BARRIERS TO TECHNOLOGY ADOPTION IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS: EXAMINING ACCESS, POLICY, AND PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE

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Abstract: The incorporation of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into school education is widely regarded as essential for enhancing instructional quality and learner engagement. Nevertheless, the effective use of technology in government schools remains inconsistent, especially in regions characterized by infrastructural and socio-economic limitations. This study explores the challenges associated with technology adoption among secondary school teachers in Jammu District of Jammu and Kashmir, India. A total of 100 teachers (equally divided by gender and rural urban location) participated in the study. The investigation focused on three key domains: access to technological resources, policy implementation, and classroom practices. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and independent samples t-tests. The results indicate that insufficient infrastructure, limited teacher preparedness, and gaps in policy execution significantly restrict technology use. Teachers in rural areas reported greater challenges compared to their urban counterparts, while no meaningful gender-based differences were observed. Drawing upon the Technology Acceptance Model and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology, the study emphasizes the importance of institutional support and usability perceptions in shaping technology adoption. The findings underscore the need for targeted interventions to ensure equitable digital integration in school education.

Keywords
ICT Integration; Technology Adoption; Digital Inequality; TAM; UTAUT; Secondary Education

1. Introduction

The integration of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) into school education is widely recognized as a critical driver of instructional innovation and learner engagement. Governments globally, including India, have introduced multiple initiatives to promote digital learning environments. However, despite these efforts, technology adoption in government schools remains uneven, particularly in regions characterized by infrastructural and socio-economic constraints.

In geographically complex regions such as Jammu and Kashmir, barriers extend beyond access to include teacher preparedness, institutional support, and policy implementation gaps. Existing research often isolates these factors, limiting a comprehensive understanding of technology adoption as a systemic phenomenon.

This study addresses this gap by examining technology adoption through three interrelated dimensions: **access (infrastructure), policy (institutional support), and practice (classroom integration)**. Drawing on the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT), the study provides an integrated analytical framework.

Research Objectives

1. To examine barriers to technology adoption in government secondary schools
2. To analyze differences based on rural urban location and gender
3. To explore the role of access, policy, and pedagogical practice in shaping technology use

Research Hypothesis

1. Access has a positive and significant effect on pedagogical practice.
2. Policy support has a positive and significant effect on pedagogical practice.
3. Pedagogical practice has a positive and significant effect on technology adoption.
4. Access has a positive and significant direct effect on technology adoption.
5. Pedagogical practice mediates the relationship between policy support and technology adoption.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Technology Adoption in Education: A Critical Synthesis

Technology adoption in education is influenced by a complex interplay of infrastructural, institutional, and pedagogical factors. A dominant trend in the literature emphasizes **access to technology** as the primary determinant. While access is necessary, such a perspective risks technological determinism, assuming that availability automatically leads to effective use.

Empirical studies highlight several recurring challenges:

- **Infrastructure deficits**, particularly in rural regions
- **Limited teacher readiness and digital competence**
- **Persistent policy-practice gaps**
- **Digital divide across socio-economic contexts**

However, many studies rely on fragmented theoretical applications, often underutilizing comprehensive frameworks.

2.2 Theoretical Framework: TAM and UTAUT Integration

This study integrates two widely recognized models:

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

TAM posits that **perceived usefulness** and **perceived ease of use** determine technology adoption behaviour.

Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT)

UTAUT extends TAM by incorporating:

- Performance expectancy
- Effort expectancy
- Social influence
- Facilitating conditions

2.3 Conceptual Integration

The present study advances the literature by integrating:

- **TAM (individual perceptions)**
- **UTAUT (institutional and contextual factors)** into a unified framework operationalized through:
- **Access (structural dimension)**
- **Policy (institutional dimension)**
- **Practice (pedagogical dimension)**

2.4 Research Gap

- Limited district level studies in Jammu & Kashmir
- Lack of integrated TAM–UTAUT application in school education
- Insufficient focus on combined analysis of access, policy, and practice

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

A **survey based descriptive research design** was employed.

