Role of Atlantic international university online-media based distance learning education system to achieve UNESCO 2030 goals towards sustainable development

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Abstract

Online-media based distance learning education system is an emerging education system in the 21st century to educate students efficiently all over the world. For this, Atlantic International University (AIU) has developed online-media based distance learning education system to educate student based on andragogy and omniology. The system accommodates students by meeting their individual needs. For this purpose, the AIU degree programs are flexible and have been designed for accelerated completion. Student reflection is vital to judge effectivity of the system. For this, Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analysis were designed and implemented to reveal real case scenario. The SWOT study identified prospects and constraints of the system with a scope to achieve UNESCO 2030 goals towards sustainable development. Findings of this study will help a wide range of audience to accommodate online-media based distance learning education system to pursue their academic endeavor.

1. Introduction

Online-media based distance learning is a method of learning by means of which a student can learn through various distance/remote communications [1-5]. By adopting this method, the student can avoid the barrier of physical presence requirement [6-10]. This is a vital benefit for the students who have many constraints, i.e., time, resource, scope, environment, health etc. By eliminating the physical appearance barrier, learning becomes accessible, affordable, amenable, easier, faster, flexible and susceptible [11-15]. Not only the young student but also the aged student can take this opportunity of online-media based distance learning to learn themselves by andragogy method [16]. Andragogy is a method

of adult learning. Thus online-media based distance learning and andragogy methodologies are interrelated. Founded in 1998, Atlantic International University (AIU) introduced a new era of online-media based distance learning education system in the United States by recognizing merits of individual student. AIU online-media based distance learning system is based on andragogy and omniology [17]. AIU recognizes student achievement from work, participation (conference, project, seminar, symposium, workshop etc.) and academic accomplishments. AIU recognizes that each student is unique and un-repeatable and deserves credit for accomplishments. Its flexible, reliable and self-pass educational systems attract students from all over the world.

Most of the students enrolled in different programs at AIU have 6 or more years of prior working experience in relevant fields. Prior academic degree and English language proficiency are enrollment requirements by the University. Each degree program offered by the University has a well developed Hand Book where program details are elaborated. Within the program, the enrolled student feels freedom to develop his/her own curriculum guided by qualified academic staffs. The compatible curriculum thus developed by the student coincides with his/her own need for development. By doing this, AIU helps the student to develop flexible, justifiable and self-pass academic curriculum. This helps the student to grow in academic as well as in working fields. Each student is unique and unrepeatable to AIU because it recognizes merits of individual student by letting the student to develop his/her own curriculum which is in contrary to traditional classroom based education system. AIU offers academic degrees in Associate, B.Sc, M.Sc, P.hD and Post Doc levels covering all disciplines. Presently AIU has three faculties. These are: School of Business & Economics, School of Science & Engineering and School of Social & Human Studies. Presently AIU students are scattered around all over the world and its Alumni are working in many reputed national & multinational organizations. Because of its uniqueness and comprehensiveness, AIU is growing exponentially in promoting higher education over the last decade. Aim of this research is to illustrate features of flexible and self-passed online-media based distance learning education system developed by AIU based on andragogy and omniology. Purpose is to demonstrate its growth potential for sustainable development by taking into account reflection of the students.

2. Problem Descriptions

Main problem associated with online-media based distance learning education system is knowledge transfer constraint between student and academia. The system effectiveness depends on efficient transfer of the knowledge. Online-media based communication system makes this transfer efficient but physical appearance gap is the main hurdle towards success of the system. In most cases, the student reflection data are absent for judicial judgment of the system. In this research, the student reflection was collected to depict real case scenario of the system. This will identify the areas where future improvement could be made towards sustainable development of the student.

3. Objective of Research

1. To analyze AIU growth potential over the decade.
2. To conduct Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analysis of online-media based distance learning education system offered by AIU.
3. To analyze prospects and constraints of online-media based distance learning education system offered by AIU.
4. To perform sustainability analysis of AIU online-media based distance learning education system based on UNESCO 2030 goals towards sustainable development.

