

## Exploring challenges of e-learning: A Qualitative Perspective of Contemporary E-learning Issues

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### ABSTRACT

*E-learning or E-education has become a need for educational institutions. It is being deployed in almost every educational establishment across the world. Researchers lay a lot of emphasis on the benefits of E-learning but the disadvantages or the challenges in E-learning have not been discussed thoroughly. The educational institutions are becoming more and more aware of diversity of the students. Thus, they are making all possible efforts for providing a wide range of alternatives for the engagement of students. The rapidly flexible modes of delivery which are available for students provide a number of opportunities for students seeking educational opportunities. In changing across and between different modes, the one size fit all approach is mostly used. However this one size fit all approach does not always work in terms of students who experience isolation. On being compared with their counterparts, these learners face various barriers to full participation in the coursework.*

**Keywords:** e-learning, e-education, globalisation, education through internet, challenges in e-education.

### INTRODUCTION:

UNESCO has confirmed that the closure of schools and universities will have a lot of adverse effects on the students. The biggest problem will be of interrupted learning that might result in youth and students being deprived of the opportunity for their development. Thus, online learning systems may come into picture and help in addressing this issue.

In fact the E-learning tools play an important role during the pandemic. The E-learning systems may help in offering the instructors a way of managing, planning, delivering and tracking the teaching and learning processes. Further, it also aims at helping the schools, universities and instructors in facilitating the students learning during the time of pandemic. Also, most of the systems are absolutely free of cost and help in ensuring continuous learning at the time of pandemic.

Even though ICT has leveraged a lot of help in this regard. However, the usage and provision of the online education material in the E-learning systems is also a great challenge for most of the educational institutions during the pandemic. The E-learning system is considered to be a very important source for information because it is ubiquitous in nature, offers ease of usage, has a low cost attached to it and is interactive in nature. The E-learning systems also have a number of wonderful features which prove to be valuable for the students. Using this system might prove to be much more practical especially during this pandemic. For instance, with the help of E-learning systems, the students might engage as well as text in some of the learning activities with their teachers through this mobile phone or laptop from the comfort of their home. Also, the students may easily receive the course material. Some researchers have stated that one important approach for E-learning is use of the LMS or the Learning Management System. Therefore, E-learning here refers mainly to offering, organising and managing the E-education activities within the system like examinations, enrolment of students, assignments,

lesson plans, course description, syllabus, messages, etc. (Tirziu and Vrabie ,2015).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW:**

The rising popularity of the E-learning technology which is used by the higher educational institutions maybe attributed directly to globalisation. This refers to economic and political phenomena, worldwide integration of culture, views and products. The growth and development of E-learning technology undoubtedly adds to the globalisation as the educational institutions try their best to break the social and the geographical barriers for offering distance learning options. This causes integration of the academic views and standards. The advancements in terms of infrastructure, technology as well as transportation are some of the major factors when we talk about the speed of globalisation (Almaiah, 2018). Globalisation helps in explaining different types of effects like a reduction in the income of households, an introduction of fee for students, growth and development of international tourism as well as cutting down of the budget for public sector. Globalisation may be identified further where a fusion of technological advancements and globalisation meet. The growth is boosted by companies who compete on the national as well as international level for earning profits which demand technological advancements over the competitors. Technology is not only used for the purpose of industrial competitiveness but it is also used for collaborations, sharing the knowledge and information used by governments, international organisations, researchers, academic institutions as well as non-profit organisations especially in the case of classroom management (Erdogan and Kurt, 2015). The rapid advancements in the E-learning technology may attribute to the force as the institutions are now competing for gaining more and more students who can pay the fee without geographical barriers. Also the institutions try to offer multiple and flexible options of education so that academic background, age and experience do not become a hindrance for pursuing the academics for the students. The pace to embrace the E-learning technology has certain ramifications on the academic staff. It develops an unwanted pressure on them and results can't be monitored whether E-learning technologies are being used efficiently or not. Hardware and software companies that are responsible for creating the applications are seeking advances for giving them an edge over the other software companies for gaining profits and establishing their name in the market (Kesim and Altinpulluk, 2015).

Adoption of E-learning technologies amongst the users is quite a challenging issue for most of the educational institutions in the developed as well as developing countries. But, it's less complicated in the developed countries. The students in developed countries are willing to accept as well as use the system of E-learning as prominent progressive steps are being taken in this direction. Researchers have also indicated that various issues and competencies required in adopting the system of E-learning in the developing nations still remain to be a hard reality because of digital divide in the developing nations (Salleh et. al., 2015).

The barriers in terms of participation that the external students experience are specifically evident in the tasks of collaborative learning through group presentations, group work as well as group assessments. Some of the most common challenges that are experienced could be personal like the anxiety related to use of technology, working away from their comfort zone, inequity in terms of assessment, difficulty or inability in terms of interaction with their peers, etc. (Mhouti, Erradi and Nasseh, 2018).

