

The Impact of Online Learning Context in Fostering Open Leadership Skills

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Abstract: The methods of learning have changed rapidly. For online learning process, collaboration, active participation and technology acceptance are crucial. Active learning plays a great role that learners become leader of their learning process and knowledge construction process. This study focused on the impact of online learning context in fostering open leadership skills. In this study, semi-structured interviews and discussion via internet is used as qualitative research technique. The participants of the research study included twenty students which aimed to examine leadership skills development of learners within practical training course context. It is emerged that students have experienced how to be a leader during online learning process and they developed skills of problem solving, awareness, research and negotiation.

1 INTRODUCTION

Online learning supports flexible access that provides to content and instruction at any time, from any place. Online learning is defined as an approach to learning and teaching process that flexible access learning material, interacting with the content and instructor. It utilize acquisition and usage of the knowlwdge in an educational context. Internet and communication technologies collaboration support online learning experiences and practices.

According to Muir (2001), advantages of online learning can be listed below;

- Learning can take place anywhere
- Learning can take place anytime and at any pace.
- There is a synergy between the learner, instructor and environment.
- High quality dialogue can be maintained because it is not restricted by a traditional classroom or time models. individuals learning styles and issues with greater ease.
- There is great access to a larger variety of quality resources.
- There is a level playing field for all learners, regardless of visual or physical

handicap, location or learning schedule.

- Teachers can use creative teaching methods in delivering material.

An important goal of distance higher education is to improve the equality in educational opportunities among various regions. Distance higher education was ignoring from traditional higher education. So, as a unique form of education, from correspondence education in the nineteenth century to today's distance learning based on the Internet, distance education has undergone great changes (Feng Liang et. Al., 2014)

All around world to underline equality in learning, the principles of online learning and restructure organizational levels come into the consideration and traditional learning transform to open up education. The equal and open learning context support communication skills and enrich skills and abilities within the life(EU,2015). Online learning enviorment have been done in order to share ideas and good practice through personalized learning and motivating learners. Moore and Kearsley (1999) has distinguished three types of interaction: learner–instructor, learner–content and learner–learner interaction, which illustrate ways online participation may be supported.

Song, Singleton, Hill & Koh (2004) focused that on the learners' perceptions of helpful components and challenges in online learning environments.

Koehle, Bird & Bonney (2008) claimed that achieving professional development involved the creation and implementation of a program in personal leadership for the organization.

Sit et al. (2004) stated that students to take responsibility for their learning process online learning environment. Students lead this process. This online learning environment gives an opportunity to students to develop skills and confidence in handling difficult tasks and problem-solving with using the Internet as a resources.

Additionally, Deal and Peterson (2009) stated that point to the multiple ways school culture fosters improvement, collaborative decision making, professional development of students' learning. Online learning environment, courses are changed by online materials. Opportunities for students to undertake tasks and responsibilities in school culture.

Technology is a transformation opportunity of course contents within the digital age. Integration of technology to the teaching, learning is sharing experiences, knowledge within digital platform enriches skills of learners by the support of social networking sites (Gilbert, 2005). In this respect, social networking site fosters learning platform within practical training course as part of the research study. Online learning environment intensified need to consider how social platform enhance learning and to what extend support skills development and learners by individualistic responsibility.

In today's information age, managing information for leaders has become the most important leadership criterion. The ability to make the most efficient use of information and ensure maximum recycling depends on the well-managed knowledge.

It is controversial whether leadership can be taught. It is found that leadership skills can be taught. There is an increasing demand for leadership training and development programs. It has been determined that the existing training programs are not sufficient for the development of leadership skills and need to be developed (Mole, 2004). There is a need for a management understanding that includes leadership processes such as creativity, direction, and impact so that organizations can adapt to the rapid changes in life and continue their existence (Elmuti et al., 2005).

Indeed, practical training course is the experiential learning process that students supports knowledge creation and develop competence and skills through practice and living experience within the sector in online learning environment. The

practical training course is very significant for the undergraduate students which they gained future experience of work for the success. Within this research study, the importance of experiential learning process for future success, the role of dialogue and interaction for the experience and social learning are highlighted. As regards the social networking sites provides platform for interaction, connectivity and access that foster interaction and socially negotiated experience as a base for the social learning. In this respect, living collaborative thinking, argumentation and reflection in order to achieve interconnected knowledge and experience become important. As practical training course significantly focus on openness, diversity, interaction and autonomy, those principles have been practiced within the course to reveal the perceptions and experiences of the students who enrolled practical training course course in School of Tourism and Hospitality Management. Although the literature paid attention to impact of social interaction (Fernandez, 2006), experience (Pankhurst, 2010), mediation (Vogel, 2004) for learning, they stay partial. In this respect, this study puts forward to reveal the evaluations of their learning and experience with the support of social networking site (facebook) as regards the openness, diversity, interaction and autonomy principles. Further to this, the study aims to reveal how online social networking sites (facebook, vb.) are relevant for different fields and courses such as tourism field and internship course.

