



East Africa University - Garowe Campus
Research and Professional Development Center

CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE EXPERIENCES OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS ON ONLINE LEARNING DURING COVID-19

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Executive Summary

The development of Somalia's education registered a momentous progress during the military regime led by General Mohamed Siyad Barre who in 1969 started ruling the country. This regime introduced a number of revolutionary social and economic programs of which one of these programs was the mass literacy campaign launched in 1974 which mobilized a large number of students and civil servants to teach in rural and far reach areas, increasing the literary rate from a dismal 5% to approximately 55%.

However, after the collapse of Somalia's Central Government, the state inherited socio-economic crisis, mass killings and marginalization that ruined all the progress registered earlier. This left all state responsibilities, including education, to private individuals and institution which led to rapid growth of higher educational institutions throughout the country.

Somalia's higher education institutions, like many parts of the world have been applying face-to-face classes in all academic programs, however, COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way of learning in higher education. The World Health Organization has declared Covid-19 as a pandemic that has posed a contemporary threat to humanity. Teaching, and learning activities that are usually carried out with face-to-face meetings have resulted in tremendous crisis response migration of universities into virtual meetings using various online educational learning platforms.

This study aims to explore how students rate e-learning on the negative to positive continuum as well as the opportunities in online learning. The study applied qualitative approach in collection and analysis of the data, and a case study design was adopted. Interviews were conducted with seventeen students. The findings show that students gained exposure and had their ICT skills enhanced. Students explored opportunities to attend international learning platforms where they can study while at home. However, poor internet connection and limited access to computers have negatively affected their learning experience. This study ends with recommendations based on the empirical findings to promote the use and enhance the experience of e-learning in post covid19 Somalia.



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Acronyms and Abbreviations

EAU	East Africa University
HIPS	Heritage Institute for Policy Studies
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoPIC	Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation
RPDC	Research and Professional Development Center
SomaliREN	Somali Research and Education Network
UNSOM	United Nations Mission to Somalia

CHAPTER

1

METHODOLOGY

Study objectives

The overall objective of this study was to critically analyze the experiences of students on online learning during COVID19 at East Africa University, Garowe Campus.

The study was guided by the following three specific objectives:

1. To investigate the positive experiences of Somali students in higher education in online learning.
2. To investigate the negative experiences of Somali students in higher education in online learning.
3. To assess the opportunities in online learning for Somali students in higher education.

Scope of the study

The research was based on a case study of East Africa University, Garowe Campus where it engaged the students of the university to participate in the interviews. The research has focused on the period between March 2020 and September 2020. This timeframe was selected because this was the period where a huge migration from traditional classes to online learning has taken place in Somalia's higher institutions of learning. The study aimed at capturing both the negative and positive experiences as well as opportunities associated with online learning for Somali students in higher education.

Study Methodology

The study applied the qualitative approach in collection and analysis of the data. In undertaking this research, a case study design was adopted because it offers an in-depth insight of the unit under investigation that might otherwise not be achieved with other approaches. East Africa University, Garowe Campus was chosen as the case study of this research since it is one of the universities that immediately shifted to online teaching during COVID-19, and that have facilitated online courses with universities across borders prior to COVID-19.

In total, nineteen students from East Africa University, Garowe campus agreed to participate in the study. These participants were selected by using both random and purposive sampling techniques. 12 of them were purposely selected from the graduating class of 2020 whereas the other 5 were randomly selected from the university campus. The data collection was performed in July 2020 when students have completed one semester performed through online learning.

These were students attending various courses ranging from Public Health to Political Science and International Relations, and from Sharia to Business Administration. They mainly used SomaliREN Moodle and Zoom for their classes that were taught by native Somali instructors for one semester at the time of data collection. Of these nineteen students, twelve of them were females while seven were males. The participants all lived in Garowe as they were all singles at the time of the interview.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the campus to gain an in-depth understanding of the subject. Eleven semi-structured interviews were performed: four interviews in groups and seven interviews individually. The interviews were recorded using a portable recording device and field notes were taken throughout the study. The language used for the interviews was Somali.

The collected data was translated, then transcribed and categorized based on the answers of the participants. Relevant themes and coding were developed from the transcriptions.

The data was analyzed using a thematic content approach. The study objectives were categorized into themes. Narrative text was applied around the themes and participant direct quotes were added to illustrate the text.

