

Significance of Online Distance Learning in Career Development and Skills Advancement in 21st Century

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Abstract

The study adopted explanatory research design, qualitative research approach, cross-sectional research strategy, sampling design were investigation into papers published by academic journals and papers published at the various websites, population of study were 7 authors, source of data collection was primary source; method of data collection was examination into the existing research. The problem statement of the study was "Significance of online distance learning in career development and skills advancement in 21st century". The objectives of the study were achieved through research. With the literature review, the study examined into the work of other writers who treated the subject under study. The background of the study was a brief introduction to online distance learning. The study found out history of online distance learning, how e-learning had advanced the skills of students, impact on online distance learning on career development, importance of digital education, difference between online distance learning and classroom learning and misconceptions about online distance learning. The study concluded that online distance learning was significant to 21st century students. The study recommended that various Universities under department of online distance learning should publish research papers to educate the general public to understand the concept of online distance learning and advertised online distance learning on radio, television and social media.

KEYWORDS: Online, Significance, Distance Learning, Skills Development, Career Development, 21ST Century, Distance Education, History, Misconceptions, Difference, Digital,

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BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Introduction

A lot of Universities continue to create online chances for distance learning for example GEPEA University in Europe, Portugal and Vienna, Austria. Distance learning is also known as distance education, e-learning and online learning is form of education. The major features are physical separation of instructors, students at the time of lecturing and application of various technologies to promote student-teacher and student-student communication. Distance learning has centered on nonnative students like full-time workers, military personnel and nonnative students who are not capable to attend classroom lectures. Distance learning has set up in the field of academics. In U.S over 5.6 million Universities Students enrolled in online course around 2009 and 1.6 million enrolled in 2002. Phoenix University was one of the earliest supporters of distance learning technology. Base on good reason students accepted distance learning. Distance learning is the act of acquiring knowledge without teacher and students physically present together. In times past high schools and Universities offered correspondence courses as a form of distance learning. Through mail, course materials were sent to students and assignments were done online or sent to the teacher by mail. Distance learning is categorized into two groups namely, synchronous learning and asynchronous learning. The word "synchronous" implies "at the same time". That is process of education occurs in real time. It needs live communication online and utilizes technology like teleconferencing. Asynchronous distance learning accompanies more opportunities for student interactions. Students have freedom to access course content and enjoy online conversations, quizzes or video comments at their convenient time. The types of distance learning which fall under either synchronous or asynchronous categories are video conferencing, hybrid distance education, open schedule online course and fixed-time online course.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To find out the history of online distance learning,
- To find out how e-learning has advanced the skills of students,
- To find out the impact of online distance learning on career development of students,
- To find out importance of digital education,
- To find out the difference between online distance learning and classroom learning,
- To find out misconceptions about online distance learning.

HISTORY OF ONLINE DISTANCE EDUCATION

Online distance education was declared in 1728 and was aired in Boston Gazette by Caleb Philipps. He was a teacher who developed new method for shorthand. He searched for students who liked to study the skills through weekly mailed lessons. However, Sir Isaac Pitman initiated the first distance learning in a modern form in 1840s. He taught system of shorthand through mailing texts duplicated into shorthand on postcards and print from his students so that he could correct them. The feedback of the students was modernization in Pitman's system. The introduction of postage rate across England made this scheme successful in 1840. The first correspondence school was set up through encouraging home studies and was founded in 1873. Wolsey Hall, Oxford was the first distance learning college in U.K established in 1894. The University of London was the first University to offer distance learning degree program and set up external program as of the start of 1853.

THESIS STATEMENT: The problem statement of the study was "Significance of online distance learning and career development and skills advancement in 21st century". The study found out the history of online distance learning, how online distance learning has advanced the skills of students, impact of online distance learning on career development of students and importance of digital education.