4. Method

Statistical method is used for this real case study and SWOT analysis. Data are acquired by tally method and are plotted by MS Excel 2010 software using histogram plot. Multiple graph and histograms are plotted on the same X and Y axis for analysis and comparison purpose.

Real time data are used to predict growth potential of the AIU. Questionnaire survey process is used to get reflection from the participating students. Questionnaire survey form is prepared on category: strength, weakness, opportunity and threat. Each category is divided into four sub categories based on relevance of online-media based distance learning education system at AIU. Sub categories for strength are flexibility, compatibility, self-sustained curriculum and user friendly online-media based platform. Sub categories for weakness are gap between student and academia, difficulty in finding study material, comparability with class room based education and vulnerability. Sub categories for opportunity are world-wide acceptance, spatial freeness (not confined in any space), andragogy learning and development opportunity (omniology). Sub categories for threat are affordability (educational cost), degree valuation, local acceptance and finding job after education. Each sub category is rated by +2, +1, 0,-1 and -2 ratings. Where +2 is the best and -2 is the worst rate.

5. Results and Discussion

5.1. AIU Growth Potential Over the Decade

AIU has made exponential growth in terms of student enrollment and passing out over the last decade. Students from all over the world are enrolled at AIU to fulfill their academic dreams. AIU has well mix of students from all five continents. AIU flexible and self-pass online-media based distance learning education systems fulfill individual needs and offer sustainable development potential all through life cycle of the enrolled student.

5.2. Strength, Weakness, Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) Analysis of Online-Media Based Distance Learning Education at AIU

This study identified strength, weakness, opportunity and threat from participating students at AIU. The study depicted real case scenario of online-media based distance learning education system at AIU. This will help AIU to improve its educational quality from student reflection. Outcome of this effort is to provide AIU students sustainable education to foster their career growth endeavor afterwards.

School of science and engineering students (20 no.) are selected for the questionnaire survey.
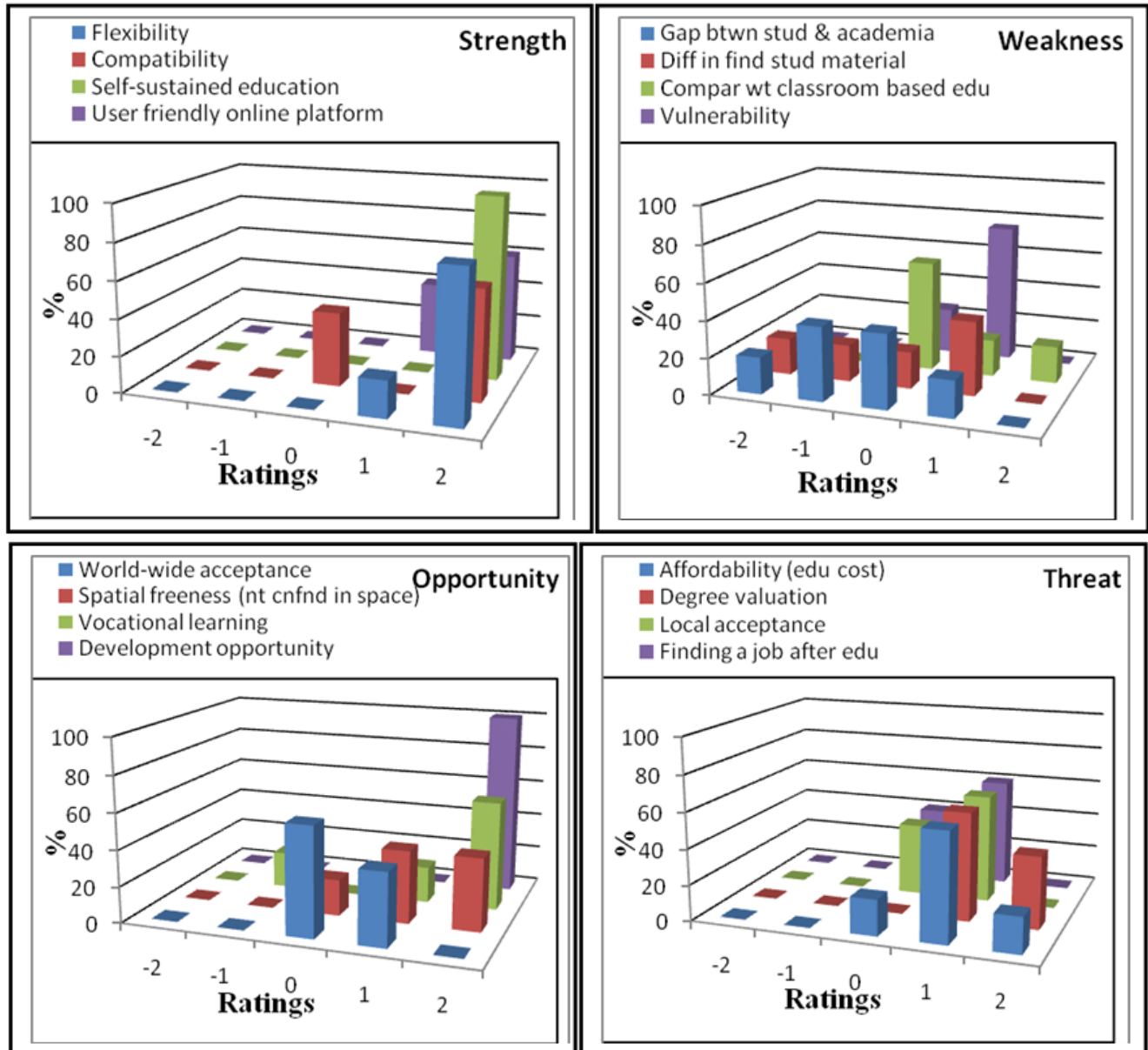

