levels of lifestyle readiness when teaching in an ODL setting (Briones, 2021; Cruz & Catura, 2020).

Individual Differences in Faculty Readiness for ODL

Faculty readiness for ODL has been explored from various perspectives, and studies have examined the relationship between faculty's teaching experience and age and their perceived readiness for ODL (Alanazy, 2018; Horan & Kim, 2020; Junus et al., 2021; Moralista & Oducado, 2020; Marek et al., 2021; Scherer et al., 2023). Moralista and Oducado (2020) found a positive relationship between age, teaching experience, and faculty's perception of ODL, as older faculty members with more teaching experience tended to perceive online instruction more positively than their younger peers and those with less teaching experience. In contrast to Moralista and Oducado (2020), Alanazy (2018) found no significant relationship between age and faculty's attitudes towards ODL. Studies specifically examining online teaching experience found that faculty with such experience were more confident and prepared for ODL environments (Horan & Kim, 2020; Junus et al., 2021; Marek et al., 2021). Marek et al. (2021) further highlighted a significant difference between faculty members who teach five or more online courses and those who teach zero online courses. Teaching experience with any course modes, however, may not demonstrate a linear relationship with the faculty's ODL readiness. Scherer et al. (2023) revealed that faculty's ODL readiness initially increased with teaching experience and then declined after a certain point. Taken together, these findings suggest mixed results regarding the roles of teaching experience and age. Continued investigation into these individual factors, particularly among faculty with experience in course design and some online teaching experience, is needed. As ODL continues to grow post-pandemic, it is essential to identify and address the unique needs of faculty across different teaching experience levels and age groups to support their development in teaching ODL effectively.

ODL course design experience is another individual factor that remains under-researched despite its importance for ODL quality (Legon, 2015). Faculty engaged in ODL course design often collaborate with instructional designers, receiving support, guidance, and professional development throughout the process (Kumar & Ritzhaupt, 2017). This experience may contribute to ongoing professional learning opportunities that faculty need and value when designing online courses (Chao et al., 2010; Ray, 2009). In the post-pandemic context, it remains unknown whether such course design experience translates into a sense of preparedness through the examination of its relationship with faculty's multifaceted ODL readiness.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted at a research-intensive university. The university has an annual enrollment of approximately 32,669 students and offers 119 majors, 17 graduate degree programs, and six professional degree programs. It provides a range of online and hybrid/blended undergraduate courses, online master's degree programs, and certificate programs. eCampus is a Teaching and Learning Center (TLC) division that provides online course support for faculty teaching in the online and/or hybrid/blended environment. eCampus is the gateway for all online undergraduate and graduate courses, post-baccalaureate certificates, graduate certificates, and graduate programs. eCampus-supported online courses are designed to meet research-based standards using Quality Matters™, providing opportunities for student engagement, active learning, faculty involvement, and authentic assessment. Instructional designers and eLearning developers consult with faculty to select from a wide range of software applications and teaching techniques that engage students in asynchronous, synchronous, and mixed online learning environments tailored to the unique needs of the course, program, school, college, and student population.

Participants

Participants in this study were faculty members at this university who had contracted with eCampus to design and develop a 100% online course. Contractual obligations include collaborating with an instructional designer who consults with faculty throughout the instructional design process for online courses. We selected faculty who previously designed and developed 100% online courses with eCampus. This helped us understand their initial experiences before COVID-19 prompted the shift to ODL. We also wanted to determine how prepared these faculty members felt during the ODL transition, despite their prior experience with online course development. Faculty invited to participate in this study met the following criteria: (a) experience working contractually with eCampus, (b) ODL course design experience before COVID-19, and (c) transitioned to ODL courses due to COVID-19. This study was approved by the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

Data Collection

This study utilized an online survey approach using the university-owned Qualtrics account. A prior power analysis for correlation indicated that at least 85 participants are needed based on the parameters: (a) medium effect size (r = .30), (b) significance level, alpha (α = .05), and (c) beta (β = .20). During the spring 2021 semester, 203 faculty members that transitioned to ODL during the Pandemic and worked with eCampus were invited to participate in our study via email, which provided information about the study and the URL link to the survey. eCampus sponsored the study, and the Director of eCampus provided the names and emails of eligible faculty. The research team sent a reminder email within one week after the first email invitation to enhance the response rate, which was 56% (N = 114).

