

Understanding The Motivating And Demotivating Factors In Online Education: A Study Of Under Graduate Students

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ABSTRACT

The rapid evolution of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) has fostered noteworthy changes in the twenty-first century, profoundly affecting the demands of modern societies. Acknowledging the transformative influence of these technologies on both the workplace and everyday life, education sector is experiencing major transformation from offline to online education. Education is increasingly imparted with these digital technologies. Post COVID 19 pandemic there is a sudden transformation from traditional face-to-face learning approach to remotely digital learning, some current studies unveiled that students' motivation in online learning was affected both intrinsically and extrinsically. This paper aims to understand motivating and demotivating factors of online education among college going students. The research was conducted in two phase to understand the motivating and demotivating factors. In first phase to explore motivating, de-motivating factors, of online education, in-depth interviews were conducted with 51 students. Data thus collected was examined for content validity through an extensive literature review.

KEYWORDS: Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs)

1. INTRODUCTION

Accessing quality education serves as the cornerstone for enhancing people's lives and achieving sustainable development. Substantial progress has been taken to enhance educational access across all levels and boost enrolment rates, particularly for women and girls in developing economies (OECD, 2017). While numerous countries are enhancing their efforts towards achieving universal education coverage, disparities persist in the quality of education provided. Quality education remains crucial as it serves as a catalyst for attaining various sustainable development goals. For instance, education empowers individuals to break the cycle of poverty. Research spanning 114 countries showed that each additional year of education correlates with a 1.4 percentage point decrease in the Gini coefficient, a statistical measure of income inequality within society (United Nations, 2017).

ICTs encompass a broad spectrum of technologies utilized for communication, creation, management, access, gathering, and dissemination of information. In the digital age, the significance of digital platforms and ICTs in delivering education has greatly increased, particularly through online channels. The rise of online education not only facilitates the provision of high-quality and lifelong learning across all levels but also contributes to bridging the gender and rural-urban education accessibility gap. Millions of students worldwide, regardless of gender or location, have enrolled in online courses offered by hundreds of participating universities (Christensen, G. et al., 2013).

The importance of ICTs, along with their acceptance and utilization according to the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) by Venkatesh (2003), is crucial for promoting education through online platforms. While numerous studies examine the potential impacts of ICTs and learners' motivations towards online education (Kaliisa et al., 2017; Papadakis and Kalogiannakis, 2017; Venkatesh, 2003), they often overlook learners' underlying perceptions of online education. Consequently, laps could be observed in understanding the motivational factors, demotivational factors from the students' perspectives, hindering a comprehensive understanding of student's attitudes towards online education. These limitations impede efforts to enhance existing educational facilities and promote lifelong learning through online platforms. This study aims to address this gap by conducting exploratory research among undergraduate students to explore motivational and demotivational factors.

2. WHAT IS ONLINE EDUCATION

Online education is defined as learning modules that is accessed by individual through internet enabled device and is limited to consumer paid services by users. The education delivery model has evolved from traditional instructor-led approaches to a more interactive paradigm, driven by learners' needs and supported by technology. In online learning, there are two main categories: synchronous and asynchronous. Synchronous learning, which involves real-time interaction through video and live streaming, is experiencing a surge in popularity, particularly in schools and higher education institutions. This trend is charged by the growing demand for dynamic learning solutions. Advancements in technologies such as learning analytics, open-source digital content, and mobile-based learning platforms have enabled the personalization of learning experiences.

3. LITERATURE REVIEW

Following the pandemic, educational disruptions impacted over 500 million students due to the intermittent shutdown of schools and universities. Technological advancements have deeply influenced traditional education systems. By 2022, the market for online education was estimated at INR 361.68 billion, with projections indicating an increase to INR 837.11 billion by 2028. This represents a forecasted compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of roughly 13.68% in the timeline starting from 2023 to 2028. In the past ten years, advancements in technology have significantly improved online education (Research and Markets, 2023, November 24). Therefore, it is crucial to examine learners' perspectives and comprehend the factors that motivate or demotivate them from engaging in online courses. Motivation is conceptualized as a theoretical framework that elucidates the commencement, orientation, Vigor, continuity, and calibre of actions, especially one that are aimed towards achieving specific goals (Brophy, 2010:3). It relates to the cognitive and emotional processes within individuals, and the dynamic interplay between learners and their educational settings, influenced by contextual and social elements that act as either facilitators or obstacles (Schuck et al., 2014).

Panda, S. (2020). Online Education in India: Trends, Opportunities, and Challenges. - Panda's study reveals an outline of the trends, opportunities, and challenges in online education in India. It discusses the rapid growth of online education platforms, their impact on traditional education systems, and the challenges related to accessibility, quality assurance, and infrastructure.

Mishra, L., & Gupta, T. (2020). Online Education: A Panacea in the period of COVID-19 Crisis in India. - This study explores the function of online education at the time of COVID-19 pandemic in India. It discusses the sudden transformation to online learning, challenges faced by students and educators, and the probable long-term implications for the education sector.

