Students' Background, Experience, and Autonomy as Factors Affecting Their Academic Achievements and Satisfaction

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Abstract

This research paper aims to explore and investigate potential factors influencing students' academic achievements and satisfaction with using online learning platforms. This study was constructed basing on the students' background, experience, and autonomy. The study was conducted through the analysis of some online learning platforms in higher education, including those used or being used in the Republic of Uzbekistan. This research utilized a quantitative research method. The model of this research illustrates several factors on using online learning platforms to improve students' academic achievements and satisfaction. The findings showed that the students' background, experience, and autonomy positively affected students' satisfaction. Consequently, effects of the students' application, remembering, understanding, analyzing, and satisfaction was positively aligned with students' academic achievements. The findings of the research present a strong support to the integrative approach in relation to using online learning platforms to improve students' academic achievements and satisfaction, which could help decision makers in universities and higher education and colleges to plan, evaluate, and implement online learning platforms in their institutions.

Keywords: learning platform, academic achievement, higher education, method, background, experience, autonomy.

1.0. Introduction

In this investigation, both transactional distance theory and Bloom's Taxonomy theory have been validated in the educational context, providing further understanding towards the students' prospective perceptions on using online learning platforms to improve students' academic achievement and satisfaction. The contribution that the current research might have to the field of online learning platforms have been discussed and explained. Additional insights towards students' satisfactions and students' academic achievements have also been presented. The current research emphasizes that the incorporation of both TDT and BTT can positively influence the research outcome. The current research has determined that numerous stakeholders, for instance developers, system designers, along with institutional users of online learning platforms reasonably consider student demands and needs, then ensure that the such a system is effectively meeting their requirements and needs. Adoption among users of online learning platforms could be broadly clarified by the eleven factor features which is based on this research model. Thus, the current research suggests more investigation be carried out to examine relationships among the complexity of online learning platforms combined with technology acceptance model.

2.0. Literature Review

Higher education organizations over the previous two decades have offered full courses online as an integral part of their curricula, besides encouraging the completion throughout the online courses. Additionally, the number of students who are not participating in any courses online has continued to drop over the past few years. Similarly, it is perfectly possible to state that learning online is obviously an educational platform (Allen, Seaman, Poulin, & Straut, 2016). Courses online are trying to connect social networking components, experts' content, because online resources are growing on daily basis. Such courses depend on active participation of a significant number of learners who participate independently in accordance with their education objectives, skills, and previous background and experience (McAuley, Stewart, Siemens, & Cormier, 2010). Nevertheless, learners differ in their previous background and experience, along with their education

techniques, which clearly influence their online courses results besides their achievement (Kauffman, 2015). Consequently, despite the online learning evolution, learning online possibly will not be appropriate for each learner (Bouhnik & Carmi, 2013). Nevertheless, while online learning application among academic world has grown rapidly, not enough is identified regarding learners' previous background and experience in learning online. Not so long ago, investigation concentrated on particular characteristics of learners' experiences along with beliefs, for instance collaboration with their own instructor, online course quality, or studying with a certain learning management system (LMS) (Lester & King, 2009). Generally, limited courses or a single institution were investigated (Coates, James, & Baldwin, 2005; Lee, Yoon, & Lee, 2009). Few studies examined bigger sample sizes between one or more particular institutes (Alexander & Golja, 2007). Additionally, there is a shortage of researches that examine learners' previous background and experience comparing face-to-face along with learning online elements, e.g., (Bliuc, Goodyear, & Ellis, 2007). The development of learners' previous background and experience, skills, are realized to be the major advantages for administrative level for learning online.

Similarly, learners' satisfaction and academic achievement towards learning online attracted considerable attention from scholars who employed several theoretical models in order to evaluate learners' satisfaction and academic achievements (Abuhassna, Megat, Yahaya, Azlina, & Al-rahmi, 2020; Abuhassna & Yahaya, 2018). This present study highlights the effects of online learning platforms on student's satisfaction, in relation to their background and prior experiences towards online learning platforms to identify learners that are going to be satisfied toward online course. Furthermore, this research explores the effects of transactional distance theory (TDT); student collaboration, student- instructor dialogue or communication, and student autonomy in relation to their satisfaction. Accordingly, this study investigates students' academic achievements within online platforms, utilizing Bloom theory to measure students' achievements through four main components, namely, understanding, remembering, applying, and analyzing. This study could have a significant influence on online course design and development. Additionally, this research may influence not only academic online courses but then other educational organizations according to the fact that several organizations offer training courses and solutions online. Both researchers and Instructors will be able to utilize and elaborate in accordance with the preliminary model, which was developed throughout this research, on the effects of online platforms on student's satisfaction and academic achievements. Advantages of online learning and along with its applications were mentioned in earlier correlated literature (Abuhassna et al., 2020;Abuhassna & Yahaya, 2018). However, despite the growing usage of online platforms, there is a shortage of employing this technology, which creates an issue in itself (Al-Rahmi et al., 2018). Consequently, the research problem lies in the point that a model needs to be created to locate the significant evidence based on the data of student's background, experiences and interactions within online learning environments which influence their academic performance and satisfaction.