Participant Characteristics

The age of participants ranged from 28 to 79 (M = 48.40). The participants' declared gender balance was 50% female and 46.5% male. The number of online courses taught ranged from 0 to 40 times (M = 4.66). An interesting finding was that 12 participants had never taught online before the Pandemic but had experience in ODL course design. Years of teaching ranged from 2 to 42 (M = 17.08). Appendix A provides faculty characteristics, including age, gender, primary delivery mode, number of online courses taught, level of experience, and years of teaching experience.

Most participants teach in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (n = 58, 50.9%). Some participants teach in the School of Engineering (n = 15, 13.2%). Appendix B provides the number and percentage of disciplines taught by the school/college at this university.

Participants attended several informal and formal learning events during the Pandemic. Eighty-six faculty participated in a TLC workshop, such as Blackboard LMS, Webex, and Collaborate, and 70 had completed an Exploring Online Learning 2-week online course. Fourteen faculty sought TLC/eCampus support, including consultations with an instructional designer and/or educational technologist. Appendix C provides a table displaying the number of learning events in which faculty have participated during the Pandemic.

Instruments

With permission from the original authors, two instruments were adapted to collect the data: (a) Faculty Readiness for Online Crisis Teaching (FROCT) by Cutri and Mena (2020) and (b) the Lifestyle Readiness subscale by Gay (2016). Both instruments are measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The Lifestyle readiness subscale consists of six items, and the FROCT consists of 23 items based on the following subscales: (a) Comfort with Risk, eight items; (b) Identity Disruption, four items; (c) Teaching Norms, six items; and (d) Equity and Tenure Norms, five items.

Nine demographic items were included: age, gender, online or distance courses taught, formal and informal training experience, higher education experience, primary course delivery mode, study discipline, and research area. One open-ended question explored further how faculty experiences transitioning to ODL will impact their readiness in the future (after the Pandemic). We modified the survey items to align more closely with our study setting.

Reliability and Validity

To ensure the instrument's content validity and face validity after minor modifications were made, three individuals with expertise in educational technology, assessment, and instructional design were invited to serve on an expert panel. Their feedback resulted in the revisions of a few items. On the 29-item scale, reliability was calculated using Cronbach's alpha ($\alpha = 0.84$), which is considered good. Subscale reliability was: Comfort with risk ($\alpha = 0.64$), identity disruption ($\alpha = 0.54$), teaching norms ($\alpha = 0.64$), equity and tenure norms ($\alpha = 0.71$), and lifestyle readiness ($\alpha = 0.53$).

Data Analysis

This study implemented both quantitative and qualitative analyses. The quantitative data were examined from the responses to the survey items. Seven negatively worded items on the FROCT were reverse-coded. The qualitative data investigated one open-ended question provided in the survey. Statistical calculations were conducted using SPSS version 28. Descriptive statistics and frequencies were calculated to answer research question one. Since we did not know faculty's primary course delivery modes before conducting the study, the faculty self-reported this on the survey. As a result, we separated the descriptive results into three categories: in-person and hybrid/blended delivery modes, and online delivery mode, prior to the Pandemic. Correlational analyses and ANOVAs were conducted to answer the second and third research questions. The alpha level was set at 0.05 for both correlation and ANOVA analyses. A Bonferroni adjustment was used to determine the adjusted alpha level by examining four correlations between the FROCT subscales and the Lifestyle Readiness subscale (Adjusted $\alpha = 0.01250$). Participants whose primary delivery mode was online before the Pandemic were excluded from the correlation and ANOVA analyses since they did not experience any transition to ODL. Skewness and kurtosis were calculated, showing normality. Z-scores were also calculated to detect outliers; no z-scores were +/- 3.0. Additionally, no extreme scores were observed from the boxplots and scatterplots. Levene's F test was used to determine the homogeneity of variance for the ANOVA analysis.

The qualitative data from the open-ended responses were coded in an Excel spreadsheet. Themes, categories, and frequency counts were generated and recorded. The codes were adopted from the literature (Cutri et al., 2020; Gay, 2016; Gelles et al., 2020; Moralista & Oducado, 2020; Tuma et al., 2021; Zheng et al., 2018). We adopted Saldaña's (2009) contrasting coding process during

several coding cycles. Themes were constructed in sentences based on a summation of the open-ended response.

