Satisfaction and Evaluation of the Online Academic Course among Experienced and Inexperienced Students in Online Courses (Poster)

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Abstract

Also at age of "Net generation" the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) is prevalent in almost all areas of life, such as interpersonal communication (Email, Social networks), e-Commerce (buying and selling), personal accounting with organizations and authorities, nevertheless, it has been found that the learner's ability to use these technologies for learning is limited (Guri-Rosenblit & Gros, 2009, 2011). Prior experience with e-Learning can promote success and satisfaction (Colleen, 2002; Shani & Nachmias, 2001; Stewart, 2008) and develop with the learner appropriate learning strategies for virtual environment (Grabinger, Aplin & Ponnappa-Brenner, 2007; Harris & Grandgenett, 1996 in Chang, 2003; Mioduser, Nachmias & Forkosh-Baruch, 2009).

A study conducted at the Technion among science and engineering students who study in online courses found that 52% of all the reasons against distance learning were fear of lack of communication with the lecturers (Dori, Barak & Hussein-Farraj, 2011). Research also found that learning and technology skills, good interaction, and support for the learner, are essential and necessary for success, and are the best predictors of student satisfaction with online learning (Hacohen, 2010; Herbert, 2006; Perry, Boman & Care, 2008).

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there were differences between students who had prior online course learning experience and students who had no such experience. The comparison concerned the degree of connection between students satisfaction with the online course to their evaluation of three pedagogical measures in a questionnaire evaluating the online academic courses (Hacohen, 2010). We hypothesized that among students with no experience with online courses there would be a stronger connection to interaction, learner support, and to understanding and encouragement from the online instructor. In contrast, among students who had prior online course learning experience there would be a stronger connection to the characteristics of the online course activities. The study was conducted at the end of 2007. The research subjects were 315 students from 23 fully online courses from various disciplines and different degree.
The results indicated significant correlations, but no differences between the two groups. We found that in both groups that the measures of “personality components, knowledge and experience of the online instructor” and “organization of a learning environment that supports the online student” had stronger connections than the “planning and organization of constructivist and cooperative learning activities and the building of a virtual group” and “students satisfaction with online course”, and the differences between the correlations are significant. However, it should be emphasized that higher correlations were found among students with prior experience. An examination of the significant differences between the two groups based on the degree of connection in all three measures showed differences that are significant only between “personality, knowledge, and experience of the online instructor” measure with “students’ satisfaction with online course”.

The contribution of this study is in emphasizing the importance of knowledge and experience of the online instructor regarding online course satisfaction, especially for experienced students, and the understanding of the relative weight of each of the pedagogical strategies in the virtual environment on student satisfaction with online course. These findings may help in characterizing pedagogical principles that will be a standard in construction and design of successful online courses, in order to ensure the satisfaction of any potential learner.

Keywords: experienced and inexperienced, evaluation, pedagogical measures, satisfaction, online courses.


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