
**NEW EXPECTATIONS FOR GLOBAL HIGHER EDUCATION BY USING ONLINE
LEARNING DURING A PANDEMIC**

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ABSTRACT

Higher education has assumed a globalized emphasis, supported and sustained by technology. Even now, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted the higher education sector worldwide leading to the near-total closures of universities and colleges. Almost all higher education institutions rapidly shifted face-to-face education to online learning during the pandemic. These have created significant challenges for the global higher education community, yet also significant opportunities. The current COVID-19 pandemic has presented educators with the challenges of converting face-to-face instruction to online learning to guarantee continued learning opportunities for students.

Key Words: Global higher education, Online learning, COVID-19; Expectations; Teaching and Learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

Globalization, a key reality in the 21st century, has already profoundly influenced and changed higher education from a local enterprise to a global reality (Marshall, 2018). Globalization is a reality shaped by an increasingly integrated world economy, new information and communications technology, the emergence of an international knowledge network, and other forces often beyond the control of global higher education institutions (Lemoine & Richardson, 2019). Globalization can be defined as the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, and ideas across borders (Van Nyhuis, 2018). It is this integration of world economy, information and communications technology that has created a turning point exacerbated by COVID-19 (Witze, 2020).

Global higher education has become a crowded global marketplace that is not immune to changes affecting 21st century society--an increasingly global, digital, and dynamic environment now characterized by a global pandemic (Bhagat & Kim, 2020). Scholars and institutional

decision makers, who actively shape the academic landscape, have attempted to predict how global higher education will be influenced by shifting trends; however, the future of global higher education is and will continue to be complicated, challenging, and filled with uncertainty, particularly during the time of COVID-19 (Blankenberger& Williams, 2020).

Global higher education is facing three severe impediments to both growth and sustainability. First, governments around the world have steadily minimized their support for higher education, and expenses have increased constantly over the last decade (Waller, Lemoine, Garretson, & Richardson, 2020). Second, governments are increasing pressure on universities to demonstrate the value of their degrees in short-term, quantitative and market-related measures (Richardson, Garretson, Waller, & Lemoine, 2019). Third, COVID-19 has introduced challenges not envisioned by most universities (El Masri&Sabzalieva, 2020).

Given the impact of COVID-19, change is necessary for global higher education institutions to remain viable (Zhu & Liu, 2020). Survival for global higher education institutions necessitates adaptation and a move away from traditional educational paradigms(Wolhuter& Jacobs, 2021). While it is true that the changes brought to higher education by globalization, changing technologies, COVID-19, and changing expectations create challenges, those very same changes create a climate where institutions making the right choices may become more relevant, and relevant on a much greater scale (Waller, Lemoine, Garretson, & Richardson, 2021).

With the challenges provided by a climate of change due to COVID-19 that appears to be accelerating, global higher education is negotiating a defining moment where even the infrastructure itself is subject to constant change (Amemado, 2020).To stay viable in the digital economy, postsecondary institutions need to become business-like entrepreneurs by marketing themselves, building collaborative alliances, and preparing for newer, emerging disruptive events (DeVaney, Shimshon, Rascoff, &Maggioncalda, 2020). Global higher education institutions are attempting to develop the capacity to adapt and modify to the new models of knowledge and information created by the pandemic.Can global higher education institutions respond to new expectations emanating from the pandemic?

Online Teaching and Learning

Most global institutions have become interested in how to best deliver course content online, engage learners and conduct assessments during the pandemic. Thus, COVID-19 while being a threat to humanity has forced institutions to invest in online learning as a result of new expectations for course delivery (Lederman, 2020). COVID-19 has ushered in a new era in global higher education and online learning has become a dynamic force for the delivery of instruction (Karalis&Raikou, 2020). Online learning has now become central to the global changes: reshaping social, economic, educational and cultural life (Dhawan, 2020).

COVID-19 has disrupted the traditional, formal processes of higher education. The accelerating pace of change created by the pandemic demand more flexible, adaptive, and agile higher education organizations. Using online learning as an accelerant, global higher education

institutions are venturing into digital world with the accompanying challenges of ensuring quality and accountability to the public sector that provides part of the funding, and to the students that are dependent on online learning for their socioeconomic security (McGowan, 2020). With COVID-19 institutions are examining how to make online education as good and reliable as possible, to maximize the quality of teaching and learning experiences and satisfy the new expectations of all users, all while it is the most viable option currently available for global higher education (Ali, 2020).

Many scholars discuss not only the usability of online learning but also its connectivity, mobility and interactivity. Online learning environments involve a variety of educational practices and are often characterized by student-centered, active learning techniques (Rege Colet, 2017). Online learning often appeals to a large number of students, as it offers versatility in participation, accessibility and convenience (Paudel, 2021). Conversely, many participants view online courses as individualizing learning and some students describe feeling isolated from their teachers, from the content of the course and from their classmates (Korkmaz & Toraman, 2020).