RESULTS

RQ 1: Faculty's Multifaceted ODL Readiness Levels

The readiness level for faculty whose primary delivery modes were in-person and hybrid/blended has a mean of 3.80 (SD = 0.43) for total scale items. The mean readiness level of total scale items for faculty with online primary delivery modes is 3.78 (SD = 0.49). For in-person and hybrid/blended primary delivery modes, Item 1 had the highest mean value (M = 4.69, SD = 0.58), as 98% of participants (n = 112) strongly agreed or agreed that they are willing to implement new teaching practices. In contrast, item 20 had the lowest mean value (M = 3.05, SD = 1.26), with 41.9% (n = 41) strongly disagreeing or disagreeing that they felt prepared to identify students' inequitable access to ODL learning necessities. Subscale Comfort with Risk had the highest mean values for in-person and hybrid/blended (M = 4.23, SD = 0.43) and fully online (M 4.16, SD = 0.47) settings. The lowest mean values are from the Equity and Tenure Norms subscale for in-person and hybrid/blended (M = 3.34, SD = 0.76) and fully online (M = 3.35, SD = 0.75) settings. Appendix D provides a table showing the means and standard deviations of the scale items, separating the results based on primary delivery modes (in-person & hybrid/blended and fully online).

Participants who strongly agreed or agreed to items 26 and 27 were allowed to provide the social media and communication tools they use personally and professionally. Facebook was the most often cited (n = 35), and MS Teams was another widely used tool (n = 28). Other tools used include iMessage (n = 25), Twitter (n = 23), WhatsApp (n = 22), Instagram (n = 19), LinkedIn (n = 16), and Slack (n = 13).

Qualitative results from one open-ended question asked faculty how their experience transitioning to ODL teaching impacts their readiness to teach courses in any delivery mode after the Pandemic. A total of 106 participants completed this question. Nineteen faculty expressed the benefits of ODL, and 18 faculty expressed their willingness to try new things. Several patterns/themes were identified from the open-ended response item explained below.

The more confident the faculty felt, the more willing they were to try new things in their teaching practice. One participant stated: "I think it has made me more confident in diverse delivery modes. I do want to learn about more technology/ways of interacting with students effectively in an online environment." When faculty see the benefits of ODL, they believe it can improve their teaching as one participant stated: "Asynchronous formative materials (videos, quizzes) are wildly useful, even for in-person courses. Having the "excuse" to develop these at the cost of in-person lecture time has allowed

me to create materials that will improve any in-person courses I teach in the future." Another participant noted: "I have forced myself to deliver more asynchronous content, and the students really appreciate this effort."

When faculty see the benefits of ODL, they gravitate toward a hybrid/blended delivery preference. One participant stated: "I would be less likely to teach a fully in-person class. I think the hybrid model makes more sense for student learning. It would allow me to flip the classroom." However, drawbacks also emerged as another participant stated:

> There are things I like about online, but I can't sustain the number of hours it requires that I am on the computer. I like to move my body and walk to my car / office / class ...I can see doing some in-person and some online parts in the future, but not all online ...I would loss [lose] my mind and body!

When faculty felt that teaching ODL requires a lot of time and planning, they also felt institutional support, such as compensation/workload, faculty development, and resources, were lacking. One participant stated: "I feel I am prepared to change delivery modes, but it does take time and effort to produce meaningful and effective alternatives. I feel this need is not fully acknowledged by the higher-ups." Another participant stated:

> … I felt that I have the resources and skills necessary to transition [to] other courses when the Pandemic hit. The problem is there just not being enough time in my personal and professional life to balance these things successfully, and the amount of time it takes to successfully implement all forms of the transition and then implementation of the course. The rest of our workload was not decreased, and in fact increased in many ways.

Another participant echoed:

> If there is adequate time to prepare and there is time to mentally recharge then it is no problem. Teachers have been put into unsustainable and unrealistic expectations during the past year with no compensation for those efforts. It will take a while to work through this exhaustion and burnout before I can be excited about doing anything new.

