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Providing a Virtual Learning Culture Pattern in Higher Education Centers

Mahnaz Miraki Zadeh Mohammadabad[1] ID , Negin Jabbari[2*] ID , Kambiz Esmaeilnia Shirvani[3] ID

1. PhD student, Department of Educational Management, Gorgan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Gorgan, Iran.
2. Associate Professor, Educational Management Department, Gorgan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Gorgan, Iran. (Corresponding Author)
3. Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Management, Gorgan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Gorgan, Iran.
❖ **Corresponding Author Email**: neginjabbary@gmail.com

Research Paper	**Abstract**

Purpose: Today, due to being in the 21st century, the discussion of virtual learning and the appropriate culture with it has become very important. Therefore, the aim of this study was to providing a virtual learning culture pattern in higher education centers.

Methodology: This study in terms of purpose and implementation method was applied and descriptive from type of qualitative, respectively. The current study population were experts of higher education institutions who were aware of the research field, and number of 12 of them were selected as a sample according to the principle of theoretical saturation and with using purposive and snowball sampling methods. The research tool was semi-structured interview, whivh whose validity was confirmed by triangulation method and its reliability was calculated by Cohen's kappa coefficient method 0.89. To analyze the data of this study were used from open, central and selective coding methods.

Findings: The findings of this study indicate that for virtual learning culture pattern in higher education centers were identified 49 concepts, 8 components and 2 categories. In the current research, the categories were included the category of structural factors with five components of software and hardware infrastructure, design and management of virtual learning interactions, platform and virtual learning environment, virtual learning development and operational support ability and the category of behavioral factors with three components of culture building, individual attitude and motivation of learners. Finally, the categories and components pattern of virtual learning culture in higher education centers was drawn.

Conclusion: The results of the present study can contribute to better awareness and cognition of the virtual learning culture in higher education centers and higher education specialists and planners based on its categories, components and concepts can take an effective step towards improving the virtual learning culture.

Detailed abstract

Purpose: In the recent decades, higher education as one of the most important and constructive social institutions has faced many changes and transformations, and this institution has always sought strategic planning to improve itself. Today, the role of higher education and universities in the establishment of a modern and advanced society is not hidden from anyone, and in order to achieve this, it is important to educate active, responsible and democratic people on the one hand and to try to solve cultural, social, economic, industrial and even problems, political and helping to promote science and expanding the boundaries of knowledge from another hand is on the agenda of higher education. The higher education system as a targeted phenomenon has two qualitative and quantitative dimensions, which its balanced growth must grow in parallel with each other, and this educational system has a prominent role in the economic, social and cultural development of the society. Considering the role of higher education in scientific growth and its impact on the most important capitals of a country, the realization of the goals and visions of societies, the higher education system in scientific growth and its impact on the most important capitals of a country, the realization of the goals and visions of societies, the higher education system always needs it is a transformation that in this situation, if higher education wants to keep up with rapid changes and transformations, it always needs purposive change and transformation. Higher education seeks to promote and improve knowledge and train the specialized human resources needed by the society, and accordingly, this system plays an important role in the comprehensive development of any society. Therefore, the higher education system in order to achieve its goals and missions must adopt appropriate policies and guidelines in the field of education, learning and research, etc. Therefore, higher education is one of the pillars and axes of the development of societies, and when it comes to the competition of societies at the international level and the movement of societies in the direction of development and reaching development, it is inevitable to pay attention to the improvement of the standards of higher education systems and changes in higher education policies is important and necessary to be in accordance with global standards for development and to keep pace with progress and the phenomenon of globalization. One of the manifestations of the use of information and communication technology is the use of virtual learning, which has been popular in developed countries for many years. The use of virtual learning and education as one of the types of electronic education that promises lower costs for education at any place and time is rapidly increasing in the world. In the electronic universities are more important to virtual learning methods and research is highly valued. In these universities, it is very important to use information and communication technology and turn opportunities and resources into wealth. Virtual learning is attention and focus on principles such as increasing the interaction between the teacher and the learner, facilitating participation between learners, encouraging learners to learn actively, the possibility of providing quick feedback to learners, emphasizing on individual differences between learners, strengthening cognitive flexibility, problem-oriented and facilitating interaction between learners and various resources of learning. Virtual learning can be a suitable tool to increase speed, reduce barriers, geographical dispersion, reduce costs of knowledge sharing in the organization and improvement and correction of communication between users. The integration of two structures of virtual learning and organizational culture led to creates a virtual learning culture that refers to the use of modern information and communication technologies in education and learning, which is in the form of a set of values and systems that support and encourage individuals and organization to continuously improve the amount of their knowledge, competence and performance. Learning culture refers to a set of attitudes, values and experiences within any center and institution or society that supports the continuous learning process. Today, due to being in the 21st century, the discussion of virtual learning and the appropriate culture with it has become very important. Therefore, the aim of this study was to providing a virtual learning culture pattern in higher education centers.

Methodology: This study in terms of purpose and implementation method was applied and descriptive from type of qualitative, respectively. The current study population were experts of higher education institutions who were aware of the research field, and number of 12 of them were selected as a sample according to the principle of theoretical saturation and with using purposive and snowball sampling methods. According to the principle of theoretical saturation, sampling and conducting research on them continues until the new samples cannot add new content and findings to the previous findings obtained from interviews with previous experts. In this research to select the samples were used the criteria to obtain more accurate and reliable information which the criteria in the current study were included at least a master's degree, educational or managerial experience of more than 10 years, willingness to participate in the research and accept the recording of interviews. It should be noted that in order to perform purposive sampling, the researchers selected some of the experts they knew as samples according to the above criteria. Also, to carry out snowball sampling, the researchers asked the experts sampled by the purposive sampling method to introduce other experts to the researchers, and these introduced experts were selected as samples if they met the above criteria. The research tool was semi-structured interview, whivh whose validity was confirmed by triangulation method and its reliability was calculated by Cohen's kappa coefficient method 0.89. To analyze the data of this study were used from open, central and selective coding methods.

Findings: The findings of this study indicate that most of the interviewees were male (66.67 percent), 36-45 years old (41.67 percent), PhD education (83.33 percent), and 21 or more years of work experience (75 percent). Also, for virtual learning culture pattern in higher education centers were identified 49 concepts, 8 components and 2 categories. In the current research, the categories were included the category of structural factors with five components of software and hardware infrastructure, design and management of virtual learning interactions, platform and virtual learning environment, virtual learning development and operational support ability and the category of behavioral factors with three components of culture building, individual attitude and motivation of learners. Finally, the categories and components pattern of virtual learning culture in higher education centers was drawn.

Conclusion: The results of the present study can contribute to better awareness and cognition of the virtual learning culture in higher education centers and higher education specialists and planners based on its categories, components and concepts can take an effective step towards improving the virtual learning culture.