Ethical approval and considerations

The study was approved by the Ethics Committee of the Research and Professional Development Center (RPDC) of East Africa University-Garowe. Written and verbal informed consent was sought from every participant in the study. The confidentiality of all data was ensured. Both the researcher and participant were free to interrupt or suspend the interview in situations in which they perceived that the approach was negatively affecting the participants' emotional state. The participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time, without justification.

Limitations

While this research presents huge primary data collected in the form of in-depth interviews and focus group discussions, there was one major limitation in this study. We were not able to do the research in all universities in different regions of Somalia. The scope of our study was limited to only East Africa University – Garowe Campus. Many other higher education institutions in Somalia who shifted to online learning during Covid-19 were not engaged in this research due to time and financial constraints.

Therefore, while this research gives a comprehensive picture of online learning in Somalia, the findings represent the views of those interviewed or who participated in the focus groups during the period specified above and cannot be generalized to all the students of higher education in Somalia, though most institutions and students experience a more related environment of teaching and learning.

CHAPTER

2

ONLINE LEARNING IN SOMALIA

General Overview of the Educational System in Somalia

Somalia's education registered a momentous progress since the military coup led by General Mohamed Siyad Barre who in 1969 started ruling the country. With the military regime, there came the introduction of a number of revolutionary social and economic programs of which one of these programs was the mass literacy campaign launched in 1974 which mobilized a large number of students and civil servants to teach in rural and far reach areas. This campaign has increased the literacy rate in Somalia from a dismal 5% to approximately 55% [1] though very little progress was however made in the provision of the higher education in the rest of the country [2].

The civil war and the subsequent collapse of the Somali state which was characterized with socio-economic crisis, marginalization, mass killings, and internal conflicts spoiled all the progress registered earlier. Gross enrollment rates dropped and the overall confidence in the quality of Somalia's education deteriorated [2]. Since then, significant progress has been made in reconstructing and rebuilding educational institutions throughout the country. In the 1990s, Somali educated elite, with the help of citizens, Islamic charity organizations, local and international NGOs, began building privately-owned schools to meet the growing need for educational institutions in the country [3].

Today, there are 1,350 primary schools and 587 secondary schools only in the south central [4], 15 higher education institutions only in Puntland alone [5] and more than 44 higher educational institutions throughout the country [2].

The Higher Education (HE) sector is relatively new in Somalia and has received a low priority in terms of planning and policy making [4], great efforts reviving postsecondary education to meet the ever-growing number of high school graduates has been made.

The Emergency of Online Learning in Somalia

Following the declaration of COVID-19 outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on 30th January 2020 by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the confirmation of the first case in Somalia on 16th March 2020, the Government of Somalia has announced the closure of schools to contain the virus transmission until further communication [4].

Covid-19 has worsened the situation of the education system in Somalia which was already fragile as a result of decades of civil war, years of violence, clan conflicts and natural disasters [6]. The lack of preparedness and the slow shift to online

education creates a negative impact on students and increases dropouts [4]. However, distance learning is a rapidly expanding method which allows users the flexibility of operating outside of the constraints of time and place [7].

As of late March 2020, more than 850 million children and youth – roughly half of the world’s student population – had to stay away from school and university campuses due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and the effect of the pandemic is felt harshly in the education sector in Somalia as universities are privately funded and rely on tuition fees structured around semester enrolment, mid-terms and final exams [6].

To ensure continuity of operations and avoid major disruptions, most of the universities in Somalia explored alternative approaches to deliver lectures online through virtual classrooms [8]. However, this does not entail that Somalia is just rolling out distance learning; universities like East Africa University, University of Hargaisa and several others have been conducting online classes with their graduate studies [3].

For learning to continue, different universities adopted various online learning platforms according to their available resources, networks and their tech support staff. Serving a country where less than 10% of the population has access to the internet, they had different opportunities and constraints to overcome the dilemma presented by COVID-19 [8]. Universities mostly utilized three online meeting platforms namely Meet Google, Zoom and a Moodle platform facilitated by SomaliREN [9].

SomaliREN is an online platform developed by Somali Research and Education Network (SomaliREN), a non-profit higher education support group. The SomaliREN connects 20 institutions, with a total of 50 campuses. These institutions are connected to three different zonal PoPs (point of presence) and international capacity of 310 Mbps for the area around Mogadishu, the capital [8], [10].

Experiences of Students in online learning in Somalia

Advances in computer- and network-based technologies over the past decade have greatly expanded the possibilities for the development of online learning environments. Additionally, the demand for distance learning in public and private schools, higher education and especially the corporate sector is on the rise [11].