According to Fullan (2007) school culture can be defined as the guiding beliefs and values evident in the way a school operates.

Ossiannilsson et. al. (2015) stated that new technologies act as change especially in higher education and universities enable to meet a broader range of learners' needs, adapting traditional teaching methods and offering a mix of face-to-face and online learning possibilities that allow individuals to learn anywhere, anytime.

Higher education institutions should offering faculty professional development programs to develop skills that support the pressures of adapting their current teaching ideologies and practice to align with rapidly expanding digital tools and expectations for learning and teaching (Salmon and Wright, 2014).

In this research study, the impact of online learning contexts is crucial in order to examine the leadership attitudes by the support of social networking site (facebook) in terms of practical training course.

The purpose of this research study was to reveal the impact of online learning context in fostering

open leadership skills. Furthermore, this research aimed to assess the skills and capabilities of students within the scope of practical training courses. Additionally, practical training course is of great importance to gain responsibilities, personal leadership and solving problem abilities for students who study in tourism and hotel management because tourism industry given the labour intensive nature during the tourism education.

2 METHODOLOGY

The research design for the study was based upon the framework of qualitative research which covers the understanding, interpretation of socially constructed meanings within an inductive process. Within the qualitative research framework, experiences and the process, based on collaboration which is considered by emerging theory and practice.

Action research was employed in this research study that skills development of learners through online social platforms and digitally integrated learning, teaching context were created.

Semi-structured interviews and discussions via internet were used in order to examine importance of practical training courses. Students actively discussed subjects among each others.

Online learning context provided social learning platform for dialogue and negotiation beside the classroom learning and teaching process in this study. The 20 students provided semi-structured interviews response within a frame of this qualitative research. This showed how principles of theory practiced and how this theory and facebook group space contribute learning, self-leadership, decision making and reflection skills.

The participants of the research study included twenty students which aimed to enhance skills development of students as learners within practical training courses context. This research was conducted one semester consist of 16 weeks. Online learning platform was used as a support for conducting theory of education and students voluntarily participated in the study and the data were collected through purposive sampling.

3 FINDINGS

In this study, 20 practical training course students from School of Tourism and Hospitality Management voluntarily involved the practice connectivist theory

in learning process. In addition, online platform has been constructed to activate dialogue and interaction as significant principle of the online learning environment. Course supported collaborative thinking and dialogue has been practiced to foster the theory in the practice with the involvement of lecturer. As regards the outcome about the online platform, the semi-structured interview revealed large amount of qualitative data and provided credible results to confirm that almost all students developed dialogue and interaction thus they learn more from others and others' experiences, enhance self-leadership, decision making and reflection skills.

Expectation Students from Online Learning and Leadership

Data collected from semi-structured interviews assembled via mail and students commented and discussed their decision. Student clarified information about online learning and expectations from these course. Almost all students considered online learning as an support to experience of their self development conceptions of teaching and learning.

These research implemented fourth class, second semester course. Although, all students had enough theoretical information in their disciplinary. First of all online learning definition requested from students. ST5 and ST8 defined that, online learning is the process where a person would seek to develop their own knowledge, or even find technological resources for a certain subject. ST2 remarked, that online learning environment is internet using. ST13 emphasized that this method is so far beyond the ordinary education system, learners need comfortably oblivious to any restriction in terms of of information and communication between individuals with regard to each other, provided the environment is very high comfort. Majority of students indicated that students as a teacher and controller of their own without any pressure or coercion in the online learning. Students agree with the responsibility for developing and responsible for their own learning skills, additionally how separate topic to learn and their learning speed.

The data demonstrate that students expectation from these online learning environment course. Practical training course helped students to earn job experience before their graduation and gain advantage for their future life. Such that, ST9 underlined that to consolidate and gain experience by blending the practical course with received training. Students obtained that knowledge has not enough for future life, necessary to reinforced with practical knowledge because of job environment that differ

from theory.

