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Online Education in North Cyprus Universities: Case Study Eastern Mediterranean University

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Abstract

Online education, known as distance learning or e-learning is different from traditional education because students are not required to visit an actual classroom and listen to an instructor face to face. Universities have used the internet as a tool for teaching .Online education program in the Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) is still in it's infancy and working gradually to catch up with other Universities in Turkey. Using questionnaires as the data source, this paper will examine the importance of online courses and gauge people's opinion about online courses in universities in Northern Cyprus with the Eastern Mediterranean University as a "case study"

Keywords: online education, Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU), E-learning:

1. Introduction

The world we live in is constantly changing. The main changes in the last decades are: computers gaining omnipresence; a society diverse in culture, education, and socio-economic levels; a high skilled workforce needed in the majority of work places; a highly competitive business market; the appearance of new educational technologies; and decreasing student's interest to such traditionally prestigious subjects as physics, math, and engineering. Learning is changing as well, especially the technologies of learning. E-education (also known as e-learning and online education) is the process of learning where computers are used at each possible step of the process: enrolment, instruction design, content delivery, evaluation, assessment and support. This means that students and teachers do not have to sit in the classroom but instead they learn from anywhere in the world at any time.

Adult e-education today is more popular than e-education for children. Thousands of modern companies, universities and colleges have online courses. It helps them distribute knowledge among learners in a broad and rapid way Examples of such online activities are emergency drills, new company policies, knowledge about a new computer virus, etc. In addition, e-education includes other examples such as lectures of important speakers or courses about new company products. However, e-education for children is not yet very popular today. There are

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many online games, virtual laboratories, museum sites, virtual field trips, etc. on the Internet. More systematically online activities include virtual schools, college courses by separate subjects, or online tutorials.

2.0 The Characteristics Unique To E-Learning

Training such as electronic-learning (e-learning) provide a great deal of experience that assist to accommodates the three different learning methods in the form of learners, auditory, kinesthetic learners and visual learners Different special unique important opportunities can be created by the advertisements and development of e-learning for audience and more efficient training to distinct geographical located worldwide audience can be targeted. In this way, it can reduce the cost for publishing and distribution as a Web-based training becomes a more accurate standard. Kruse, K., found that traditional classroom instructor-led courses permits clumsiness and very expensive. In conjunction with needs assessments, e-learning can used to target specific needs by using learning methods of tests, e-learning to find and target individual learning we prefer In addition to this we have Synchronous e-Learning that allow a teacher to conduct classes by the use of Internet. The synchronous technologies also permit students to interact with peers and teachers with enormous experience in certain subjects or courses-learning was originally created for workers to better their education since working in day time did not permit them to attend traditional classes.

2.1 Collaborative Learning

All collaborative learning theory contends that human interaction is a vital ingredient to learning. Consideration of this is particularly crucial when designing e-learning, realizing the potential for the medium to isolate learners. With well-delivered synchronous distance education, and technology like message boards, chats, e-mail, and tele-conferencing, this potential drawback is reduced. However, e-learning detractors still argue that the magical classroom bond between teacher and student, and among the students themselves, cannot be replicated through communications technology.

2.2 The Benefits of These Systems E.g. Flash Simulations

A flash simulation is an interactive flash video (FLV) usually used in online or distance learning to simulate a real life device, equipment, function or place. Its principal benefits are to minimize cost, in production, distribution and training. Example: Online Exams, Flash Video is a container file format used to deliver video over the Internet using Adobe Flash Player, initially produced by Macromedia versions 6–10. Flash Video content may also be embedded within Shockwave Flash (SWF) files. There are two different video file formats defined by Adobe Systems and supported in Adobe Flash Player: FLV and F4V. The audio and video data within FLV files are encoded in the same way as they are within (SWF) files. The latter F4V file format is supported starting with Flash Player 9 update 3 format has quickly established itself as the format of choice for embedded video on the web. Notable users of the Flash Video format include YouTube, Google Video, Yahoo Video, metacafe, Reuters.com, and many other news providers. This software is available at (EMU) and with a little interest they could be put in use for online education.