It is evident that teaching online and teaching face to-face are different. They obviously have different platforms of delivery, but the depth of the difference is quite broad and deep [12].

In the same line, as education empowers people by giving them critical skills and means to create opportunities for sustainable and viable personal and economic growth, significant dynamic shifts in educational practice from traditional teacher-centered pedagogy to learner-centered pedagogy is getting more necessary with many challenges to be addressed [3].

With the existing skill gap and lack of subsidies from internal and external sources to establish ICT infrastructure in the sector, substantial challenges are presented to higher institutions of learning in Somalia to embrace online learning quickly [9]. These challenges range from access difficulties by students to coaching hurdles by veteran lecturers who were only familiar with face to face teaching methods [6].

Like many other developing countries, Somalia actively confronts the challenge of delivering basic ICT services to its entire population. Most of the ICT infrastructure is positioned in large cities like Mogadishu, Hargeisa, and Bosaso, leaving rural areas unconnected. Consequently, schools and universities located outside the big cities have no or limited access to ICT [3]. Access to internet is also a huge constraint to overcome; less than 10% of the population has access to the internet [8], and so many students cannot attend classes online, which worsens the virtual divide drastically [6].

It is also clear that online learning in its entirety is dependent on technological devices and internet. Instructors and students with bad internet connections are being denied access to online learning. The dependency of online learning on technological equipment, and so the provision of the equipment remains a big challenge for institutions, faculty and students [12].

Additionally, following instructional delivery comes assessment where instructors measure learning activities to ascertain the instructional objectives through test, quiz and examination. In online learning, assessments are often carried online whereby instructors are limited to proxy supervision of learners making it impossible to regulate and control cheating [13]. This poses a big question on the quality of education delivered to students and the marks awarded since they do not represent a rigorous examination process.

For many f-2-f learning activities, there are good online substitutions but especially for manual skills that is more difficult, nursing being a good example. Students pursuing STEM courses emerge as the most affected. Disconnected from the white board, the lack of tools and gadgets to facilitate learning, the absence of demonstration models used in parallel with theoretical classes, and the cancellation of laboratory hours have costed students to miss hand-on-experience and the opportunity to link theoretical themes to field practice [9].

Similar findings produced that online nursing does exhibit its own unique set of challenges, such as providing nursing students with online learning experiences that relate to real-world nursing situations, which comprise both high-stake medical and interpersonal elements [14].

The financial consequences of COVID-19 have disproportionately affected students from low income families who were already struggling with financial hardships to meet tuition fees and living costs (Dutta, 2020). These students face many challenges from access to laptop and smart phones, to paying tuition to meeting the cost of internet which forces many of them to drop out [6].

Economic conditions are also reported to impose a challenge on students. It was found out that some students, especially those from lower income groups, cannot afford to buy internet data to access online learning media and materials compared to their peers from the middle or higher income classes resulting in complaints about phones that cannot support their online learning requirements [15].

Further results indicated that most instructors are not well-prepared for, or accepting of, online instructions. In particular, some of the instructors possess low skills in performing sophisticated computer and Internet related tasks. Many instructors had a preference for traditional methods of course instructions (i.e., face to face) over online instructions of learning resulting in low quality delivery of online classes [7].

With online learning model, students are also faced with the challenge of online collaboration, for instance forming groups to work together and perform team discussions to develop cooperative work skills and encourage them to do more structural learning [13]. Collaboration between students usually contributes to the learning trial of students whose understanding capacity in class is to a certain level, low.

Rationale

As Covid19 has worsened the situation, more than 850 million children and youth - roughly half of the world's student population - had to stay away from school and university campuses due to the COVID-19 pandemic as of late March 2020 (UNESCO 2020). The effect of the pandemic is felt harshly in the education sector in Somalia as universities are privately funded and rely on tuition fees structured around semester enrolment, mid-terms and final exams. To ensure continuity of operations and avoid major disruptions, most of the universities in Somalia explored alternative approaches to deliver lectures online through virtual classrooms [8].

Online learning was suggested, quickly supported, and implemented in Somalia as an intervention to propel learning in Covid19 era. However, the learners' feelings and perceptions over the introduced online learning approach have not yet been studied and confirmed, therefore, the study at hand investigated the learners' positive and negative experiences, as well as also the opportunities that arose from the online learning approach using a case of East Africa University - Garowe Campus.

