A Study on the Key Drivers towards Adoption of E-Learning in Educational Institutions

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Abstract: This study aims to identify the key drivers in adoption of e-learning and other online capabilities in educational institutions for academic purposes. It reports on previous studies carried out to determine the drivers towards adoption focusing on the ability of all related stakeholders to utilize e-learning tools and other capabilities for knowledge building. From this study we came to know that on top of various drivers, facilitating conditions were found to be a significant driver of perceived use and satisfaction.

Keywords: E-Learning, Online Capability, Information Control Technology (ICT), Drivers, Learners, Instructors

INTRODUCTION
With the widespread use of ICT, adopting online capabilities has become vital for all educational institutions. E-learning opens up opportunities for interaction across borders and cultures seamlessly. In a technology savvy environment, online capability has become a core part of the modern day educational institution. The argument is that currently eLearning is geared towards technically “literate” and innovative staff. One other compelling arguments for adoption of online capabilities comes from previous studies that self-directed learning acts as a significant driver.

Review of previous studies indicates that in many situations individual or organizational contexts determine the adoption of online capabilities. Demand stands out for Individual contexts and organizational objectives stand out for organizational contexts. In addition to these, many other enablers push towards adoption of online capabilities which are detailed in this article based on extensive review of previous studies. Each driver is necessary to meet the challenges of learning in the digital world.

OBJECTIVES
1. To study the online capabilities of educational institutions
2. To identify the stakeholders involved around online capabilities of educational institutions.
3. To identify drivers of online capabilities

REVIEW OF LITERATURE
David highlights that online market demographic for learning and knowledge is potentially the largest, even more than sports, leisure and travel. From investor perspective as well, eLearning has larger e-business opportunities in terms of government programs and other social agendas. Access to online learning is growing fast in education. Already one million students globally are taking Higher Education courses online and 25% of institutions are offering them over the Internet.

Drivers behind e-learning initiatives are discussed in Educause | 2003.
Given the current life style of the learning population, hybrid model of both conventional and online learning has gained momentum. Apart from the convenience and life style perspective of the learners, organizational goals and motive to expand educational bandwidth play the role of key driver behind adoption of online capabilities.

Kaur and Abas | 2004 in their assessment of e-learning readiness comment that learners and instructors capacity to construct knowledge through remote means is greatly dependent on the efficacy
of e-learning infrastructure. In their research conducted in Malaysian context, they report that 85% of learners and 54% of instructors felt that they would upgrade their professional and academic status through e-learning programs. Regulatory bodies and policy makers have a key role to play as they are the principals towards establishing e-learning initiatives in the country. It was found that 71% of receivers and 66% of enablers expressed some concern over the fact that such qualifications may not be given due recognition (in comparison to qualifications accrued through conventional means). Despite such a conception, 85% of receivers and 54% of enablers felt that they would upgrade their professional and academic status through e-learning programs.

Figure 1: Learner (Receiver) and Instructor’s (Enabler) perception towards time management aspect

![Figure 1](image1.png)

Figure 2: Learner (Receiver) & Instructor’s (Enabler) perception towards e-learning demand to upgrade status

![Figure 2](image2.png)

**Bill Ferriter** | 2009 in the article on “Learning with Blogs and Wikis” iterate that Blogs and wikis are enriching the learning community preparing them for a future driven by networked learning. Blogs and wikis encourage digital collaboration across borders.

**Singh Gurmak and Hardaker Glenn** | 2011 in their article on identifying barriers and enablers to adoption of eLearning review various literatures and voice out that eLearning is geared towards technically “literate” and innovative staff.
Research Methodology
The analysis of this paper is totally depending upon secondary data like journal, books and various websites from internet. An extensive search of the literature was conducted and selected references were analysed to compile the findings of this paper.

Broad Grouping of Online Capabilities

- **Online education**
  - Teaching and learning
  - Video assignments
  - Management of lecture capture content
  - Digital libraries: Ebooks, e-libraries, e-journals, research databases etc.
  - E-services like e-conferences
  - Informal learning ways: Blogs, Internet searches, Live chats, networking with external professionals, Shared repositories, Wikis, Web conferences, online publications, e-journals etc.

- **Online methods to assess and evaluate student progress, course material**
  - Online surveys for feedback on course material
  - Online tests

- **Other online services include**
  - Hosting vast student/staff data
  - Public communications
  - Recruitment
  - Alumni relations
  - Live events etc.

Stakeholder Identification
Success of any program or implementation depends on the extent to which the needs and concerns of the related stakeholders are addressed. Stakeholders Involved:

- **Government**
- **Educational Institutions**
  Educational institutions in the higher education context include colleges and universities.
- **Learners**
  Students/Learners are the consumers or end-users of online learning and other capabilities
- **Instructors**
  Instructors guide the educational experience of students. Depending on the mode of delivery, instructors may or not have a face to face interaction with the learners
- **System designers**
  The expansion in online capabilities of educational institutions has created a market for commercialized educational content creators
- **Technology providers**
  Technology providers develop the technologies which enable delivery of online capabilities. This category of stakeholders ranges from service providers to complete learning management (LMS) providers.