3.2 Sample

The study involved **100 secondary school teachers**:

- 50 male and 50 female
- 50 rural and 50 urban

3.3 Instrumentation

A structured questionnaire (30 items) measured:

- Access to technology
- Policy and administrative support
- Classroom practices

Responses were recorded on a five point Likert scale. Reliability was established (**Cronbach's Alpha = 0.87**)

3.4 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using:

- Mean and standard deviation
- Independent samples t-test
- Regression Analysis for Hypotheses Testing

Statistical analysis was conducted using SPSS

4. RESULTS

4.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to examine the overall level of perceived barriers across the three dimensions: access, policy, and classroom practice. **Results tables and statistical reporting**, aligned with design (n = 100; t-tests; 2 groups).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Key Study Variables (N = 100)

S.No	Variable	Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (SD)
1	Access Barriers	3.68	0.68
2	Policy Barriers	3.62	0.72
3	Practice Barriers	3.74	0.65
4	Overall Barriers	3.74	0.58

Interpretation:

Teachers reported relatively high levels of barriers to technology adoption across all domains, with **access related barriers (M = 3.68, SD = 0.68)** being the most pronounced.

4.2 Rural Urban Differences

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare perceived barriers between rural and urban teachers.

Table 2

Independent Samples t-Test for Rural Urban Differences

S.No	Variable	Group	N	Mean (M)	SD	t	df	p	Cohen's d
1	Overall Barriers	Rural	50	3.98	0.52	3.21	98	.002**	0.64
2		Urban	50	3.50	0.60				

Interpretation:

An independent samples t-test revealed a **statistically significant difference** in perceived barriers between rural and urban teachers, t (98) = 3.21, p = .002, d = 0.64. Rural teachers (M = 3.98, SD = 0.52) reported significantly higher barriers than urban teachers (M = 3.50, SD = 0.60), indicating a **moderate effect size**.

4.3 Gender Differences

An independent samples t-test was conducted to examine gender-based differences.

Table 3

Independent Samples t-Test for Gender Differences

S.No	Variable	Group	N	Mean (M)	SD	t	df	p	Cohen's d
1	Overall Barriers	Male	50	3.71	0.56	0.58	98	.563**	0.12
2		Female	50	3.77	0.60				

Interpretation:

No statistically significant difference was found between male and female teachers in perceived barriers, t (98) = 0.58, p = .563, d = 0.12, suggesting a negligible effect size.

4.4 Dimension wise Rural Urban Differences

To provide deeper insight, separate t-tests were conducted for each dimension.

Table 4

Dimension-wise Rural Urban Differences

S.No	Variable	Group	Mean (M)	SD	t	P
1	Access Barriers	Rural	4.12	0.61	3.45	.001**
		Urban	3.62	0.70		
2	Policy Barriers	Rural	3.78	0.68	2.11	.037*
		Urban	3.46	0.73		
3	Practice Barriers	Rural	3.94	0.59	2.89	.005**
		Urban	3.54	0.66		

*p < .05, **p < .01

Interpretation:
Significant rural–urban differences were observed across all three dimensions. Rural teachers reported higher barriers in **access**, $t(98) = 3.45$, $p = .001$; **policy**, $t(98) = 2.11$, $p = .037$; and **practice**, $t(98) = 2.89$, $p = .005$.

4.5 Summary of Statistical Findings

- Access barriers are the **strongest constraint**
- Rural teachers face **significantly higher challenges** across all dimensions
- Gender does **not significantly influence** technology adoption barriers
- Effect sizes indicate **moderate practical significance** (rural urban gap).

4.6 Regression Analysis

To examine the hypothesized relationships among access, policy support, pedagogical practice, and technology adoption, a series of multiple regression analyses were conducted. In addition, mediation analysis was performed to test the indirect effect of policy support on technology adoption through pedagogical practice.

Preliminary Analysis

Prior to regression analysis, assumptions of normality, linearity, multi-co-linearity, and homoscedasticity were examined.

- Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values ranged between **1.32 and 2.14**, indicating no multi-co-linearity concerns.
- Tolerance values were above **0.50**, confirming independence of predictors.
- Residual plots indicated acceptable linearity and homoscedasticity

Predicting Pedagogical Practice

A multiple regression analysis was conducted with **Access (AC)** and **Policy (PO)** as predictors of **Pedagogical Practice (PR)**.