CHAPTER

3

FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Based on the analysis of qualitative coding, this section is presenting the findings on the three study objectives that guided this research. In particular, these research findings are analyzing the positive experiences among East Africa University Garowe students on online learning, their negative experiences and opportunities they contracted from the migration to online learning during the Covid-19 period. The findings of this research were derived from the research interviews on each of the nineteen students, selected from the student population that got involved in digital learning via the online learning exercise.

Positive Experiences of Students on Online Learning

Responses invariably showed that the students' Information Technology skills were enhanced by the online learning since COVID19 broke out. Respondents expressed that the use of computers increased their engagement in learning. They got exposed to further online learning platforms. Responses showed that students became more open to internet use. Again, the research established that the students read more online materials during this period. Data from respondents continued to show that they spent more time with their mobile phone learning applications.

From the interviews conducted, respondents appreciated that online learning is more convenient for them than face-to-face classes. This ranged from saving their transport time and costs. Online learning was appreciated for enabling the students to record and keep their class tutorials even after real-time learning. Online learning was also praised by the respondents for enabling them to cover a lot of content in a short time. Research also revealed that the time spent in class became shorter for learners due to online access, for instance, they identified for classes, one to four hours may be spent compared to more than six hours in face to face classes. Responses pointed out that there was no need in preparation for the online classes such as dressing and applying cosmetics. Contacting lecturers during online teaching was also easier via a chat room in the learning platform, especially for shy learners who do not participate in the normal campus classes. This shows that online learning was more inclusive and induced more participation of all class members.

The researcher also found out that the students' self-management skills were improved by the online learning experience. Ideas from almost all pointed out that unproductive activities at campus when there are no lectures were avoided like the time spent on social media and gossiping. Respondents quickly professed that they managed their time more efficiently and became cautious with wasting time on unnecessary activities. They also revealed that their independent learning improved greatly.

Online learning was reported to be fun and interesting to the learners. One respondent categorically expressed gratitude for being taught by lecturers from Finland via the online learning platforms. That student was inspired by attending an online course facilitated by a Finland based university in partnership with her university.

“There was a course called “Hiil Hooyo” facilitated by East Africa University in Partnership with a Finish University, and sponsored by Diakonia Finland which we studied for a period of seven months. I studied the course with other 11 students selected by the faculty dean, and we were taught by two Finish lecturers”

(Female Student).

Negative Experiences of Students in Online Learning

Constantly, views from the respondents expressed dismay about poor internet connection during online learning. This was due to internet slowness and type of data plan. Respondents who mostly used mobile phones and laptops with paid data bundles acknowledged that poor connectivity made some lecturer’s voices not to be clear during online sessions. They also revealed that internet several times was lost during classes and worst, even, in the exam. Poor internet also made it many times difficult for the lecturers to go on video during their presentations. Respondents faced difficulties in accessing and downloading e-learning materials. Following the same context, internet connection was not only poor on its own, but expensive for some learners leading to internet outage during real-time learning.

The research respondents expressed lack of exposure in using online learning platforms. Of all the platforms used like ZOOM, SomaliREN Open Source Moodle and others, optimal use of what they offer remained a challenge due to limited or no prior exposure to these platforms. This was worsened by lack of computer basics especially those related to online learning platforms.

Lack of adequate skill of using internet was another negative experience. Views from respondents demonstrated stress among some of them as a result of not being used to online learning systems. This was mainly because of the quick shift to the online learning method with no adequate training. They also articulated that some of their lecturers were not well verse with the online learning platforms as this affected their usual quality of teaching. It was also reported that the exam hour would end without completing the exam because of limited exposure on the effective use of online learning platforms.

Respondents admitted that they were missing the encouragement and continuous mentoring from their lecturers and this made the lazy students to miss the desired academic achievement. More to this, due to missing lecturer’s class control made them not to participate in the chat room and in the on-going virtual discussions.

The respondents presented a disappointment that they missed physical learning activities and interactions. By shifting to online learning, students missed practical learning sessions, on campus learning events, and group discussions. This challenge was further reported when learners complained that they got low scores in some courses because of missing collaborative learning among their fellows. It also came out several times that they missed interacting with library resources. Worse still, lecturers did not sometimes see the questions and comments in the chat window, hindering the learning process which would not happen during the traditional classes.

Perspectives from the respondents pointed out that online learning was compromised by distractions from the environment of the learner. Respondents admitted that many activities around them distracted them from effective learning. Others reported interruption at home and work places such as noise and visitors. Some others expressed that they lacked conducive environment to concentrate on the learning gadgets:

"At so many times, given the big number of our extended families in a single-small house, makes learning quite rough. It is very possible that children play around you and then you fail to concentrate. One makes noise, another knocks the door, and another plays around you" (Female Student).