ONLINE DISTANCE EDUCATION SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Online distance learning enables students to develop the attitude of self-discipline. Through this, students devote ample time to lectures. Many students schedule for lectures assist them to have enough time to involve in studies. Setting time to read, do assignment and converse with other students are encouraging. Scheduling makes students feel flexible and not overpowering. Advancing schedule indicates particular time to log in and involve in class and to do other academic activities like reading and conducting research promote students success. Around 78.9 percent of students proved that time management helps to schedule time for studies and 31.6 percent of students confirmed that it assists to devote time daily to the course. Weekly assignment from the teacher helps students on regular schedule in the course. Students and teachers interact in asynchronous time and makes students to become used to in-class discussions. It creates chances for discourse out of written discussion that permit students to spend time to scribe their responses. Students interactions are fun online classes and responding to students interactions are easily communicated. This builds online students relationship. About 52.6 percent of students reported that they gained from interacting with their classmates. Those who confirmed that reading the responses of others helped were 15.8 percent. Students who discovered that e-mailing was important but not part of the course platform were 21percent. Teachers role promote class discussions. According to students seeking a means to apply the concept enable them absorb information. Concepts could be explained and redefined in student's own words in conversation with others. Asking questions become part of learning which make students and teachers go deep into the subject. This contributes to the thorough understanding of the course. The online course environment creates communication tools such as threaded discussions, e-mailed connectivity and live chat that assist to ask deep questions. Many online students are motivated by considering the prize as being meaningful. Other students are motivated by perceiving themselves in "cup and gown" and at the end receiving degree and friends and relatives witnessing their gradation. Some students declared that were motivated by getting good grades were 21percent. About 42 percent of students were motivated by personal goals. Students felt proud of working with other online students through encouragement and feedback were 15.8 percent.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are countless articles about online distance learning which educate the general public to understand the need to opt for online distance learning. Notwithstanding the views of the writers, the study Investigated into "significance of online distance learning in skills advancement and career development in 21st century". Due to the nature of the study, the researcher considers authors who have written about the subject under study. On the 1st February, 2022 Clyde Ericson Nolasco wrote a paper entitled "Online distance learning: The new normal in education" and stated that COVID 19 pandemic was threatened the life of man and challenged our time. Apart from health matters, it created economic hardship in the entire world. Companies were closed and a lot of people sacked and became unemployed. The World Health Organization declared that there was shortage of food because of lockdown.

Schools in many countries in the world closed so that COVID 19 virus could be controlled. The pandemic affected educational system including research, academic programs and staff professional development. The problem affected not only schools but teachers, students and parents. During this time, face-to-face classes became a thing of the past. This urges worldwide schools to adopt online distance learning as a method to solve pandemic. At time of COVID 19 pandemic GEPEA University in Portugal, and its offshore office located in Vienna, Austria enrolled many students in online distance learning program. This helped a lot to prevent the spread of COVID 19 virus and held education from collapsing. Through this, many students developed in skills and career. With respect to the views of above mentioned author and contribution of the institution, the study found out history of online distance learning, how online distance learning advanced the skills of students, impact of online distance learning on students career, importance of digital education, difference between online learning and classroom learning and misconceptions about online distance learning.

IMPACT OF ONLINE DISTANCE EDUCATION ON STUDENTS CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Online learning builds marketability to employers and indicates passion for role. Online learning promotes progress in the right direction. Through online courses, students build soft skills, industry-knowledge and gather confidence to take the next action. Attending classes, discovering mentor, linking with other students and doing extracurricular reading and research compel students to move to the next level of education. New skills are developing to change the existing profession. Online learning helps people to feel flexible to study instead of going to classroom. Employers regard a degree awarded through online distance learning. They know that at this modern times a lot of employees are receiving education and training online. Online learning saves time and reduces stress. Colleges and Universities concentrate on offering courses that meet the demands of adult students. A lot of degree program and courses offer online are less expensive. Because of the pandemic, a lot of organizations shift to hybrid working. Working at home demands personal responsibility than working at the office. Online learning enables students to have chances to advance their technical skills and to recognize the tools used in workplace such as video conferencing, online portals; Google suites. Students getting to know these digital tools develop their faith in the internet and finishing tasks. Important tasks like applying for a job, receiving bank statement are accessible on the internet. Instructing students to use these devices inside and outside classroom develop their faith in technology to communicate and to get results.

