

Online Learning. Before and during COVID-19 pandemic crisis. Future perspectives

Abstract

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In the last decade, the online learning sector exploded driven by technology evolution. The developed technology offers us the possibility to connect with each other in real-time from everywhere with minimum financial impact. However, progress has been largely visible in the United States and China - the two poles of innovation in the tech sector. Online learning is not yet presented in many countries and too few software solution providers are fully focused only on creating a complete, state-of-the-art online platform for digital universities. In the market are many software that combined can create a digital experience effectively but this comes with a big security concern: should the students' personal data and progress be stored outside the university data storage / centers? As the number of the software's used increases, the number of places where the university data is stored also increases. The data regarding the schooling process are quite sensitive and we need to avoid being manipulated or even extracted by external actors with different interests.

The paper is concentrated around online learning. The theoretical foundation is based on specialized literature in the field. To understand better the online learning from Cluj-Napoca students perspective, the research was focused on understanding their view of how the schooling process has been during the pandemic crisis. The research will include both, how they perceive online learning in general and how they imagine the Digital Universities.

The paper is divided into six-chapter. The first chapter will introduce the paper aims, objectives, and research questions. The next two chapters will cover the theoretical foundations of the paper. Chapter II will focus on the specialization literature review and chapter III on an empirical analysis of a few online platforms used for online learning during the pandemic crisis. The chapters number IV and V will be the practical part. In IV chapter will be presented the research design and findings. Based on the research findings, chapter V will be shown a new concept for an online learning platform. The last chapter will present the paper's conclusions, reiterating big points extracted from the theoretical foundations and compared with the research findings and the new concept.