Online education programs have great profit potential because they are inexpensive to operate and administrators have more flexibility in setting higher tuition and fees. Online classes create economics of scale; part-time and adjunct faculty are readily available to hire at a low cost; almost no specialized equipment or materials is required, and content is somewhat mundane (Waller, Lemoine, & Richardson, 2020). However, providing instruction of commensurate quality with appropriate student support services creates new challenges for universities in terms of curriculum development, time spent online in supporting students, and in communication with students (Watermeyer, Crick, Knight, & Goodall, 2020).

From the review of literature, the researchers speculate on four components for consideration by higher education leaders during COVID-19. First, global higher education institutions are increasingly turbulent, disconnected and fragmented. Second, higher education institutions are increasingly less autonomous, and more data driven in a venue where education is a qualitative endeavor that is being mandated as a quantitative measure. Third, global higher education is increasingly seen as a social means for a financial goal. Most students are enrolled to get a better job, not learn about history. Fourth, higher education is increasingly global, driven by technology (Lemoine, McElveen, Waller, & Richardson, 2021). To realize new expectations, global higher education leaders need to know their organizational capacity and capability, in addition to being able to clearly articulate the role that online learning plays in their organizations (McQuirter, 2020).

New Expectations in Global Higher Education Using Online Learning

Rorty (2008) argued that the future is not a predication; rather, it is a project that must be collectively built. While he did not specifically reference higher education institutions, his remark may be the most appropriate advice for global higher education institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic because higher education institutions have a unique role in building the project that is the future (Aucejo, French, Araya, & Zafar, 2020).

The actual components of truly revolutionary changes in the sphere of higher education that are caused in the twenty-first century by various objective processes--globalization, world integration and informatization, and the introduction of new technological processes and new procedures for learning--are considered critical (McCormack, Lemoine, Waller, & Richardson, 2021). The emphasis is placed on global higher education to fundamentally change its role, purpose, and nature of influence on the vital activity of students and society (Gardner, 2020).

As a result of COVID-19, new and different terms are being heard today, e.g., learning continuity and alternative learning modes, which speak to the need to transform in-person teaching into innovative digital delivery of education (Orakcı, 2020). Admittedly, there are advantages for students, such as flexibility, but also obstacles to their motivation, engagement, and perseverance (Baber, 2020). Educators have found it challenging to plan their lessons and monitor their students, and global higher education institutions are being challenged by their educators' lack of experience with online learning (Houlden & Veletsianos, 2020).

New expectations in global higher education are categorized as: (1) changing expectations for global higher education by policy makers and governments (Tasci, 2021), (2) emerging expectations of global higher education to play a more significant role in societal issues, particularly those impacting students (Vlachopoulos, 2020), (3) changes in the importance of global higher education in human life and the operational roles of society (Mukherjee, 2020), (4) the expanding use of a variety of electronic and computer technology is drastically changing global higher education, particularly teaching and learning (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020), and (5) COVID-19 has radically altered global higher education in ways not yet understood (Murgatroyd, 2021). Survival for global universities requires modification and adaptation to the new expectations from society, government and constituents. However, all these new expectations demand expanded planning if higher education institutions are to be competitive and ultimately successful (Lemoine & Richardson, 2020).

The COVID-19 pandemic functioned as an impetus for change, forcing the rapid shift to a higher level of digitalization for universities worldwide with the move to online learning (Bhowmik & Bhattacharya, 2021). This unforeseen transformation had a profound impact on the organization of higher education institutions making willingness, efficiency and cooperation crucial to remain relevant in the global knowledge economy (Lemoine, Waller, McCormack, Garretson, & Richardson, 2021). What is not clear is if all students are ready for a complete move to online learning. However, meeting new expectations for teaching and learning is imperative (Alea, Fabrea, Roldan, & Farooqi, 2020).

CONCLUSIONS

1. Faculty professional development for online teaching should be mandatory for all global higher education institutions.
2. Global higher education institutions were not ready for the transition from face-to-face learning to online learning, nor were most faculty and students.

3. Covid-19 has caused major disruptions to all aspects of higher education, particularly teaching and learning.
4. Online learning quickly became the solution of choice to continue teaching and learning during COVID-19.
5. Success of online learning during COVID-19 will be determined by (a) faculty commitment to the process and their teaching skills; (b) student receptivity to online learning; and (c) the quality of the interaction between faculty and student.
6. New expectations for global institutions are projected to exert pressure to modify teaching and learning.

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