



With High-Quality Online Learning Integrated into Campuses in Each Major Students Are Motivated to Earn Their Degrees, And Compensate for Emergencies

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Abstract

Are there reasons why higher education institutions should incorporate online learning in each of their programs? Why should opportunities for online learning be considered in every program? In other words, what are the benefits or advantages of online learning for higher education institutions? The pandemic resulted in the closure of many college campuses, and as these institutions quickly shifted to online learning as a response to the crisis, the impact of this change on the motivation and retention of students has become an important topic of discussion. Online learning compensated for any limitations caused by pandemic conditions, and the unprecedented closure of many campuses that would normally maintain their students until graduation. Therefore, online learning programs should be sufficiently robust as a resource to encourage students to retain and gain their educational degrees regardless of their financial, social, and mental health conditions.

Research Design

My research will use a mixed methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative data. In order to support my argument, I will also use case studies, online data-gathering methods, students' questionnaires about their opinion of online learning, and peer-reviewed journal articles which address issues that align with my area of interest.

Keywords: Growth Mindset, Online Learning, Educational Technology, Motivation, Retention, Student Enrollment

Introduction

In today's technologically advanced world, higher education institutions should be focused more than ever before on building online division for each of its programs. There are many reasons why institutions should take this step, but the most important of these is the ability to enhance financial strength. There is a strong relation between students' enrollment in online learning and enhancing the financial strength of higher education institutions. Aaron Rasmussen, co-founder of the online learning platform Master Class

talked about the accelerated trend of colleges closing due to the enrollment crunch in need of state or federal intervention. In an interview with CNBC Make It, Rasmussen stated that he anticipated that over the next five years there would be many colleges closing (Johnson Hess, 2020).

Online learning gives a push-up to these colleges that allow them to stand up on their feet and provides them with a boost to continue their educational trajectory through online options without facing financial obstacles due to the low costs associated with online learning in comparison with learning that occurs on campus.

Secondly, by ensuring that students have the flexibility to choose between online and onsite learning of the same concentration helps to retain students when there is a tremendous number of campuses closed down. In a recent article for The Hechinger Report, Jill Barshay points out that 861 colleges and 9,499 campuses have closed down since 2004 leaving students without easy transfer options, and most of them have dropped out (Barshay, 2022). Third, by encouraging adult students who are less motivated or having a hard time balancing work, home, and study online learning programs can provide a vital resource for these students.

The Argument

Online learning often has positive impacts on the motivation and efficacy of adult students, and higher education institutions need to consider this option in order to retain and attract students to their online learning environments. Online programs allow students to maintain their course credits, provide viable learning options if a campus shuts down, and allow students to achieve balance in their life by studying at their own convenience. Therefore, it is important to motivate students as they will be less likely to withdraw if they remain motivated and engaged with their learning process while retaining confidence in their ability to succeed.

Adopting a growth mindset is extremely important for students who do not want to withdraw, fail, or lose interest for any reason. If students adopt a growth mindset, they will see themselves as motivated, energetic, and capable of continuing their education. Faculties in higher education institutions play a fundamental role in instilling a growth mindset in their students who take online courses. They encourage them to accept failure as part of their growth, and support them mentally, socially, and financially. If these institutions take on this responsibility, they will retain their current students and attract more, and this increased student enrollment subsequently elevates the financial strength of higher education institutions. Colleges can support their students mentally by utilizing concepts like a growth mindset and financially by identifying funding resources that could uplift their spirits and motivate them to do more and continue with their education.

Why Students Withdraw

There are two major reasons why students withdraw from their college programs. One is related to campus closure and the other one is related to students' states of mind; their economic, social, and academic circumstances. Higher education institutions can improve their students' motivation, and attract and retain students into their online programs if they are flexible enough to embrace structured and organized pedagogical online programs for those with low motivation levels and provide resources for those with academic, and financial struggles.

What Is Online Learning?