RQ 2: Age, Teaching Experience, and ODL Course Design Experience

Pearson's product-moment correlation indicated no statistically significant relationship between overall readiness and age ($n = 91$), $r = -.16$, $p = 0.14$, CI [-.35, .05]. Similarly, no statistically significant relationship was found between overall readiness and years of teaching in any course delivery mode ($n = 98$), $r = -.09$, $p = 0.39$, CI [-.28, .11].

Tables 1 and 2 contain the results from the one-way ANOVA on overall ODL readiness and ODL course design experience. The HOV was met as assessed by Levene's F test: $F(3, 94) = .63$, $p = .60$. Results indicated a statistically significant difference ($n = 98$), $F(3, 94) = 6.15$, $p < .001$, $\eta 2 = .16$, 90% CI [.03, .28]. The Tukey-Kramer post hoc test that adjusted for unequal sample sizes indicated that the advanced group had a mean increase of .48, SE = .13, 95% CI [.15, .81] between the novice group, which was statistically significant ($p < .05$). The advanced group had a mean increase of .28, SE = .09, 95% CI [.04, .51] between the intermediate group, which was statistically significant ($p < .05$).

Source	df	MS	F	p	η2
ODL Course Design Experience	3	.97	6.145	.000*	.16
Error	94	.16			

Table 1: Analysis of the Variance Results for ODL Course Design Experience (Note: p<001)

ODL Course Design Experience	n	M	SD
Novice	14	3.51	0.46
Intermediate	43	3.71	0.39
Advanced	34	3.99	0.38
Expert	7	3.96	0.39

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics for ODL Course Design Experience (n = 98)

RQ 3: Relationship Between Lifestyle Readiness and Readiness Related to Affective and Cultural Factors

Pearson's product-moment correlation indicated a statistically significant moderate positive relationship between lifestyle readiness and comfort with risk, $r = .43$, $p < .001$, CI [.25, .58], a low to moderate positive relationship between lifestyle readiness and identity disruption, $r = .39$, $p < .001$, CI [.21, .55], a moderate positive relationship for lifestyle readiness and teaching norms, $r = .45$, $p < .001$, CI [.27, .60], and lifestyle readiness and equity and tenure norms, $r = .40$, $p < .001$, CI [.22, .56]. Table 3 contains the results from Pearson's product-moment correlations between lifestyle readiness and the FROCT subscales.

Subscales	Comfort with Risk	Identity Disruption	Teaching Norms	Equity and Tenure Norms
Lifestyle Readiness	.43*	.39*	.45*	.40*

Table 3: Correlation Matrix between FROCT subscales and Lifestyle Readiness (n = 98)

Note. * $p < .001$. Adjusted $\alpha = 0.01250$.

DISCUSSION

This study explored the ODL readiness of faculty with ODL course design and some online teaching experience from multiple facets, including affective, cultural, and lifestyle factors. A second purpose is to uncover the relationship between these faculty members' ODL readiness and individual difference factors, as well as the association between their affective and cultural readiness and lifestyle readiness.

Faculty's Multifaceted ODL Readiness Levels

In our study, faculty with experience in ODL course design and some online teaching exhibited higher mean scores for ODL readiness across the four affective and cultural constructs compared to those reported in Cutri et al. (2020), which was conducted during the Pandemic, and reflected faculty responses to the abrupt shift to ODL. Specifically, faculty in our study who taught in-person or hybrid/blended courses before the Pandemic felt more comfort with risk compared with the other constructs, but they were unsure about their identity disruption, teaching norms, and equity and tenure norms, aligned with the Cutri et al. (2020) study. As explained further in the qualitative findings, after the Pandemic, some faculty expressed their willingness to try new things and can see the benefits and limitations of ODL. However, some faculty experienced higher workloads in preparing for ODL courses, consistent with the findings from similar studies (Maraqa et al., 2022; Marek et al., 2021); moreover, they were not compensated for their efforts despite their investment and preparation challenges for the ODL environment, as revealed in the open-ended responses. Overall, our findings suggest that while faculty who gained online teaching experience during the Pandemic may feel confident in trying new approaches, their ODL readiness in areas such as identity disruption and equity, as well as tenure norms, may still be compromised due to systemic barriers, including high workloads and limited compensation.