Figure 1.
Histograms of SWOT responses/reflection from participating students at AIU.

Few of the students responded. 60-100% of the students responded strength of different sub categories. Among these, 100% of the students responded their satisfaction on self-sustained education. The students also expressed their satisfaction on user friendly online-media based platform and flexibility. However 40% of the students remained neutral on compatibility of the education.

On weakness side, student responses are scattered. 0-40% of the students experienced their hardship on gap between them and academia. This is very usual for online-media based distance learning system. Students response are positive on comparability between traditional & class room based education as well as vulnerability. 0-40% of the students experienced hardship in finding their study materials. However 20-60% of the students remained neutral on weakness side of the online-media based distance learning system at AIU.

On opportunity side, student responses are very impressive. 100% of the students responded their satisfaction on development opportunity by online-media based distance learning education system (omniology). Below average students (0-40%) responded positively on spatial freeness (not confined in any space) of their education. 0-60% students responded

positively on vocational (andragogy) learning feature which is unique facility of the AIU online-media based education system. However above average students remained neutral on worldwide acceptance of their university education.

Above average students (60%) responded positively on affordability, degree valuation, local acceptance and finding job after education. However below average students (0-40%) remained neutral on various threats of their education.

5.3. Prospects And Constraints Analysis of Online-Media Based Distance Learning Education System Offered By AIU

AIU online-media based distance learning education system has prospect in various dimensions. Because of rapid growth of information technology, online-media based communication becomes easier, faster and cheaper. Taking this opportunity AIU has developed virtual campus where all sort of education materials are embedded. By using the virtual campus, its students can receive, learn and apply the gained education in sustainable way guided by the qualified academic staffs. This is a vital prospect. Moreover, AIU virtual library contains 10 million full texts and approximately 47 million bibliographic references in more than 400 languages. All enrolled student in AIU has full access to this virtual library where they can find their required study materials. AIU helps its student to make paradigm shift from stagnant to dynamic state by empowering education and learning opportunity. This helps the students/learners to take advantage of the enormous array of resources from the world's environment, in an effort to eliminate the current continuum of poverty and limitations. To this end, students are able to convert their past into a self-propelled growth module that is constantly on the move. This module veers from the accredited, traditional systems that foster limitations and an old way of teaching. Virtual campus, dynamicity, andragogy and omniology are the main prospects of AIU online-media based distance learning education system. These have proven track records in the past and present and offer potential prospect to grow in the future as well.