Online learning is learning that is delivered and supported through the internet (Clarke, 2004). It can be both formal and informal. Usually, higher education institutions have formal online learning where students interact and collaborate through learning management systems and other resources. Distance learning is a fundamentally different way to communicate as well as a different learning framework (Alfiya et al., 2022).

Online learning environments create an opportunity for the use of interactive and collaborative models of learning (McDonald & Reushle, 2000), (Segrave, 2004). Adult online learners like the varied approach that creates a rich, interactive learning environment; adult students are able to engage more fully with course content using different media and can interact with others in a way that makes learning more effective. Adult students with disabilities may find this approach helpful due to the lack of schools that address their needs. They like the lack of prejudice that electronic communication allows (Debenham, 2001).

Online student retention is impacted by: motivation, support systems (academic, financial, and behavioral), as well as the level of student engagement in learning in their community. Students feel motivated in positive learning environments, incorporating both a growth mindset and technology where they are supported by teaching staff that is highly qualified.

Advantages of Online Learning

Online learning offers working students and professionals a flexible degree option to advance their careers without sacrificing their personal or professional lives. It is an opportunity for less advantaged and socially excluded, or marginalized adults to participate in their education by utilizing communication and information technology as a means to overcome barriers to participation in education by adults, (Simpson, 2005) (DFES, 2003). The benefits of receiving a higher education extend not only to students but also to their families and communities who directly benefit from their modernized, civilized, and

prestigious status.

Three Factors Impact Retention

Online student retention is impacted by: motivation, support systems (academic, financial, and behavioral), and the student's level of engagement in learning in a community. It is believed that isolation from learning and/or community is a hindrance to development and involvement in activities and learning. An individual who is isolated (not engaged in learning or community activities) is considered to have a hindering effect on their development and motivation. Motivating students requires a positive learning environment, which is something that both researchers and faculty should consider. This can be achieved in several ways. Starting with faculty and decision-making staff who can contribute to their student's growth and excitement by supporting them academically and technologically, to assisting students mentally through utilizing concepts like a growth mindset.

Factors That Contribute to Students Withdrawing from Their Campuses

Higher education institutions, specifically those engaged in college education, serve adult learners who are supposed to thrive and go forward with their education. However, a significant number of them withdraw and drop out claiming that they are working adults and they don't have time or energy to devote to their studies. Several factors contribute to this attitude, which ranges from having low motivation levels or fixed mindsets in some students, to the ineffective use of educational resources and teaching quality issues. In order to attract, motivate, and encourage students in their learning, institutions should incorporate both a growth mindset and technology, along with ensuring teaching staff is highly qualified. Demir, et al suggest that students appreciate mobile learning as an approach to improve motivation. Motivation can be applied when there is a positive learning environment for students (Demir et al., 2018). A correlation has been established between both motivation and online learning.

Technology Infrastructure

There is no doubt that student enrollment enhances the financial strength of higher education institutions. In order to increase enrolment, online learning should be tremendously encouraged especially with the vast growth of emerging technology and the unprecedented times of a global health crisis. It becomes an attractive tool to consider in any educational program. The revolution of higher education can be accelerated by introducing synchronized or a synchronized classroom. To do so, technology infrastructure should be established first to meet the needs of the curricula and then focus on attracting

faculty and students. Higher education students, specifically those in community colleges, can benefit more from engaging in educational technology tools to actively participate in their online learning. Researchers and faculty should consider the impact of this change. The faculty and decision-making staff can contribute to their student's growth and excitement. In order for students to utilize technology effectively, students should receive thorough online learning opportunities. Integrating edtech into higher education increases enrollment by a significant amount. Georgia Tech, for instance, recently announced it had reached 10,000 enrollments for their online master in computer science program, which costs only \$7,000. This wouldn't be possible without education technology. The term Edtech covers a broad range of technologies, including podcasting, gamification, video games, interactive whiteboards, etc., learning management systems (Moodle, Google Classroom, asynchronous learning platforms, online collaboration spaces (such as Microsoft Teams), and the Cloud are some of the tools included in this category. In order for online learning to look appealing, schools should innovate in terms of their organizational and pedagogical structures. According to an article in the *Australian Journal of Adult Learning*, innovation in schools includes changing the role of learners and teachers, restructuring organizational and pedagogical structures, and utilizing resources differently, such as technology and learning environments (Owen, 2014). Innovative contexts also often involve significant changes in curriculum content, often including more interdisciplinary approaches and a focus on competencies and values.