Individual Differences

Consistent with Alanazy (2018), age did not play a factor, which is contrary to other studies (Moralista & Oducado, 2020). However, while younger faculty were more frequent technology users before and during the Pandemic (Aydın et al., 2023), rapid adaptation to ODL left faculty of all ages unprepared.

Similarly, years of teaching did not play a factor in our study, contrary to previous studies (Alanazy, 2018; Marek et al., 2021; Moralista & Oducado, 2020). Despite having more years of teaching experience, faculty members were not necessarily better prepared for ODL than those with less experience. This is likely due to the insufficient preparation for the abrupt transition to online teaching during the pandemic—a time often referred to as emergency remote teaching (ERT) (Hodges et al., 2020; Rapanta et al., 2021). Unlike ODL, ERT emphasizes the short-term and sudden shift caused by a crisis (Hodges et al., 2020; Xie & Rice, 2021). As a result, even experienced faculty may find themselves unprepared for this new teaching mode.

Prior ODL course design experience did play a factor between novices and advanced faculty, as well as between intermediate and advanced faculty, which aligns with the findings from previous studies (Horan & Kim, 2020; Junus et al., 2021). This finding reinforces the impact of prior ODL experience, as studies indicate that the Pandemic more negatively influenced faculty with less ODL experience in terms of teaching performance and their interest in future online teaching (Hebert et al., 2022; Zgheib et al., 2023).

Affective and Cultural Readiness and Lifestyle Readiness

Faculty tended to be neutral about their overall lifestyle readiness (M = 3.71), contrary to the pre-pandemic results on lifestyle readiness from Gay (2016), which found positive responses (M = 4.42). However, other studies focusing on the Pandemic (Briones, 2021; Cruz & Catura, 2020) reported a relatively low level of faculty lifestyle readiness. That may indicate the importance of lifestyle readiness for faculty with course design experience and some ODL teaching experience.

Lifestyle readiness may affect other subscales. As lifestyle readiness increased, so did their comfort with risk, identity disruption, teaching norms, and equity and tenure norms. Comfort with risk and teaching norms had the highest positive r-value with lifestyle readiness. Such findings suggest that the environment in which faculty access ODL, their use of technology in daily life, and the flexibility they value may play a role in other aspects of their readiness for ODL.

Limitations and Further Research

Study limitations include: (a) self-reported data, (b) a single research-intensive university, (c) lack of a “not applicable” response option for some items, and (d) unexamined construct validity and discriminant validity for the adapted instruments. Accordingly, future studies may compare ODL readiness and learning events from faculty development, involve multiple sites or teaching-intensive colleges, include a “not applicable” option, and validate the instrument’s constructs to enhance comparability across studies. Further research may also investigate the differences in readiness between faculty members with experience in ODL course design and those without it. This

distinction is crucial for understanding the varying readiness levels and identifying specific support needs.

CONCLUSION

Unfolding a holistic picture of faculty readiness in ODL, this study contributes to the literature about faculty readiness during and after the Pandemic by examining different facets of readiness, namely, comfort with risks, identity disruption, and lifestyle readiness. The results from this study inform practices for higher education administrators, faculty developers, and other stakeholders so that they can provide targeted support for faculty who may continue ODL instruction in the post-pandemic era.

First, stakeholders might consider new development opportunities for faculty to enhance equity and access that meet faculty lifestyle needs. Since faculty members who are expected to be more prepared to teach online, due to their experience with ODL course design and online teaching, are uncertain about their lifestyle readiness, more attention should be given to their lifestyle readiness in teaching ODL environments.

Due to higher workload issues and investment/preparation challenges, Teaching and Learning Centers (TLCs) may consider utilizing efficient and sustainable instructional design approaches to alleviate the high workload and time invested in ODL. For example, TLCs might explore how their current templates for faculty to design ODL courses can be redesigned to allow for more efficient application of standards-based models.

Since ODL course design experience plays a factor in ODL readiness, faculty who are more experienced in ODL course design can mentor less experienced faculty to help them feel more ready to teach in these environments. Since higher course workloads are a concern, would faculty experienced in ODL course design be willing to take time to mentor inexperienced faculty? Could a mentoring incentivization program motivate experienced faculty to do this?