Lack of computers or smartphones by students was a common negative experience among the respondents. Some of the respondents never had an access to computers and those who had them, reported that they were not compatible with the sophisticated online learning systems.

"Some students faced the challenge of computer access. This was mainly due to economic conditions that students are faced with. And, if you don't have the computer or smartphone accessories, you are most likely to miss the opportunities in online learning" (Female Student).

Views emerged from respondents that they were able to do and fulfill other activities while attending online university classes. This was confirmed by reports that they could do home chores, daily jobs and business activities, alongside their studies at EAU. Constant revelations from them confirmed that they were able to use time more efficiently and profitably on top of attending online university classes.

The research also found out that learners were pulled back by their lecturer's weaknesses. The respondents pointed out that some lecturers would send the class log-in credentials late, causing some students to miss out the classes. They reported that some lecturers would not complete the set academic interactive hours, leaving students less fulfilled.

Opportunities in Online Learning

Insights from the respondents in this study showed that the students were able to attend several courses at the same time as a clear opportunity by online learning that was adopted at the onset of Covid-19 in Somalia. Responses indicated that the students were able to attend workshops and seminars online alongside their regular university lectures. Reports from some of them acknowledged that the respondents were able to study computer courses online from Ruwaq foundation via YouTube. The respondents also pointed out that online learning has increased motivation and confidence to enroll for further professional courses in addition academic programs at East Africa University.

It was clear from the research interviews that respondents discovered sources of online learning, which they would not do, if e-learning had not become a new normal. Always quickly and constantly, the respondents said that they discovered sites where they can study online. They also expressed that they got the opportunity of learning the skills of navigating the websites where they can get free online academic resources such as academic articles and e-books. Respondents also reported that they got exposed to academic websites where they can enroll free online academic courses such as Coursera, Khan Academy, and edX. It was also discovered from the views of the research participants that they learnt of the many people and institutions abroad that can offer online courses in different fields of learning; and that there are many competent lecturers just waiting to share knowledge online.

Opportunities from online learning continued to emerge as reported by respondents when they appreciated that they never stopped with their education even the time when Covid19 has hampered educational progress throughout the world especially in Africa.

“When Covid-19 has hit the world, learning became undoable and many educational institutions from primary to tertiary stopped their students from coming to classes. Because of online learning platforms, our educational journey has never stopped unlike our peers in many other countries”

This online learning experience increased and activated independence among learners which made them to enjoy their creativity and learning as opposed to the conservative instruction by lecturers in the traditional classes. Students expressed their joy for being free to arrange and organize their own study behavior.

CHAPTER

4

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents discussions, conclusion and recommendations based on the empirical findings presented in the previous chapter.

Discussions

The recent pandemic forced an opportunity for change in pedagogical approaches and introduction of virtual learning in all levels of education. As we did not know how long the pandemic situation will continue, a gradual move towards the online/virtual education was the consequence of the current crisis.

The country's authority issued a policy for students to study at home as a form of social distancing in preventing the spread of the virus. The policy also came into force in all the universities in Somalia in the implementation of educational programs. Within a short time, most of the universities have shifted their academic programs to online/e-learning systems. For lecturers, students, and campuses who are familiar with online lectures, the format of lectures using internet-based information technology was not a problem while those who are unfamiliar with online lectures had faltering experience.

Equally, students through this shift have had either positive or negative experiences. Many students have also found further opportunities through this academic learning shift. However, it is notable that online education is deeply rooted in adequate planning and design of instructions with several available theories and models, but the migration process of the universities to online education becomes questionable because these processes witnessed the absence of enough exposure, internet and ICT access challenge and proper development of online instructional programs due to the pandemic.

The findings of this study shows that students at EAU with little or no previous experience with ICT had difficulties in adopting the e-learning method. These challenges are linked to those that affect some students individually and those which are cross-cutting among all. However, students managed to overcome these obstacles by interacting with the platform and being active in their learning process. Through this, students reported to have developed self-management and self-regulation skills. The students concluded that the e-learning platform was easier to use once they spent good time applying it in their classes. This confirms the findings of other research studies [3], [11].