Student's State of Mind

There has been a connection between students' attitudes and motivation during online learning, and these factors can influence whether students are willing to take online courses or use particular online learning platforms (Kim, 2017; Zhu, 2020). According to an article published in *Computers in Human Behavior*, students' intrinsic motivations (i.e., perceived playfulness) and attitudes toward blogging determine their continuous intention to use them for learning (Ifinedo, 2017). Due to the ever-changing global environment, students must acquire enterprising and innovative mindsets, a necessity that has led to almost ubiquitous implementation of entrepreneurship education. In addition to using case studies, computer-aided learning, and role-playing for entrepreneurship education, it is important to consider the delivery of entrepreneurship education (Ni, 2021).

A case study was conducted in ED at Polsri in order to explore the motivation of the students there. The study explored if either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation plays an important role in students' online learning. All participants agreed that they were intrinsically motivated by their online learning. They were greatly influenced by their intrinsic motivation. Their online learning was driven by their (1) ambition or belief to learn and gain new knowledge; and (2) enjoyment in experiencing new learning methods (Gustiani, 2022).

Quality of Teaching Staff

One important factor that contributes to the enrollment level of higher education institutions is the quality of teaching. A teacher with many years of experience should still receive training on how to teach mature students in an online environment, despite their large amount of experience (Abdullah, 2022). In her article, *Should Professors Need a License to Teach?* Suzan Khan argued that in fighting the trend of declines in student enrollment, college and university leaders need to maximize their advantage by ensuring that the learning experiences—and outcomes—of all their students are led by people who provide the highest quality of teaching (Khan, 2022). It is crucial for faculty members not only to be subject-matter experts but to be prepared as teachers of their subject matter; students would be able to benefit from engaging learning experiences from the moment they step foot on campus. Using an engaging teaching approach, high-quality content, interactive lessons, and adaptable learning settings are all crucial to exceptional delivery. Students also benefit from collaborating in real time in small groups, holding discussion classes in breakout rooms, and asking professors questions which reinforces learning through embedding secondary resources. Having a high-quality teacher is essential to getting the best from students and helping them graduate as academically successful adults.

Quality Online Course Content

Students can be motivated academically in online learning by having a quality online course service and content. A number of researchers suggested that students' online learning intention could be affected by the quality of online course content, system, and service provided to the students (Chen, 2013). Usefulness and ease of use are important factors to increase motivation and engagement in online learning. One study, in particular, premised that if any activity or task were interesting and not difficult enough to cause frustration, there would be a high likelihood of one's total engagement (Csikszentmihalyi, 1975).

Evidence and Findings

Existing research in the motivation and retention of online adult students suggests that institutions of higher education are more likely to address these issues by First, developing a more individualized approach to online learning, using a pedagogy that focuses on the range of learning styles of adult students (Dron, 2016). Second, developing a better emphasis on building a sense of community and connection for online learners by utilizing group discussions and virtual meet-ups to share student input (Wise, 2016). Third, Improving access to and awareness of student support services. These services should be specifically designed to address the academic and psychological well-being of online

students (Roberts, 2007).

Conclusion

Online learning is an attractive tool to consider in any educational setting. Despite the rapid development of online learning in higher education and its attractiveness as a learning tool, engaging and motivating students remains one of the challenges which emerged in this perspective. In higher education institutions, students from various backgrounds and ages can benefit more from online learning tools that enable them to engage in and participate actively in their learning. To attract, motivate, and encourage students in their learning, institutions should effectively make the best use of educational technology tools. In order for students to utilize technology effectively, students should receive thorough online learning. Students are less likely to withdraw if they remain motivated and engaged with their learning process while retaining confidence in their ability to succeed.

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