

Meta-synthesis approach to continuity of learning in higher education by online education especially for Corona crisis¹

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Abstract

The main goal of this research was to identify the components of the model of continuity of learning in higher education by using online education especially for the Corona crisis. This qualitative research was conducted using the six-step method of Sandlovski and Barroso. Through searching in reliable scientific databases inside and outside the country 39 articles related to the subject of the study and were published during 1919-22 were analyzed. The obtained data were analyzed by content analysis method. The findings of the study were the extraction of 15 effective themes which was the basis for designing the conceptual model of learning in higher education by supporting effective forms of online education during the outbreak of Corona. The classification of these factors into four main themes including new missions (optimal development of potential ability, professional training, training for change and development, training for citizenship and political maturity of students), the goals of the teaching and learning process (gathering knowledge, learning new tasks, developing knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, multimodal and text-centered and dynamic education, requirements

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and contexts (familiarity with computer technologies, infrastructure and access to technology and evaluation approaches (online learning evaluation, offline learning evaluation, and evaluation over time) The results of this qualitative study showed that the continuation of learning in higher education by supporting effective forms of online education during the outbreak of the Corona virus, by recognizing new missions, taking into account the requirements and platforms, paying attention to the goals of the teaching and learning process and evaluation approaches is possible. The awareness of the planners, policy makers and university administrators of the mentioned requirements in the light of paying attention to the components of the conceptual model will lead to the continuity of learning in higher education using online education.

Keywords: continuity of learning, Corona crisis, higher education, Meta-synthesis, online education.



Introduction

The learning process takes place by using methods, media and other learning resources that play an important role in transmitting content and prepares the learner to participate in the learning process so that the learner can develop the experiences gained and the learned content, develop intellectual, emotional and social abilities and cognitive, emotional and psycho-motor skills. Thus, learning in the learner can develop their activities to improve their abilities and understanding of specific topics (Sulasmi, 2021). Only logical and correct learning and comprehensive understanding of educational materials can create meaningful and internal knowledge for the learner, and in fact the learner can learn past educational materials and use new educational materials and new information when necessary (Hand, Chen & Suh, 2021). Continuous learning goes beyond adult education. Adult education provides opportunities for formal learning activities throughout adulthood. But the goal of continuous learning is a fundamental overhaul of learning, nurturing and teaching in an effort to change mindsets (Paulynice, 2020). It engages learners of all ages and, while applying knowledge and skills, it prepares them to take advantage of the educational opportunities offered. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to reconsider the field of learning, skills and education and lead the style and approach of the educational system to continuous learning (Duncan, Eicher & Joyner, 2020).

Technological developments that have permeated everyday life have also affected the institution of higher education. Hence, the university curriculum should create a space for students to understand how to learn continuously (Matthews, Garratt & Macdonald, 2018). In the last two decades, significant theorizing has been presented on how distance learning and teaching use technology. According to UNESCO, on April 1, 2020, schools and institutions of higher learning were closed in 185 countries in the current challenging context of the Coronavirus pandemic. In early May, some countries reopened universities as the number of cases and deaths decreased (Crawford, Butler-Henderson, Rudolph, Malkawi, Glowatz, Burton & Lam, 2020). Consequently, in order to curb the coronavirus, many governments have banned face-to-face activities including on-campus teaching and on campus. China Higher Education has launched an initiative called 'disruptive but uninterrupted classes' to provide flexible online education to hundreds of millions of students from home (Minix-Fuller, 2020). The rapid evolution of communication and information technology and its increasing complexity, together with its high potential, explain why the integration of technology for continuing education, especially after the corona epidemic, continues to receive special attention (Huang, Liu, Tlili, Yang & Wang, 2020). Technological developments that are integrated into daily life have also affected the institution of higher education. In this regard, new technologies such as mobile phones has helped to improve academic performance by providing information to people, anywhere and anytime through wireless technology and has always continued higher education. New technologies can offer students a variety of benefits including ease of access to rich and comprehensive educational content, timely and continuous learning. The main purpose of this study was to design a conceptual model of learning continuity in higher education with the support of effective forms of online education in times of outbreak with a meta-synthesis approach.

Methodology

This qualitative study was conducted using the six-step method of Sandlowski & Barroso. Thirty-nine articles related to the subject of the study were finally analyzed in the time efficiency of 2019 to 2021 through a search of scientific inside and outside of Iran databases. The obtained data were analyzed by content analysis method. Data validity was determined using credibility and transferability techniques through investigator self-monitoring, data triangulation and dependability was determined by precisely guiding the process of data collection and investigator triangulation (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Findings

The findings of the study were the extraction of 15 effective themes that were the basis for designing a conceptual model of learning in higher education with the support of effective forms of online education at the time of corona outbreak. Classification of these factors includes four main themes: 1. New missions (optimal development of potential ability, functional literacy, vocational training, change and development training, citizenship training, students' political maturity); 2. Objectives of the teaching-learning process (progressive knowledge transfer, knowledge aggregation, learning new tasks, knowledge development, skills, attitudes and values, multifaceted, text-based and dynamic education); 3. Requirements and platforms (familiarity with computer technologies, infrastructures and access to technology); And 4. Assessment approaches (online learning assessment, offline learning assessment & assessment during learning time).

Discussion

The results of this qualitative study showed that the continuation of learning in higher education with the support of effective forms of online education during the Coronavirus outbreak by recognizing new missions, considering requirements and contexts, paying attention to the goals of the teaching and learning process and assessment approaches will be possible. Awareness of planners, policy makers and university administrators of the above requirements in the light of attention to the components of the conceptual model will lead to continued learning in higher education with the support of effective forms of online education.

The fact is that in the face of this crisis, academic environments redefine current missions into new and innovative missions including the optimal development of potential ability, vocational training, change and development training, citizenship training, and student political maturity. University leaders are eager to develop these missions and bring these concerns into the context of university curricula. In the present study, the researchers focused on the potential abilities of students, which is the concern of higher education administrators. The findings of this study lead the higher education system to re-read or design and define new missions.

In summary, in the field of theoretical innovation and knowledge-enhancing contribution of research, it can be acknowledged that the results of this qualitative study by observing and consolidating and integrating global studies, showed the continuation of learning in higher education using online education during the pandemic. It will be possible to identify new missions, consider requirements and contexts, and pay attention to the goals of the teaching-learning process and assessment approaches. Regarding the practical

contribution of the study, it can be said that the awareness of planners, policy makers and university administrators of the above requirements in the light of attention to the components of the proposed model will lead to continued learning in higher education using online education.

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