Practical training course caused to increase students' experience on the other hand online learning environment aimed to discussed happens during practice and compare theoretical knowledge. ST10 remarked that contribution to the theory with practical knowledge is created over time. Students go along with practical knowledge in online learning environment course created with their theoretical knowledge, and taking time to reinforce their knowledge.

Table 1: Expectations from Online learning.

Topics	Expressions Obtained	Number of Students
Innovative	Developing technology and education system	5
Unlimited Resources	Achieve a lot of online resources	4
Control belongs to student	Advanced own knowledge from online learning environment no time and place limit	7
Experience	Knowledge transferred to experince in online learning environment	4

Table 1. shown that, students positive vision appeared for online learning. It was possible to divide into three categories online learning definations. According to students' perspective online learning related with innovative,belongs to student and gain experience and unlimited resources.

Students identifies as their leadership abilities also more abstinent. Student emphasize that need time to adjust themselves and to express themselves correctly

Defining the Leadership Attitudes

Multiple data showed that students perceived advantages of practical knowledge in online learning course added inestimable aspect and vision for personal and professional development for their future career.

Before discussing students' self leadersip cases and growth in these course context, concept of

leadership asked to students in semi-structured interviews. ST10 and ST18 defined that leadership is a ability to transfer the goals and objective to community. Additionally, ST20 believed that an innate characteristic of leadership, but people trying to combine this feature with the knowledge gained over time to lead the field and their orientation to people. Other students remarked that leaders have a lot of skills and ability to manage people and persuaded to achieve goals and objectives.

In parallel with concept of leadership, students discussed that leadership styles and they have or not. All students who attend these study have work opprtunity during summer training program in their regular education. So, student have enough information about training course, cases and experiences about their leadership attitudes. ST1 explained that self leadership ability to manage, problem solving ability, to appeal to the community in the separation, and being a model such as the properties.

Table 2: Defining Leadership Attitudes.

Topics	Expressions Obtained	Number of Students
Well Organized	Ability to organize and construct knowledge efficiently	6
Team Work	Sharing knowledge and learning with other learners	7
Problem Solving	Good communication skills, empathic and negotiation	4
Getting Responsibility	Self-motivator and self-responsible	3

During these process, redounded self leadership skills in the online learning environment. According to semi-structured interviews, students clarified that their self leadership skills during practical phase. ST5 and ST8 reported that come out top of their performance of a workplace and correcting deficiencies noticed. All students agreed with awareness of their responsibility and interfered problems.

The Effect of the Online Learning Environment

Students reported their experiences and perceptions as regards the contributions of online learning environment for their learning and skills development. The reflections through self-report confirmed that online platform give space revealed how supports learning and the skills development of students based on particular online learning environment and activities of the practical training course. In this respect, students reflect consensus on that dialogue, negotiation and complexity of discussion questions in online context within a framework help them construct knowledge and develop leadership skills, negotiation and reflection skills within self-discipline. Almost all of students underlined that course requires inquiry, question and knowledge sharing which enhances learning and peer evaluated and reflected skills development process. In this respect, students practiced the principles which are learning and knowledge rests in diversity of opinions; process of connecting specialized nodes or information sources; reside in capacity to know more critical than what is currently known; maintaining connections is needed to facilitate continual learning; ability to see connections between fields, ideas, and concepts is a core skill; decision-making is itself a learning process; chaos, network, complexity, self-organization are significant for learning through discussions and collaboration with pers within online environment.

4 CONCLUSIONS

As a result of the study, the students discussed that leadership styles features among themselves, expressing better in the online learning process. In the context of this research, online learning has shown how students develop leadership skills in the online learning environment by developing the skills of thinking, researching, taking responsibility and solving problems.

For this reason, this research determined that the students who reach the theoretical level of the knowledge, at the same time continue to apply technology during practically, their future career developments and ability to express themselves, take responsibility and solve problems.

Students stated that more aware of their online review process and are more capable of solving problems. During this time, students developed their abilities by producing solutions by observing the

students and other problems on site.

The lack of time and space constraints has helped to create a comfortable work environment for students. At the same time, online learning plays an effective role in determining the goals and objectives of the students in their future lives.

However, a few students (5 out of 20) yielded that satisfied with classroom learning model. Although the minority of the group revealed the question on the effectiveness of new practice, in-depth examination can be done for the impact of cultural and contextual factors, learning styles of students for diversity as these are the limitations of this study that needs to be considered in detail and may be investigated in-depth.

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