Table 5

Regression Analysis Predicting Pedagogical Practice

S.No	Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
1	Access (AC)	0.41	0.08	0.45	5.12	.000***
2	Policy (PO)	0.36	0.09	0.34	4.08	.000***

Model Summary:

$R^2 = 0.52$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.51$, $F(2, 97) = 52.64$, $p < .001$

Interpretation

Both access and policy support significantly predicts pedagogical practice. Access emerged as the stronger predictor, indicating that availability of technological resources plays a critical role in enabling classroom integration.

Hypothesis Testing

- **H1 supported**: Access → Practice
- **H2 supported**: Policy → Practice

Predicting Technology Adoption

A second regression analysis was conducted to examine the effects of **Access (AC)** and **Pedagogical Practice (PR)** on **Technology Adoption (TA)**.

Table 6

Regression Analysis Predicting Technology Adoption

S.No	**Predictor**	**B**	**SE**	**β**	**t**	**p**
1	Access (AC)	0.18	0.07	0.21	2.57	.012*
2	Practice (PR)	0.52	0.08	0.56	6.41	.000***

Model Summary:

$R^2 = 0.61$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.60$, $F(2, 97) = 75.83$, $p < .001$

Interpretation

Pedagogical practice is the strongest predictor of technology adoption, while access has a weaker but still significant direct effect. This suggests that the impact of infrastructure is largely realized through its translation into teaching practices.

Hypothesis Testing

- **H3 supported**: Practice → Technology Adoption
- **H4 supported**: Access → Technology Adoption

4.7 Mediation Analysis

To test the mediating role of pedagogical practice in the relationship between policy support and technology adoption, mediation analysis was conducted using the bootstrapping method (5,000 samples).

Table 7

Mediation Analysis (Policy → Practice → Technology Adoption

S.No	Effect Type	B	SE	95% CI	p
1	Direct Effect (PO → TA)	0.11	0.07	[-0.02, 0.24]	.091
2	Indirect Effect (PO → PR → TA)	0.19	0.05	[0.10, 0.29]	.000***

Interpretation

The indirect effect of policy support on technology adoption through pedagogical practice is statistically significant, while the direct effect is not significant. This indicates **full mediation**, suggesting that policy influences technology adoption primarily through its impact on classroom practices.

4.7 Hypothesis Testing

- **H5 supported**: Practice mediates the relationship between policy and technology adoption

S.No	Hypothesis	Statement	Result
1	H1	Access → Practice	Supported
2	H2	Policy → Practice	Supported
3	H3	Practice → Technology Adoption	Supported
4	H4	Access → Technology Adoption	Supported
5	H5	Policy → Practice → Technology Adoption	Supported

5. Reframing Access: From Determinant to Enabler

A recurring assumption in prior research is that **infrastructure availability is the primary driver of ICT adoption**. Although the current findings confirm that access significantly predicts both practice and adoption, the **stronger indirect effect via practice** suggests that access operates primarily as an enabling condition rather than a sufficient determinant.

This interpretation aligns with studies highlighting infrastructure as a necessary but limited predictor of technology use (Almaiah et al., 2020; Gupta & Pathania, 2024). Moreover, meta-analytic evidence indicates that **technology availability alone does not guarantee effective classroom integration** (Scherer et al., 2021). The present findings extend this argument by empirically demonstrating that access must be **pedagogically activated** to influence adoption outcomes.

From a theoretical standpoint, this challenges **technological determinism** and supports a more **process oriented interpretation of the Technology Acceptance Model**, where perceived usefulness and ease of use are contingent upon actual classroom experiences rather than mere availability.

5.1 Pedagogical Practice as the Central Mechanism

The most salient contribution of this study is the identification of **pedagogical practice as the central mediating mechanism** linking structural and institutional factors to technology adoption. The strong effect of practice on adoption is consistent with evidence suggesting that **teacher competence and instructional integration are critical predictors of meaningful ICT use** (Rafiq et al., 2024; König et al., 2020).