3. 0 Video Conferencing

Videoconference or video conference (popularly known as a video-teleconference) is a group of interactive telecommunication technologies tool that permit more than two locations to interact through a double way video and audio transmissions that could simultaneously occur. We called this kind of reaction a 'visual collaboration' which is a kind of groupware. Video-conferencing is different from videophones calls. They are designed to serve a conference rather than individuals. This is an intermediate form of video-telephony. This was initially deployed commercially by AT&T Company during the 1970s by using their Picture phone technology. This system is widely use in e-education for distribution of materials and training. (EMU) has all these materials and with a proper market of the online education, additional revenue could be generated to help assist the University recruitment purpose

3.1 Vod in E- Learning or Education

Video on Demand (VoD) is an interactive multimedia system that works like cable Television, the difference being that the customer can select a movie from a large video database. Individual customers in an area are able to watch different programmes when they wish to, making the system a realization of the video rental shop brought into the home. The situation in e-education most of these videos are professors, Lectures, training, manuals etc for the industries, universities, and work place. The author, E. Grant, university of Texas wrote that presence of potential technologies for audiovisual information transmission, encoding and storage has made transition to interactive media systems almost inevitable, justifying the criticism that Interactive Multi-Media is a technology looking for applications. The University library has kind of service and students or teachers could go in and borrow videos for studies on various subjects. With little effort about online education students could benefit from the improved nature of VoD system in the University library.

4. Advantages of E-Learning to Universities and education centres

- ➢ Consistent delivery of content is possible with asynchronous, self-paced e-learning.
- ➢ Reduced overall cost is the single most influential factor in adopting e-learning.
- ➢ Travel cost and time savings: Learning is delivered directly to the learner.
- ➢ Expert knowledge is communicated but more importantly captured, with good e-learning and knowledge management systems.
- ➢ On-demand availability enables students to complete training conveniently at off-hours or from home.
- ➢ Self-pacing for slow or quick learners reduces stress and increases satisfaction.
- ➢ Extendibility, Accessibility, Suitability: Users can proceed through a training program at their own pace and at their own place. They can also access the training at any time, receiving only as much as they need.
- ➢ Collaborative and exploratory learning environments.
- ➢ Easy and affordable training delivery: Validate what browsers your audience has and what version
- ➢ Cross Platform: you can deliver your training course to any machine over the Internet or company intranet without having to develop a different course for each unique platform.

5. Literature survey

Online programs will continue to increase if quality and integrity must be ensured. Ahmad, A., Naqvi, I., & Rehman ,ur, K., found that online education is not at all inferior to the conventional education. All that matters is the effectiveness of technology and quality of the materials that are being used to train the human resources. A literature review of statistical data obtained from the registration office in the Eastern Mediterranean University was used to find out how many students registered for the online courses in the University from 2000-2011 but the results turned out to be very low going by the records as shown below in the table 1.

Table 1, Number of students that register for online courses from 2000-2011

2000-01	2002-03		2003-04	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2010-11	
Autumn	Autumn	Spring	Autumn	Autumn	Autumn	Autumn	Autumn	Autumn	Spring
1	5	5	9	12	20	2	1	6	3

The maximum number of students that studied online in the University from 2000-2011 was just 64 going by available statistical records. There were some business courses that used online as a base for studies in school of Computing but were later closed due to inefficiency of the program. Eastern Mediterranean University needs to

