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Online Education During and After COVID-19 Pandemic

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Online Education During and After COVID-19 Pandemic

TREO Talk Paper

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Abstract

Even before COVID-19, online education is already experiencing high growth and adoption (Erickson & Siau, 2003). Whether it is language application, virtual tutoring, video conferencing tool, or online learning software, there has been a significant surge in usage since COVID-19. In this unprecedented and uncertain time, most people are encouraged to study at home and work from home. On one hand, there are many challenges to online education, especially with the sudden transition. Many instructors and students have little or no training in online education. Other issues such as insufficient bandwidth and missing hardware and software are common. On the other hand, this presents an unforeseen and golden opportunity for a wider student population to experience online education. This will likely change the perception of students on online education and may trigger a wider online education adoption after the pandemic.

There are many nice features with online education: (i) Removing the limitation of learning space and time. Online education is open to all people wherever they are and whenever they want to study; (ii) Synchronous teaching provides more opportunities for online students to participate in real-time interaction and to communicate with off-online students. Asynchronous education provides course scheduling flexibility and allows students to progress according to their understanding, mastery of course materials, and internalization of knowledge; (iii) Providing more people with access to education and promoting educational equity. Students from poor areas and developing countries have the opportunity to access high-quality education resources in their countries or any parts of the world at an affordable price (Siau, 2018); (iv) Big data and artificial intelligence can analyze the outcomes of pedagogical activities (Wang & Siau, 2019). This improves the quality of teaching; (v) Students have access to more materials when learning online, such as electronic resource databases at the school/national/public library and Google Scholar; (vi) Better experience with online education because of the availability of comprehensive course materials. For example, arts and science education courses on how to live a healthy life and how to manage time. Online education has its shortcomings as well: (i) Difficult to establish a sense of belonging in an online class which may not be designed to cultivate collective consciousness by emphasizing individual activities; (ii) The learning process requires students to have high self-discipline because they can be easily distracted and attracted by social chats, news, and games; (iii) Lack of emotional engagement between teachers and students, and between students.

For those who have access to the right technologies, they can capitalize on the advantages of online education to improve learning efficiency. Although online education is a trend, it is not the only form of future education. With the COVID-19 pandemic, online education is thrust into the limelight and serves a key role during the pandemic. Undoubtedly, online education will become an integral component of education after the pandemic.

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