

Chapter 15

Motivation of Management Information Systems Students Towards Online Learning in the COVID–19 Pandemic: A Qualitative Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic made it necessary to take serious precautions in the field of education, so schools were closed in many countries and switched to online education. The pandemic has caused similar changes in higher education institutions in Turkey. The motivation of the students is an important component in achieving the targeted success of the rapidly adapted online education. This study aims to investigate the factors that affect the motivation of management information systems students towards online education conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic. The findings reveal that the role of instructor, system support, and time management come to the fore in students' positive motivation. On the other hand, ineffective group work, failure to achieve career goals, prolonged pandemic period, and breakdown in social relationships have influence on students' negative motivation. It is expected that this study will guide policy developers for distance education and instructional strategies to be developed in the field of management information systems.

INTRODUCTION

More than a billion students in 188 countries have had to stay out of the school environment to control the spread of COVID-19 since spring 2020 (UNICEF, 2020). Many countries rightly closed schools, colleges and universities and quickly integrated distance learning programs into their education systems. Although the transition to distance education offers opportunities for students and teachers, this rapid

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change brings with it many problems that need to be solved for many countries that are not ready for distance education (UNESCO, 2020). First of all, not all students have sufficient economic status and technological infrastructure (internet access, computer, tablet or smartphone ownership, etc.) for distance education (UNICEF, 2020). The problems that can be experienced in the quality of learning compared to face-to-face education and the distance of students from the campus environment and its effect on the social life of students are the other issues that come to the fore in this crisis period (Attai et al., 2020).

Open and distance education practice in higher education institutions in Turkey has grown in accordance with legal provisions and has become widespread since 2009 (Yamamoto and Altun, 2020). By year of 2020, there are Distance Education Application and Research Centers in 123 universities in Turkey (Yamamoto and Altun, 2020). This existing infrastructure has allowed authorities to quickly switch to distance education. According to the evaluation report presented by the Higher Education Council of Turkey in 2020, all 189 universities have made this transition until April 6, 2020. It is seen that 90.1% of the courses were given with distance education in the 2019-2020 Spring semester.

Live classroom practice was carried out in 22% of the courses offered by the distance education method. In this process, distance education applications were mostly applied in Social Sciences (91%), Faculty of Science (78%) and Engineering Sciences (77%), respectively. The lowest density was in Health Sciences with 54%. As Yamamoto and Altun (2020) stated, the infrastructure and application areas required for the implementation of distance education in higher education in Turkey have sufficient maturity level. Despite these opportunities, it can be difficult for students to find sufficient motivation to attend online classes. In order to achieve the expected results in distance education, students must fulfill their responsibilities and have high motivation (Cabı, 2016). In this context, it is important to understand the factors that affect students' motivation towards online learning to reduce the negative effects of staying away from the traditional classroom environment during the pandemic process.

In this study, the factors affecting the motivation of students studying in the Department of Management Information Systems towards online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic are revealed. It is predicted that the findings of the study will increase the quality of instructional strategies applied in higher education. In addition, it is anticipated that the findings will be valuable for education policy makers and teachers who design online courses.

BACKGROUND

Online Learning

Online learning is widely used to support face-to-face education or purely used to carry out distance education. Ally (2008) stated that applications and technologies used led to the emergence of many definitions of online learning and he defined online learning as “... *the use of the internet to access materials; to interact with the content, instructor, and other learners; and to obtain support during the learning process, in order to acquire knowledge, to construct personal meaning, and to grow from the learning experience.*” (p. 5). Within the scope of this study, online learning was carried out with the participation of students and instructors from different geographical regions with a technological tool. Online learning provides many advantages in solving problems encountered during traditional learning. For example, online learning promotes self-paced and active learning (Obringer, 2002), reduces the

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