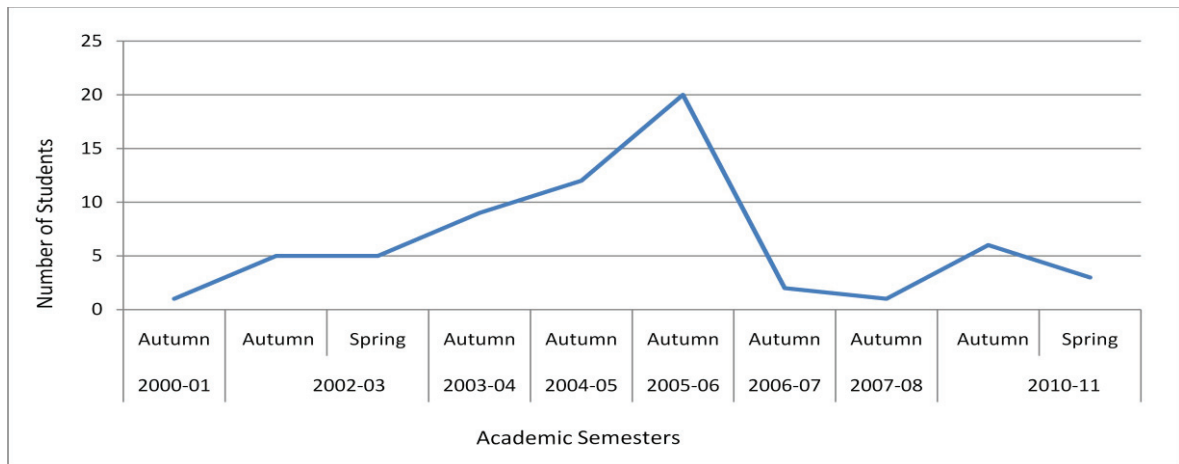market its online programs to make students aware of the benefits and to be enrolled.

Online (EMU) founded was in 1999 (www.emu.edu.tr) and Girne American University (GAU) founded in 2006 (www.gau.edu.tr) are the only two universities that offer online courses in north Cyprus. They both both run on hybrid blended courses. (GAU) online education system run at (GAU'S) new campus in America providing opportunities for students from other campuses to exploit online courses with campuses in Cyprus, Singapore, UK and USA. (EMU) I, Aybay., wrote that Information management program ran in a fully online mode while other program courses ran on hybrid, online activities formed 20% for elective courses which students took only one elective online course per semester and 80% of the other courses are face-face in each semester. This seems to be imbalanced compare to other universities doing online program. (EMU) in north Cyprus in 2002 started a fully online 2-year diploma program on Information Management. This placed (EMU) among the first five Turkish/Turkish Cypriot Universities which offered online programs. Online Information Management program has been discontinued after 2006.

6. Research Methodology

This paper is Therefore, centred on approach by using questionnaire and interview in getting the student's opinion about on-line education, Data of student's doing on-line program was obtained from the registrar office, email was sent to students doing the online program to filled in their opinion about their on-line programs. The investigation was conducted for a period of 2 months (February 2011- march 2011) in northern Cyprus –turkey and (EMU) and some departments selected were banking and finance, hospitality management, information management, information technology, Engineering, Distance Education Institute (EMU-DEI.)

7. Structure and Administration of the Questionnaire

This concerned the layout and order of the well arranged research questionnaire to the student's studied areas. The questionnaire was divided into difference sections. Data was gathered from the students through open-ended interviews and questionnaires by the opinion. Selected department. (1) Information Management. (2), engineering department. (3) Banking and finance. (4) Hospitality Management. (5) Distance Education Institute (EMU-DEI). Questions asked are listed below. For each of the statements, the students had five choices of response. Using Author, Hong, K, S., Lai, K., W., & Holton, D., "Strongly agree", "Agree", "No Opinion", "Disagree", and "Strongly

Disagree.