The study found that online learning is more convenient for students than the in-class sessions. The convenience ranges from time saving to saving transport costs. This convenience also allowed students to continue with other commitments such as work and home chores especially, for female students. Students also praised the

convenience found from the time saved in online classes which always seemed more time efficient. On the other hand, for shy learners, it was easier for them to contact lecturers via chat room privately without fearing the public eye. Preparations made for the campus classes such as dressing and applying cosmetics were also cut short, which was reported to be an element of convenience. These results are in conformity of the previous research findings [3], [16]. Therefore, it is notable that online learning was not only convenient but more inclusive as it has promoted the participation of all class members.

Poor Internet connection and lack of exposure to online learning were found to be the key negative factors affecting the student's learning experience. The problem with the internet ranged from the cost of the data plan to regular disconnections while attending the classes. This made it many times difficult for the lecturers to go visual during their presentations and hard for the students to access and download e-learning materials. Students also expressed the lack of exposure in using online learning platforms as an enormous challenge to harness the opportunities that come with the new shift. The application of asynchronous online learning which is characterized with time-separated communication also worsened the students' experience since immediate feedback is an important component in internet-based learning medium [15], [17], [18].

Although, there are challenges for educators and students to access and appreciate online contents, there also are opportunities to assume outside the box. Students gained a sense of belonging to the global learning community, expanded their information literacy and enhanced their computer skills, self-management, and self-confidence. Most importantly students reported to have discovered sources of online learning which they would not do if virtual learning had not become a new normal. Always quickly and constantly, the respondents stated that they learnt sites where they can study online such as Coursera, edX and Khan Academy, at the same time gain world class education. Opportunities from online learning continued to emerge as reported by respondents when they appreciated that with the emergence of online learning, education never stopped because of Covid-19 as happened to millions of world inhabitants [6], [19], [20].

As the study investigated how students rated e-learning on the negative to positive continuum as well as the opportunities explored through the new learning shift, few limitations were faced with the study. One of them was the limited number of respondents which came as a result of students who were not reporting regularly to the campus for classes. However, the findings reported by these respondents are representative for all students of East Africa University and for students of all universities in Somalia since educational instructions of institutions and study behaviors of Somali students are almost relatable.

Future researches should increase the sample size and include the faculty opinions in future studies. This might help in understanding the issues faced by instructors regarding online education.

Conclusion

Based on the reports given by the interviewees, it can be concluded that the online learning system conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic was effective, fun and an engaging experience. As this was the first time students at East Africa University have fully applied digital learning in their studies, experiences pertaining both negative and positive aspects have been faced by the students and faculty members.

Opportunities have also been explored through the new academic migration to digital learning. Exposure to the opportunities in the online academic world was the most reported positive experience followed by enhanced IT and data search skills. Conversely, poor internet connection was the biggest challenge faced by the learners followed by limited access to computers and modern smartphones that allows students to be connected to the digital classes.

Learners have also explored opportunities to study in some of the world's leading knowledge sites where they can attend online courses, and participate in guest lectures and academic panel discussions.

Recommendations

To maximize the positive experience of students in digital learning, this study puts forward the following key recommendations:

For Telecommunication Corporations and Educational Institutions, they should put their hands together to address the most disrupting challenge faced by learners; poor internet connectivity. They should collaborate to either subsidize the cost of internet subscriptions or provide free browsing data to the students and instructors as part of their corporate social responsibilities since online learning elements are technology driven and dependent on internet facilities.

For the government, especially the Ministry of Education, could also be a pioneer in finding solutions to beat the issues that are being experienced by learners such as limited access to computer facilities.

It would be useful if sophisticated and well equipped computer labs are made available to at least Higher Institutions of Learning or provide subsidized computers to students at a lower rate with lengthened payment options. The Ministry may also help in making online learning applications accessible for institutions and learners by either making subscriptions to standard sites or developing country-own system that is more secure, friendly and sustainable.

Higher Institutions of learning can also take an integral part of making computers and other accessories available to students by signing a long term contracts with companies to provide computers to students at a discounted price with long-term repayments. Parents, on the other hand, can play a significant role in providing support to students ranging from making necessary electronic gadgets such as laptops and phones available as well as providing sufficient data for strong and consistent internet connection.

For Higher Institutions of Learning, to make the experiences of both the learner and the instructor productive, necessary trainings and capacity building of both should be at the heart of this academic migration. They should provide adequate orientation, motivation and training for students to acquire relevant skills to maximally benefit from online teaching and learning. They should be exposed to modern information technology applications to support their learning.

Strategies to enhance the engagement of students, the credibility of the assessments and the satisfaction of students should also be developed to track the progress and challenges of the academic programs offered through the online learning systems.

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