Additionally, faculty with OLD course design and online teaching experience who feel comfortable taking risks might be encouraged by TLCs to try new things in their ODL teaching practice. Faculty in this study had experience designing online courses following a standards-based model (e.g., Quality Matters), so it makes sense that they are comfortable taking risks. When faculty experienced in ODL design try new strategies to enhance their teaching practice that might seem risky, perhaps TLCs could create events that showcase these course changes, the associated risks, and how the instructor adapted to the change and overall experience.

Given the growing demand for ODL courses, it is essential for ODL researchers to continuously assess and update faculty readiness to ensure they are prepared for the next significant shift in instructional practices.

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APPENDIX A

Faculty Characteristics: Age, gender, primary delivery mode, online courses taught, level of experience, and years teaching (N = 114)

Characteristic	n	Total Percentage
Age		
28 or under	1	0.9
30-39	22	19.3
40-49	43	37.7
50-59	22	19.3
60 or over	18	15.8
Nonresponse	8	7.0
Gender		
Female	57	50.0
Male	53	46.5
Nonresponse	4	3.5
Primary Delivery Mode Prior to Pandemic		
In-Person	88	77.2
Online	16	14.0
Hybrid/Blended	9	7.9
Nonresponse	1	0.9
Online Courses Taught Prior to Pandemic		
Never	12	10.5
One time	21	18.4
2-3 times	34	29.8

Characteristic	n	Total Percentage
4-6 times	22	19.3
7 or more times	24	21.1
Nonresponse	1	0.9
Level of ODL Course Design Experience Prior to Pandemic		
Novice	15	13.2
Intermediate	51	44.7
Advanced	40	35.1
Expert	8	7.0
Nonresponse	0	0.0
Years of Teaching		
1-5 years	8	7.0
6-10 years	26	22.8
11-15 years	21	18.4
16-20 years	19	16.7
21-25 years	24	21.1
26-30 years	9	7.9
31 + years	7	6.1
Nonresponse	0	0.0

APPENDIX B

Disciplines Taught by School/College at the University

Disciplines Taught by School/College	n	Percentage
College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (CLAS)	58	50.9
College of Agriculture, Health, Natural Resources (CAHNR)	8	7.0
School of Education	5	4.4
School of Business	6	5.3
School of Engineering	15	13.2
School of Fine Arts	4	3.5
School of Social Work	3	2.6
School of Nursing	4	3.5
Institute for Systems Genomics	1	0.9
CLAS and CAHNR	1	0.9
STEM	1	0.9
Nonresponse	8	7.0

APPENDIX C

Number of Learning Events Participated During the Pandemic

Learning Events	n
TLC/ eCampus Exploring Online Learning (EOL) short 2-week course	70
TLC/eCampus Preparing for Distance Education (PDE) short 1-week course	16
TLC Workshops (e.g., LMS, video conference tools)	86
Teaching Professor/Magna Workshops	15
Vender Workshops	12
Certificate Program/Course	9
Conference Workshops	29
Professional Societies	24
Departmental Training	21
Vender Websites	9
Internet Searching	56
Colleagues	53
Mentors	24
None	5
Other:	20
Faculty Meetings	2
PhD Coursework & Support	1
TLC/eCampus Support	14
Self-Directed (on their own)	1
Online Summer Fellowship	1
Don't Know	1

APPENDIX D

Descriptive Statistics for In-Person & Hybrid/Blended Primary Delivery Modes and Fully Online Primary Delivery Mode

Item	Primary Delivery Mode			
	In-Person & Hybrid/Blended (n = 98)		Fully Online (n = 16)	
	M	SD	M	SD
Comfort with Risk subscale				
(1) I am willing to implement new teaching practices.	4.69	0.58	4.69	0.48
(2) I am comfortable when I teach outside of my regular mode of delivery.	4.26	0.89	4.31	0.95
(3) I am willing to try new teaching technologies in my class even if I have not fully mastered them.	4.26	0.78	4.25	0.68
(4) I can imagine creating new teaching methods that utilizes the benefits of distance delivery.	4.51	0.66	4.13	1.03
(5) I have strategies to manage my doubts and concerns when I teach outside of my regular mode of delivery pre-pandemic	4.15	0.82	4.00	0.90
(6) I can acknowledge my doubts and concerns in my workplace when I teach outside of my regular mode of delivery	4.36	0.71	4.12	0.62
(7) I am not yet comfortable teaching online [R]	4.36	0.97	4.50	0.82
(8) I prefer to return to my regular mode of teaching*	3.30	1.05	3.31	0.79
Subscale	4.23	0.43	4.16	0.47

