COVID-19 Imposed Digital Learning Environment Acceptance

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INTRODUCTION & LITERATURE

Online and computer mediated pedagogy has been well researched over the last decade. Generally, these results have skewed toward the outcome of 'no significant difference' between traditional and online learning (Swan, 2003).

Yet, the lack of choice for both students and teachers is a facet to consider when assessing tertiary education during the pandemic. Especially since many educators regard online learning as an inferior teaching medium (Gurley, 2018; Swan, 2003).

Research suggests that online education is one of the top concerns of faculty, specifically in higher education and that they can be successfully addressed via mentoring, training, and ongoing professional development specific to the method (Andrews Graham, 2019).

However, due to emergency modifications any educator with concerns about the efficacy and value of online learning may have been unprepared and/or unaccepting when the transition occurred.

It then follows that these educators' perceptions may influence interactions within the platforms. Such inquiry into student perceptions of the value that educators place upon digital course designs was recommended in the research by Paul et al. concerning student's perceptions of control over the learning environment (2020).

RESEARCH QUESTION

Do students' perceptions of educator attitudes toward digital learning environments influence the student's acceptance of these platforms?

EXPECTED RESULTS

Summated ratings scale for each category will be totaled providing a student acceptance score and a score for perceived educator attitude.

It is likely that students with greater digital learning environment course experience prior to COVID-19 will be more accepting in general because those students previously self-selected similarly designed courses.

This study may determine a positive correlation between perception of favorable professor attitudes and higher student acceptance for those individuals who have little previous experience in the digital learning environment.

DESIGN

The study will employ a correlational design.

Attitude will be defined as "...a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor" (Eagly et al., 1993, p. 1) where the entity refers to digital learning environments.

The term digital learning environment (DLE) is a general reference to the non-classroom-based set of services or tools that facilitate teaching and learning across multiple course components and course designs.

Student acceptance towards DLEs will consist of self-report ratings across the categories of ease-of-use, convenience, and future selection.

PROCEDURE

Web-based survey software will first display the consent form (see Appendix A) and require confirmation of consent and eligibility criteria. Then, definitions and an instruction to reflect on experiences during COVID-19 will be provided. The presentation order of scale and demographic items will be generated randomly when the survey link is accessed.

MEASURES

Survey instrument was adapted from tools validated by faculty at Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University (Alshorman & Bawaneh, 2018). Adaptation produced 19 items on a 5-point Likert-scale of measurement with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree (see Appendix B).

Five additional questions will be asked:

- Number of remote courses before & after COVID-19
- Age & Gender identity
- Current credit equivalencies

PARTICIPANTS

- Undergraduate students
- Graduate students
- 18 years or older

SIGNIFICANCE

- Context is of widespread interest
- Insights on improving student acceptance
- Better understand the pandemic's effects on educators
- Institutions may expand training resources
- Knowledge of student views on pandemic induced education trends

REFRENCES

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