FACTORS AFFECTING THE QUALITY OF E-LEARNING DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

Aim/Purpose	The objective of the research was to study the relationship of seven independent factors: administrative support, course content, course design, instructor characteristics, learner characteristics, social support, and technical support on quality of e-learning in higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic. Further, the study analyzes the moderating effect(s) of gender and level of the course on the quality of e-learning in higher education during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Background	The COVID-19 pandemic situation has impacted the entire education system, especially universities, and brought a new phase in education "e-learning." The learning supported with electronic technology like online classes and portals to access the courses outside the classroom is known as e-learning. This study aimed to point out the variables influencing the quality of e-learning, such as administrative support, course content, course design, instructor characteristics, learner characteristics, social support, and technological support.
Methodology	An inferential statistics cross-sectional study was conducted of the students of higher education institutions in India and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with a self-administered questionnaire to learn the students' perception of e-learning. All levels of undergraduate and postgraduate students took part in the study with a sample size of 784. Ultimately, this study used a Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) approach to find the positive relationship between the quality of e-learning and the seven independent variables and two moderating variables in the higher education sector.
Contribution	The study aims to explore the quality of e-learning in higher education from the students' perspective. The study was analyzed based on the student's data collected from the higher educational institutions of India and Saudi Arabia. The study will support the top management and administrators of higher educational institutions in decision making.
Findings	The findings revealed that there is a positive relationship between the set of variables and the quality of e-learning in the higher education sector. Also, there is a significant difference in the perception of the students between gender, level of the course, and quality of e-learning in the higher education sector during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Recommendations for Practitioners	The results of the study can help top management and administrators of higher educational institutions to improve their actions. Higher educational institutions need to concentrate on the study outcomes related to administrative support, course content, course design, instructor characteristics, learner characteristics, social support, and technological support to enhance the quality of e-learning. The study revealed that there should be a difference in the procedure of providing e-learning based on the level of the course and gender of the students.
Recommendations for Researchers	The results were examined and interpreted in detail, based on the perspective of the students, and concluded with a view for future research. The study will be beneficial for academic researchers from different countries with a different set of students and framework.

Impact on Society	The study revealed that the positive results of the students' perspective on the quality of e-learning would help the policy-makers of the country in providing the learning process during the COVID-19 pandemic. Also, the result explored the importance of the quality aspects of e-learning for improvement.
Future Research	There is a need for future studies to expose the quality of e-learning in higher education in the post-COVID-19 pandemic. Further researchers will bring the performance level of e-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Keywords	e-learning, quality, students' perspective, higher education, COVID-19 pandemic

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