Kumar, V. (2019). Exploring the Effectiveness of Online Education in India: A Case Study Approach. - Kumar's research investigates the effectiveness of online education in India through a case study approach. It examines factors influencing student engagement, satisfaction, and learning outcomes in online learning environments.

Singh, M. (2018). Digital Learning in Higher Education: A Review of Literature on Flipped Classroom Approach in India. - Singh's review focuses on the flipped classroom approach in higher education in India. It discusses the integration of digital technologies to enhance student engagement, active learning, and academic performance.

Jain, N., & Jain, S. (2017). Challenges and Opportunities of Online Education in India. - This study explores the challenges and opportunities of online education in India. It discusses issues related to digital infrastructure, pedagogical practices, accreditation, and policy frameworks governing online learning initiatives.

4. IMPORTANCE OF ONLINE EDUCATION

The effective utilization of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) is a crucial element in achieving success in contemporary society, both for individuals and organizations (Colwell, 2001). Online education, facilitated by ICTs, offers broadened access to high-quality learning opportunities for the masses, leveraging the unparalleled capacity of ICTs to manage and retrieve vast amounts of information and present it in engaging and innovative formats (Bates, 2003; Moore and Anderson, 2003). Likewise, computer-based education empowers students to actively engage with learning materials, changing them from passive recipients into proactive learners (Candy, Crebert, and O'Lear, 1994). It is worth noting that computer learning does not certainly need network connectivity; standalone computers can utilize specific software stored either locally or externally to facilitate learning.

In early literature, the online mode of learning encompasses a learner-centric environment, integrating various technologies to facilitate activities and interactions in both asynchronous and real-time settings. This model blends features of campus-based delivery and distance education, allowing learners to take charge of their learning journey by specifying individual needs, setting goals, organizing tasks, evaluating progress, and deriving meaning from the learning process (Candy, Crebert, and O'Lear, 1994; Reid, 1999).

Access to topical information online offers a convenient avenue for continuous learning throughout one's career, enabling individuals to acquire professional certifications or university degrees at any stage. This accessibility promotes periodic and lifelong learning by providing modularized curricula tailored to specific educational needs, thus enhancing feasibility (Ashton and Levy, 1998; Dykman and Davis, 2008).

Traditionally, higher education often entails substantial economic investment, but the integration of ICT and the Internet has significantly reduced incremental costs for universities while increasing affordability for participants, thereby creating vast opportunities for market expansion in online education (Dykman and Davis, 2008).

The proliferation of ICTs has revolutionized the interactive digital experience, catering to learners of all ages and skill levels, with devices designed to promote exploration and further learning, even among young learners (Papadakis and Kalogiannakis, 2010; Hwang et al., 2015; Papadakis et al., 2017).

5. ONLINE EDUCATION IN INDIA

The Indian Government has undertaken significant initiatives to promote and expand the benefits of online education, aiming to enhance learning effectiveness, particularly in technical education, through the integration of technology. For

instance, in 2003, the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) launched the National Programme for Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) to foster quality education in Engineering, Science, and Humanities fields across the nation. This initiative involved the development of curriculum-based video courses and web-based online courses (MHRD, 2017). Additionally, Virtual Labs offer remote access to laboratory facilities in various disciplines of Science and Engineering, catering to undergraduate, postgraduate, and research-level students. The Spoken Tutorial project, a part of the National Mission on Education through ICTs, encourages interactive learning by facilitating communication with educators. E-Yantra integrates Robotics into engineering education, promoting hands-on application of Mathematics, Computer Science, and Engineering principles. Project OSCAR provides a repository of web-based interactive learning materials such as animations and simulations, covering topics in Science, Engineering, Mathematics, and school-level Science. SWAYAM, launched in 2016, embodies the Government's commitment to accessibility, equity, and quality in education. It offers a wide range of courses, from 9th grade to post-graduation, accessible to learners anytime and anywhere through an indigenous IT platform (Sinha, E., & Bagarukayo, K. (2019).

KPMG in India & Google. (2017, May) the online education market in India currently stands at USD 247 million and is anticipated to reach \$350 Billion by 2025. There are certain reasons for the growth of online education which are:

- Cost of online education
- Availability of online education
- Employability quotient
- Government digital initiative
- Internet penetration
- Disposable income
- Young population
- Smartphone user base

6. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To understand the motivating and de-motivating factors of undergraduate students for pursuing online education.

7. METHODOLOGY

An exploratory study is conducted to understand the motivating and de-motivating factors of undergraduate students. Because this research is exploratory in nature, the most appropriate methodology employed was qualitative in-depth interviews. Researcher conducted in-depth interview from 51 students studying in the graduation from different colleges of India over period of 5 days. These students were either pursuing or had an intention of pursuing the online education. Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were utilized to gain insights into students' perspectives regarding motivations, de-motivations factors of online education. To begin the discussions, participants were asked whether they were currently pursuing or intending to pursue online education. Subsequent follow-up inquiries delved into reasons behind their choices and suggestions for improving the current state of online education in their respective countries. Researchers encouraged open dialogue, allowing respondents to express their viewpoints freely. To ensure the facts of findings, responses were checked with existing literature and researchers' observations. Through this process, 11 motivational factors, 13 demotivational factors for online education were identified.