3.0. Students' Background Toward Online Platforms

Students' background regarding online platforms in this study is referred to as their readiness and willingness to use and adapt to different online platforms, providing them with the needed support and assistance. Students' background towards online learning is a crucial component throughout this process, as prior research revealed that there are implementation issues, for instance; the deficiency of qualified lecturers, infrastructure and facilities, in addition to students' readiness, besides students' resistance to accept online learning platforms in addition to the Learning Management System (LMS) platforms, as educational tools (Azhari & Ming, 2015). However, student demand continued to increase, spreading to global audiences due to its exceptional functionality, flexibility and eventual accessibility (Azhari & Ming, 2015). There have been persistent apprehensions regarding online learning quality compared with traditional learning settings. In their research, (Panyajamorn, Suthathip, Kohda, Chongphaisal, & Supnithi, 2018) have discovered that Austrian learners continue to prefer traditional learning environments due to communication goals, along with the interpersonal relations preservation. Moreover, (Lau & Shaikh, 2012) have discovered that Malaysian learners' internet efficiency and computer skills, along with their personal demographics like gender, background, level of the study, as well as their financial income lead to a significant difference in their readiness towards online learning platforms. Abuhassna and Yahaya (2018) claimed that the current technologies in education play an essential role in providing a full online learning experience which is close enough to a face-to-face class in spite of the physical separation of the students from their educator, along with other students. Platforms of online learning lend themselves towards a less hierarchical methodology in education, fulfilling the learning desires of individuals which do not approach new information in a linear or a systematic manner. Platforms of online learning additionally are the most suitable ways for autonomous students (Abuhassna et al., 2020; Abuhassna & Yahaya, 2018; Panyajamorn et al., 2018).

4.0. Students' Experience Toward Online Platforms

Students' experience in the current research indicates that learners must have prior experience in relation to utilizing online learning platform in their education settings. Thus, students experience towards online learning offers several advantages among themselves and their instructors in strengthening students' learning experiences especially for isolated learners (Lau & Shaikh, 2012; Salmon, 2014). Regardless of student recognition of the advantages towards supporting their learning throughout utilizing the technology, difficulties may occur through the boundaries about their technical

capabilities and prior experiences towards utilizing the software itself from the perspective of its functionality. As demonstrated over learner's experience and feedback from several online sessions over the years, this may frequently become a frustration source between both learners and their instructors, as this may make typically uncomplicated duties, for instance, watching a video, uploading a document, and other simple tasks to be progressively complicated for them, having no such prior experience. Furthermore, when filling out evaluations, for instance, online group presentations, the relatively limited capability to communicate face-to-face then to rely on a non-verbal signal along with audience's body language might be a discouraging component. Nonetheless, the significance of being in a position to participate with other colleagues employing online sessions, which are occasionally nonvisual, for instance; teleconference format is a progressively significant skill in the modern workplace, thus affirming the importance of concise, clear, intensive interactions skills (Salmon, 2014).

5.0. Students' Autonomy in Online Platforms

Student autonomy in the current study refers to their independence and motivation towards learning. The learner is the motivation of the way toward learning, along with their expectations and requirements, thinking about everyone as a unique individual and hence investigating their own capacities and possibilities. Thus, extraordinary importance is attributed to autonomy in DL environments, since the option of instructive intercession offered in distance education empowers students towards learning autonomy (Massimo, 2014). In this respect, the connection between autonomy of student and explicit parts of the learning procedure are in the center of consideration as mentioned. (Madjar, Nave, & Hen, 2013) concluded that a learners' autonomy-supportive environment provides these learners with adoption of a more aims guided learning, leading to more learning achievements. This is why autonomy is desired in the online settings for both individual development and greater achievement in academic environments. The researchers also indicate in their research that while autonomy supports outcomes in goals and aims guiding, educator practices mainly lead to goals which necessary cannot adapt. Thus, supportive-autonomy learning process needs to be designed with affective elements consideration as well. However, (Stroet, Opdenakker, & Minnaert, 2013) efficiently surveyed 71 experimental studies on the impacts of autonomy supportive teaching on motivation of learner and discovered a clear positive correlation. Similar to attribution theory, the relationship between learner control and inspiration involves the possibility of learners adjusting their own inspirations, for example, learners may be competent to change self-determined extrinsic motivation to intrinsic motivation. However, (Jacobs, Renandya, & Power, 2016) further indicated that learners will not reach the same level of autonomy without reviewing learner's autonomy insights, reflecting on their learning experiences, sharing these experiences and reflections with other learners, and realizing the elements influencing all these processes, and the process of learning as well.

6.0. Conclusions

Based on the study findings, the first recommendation would be for administrators of higher institution. In order to implement online learning, there must be more interest given to the course structure design, whereas it should be based on theories and prior literature. Moreover, instructor and course developer need to be trained and skilled to achieve online learning platforms goals. Workshops and training sessions must be given for both instructors and students to make them more familiar in order to take the most advantages of the learning management system like Moodle and LMS. The software itself is not enough for creating an online learning environment that is suitable for students and instructors. If instructors were not trained and unaware of utilizing the software (e.g. Moodle) in the class, then the quality of education imparted to students will be jeopardized. Training and assessing the class instructor and making modifications to the software could result in a good environment for the instructor and a quality education for the student. Both students' satisfaction and academic achievements depends on their prior knowledge and experience in relation to online learning. This current research intended to investigate student satisfaction and academic achievements in relation to online learning platforms. Future research could integrate more in relation to blended learning settings.

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