In spite of having best intentions from the teaching staff for providing beneficial and equitable learning experience for the students, irrespective of the mode of enrolment, most of the instructors feel apprehensive about it and they are not even suitably equipped for teaching through online methods specifically as they might also be still in the phase of learning about the use of certain online teaching platforms (Shahnavazi et. al., 2017).

This could also leave some of the learners in the isolated spots where they could even have varied level of proficiency and competency with the help of different types of IT tools. Thus, they are kind of by themselves when it's about online environment of learning with the help of LMS or Learning Management System. It's highlighted specifically in the collaborative tasks of learning where the individuals could be hardly managing navigation of the system by themselves. While team work is important in terms of education which helps in development of various inter-personal and transferable skills of employment, a rising number of prospective hurdles for achievement beyond the ones which are commonly related to withdrawal, disengagement, and ultimate exclusion from engagement with and access to course material as well as learning activities (El-Masri and Tarhini , 2017).

Poor ICT and Employable skills, may prove to be a potential hurdle for achievement beyond the ones associated commonly with the traditional group work experience might serve for alienating the isolated learners further. This causes withdrawal, disengagement and ultimate exclusion and they refrain from engaging with course material and related learning activities. While the environment online offers a number of opportunities for the way education is offered and accessed by students, the practices of assessment are restricted to modes and variety wherein they are allocated in online environment, For instance, wherever the group presentations within tertiary

environments have been conducted traditionally through predominantly through the face to face modes (Al-Azawei, Parslow and Lundqvist, 2016).

The online environments present some additional opportunities for the summative assessment with the group presentation which aren't restricted to the live option only. Even then, the group presentation assessment online don't seem to be a common practice which could be because of some difficulties which are experienced by the academicians and the students for using the platforms of online delivery, This is exactly where sharing of the good practices as well as the lessons learned amongst the members of higher education community may help the academic teachers in concentrating on the efficient use of technology. It also helps in avoiding unnecessary duplication of the expenses and efforts (Sabi, et. al., 2016). Some of the challenges associated with adoption of E-learning system have been identified. These challenges maybe classified into 4 categories i.e. 1. Technological challenges, cultural challenges, individual challenges and course challenges. It has also been seen that such challenges are quite different in countries because of different readiness, context and culture. For instance, a lack of knowledge about ICT, poor infrastructure and weaknesses of development of content are some of the main challenges of adopting the E-learning system in the developing nations. Another paper reveals that the characteristics of the system, experience of internet and self-efficacy in computer technology are some of the primary issues which impede successful adaptation of the E-learning system in education system especially in the primary schools. According to another study, 3 main challenges were identified which are insufficient technical assistance, poor design of the interface and lack of the IT skills are the main barriers which hinder successful implementation of the current projects of E-learning. Some researchers also claim that the political, cultural and the economic constraints are behind the failure for E-learning initiatives. Similarly, some researchers have also classified the issues which affect the use of E-education into 4 categories i.e. implementation challenges, technological challenges, management challenges and culture related challenges. In spite of such efforts, none of the studies have stated the real challenges which face the users during use of the E-education system (Chen, 2017). According to another study that considers the technological challenges as the basis criteria for success of the E-learning system indicate that about 45% of the projects associated with E-learning are complete failures in the developing nations, 40% of these are partial failure, while just 15% of these are successful. Thus, on the basis of the findings of these studies, along with the other papers, a lot of researchers in this field have conducted their researches for investigating the issues related to successful implementation of the initiatives of E-learning system. The technical factors related to the E-learning system is a critical issue which need to be addressed as it might cause hurdles in adoption of this system of e-learning by most of the students. The present E-learning system is witnessing some critical hurdles in terms of availability, accessibility, usability and the quality of the website of the E-learners.

It's quite obvious that when the learners feel that the system of E-education is user friendly and can be used easily, they believe that this system is helpful and would help in improving their performance too. E-learning systems are mainly designed for meeting the demands of the students (Jiang and Wang, 2015).

While interacting with the system of E-learning, the issues of usability become important. Positive experience within the learning tools depend mainly the system of global learning being usable. When an individual has some negative experiences with specific tool, the negative experience is often related to E-learning. Also, often the biases, misunderstandings and prejudices restrict people from reaching to their goals in future experiences.

Thus, the platform of E-learning that sets itself as the target of becoming successful can't neglect the issues of usability. For being successful means succeeding in alluring and retaining the users. It's connected strictly with ease of virtual lessons (Kisanga, and Ireson, 2015).

## **CONCLUSION:**

Several papers have identified the gap in researches which are present in understanding the perspective of academics. There are a number of areas within the perspective which gives cause for the concern. They have been identified as the challenges which are faced by the higher education organisations. The main categories into which these challenges maybe categorised are pedagogical e-learning issues, cultural issues, challenges related to technical training, technological issues and issues of time management. These issues are important for understanding for the institutions who are looking to get successful outcomes of e-learning.

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