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E-Learning for Employability Skills: Students Perspective

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Abstract

With the rapid growth of digital technology and rise in virtual learning centres offering online courses and degrees to students, E-Learning has gained a vital role to play in future as a class room teaching tool and self-study platform for skill development. The emphasis of this paper is to identify prominent factors of e-learning for the development of job-specific skills. Step wise multiple regression analysis was performed. The result suggests that from the student's perspective, besides other factors flexibility in E-learning is the most prominent factor for developing job specific skills.

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1. Introduction

The current educational infrastructure in India is inadequate to meet the challenges of future needs of the country. Digital India initiative by Indian government will enhance the Internet usage. This is going to help the education sector in providing quality education to larger neglected population and it can be boon for the learners to have access to quality education to skill and re-skill themselves for current and future jobs available in the market. The previous study suggests that E-learning market in India is expected to grow twice as compared to global average with a compounded annual rate of 17.4% during 2013 to 2018. Even though India is marked by having more than half the population under 25 years of age, due to inadequate education infrastructure, the country is going to face a crunch of 250 million skilled workforce by 2022. In this situation, E-learning has a pivotal role to play in addressing employability skill gap and helping employers to reduce the burden and cost for training.

For E-learning it is important for the educators to know that there is a need to shift the learner's attitude towards learning, they should be intrinsically motivated to learn and for this, there is a need to create awareness

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and develop an understanding of the relevance of the employability skills amongst them. As educators, it is necessary to understand how they can engage, impart knowledge, develop relevant skills and make them ready for the employment.

This paper basically focuses on identifying different factors that motivate the students adapting e-learning for developing job-related skills. This research work can be of relevance for the educators while developing their course modules and delivery methods.

2. Literature Review

2.1 E-learning

Recently E-learning has been very productive and there is ample availability of e-learning opportunities (Hylton, Levy, & Dringus, 2016; Koohang, Paliszkievicz, Nord, & Ramim, 2014). E-learning helps in educating and training individuals worldwide on different topics from focused educational programs, to general hobbies (Koohang & Paliszkievicz, 2013; Keh, Wang, Wai, Huang, Hui, & Wu, 2008). E-learning systems are becoming a critical platform for educational institutions, as well as for corporations, and general life-long learning (Beaudoin, Kurtz, & Eden, 2009; Levy & Ramim, 2015).

2.2 Learning and Skills

Boyatzis and Kolb (1991) suggest that skills are a combination of ability, knowledge, and experience that enables an individual to enhance his/her performance. Skills are the cornerstone of what enable individuals to be successful in their daily activities, be it work, hobbies, or educational endeavors. It has been observed that from the early age to adulthood, learning and enhancing skills are very important as it enables individuals to be competent enough in what they do, (Fletcher, & Wolfe, 2016). Levy & Ramim, (2015) are of the opinion that to ensure success in any form of career or human development, skills are required and it is very important part of the e-learning courses.

2.3 Employability Skills

Employability refers to the ability of an individual to gain employment appropriate to his/her educational standard (Dearing, 1997). An individual employability depends upon his or her assets in terms of knowledge, skills, and attitudes; the manner in which these assets are used and deployed; presented to potential employers and the context within which the individual works (for example labour market and personal circumstances) (Hillage and Pollard, 1998). The term employability includes a set of achievements that comprise skills, understanding and personal attributes that secure and make an individual successful in his/her chosen occupation provide benefit to him/herself, the workforce, the community and the economy (Yorke and Knight, 2004). Though it's difficult to define employability skills, according to UK Commission for Employment and Skills it refers to personal skills like self-management, problem-solving and people skills supported by functional competencies like traditional literacy, numeracy and effective use of Information and Communication Technologies.

Lacking employability skills may lead to a risk of unemployment and it will be difficult to progress at work. Poor employment skills are of great concern for the individuals as well as employers, economy, and society as a whole.

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