A	Traditional classroom teaching is better than online education
	A. Strongly Agree B.Agree C. Neutral D.Disagree E.Strongly Disagree
B	Online education was created to help workers, teachers and students to study at their free pace and time
	A. Strongly Agree B.Agree C.Neutral D.Disagree E.Strongly Disagree
C	The bound or friendship between a teacher and student or a student and a student in the traditional classroom system cannot be replaced by online education.
	A. Strongly Agree B.Agree C.Neutral D.Disagree E.Strongly Disagree
D	Many people graduated from online programs with good CGPAs
	A. Strongly Agree B.Agree C.Neutral D.Disagree E.Strongly Disagree
E	Online education is not a good method of education and should not be encouraged in Eastern Mediterranean University.
	A. Strongly Agree B.Agree C.Neutral D.Disagree E.Strongly Disagree
F	With the modern technology in the near future online education will overtake the traditional classroom teachings
	A. Strongly Agree B.Agree C.Neutral D.Disagree E.Strongly Disagree
G	All the other universities in North Cyprus should encourage online education like EMU and GAU's are already doing.
	A. Strongly Agree B.Agree C.Neutral D.Disagree E.Strongly Disagree
H	Online education is a waste of time and should not be encourage or practiced in North Cyprus
	A. Strongly Agree B.Agree C.Neutral D.Disagree E.Strongly Disagree
I	With online education people can study from anywhere without limits to geographical boundaries.
	A. Strongly Agree B.Agree C.Neutral D.Disagree E.Strongly Disagree

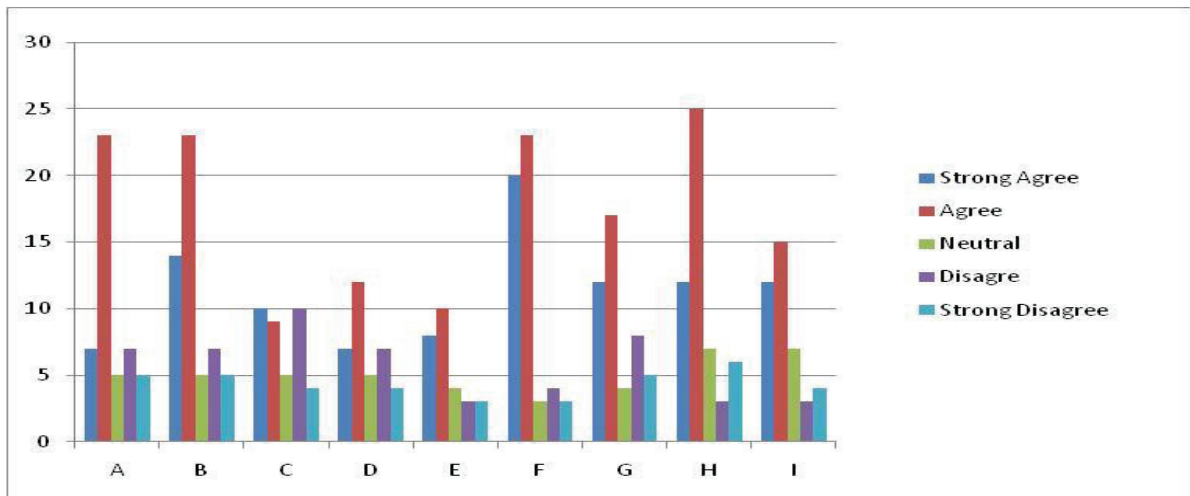**Table 2**. Online Education Questionnaire.

Figure 2. *Diagram showing the perception of people about online course program*.

8. Conclusion

It is therefore vivid from this paper that online education has not been as progressive as compare to other online schools since the year Eastern Mediterranean University (EMU) started the program. If the University calibrated this program by getting the accreditation for the online courses, as well as by looking at the importance of the online programs It will add improvement to people's and career by removing the geographic location barriers and generate revenue for (EMU) by adding more value to people's educational objectives. Online education has not been encouraging for the past years in the (EMU). The teaching was the face to face traditional classroom system with computer aid learning. In order to improve online education in (EMU), a marketing system needs to be put in place to create awareness to students about the online programs and their benefits to education. This is necessary because

as time passes by online education will surpass the traditional classroom studies because of the new technologies around the globe. However we still take into consideration the bond between a teacher and a student and that of a student and a student which is a unique relationship that cannot be replace by any technology.

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