Further frequency and percentage analysis was done to summarize the data of motivational and de-motivational factors expressed by the respondents.

Convenience sampling method was used for selecting the students for interview

8. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

During the initial phase of qualitative data collection, 11 motivators, 13 de-motivators, were identified among the 51 respondents (See Table 1 & Table 2)

Table 1 Motivational Factors

S.No	Motivational Factors Identified	Frequency	Percentage
1	Convenience	61	48%
2	No age limit	50	39.4%
3	Modular approach	30	23.6%
4	World class instructors	39	30.7%
5	Affordable fees & Flexiblepayment options	39	30.7%
6	Can continue full time course	28	22
7	Technology penetration & friendliness	45	35.4%
8	casual learning	45	35.4%
9	Availability of tailor-made courses	28	22%
10	Learner centric approach	29	22.8%
11	Access to International Content	44	34.6%

Table 1 shows the motivational factors for opting online education of the respondents. The factor of "convenience" surfaced as the primary motivator for learners to engage in online education, with "No age limit" following closely behind. This observation aligns with the research by Zhang and Zhou (2003), indicating that learners could participate in self-paced learning, enabling them to exert control over both the learning process and content. Technology penetration & friendliness, 'casual learning appeared to be one of the important motivators for the respondents. Access to international content is also major motivators for the students which signifies that students search for the content not only limited to India rather they are eager to explore international content also for their knowledge. World class instructor, learner centric approach, tailor made course, no age limit and option of continuing full-time course are some motivators which are extrinsic in nature rather than individual factors. From this, researcher could infer that fostering a supportive environment is crucial for advancing online education.

Table 2 De motivational factors

S.No	De-motivating Factors Identified	Frequency	Percentage
1	Lack of awareness	45	35.4%
2	Lesser social interaction	37	29.1%
3	Lack of personal attention by the instructor	47	37%
4	Intense requirement of self- discipline	19	15%
5	Lack of time management skills	35	27.6%
6	Lack of desired Courses	25	19.7%
7	Lack of interest in pursuing hobbies/higher career roles	21	16.5%
8	Perceived lower value of certificate	26	20.5%
9	Language Barrier	23	18.1%
10	Limited Internet Access	28	22%
11	Structure of the existing Education System	26	20.5%
12	High Costs	41	32.3%
13	Lack of Local Content	24	18.9%

The factors presented in Table 3 emphasize the aspects that discourage learners from either initiating or persisting in online education endeavours. In India, "Lack of personal attention" and "Lack of awareness" emerged as significant de-motivators, accounting for 37% and 35.4%, respectively. Students exhibit a strong affiliation with the formal education system, expressing concern over insufficient interaction with classmates and instructors, which has emerged as a notable de-motivating factor. The absence of social interaction was noted to impede the learning process significantly. Therefore, it could be inferred that integrating both online and offline interaction points have the potential to enrich the online education experience. The survey results revealed that 32% of respondents cited 'insufficient personal attention from instructors' as the primary demotivator, followed by 'unavailability of desired courses' at 18.4%, which further emphasizes the significance of 'social approval,' 'social influence,' and 'a preference for instructor guidance' in high contextual cultures and emerging knowledge economies (Niles, 1995; Maldonado et. al., 201; Andrews et al, 1998).

The close attachment of students to the formal education system became evident as they expressed dissatisfaction with the limited interaction with classmates and instructors, which significantly dampened their motivation. Lack of social interaction made the learning process notably challenging for them. Therefore, integrating both online and offline channels could potentially improve the overall experience of online education.

9. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study delved into the motivating and demotivating factors experienced by undergraduate students in the realm of online education. Through meticulous analysis, the research identified key insights that shed light on the intricate dynamics at play within this educational landscape.

The study unveiled the factors such as the convenience, no age limit, quality of interaction with instructors, technology penetration & friendliness and peers, availability of desired courses, and the overall learning environment significantly impact students' motivation levels. Specifically, in absence of personal attention from instructors and less opportunities for social interaction emerged as prominent demotivators, underscoring the crucial role of social engagement in the online learning experience.

Besides, our findings indicate that integrating various touch points, both online and offline, could enhance the overall educational experience for students. By leveraging technology to facilitate meaningful interactions and fostering a supportive learning community, educational institutions can mitigate demotivating factors and promote student engagement and success in online education.

Moving forward, it is imperative for educators and policymakers to consider these insights when designing and implementing online education initiatives. By addressing the motivating and demotivating factors uncovered in this study, we can work towards creating more inclusive, engaging, and effective online learning environments for undergraduate students.

10. LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study has potential to provide insight into what are some motivating and demotivating factors which students consider for online education, considering all the motivating and demotivating factors one can understand the scope of online education in emerging knowledge economies. Due to time constraint the study is done on a smaller sample size, if the study will be done on larger sample size, we can generalize the motivating and demotivating factors for online education. Further this study could be carried out with different demographic variables such as age, gender different category of the learners etc for better insight of the online education. Also, this study could include what are some potential facilitators for online education. This could be considered as a research gap. This study could also be used to understand the impact of online education on the students.

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