IMPORTANCE OF DIGITAL EDUCATION

Digital learning keeps records of classes in a video form so if students miss vital information they have opportunity to learn. Students can access course material online at any time, can involve in universal learning community and share knowledge with people from different countries and cultures. Through utilizing digital learning solutions, students collaborate and study in a shared environment. Video conferencing, shared documents assist them to share their thoughts and ideas with others. This urges them to study to work together as a team. As a point of reference, students have the means to access recorded lectures. It helps students to understand the course and speed up the learning mechanism. They can read other reading materials and have chance to communicate through digital platforms. In the previous days this was not possible. They can inquire questions, give feedback and do project with other peers. Digital learning solutions enables teachers to personalize lessons. Students getting access to online learning tools permit them to work at their own step and on their schedule enable them to understand the teaching methods. As education develops, we should accept

new ways of doing things. Gamification, micro-learning and other learning methods are becoming popular in classroom. New digital learning strategies should be adopted, permitting students to study how to use and apply technology and know new skills. Technology is changing every day and we must be ahead by appreciating digital learning and teaching. It prepares students towards life both using technology and studying new digital learning solutions. Online communication develops strong relationship between teachers and students.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CLASSROOM LEARNING AND ONLINE DISTANCE EDUCATION

Classroom learning:

- Classroom learning is about physical interactions with teachers and students. There is evidence of human interactions.
- Students attend classes in a building and talk with teachers face to face.
- Students stop their jobs in order to finish a degree program and acquire new knowledge when they join workplace.
- Assessment of students capabilities are based on quizzes and exams invigilated by an examiner.

Online distance learning:

- There is virtual lectures, discussions and face-to-face video workshops.
- Students can access learning material like module contents, assignments and record sessions anytime.
- Online students fix studies at their own work schedule and instantly practice new concepts
- Many online learning tools and apps assist students to understand concepts thoroughly.
- Assessments of students capabilities are based on assignments which could be individual or group and creates chances for them to form study group and learn from each other.

MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ONLINE DISTANCE EDUCATION

Misconception: Online courses are easy to offer than classroom learning.

Fact: Online courses demand study hours like classroom learning and sometimes complex than classroom learning.

Misconception: Cheating is more open in online courses.

Fact: Professors utilize software to discourage new browsers from getting access during exams time.

Misconception: It is difficult to interact with professors and classmates.

Fact: Professor develop courses in interactive form such as live chat.

Misconception: Online degrees are regarded by employers.

Fact: Higher accredited Universities offer online courses.

Misconception: The quality of online education is poor as compared to classroom learning.

Fact: Online professors have set high academic standard like classroom professors.

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter covers research design, approach, strategy, population of the study, sampling design, source of data collection and method of data collection. The research design used was explanatory because it was the best method of explaining the data collected. The research strategy adopted was cross-sectional survey where the work of other writers were chosen as a case study. The approach to the study was qualitative since the study was interested in

signing of online distance learning in career development and skills advancement. The source of data collection, method of data collection, sampling design and population of the study were thoroughly examined.

SAMPLING DESIGN: The study considered articles published by academic journals and articles published at the various websites.

POPULATION OF THE STUDY: The study investigated into the work of 7 authors.

SOURCE OF DATA COLLECTION: The source of collecting data to write this paper was primary source.

METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION: The procedure of collecting data to write this paper was examination into existing research.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study discovered that many Universities continue to create chances for online distance learning, online distance learning was declared in 1728 and was aired in Boston Gazette by Caleb Philipps. It enables students to develop an attitude of self-discipline to devote time to lectures, builds marketability to employers, keep records classes in a video form, classroom learning is about physical interactions with teachers and students, online learning students can access course material; online learning chatting is more opened.

CONCLUSION

The study found out that about 78.9 percent of online students declared that time management helped to schedule time for studies, enabled students to have access to universal learning community and created chances to share knowledge with people from different countries and cultures. Base on the above mentioned factors the study generalized that online distance learning was significant to 21st century students.

RECOMMENDATION

Publication

Various Universities in the world under department of online distance learning should write research papers to educate the world to see the need to value online distance learning. The heads of these departments ought to regard the publication as their responsibilities.

Advertisement: The heads of department of online distance learning in various Universities in the world must advertise online distance learning on radio, television and social media so that the general public will perceive the importance of online distance learning.

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