

COMMUNICATION FACTOR IN SUCCESSFUL ADOPTION OF ONLINE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The number of online courses and online programs are continuously increasing in the field of higher education. One important factor for the successful adoption of online education that has not received sufficient attention in the literature is effective communication between administrators and faculty members. The purpose of this research study is to identify reasons for possible communication breakdowns between administrators and faculty members and identify factors that facilitate the communication between the two parties.

RESEARCH PROPOSAL

The number of institutions offering online courses or degrees increases continuously. Of the institutions participating in the most current National Center for Education Statistics' report on Distance Education, 56% of institutions offered online education for students at any level, 12% of did not presently offer online education but intended to introduce it within the next three years and only 31% did presently not offer online education and did not intend to introduce it within the next three years. [5].

The success of the process of adopting online education, like any strategic project, depends greatly on effective communication between the major parties involved, namely administrators and faculty members. Often, however, the adoption decision for online education is initiated by administrators for a variety of reasons, such as market pressures. In many cases, students and, more critically, faculty are not truly involved in the decision making process and are rather presented with the adoption decision as a *fait accompli* [3].

Given the crucial position that faculty play in the educational process, it is essential that faculty and administrators understand each other's position and reasoning for or against online education. This, however, does not always reflect reality. A 2003 study by Allen and Seaman [1], for instance, found that while 67% of all administrators surveyed found online education to be essential for their institutions' continued success they contended that only 56.7% of faculty members were sold on the idea of online education.

A growing number of studies in the quickly expanding literature on online education concentrate on faculty needs and faculty concerns [2, 3, 4]. Literature, however, also suggests that little is done on the part of administrators to address these issues [3].

The present research project intends to survey faculty members regarding their perception of the communication process between themselves and the university administrators. The primary purpose of this proposed study is to increase awareness of communication factor in successful online education adoption by the institutions of higher education.