

Chapter 15

Perception of Online Adult Education in Different Countries

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ABSTRACT

Adult education has gained immense popularity during a pandemic. Adult learners are able to meet their educational requirements through online education. Adult learners also prefer online education due to convenience and self-learning interests. Online education also poses challenges and discomfort to online learners. Statistics indicate a higher dropout rate among adult online learners due to various factors. This chapter focuses on the significant challenges adult online learners face and has identified tools, strategies, and techniques to empower and motivate them. This chapter will also help us to understand how tools and techniques, such as information and communication technology, allow us to increase the number of such learners in different countries. Information and communication technology tools are used in developed and developing countries to encourage and motivate adult learners to improve their education virtually at their convenience.

INTRODUCTION

Online learning is experienced via the Internet and computers (Singh & Thurman, 2019). It can be concomitant or asynchronous, or a blend of both. Synchronous learning is real-time; here, the instructor and students would gather and interact simultaneously, virtually, or physically. In contrast, in asynchronous learning, there is no coordination between the instructor and learner as the education does not take place simultaneously and students can access the material at their own pace (Kearsley, 2000; Moore et al.,

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2011). It is a platform to enhance knowledge using audio, video, images, and other software to support online learning (Zhu & Liu, 2020).

Online learning is a form of web-based learning, distance education, e-learning and digital learning (Machado, 2002). The primary concept is to help clarify the conceptual issues students face with the help of automated voice learning or the use of faculties. In the past few years, more students have preferred enrolling in online courses and studying part-time while working full-time to support their education (O'Connor & Cordova, 2011). Online platforms like Zoom and Microsoft teams were used widely for online learning and WhatsApp was used to communicate between the teacher and learner (Jayaraman & Jothiswaran, 2020). Online learning becomes effective when the teachers and learners engage in meaningful interaction (Phillips, 2005). When the pandemic struck, many middle and lower-class families sent their children to work rather than study in school or university (Shahriar et al., 2021). This chapter aims to explore how adult learners can be motivated, improve their quality of education, and understand how they can research and manage their responsibilities simultaneously, without any gap in their education.

Recent educational and telecommunication developments have significantly changed the world, yet these technologies have had exceptionally favorable effects on people's lives. Adult online learners are mostly lifelong learners, or have just taken re-entry, or are busy with multiple responsibilities and require a flexible, online learning platform (Thompson & Porto, 2014). Adult learners can be classified into three categories: (a) goal-oriented learners, whose objective is to achieve specific outcomes; (b) activity-oriented learners are the ones who like to be engaged (c) learning-oriented learners are those who learn just for the sake of learning (Houle & Buskey, 1966). Distance education provides adult learners the advantage of lifelong learning (Kara et al., 2019). Conventional students have distinct traits in comparison with adult learners, as they are aware of their purpose and goals and often reflect on their experiences in their educational processes (Scott, 2015). Most young adult learners (aged 18-24) share traits of older adult learners in terms of work, financial responsibilities, and family (Kasworm, 2010). Adult online learners undergo fear and anxiety that has led to emotional ambivalence and feel like lonely travellers. They also feel reluctant to engage in discussions through email (Zembylas, 2008). Adult education is vital as it helps them to cope with the changing environment (Adeyemo, 2013). Though there is growth in online education, there is an increase in dropout rates, which has been a concern to many organizations and higher educational institutions. According to Meister (2002), 70% of adult learners, who were enrolled in a corporate online program, did not complete the course. The National Centre for Educational Statistics report found that students above 30, married, with children accounted for the highest percentage of students enrolled in online courses (U.S. Department of Education, 2008). Adults unable to pursue their studies due to their commitment opt for part-time online learning to attain their degrees or certificates (Žammit, 2021) and (Allen & Seaman, 2010). Meeting adult learners' basic psychological needs during online learning was an essential component of student assessment (Salikhova et al., 2021).

Objectives and Purpose of the Chapter

Evolution and technological growth have not only led to positive advancements but also made several adult learners improve their education virtually. One of the objectives of this chapter is to identify the significant challenges adult learners face even as they have multiple responsibilities. With this chapter, we aim to gain more knowledge in education, especially online learning. Moreover, by reviewing and elucidating literature in recent years and comparing various managements in both developed and develop-

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