Item	Primary Delivery Mode			
	In-Person & Hybrid/Blended (n = 98)		Fully Online (n = 16)	
Identity Disruption subscale				
(9) Online teaching challenges my sense of who I am as an instructor. [R]	3.28	1.24	3.37	1.46
(10) Online teaching negatively impacts my teaching persona and presence that I usually maintain during in-person instruction. [R]	3.23	1.30	3.31	1.25
(11) Online teaching makes me feel like a novice instructor rather than an experienced professional. [R]	3.99	1.00	3.88	1.15
(12) I am interested in learning from online teaching experts about how to transition my in-person course to an online format	3.76	1.09	3.81	0.76
Subscale	3.56	0.75	3.59	0.76
Teaching Norms subscale				
(13) I am comfortable with students relying LESS on my direct instruction to learn class material.	3.90	0.91	3.75	0.86
(14) I intend to lessen the amount of direct teacher instruction (e.g., lecturing with slides, etc.) that is commonly associated with in-person instruction	3.60	1.06	3.50	0.97
(15) Instead of relying solely on synchronous platforms to teach such as Webex, I imagine creating opportunities to increase student autonomy,	3.93	0.92	3.81	1.11

Item	Primary Delivery Mode			
	In-Person & Hybrid/Blended (n = 98)		Fully Online (n = 16)	
such as students choosing when and how they learn (e.g., student self-pacing of learning and selection of learning material).				
(16) I prefer creating opportunities for student autonomy by allowing students to choose from a selection of topics proposed by me.	3.42	1.13	3.38	1.15
(17) It is important to use instructional time to foster and nurture relationships with students in online/distance learning classes.	4.31	0.74	4.06	0.77
(18) I feel prepared to support students in an online setting, especially for those who are having difficult times in their lives.	3.86	1.03	4.19	0.75
Subscale	3.84	0.56	3.78	0.72
Equity and Tenure Norms subscale				
(19) It is important to adjust my course assignments and requirements to make student access equitable to online learning necessities (e.g., internet access; device access; safe place to learn, etc.).	4.32	0.82	4.19	1.05
(20) I feel prepared to identify students' inequitable access to online or DL learning necessities (e.g., internet access; device access; safe place to learn, university resources, etc.).	3.05	1.26	3.06	1.00

Item	Primary Delivery Mode			
	In-Person & Hybrid/Blended (n = 98)		Fully Online (n = 16)	
(21) Transitioning my courses to another mode of delivery will negatively impact my student professor ratings (e.g., SETs, rate my professor). [R]	3.14	0.95	3.25	1.24
(22) Transitioning my courses to another mode of delivery (e.g., online or blended) will negatively impact my scholarly productivity. [R]	3.10	1.27	2.94	1.07
(23) Transitioning my courses to another mode of delivery (e.g., online or blended) will negatively impact my time and ability to accomplish my service responsibilities. [R]	3.07	1.18	3.31	1.25
Subscale	3.34	0.76	3.35	0.75
Lifestyle Readiness subscale				
(24) I have a private place in my home that I can use for extended periods for work-related activities.	4.30	0.98	4.38	1.09
(25) I have adequate uninterrupted time at home in which I can work on my online/DL courses.	3.82	1.12	4.06	1.39
(26) I routinely use social media (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Instagram, etc.).	3.13	1.39	3.19	1.42
(27) I routinely use communication/instant messenger tools (e.g., Slack, MS Teams, GroupMe, WhatsApp, iMessage, etc.).	3.30	1.36	3.44	1.41

Item	Primary Delivery Mode			
	In-Person & Hybrid/Blended (n = 98)		Fully Online (n = 16)	
(28) I have persons and/or resources nearby who will assist me with any technical problems, including software applications and computer hardware.	3.41	1.20	3.00	1.21
(29) I value and/or need flexibility. For example: It is convenient for me to work from home without commuting to campus.	4.33	0.82	4.44	0.73
Subscale	3.71	0.63	3.75	0.73

Note. [R] = Item was reverse-coded. Scale items measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-neutral, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree

Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no competing interests.

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