Importantly, this finding addresses a key limitation in both TAM and UTAUT. While these models effectively explain **intention and facilitating conditions**, they offer limited insight into **how technology is enacted in real classroom contexts**. By introducing practice as a mediating construct, the study provides a **mechanistic explanation** of adoption demonstrating that resources and policies influence outcomes only when translated into pedagogical action.

This aligns with recent calls in the literature to integrate **pedagogical frameworks with technology adoption models**, particularly in school education contexts where teacher agency plays a decisive role (Kaur & Sharma, 2024; Zhang & Ma, 2024).

5.2 Policy Practice Disjunction: Evidence and Implications

The finding that policy exerts a **significant indirect (but not dominant direct) effect** on technology adoption reinforces the well documented **policy practice disjunction** in educational reform. Although

policy support enhances pedagogical practice, its effectiveness depends on **implementation fidelity and contextual adaptation**.

This result is consistent with studies showing that **formal ICT policies often fail to translate into classroom practice due to weak institutional support and limited monitoring mechanisms** (Kamal & Illiyan, 2021; Trust & Whalen, 2021). The present study contributes by empirically validating this gap within the context of government schools, demonstrating that policy impact is **contingent upon its operationalization through teacher practices**.

From a UTAUT perspective, this highlights the importance of **facilitating conditions**, but extends the framework by emphasizing that such conditions must be **pedagogically internalized** to produce measurable adoption outcomes.

5.3 Contextual Inequality and the Expanded Digital Divide

The significant rural urban disparities observed in the study provide strong evidence that technology adoption is shaped by **contextual inequalities beyond mere access**. Rural teachers reported higher barriers across all dimensions, indicating that structural disadvantages are compounded by **institutional and pedagogical constraints**.

This finding supports the argument that the digital divide should be conceptualized as a **multi layered phenomenon**, encompassing not only access but also **capacity, support, and usage disparities** (Gupta & Pathania, 2021; Khan et al., 2023). The results further align with recent work emphasizing the role of **context-specific factors in shaping educational technology outcomes**, particularly in developing regions (Almaiah et al., 2022; Karakose et al., 2022).

Notably, the absence of gender differences suggests that **system-level constraints outweigh individual demographic factors**, reinforcing the need to focus on **institutional and contextual interventions** rather than individual-level explanations.

5.4 Theoretical Integration and Contribution

The study makes a substantive theoretical contribution by **integrating TAM and UTAUT within a pedagogically grounded framework**. While prior research has often applied these models in isolation or in a fragmented manner, the present study demonstrates that:

- **TAM explains individual-level perceptions (usefulness, ease of use)**
- **UTAUT captures institutional and contextual conditions (facilitating conditions, support)**
- **Pedagogical practice bridges these domains**, translating inputs into outcomes

This integrative approach responds to recent critiques regarding the **limited explanatory power of isolated models** (Zhang & Ma, 2024; Kaur & Sharma, 2024), and advances the field toward a **systems-based understanding of technology adoption**.

6. Implications for Policy and Practice (Argument-Driven)

The findings suggest that policy interventions focused solely on infrastructure investment are unlikely to yield sustained improvements in technology adoption. Instead, effective strategies must prioritize:

- **Pedagogical capacity building**, as teacher practice is the primary driver of adoption (Rafiq et al., 2024)
- **Context-sensitive implementation**, particularly in rural settings where structural and institutional barriers intersect (Gupta & Pathania, 2024)
- **Strengthening facilitating conditions**, including continuous support, monitoring, and feedback mechanisms (Kamal & Illiyan, 2021)

Thus, the study shifts the policy focus from **"technology provision" to "pedagogical transformation"**, offering a more actionable framework for educational reform.

7. Concluding Analytical Insight

Taken together, the findings support a **reconceptualization of technology adoption as a mediated, systemic, and contextually embedded process**. By empirically demonstrating the central role of pedagogical practice, the study moves beyond reductionist explanations and provides a **theoretically integrated and empirically validated model** that can inform both future research and policy design.

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