Drivers of Online Capabilities

**Increased competition**
There is a common consensus that educational institutions are in a situation to cater to the need of students, staff and the community around the campus and provide them with an environment with the latest advancements in the way people connect, share and communicate.
Maximum value on investment
When an activity or event is process oriented rather than being person dependent, the value out of the investment is more. Be it recruitment, assignments, assessments for academic purposes, the migration these days has been towards online recruitment, online video assignments, e-assessments. Return on Investment may not be attractive for the learners but for the providers.

Institutional Goals – Innovation, Reputation
More than student’s demand, organization support and infrastructure rendered are essential factors towards successful adoption of any online capabilities. Thereby organizational objectives serve as the primary catalyst to e-learning development and adoption. It can be from competitive perspective or in terms of increasing the universities reputation towards attracting more enrollments. Some institutions are driven by unique circumstances like management’s aspiration to get new technology into the hands of learners, instructors to push them towards innovation in learning.

Expanding educational bandwidth
E-learning, e-books, e-library, online means of public communication and other online capabilities in academics save on physical facilities while increasing socialization. Unlike conventional set up of education, this doesn’t require physical infrastructure.

Convenience
E-learning helps full time employees in continuing education or graduation. Though not restricting to employed crowd, it helps people living far from the physical campus setup. E-learning, e-books, e-library, online databases provide flexible, dynamic learning environment. Many market studies indicate convenience and flexibility as key driver for adoption of these online capabilities. As far as e-recruitment is concerned, Expanding geographical scope of recruiting measures is value to be a significant driver.
The paper identifies that the importance of individual factors influencing the adoption of eLearning has been acknowledged from previous studies.

Cost Effective
Online capabilities on the whole have been greeted with great enthusiasm as a potential means of learning and communicating more cost effectively and conveniently. In education, the value of e-learning is seen to be in raising the quality and accessibility of the experience, therefore raising achievement and widening participation.
E-recruitment is viewed upon by both recruiters and candidates as a cost and time saving measure.

Government Policies
The quick and widespread adoption of e-learning and related online capabilities like e-books, e-library etc. owes much to government policies aiming to promote e-learning at various levels of education and digitize the entire education sector

Growing demand
There is a growing demand of meeting of minds seeking cross connect across various geographies in the minds of e-learning stakeholders (learners, developers, instructors) that drivers the demand and the persistence of this innovation acts as a key driver towards adoption of online capabilities by education institutions to meet the demand of their learner, instructor community. Learning community is towards just-in-time skilling, professional updating and ongoing knowledge acquisition which is facilitated through e-learning.
E-recruitment is inevitable with the existing trend of digitalization so that we even have digital newspapers these days. Conventional means cause the candidates interest to wane and the number of passive job browsers is drastically growing in number.

Information Control Technology (ICT)
It is predicted that nine out of ten jobs will need IT skills. It’s believed that medium reinforces the message of skilling people in IT in their learning phase itself. Thereby ICT acts as catalyst towards
adoption of e-learning. Future of learning remains inseparable from that of mass-market web technologies. Emerging platforms indicate anytime / anywhere learner support potential. The technologies (content, software systems, hardware platforms, and data communications) clearly exist to support the evolution of online capabilities.

Other significant factors driving the adoption of online capabilities

- Alleviate physical space shortages due to increased enrolments
- Institutions goal to expand educational bandwidth
- Survival strategy of few institutions with geographically dispersed student enrolments
- Increased Socialization
- Harnessing the ICT platform for effective learning
- Convenience
- Effective utilization of time for better learning

CONCLUSION
Throughout this review we have noted the significant global opportunities for e-learning. Several studies have shown that the importance of the Internet in higher education has continued to rise over the past decade. Indeed several studies have claimed that the future of universities greatly cruxes on their ability to embrace and leverage the potentials of these emerging ICTs in their business activities and strategies including learning, teaching, research and administration. E-learning is an innovative approach to learning that meets today’s digital natives. However, there is less direct evidence for the anticipated Improvement in the quality of teaching and learning materials as an insufficient number of studies have deliberately investigated this as yet.

Underlying message that emerges out of this study is that eLearning adoption would be higher if strategic decision makers recognized the dimensions of eLearning adoption, such as: academic and professional goals (Return on investment, expanding educational bandwidth), individual interests and needs (Demand, Convenience, Time and cost factor); technology interests; sources of support (Government policies, organizational support) and significance of ICT.

We recognize that additional contextual factors might influence learner’s satisfaction on top of their perceived usefulness. Effective usage of every other online capability seems connected towards orientation towards adoption and perceived satisfaction kindled by the use, contextual, technological and other environmental factors.

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