Gap between student and academia, difficulty in finding study material, comparability with class room based education system and vulnerability are the main constraints of online-media based distance learning education system offered by AIU as identified in questionnaire survey on the participating students. AIU strives hard to overcome these constraints by promoting amenable and sustainable education.

5.4. Sustainability of AIU Online-Media Based Distance Learning Education System Based on UNESCO 2030 Goals

AIU online-media based distance learning education system ensures sustainable education to its students on the basis of three pillars of sustainability: ecology, economy and society. To this end, AIU offers cultural weeks, online courses and research based publication initiative in recognized media on recent development of sustainability concept – UNESCO 2030 goals towards sustainable development [18]. These are:

- Goal 1- no poverty: AIU unique learning systems (andragogy and omniology) fulfill the student's individual need and promote sustainable education. These help the students to reduce their poverty in individual and collective level.
- Goal 2 - zero hunger: Reduced poverty acts as an antecedent to reduce hunger in individual and collective level.
- Goal 3 - good health and well-being: AIU sustainable education systems help the students to get suitable job/upgrade position after study. This secures stable income and ensures good health and well-being in individual and collective level.
- Goal 4 - quality education: AIU ensures quality education by recognizing merits gained in working experience/outside structured education through omniology methodology. Introduced independent research based publication in recognized media helps the students to secure global recognition. These ensure quality education which fulfills the individual needs.
- Goal 5 - gender equality: AIU online-media based education systems promote gender equality by ensuring equal respect to the gender.
- Goal 6 - clean water and sanitation: AIU cultural weeks provide each student with information on importance of clean water and hygiene practice. These ensure clean water and sanitation in individual and collective level.
- Goal 7 - affordable and clean energy: Many students are pursuing their academic programs on renewable energy systems. There, they have opportunity to create their impacts on affordable and clean energy.
- Goal 8 - decent work and economic growth: AIU educates the students to exercise the best workmanship prance and raise their income by promoting sustainable education. These ensure decent work and economic growth in individual and collective level.
- Goal 9 - industry, innovation and infrastructure: AIU cultural weeks provide each student with information on industrial revolution, innovative idea and infrastructural development. These ensure education on industry, innovation and infrastructure in individual and collective level.
- Goal 10 - reduced inequality: AIU cultural weeks provide each student with information on human right, respect and equality. These ensure reduced inequality in individual and collective level.
- Goal 11 - sustainable cities and communities: AIU sustainable education policy helps the students to acquired knowledge on sustainability. This ensures sustainable cities and communities in local, regional and global domain.
- Goal 12 - responsible consumption and production: AIU education policy helps the students to acquired knowledge on balanced growth. This ensures responsible consumption and production in individual and collective level.
- Goal 13 - climate action: AIU cultural weeks provide each student with information on adverse affect of climate change. This helps the student to act on climate change by reducing impact on the climate.
- Goal 14 - life below water: AIU cultural weeks provide each student with information on life below water which must be explored sustainably.

- Goal 15 - life on land: AIU cultural weeks provide each student with information on life on land which must be explored sustainably.
- Goal 16 - peace and justice strong institutions: AIU cultural weeks provide each student with information on peace and justice strong institutions to preserve human right in local, regional and global domain.
- Goal 17: partnerships to achieve the goal: AIU cultural weeks provide each student with information on importance of partnerships creation to achieve the goal.

6. Conclusion

Sustainability study on online-media based distance learning education system of AIU was carried out in this research. Part of the study was conducted by questionnaire survey based on the student reflection. SWOT analysis on online-media based distance learning education system at AIU revealed impressiveness. The participating students expressed their satisfaction on strength and development opportunity of the AIU online-media based distance learning education system. Like all other education systems, self-pace online-media based distance learning education system at AIU has weakness and threat. But merits of the AIU online-media based distance learning education system outweigh demerits. It identified potential sectors (gap between student and academia and degree valuation etc.) where AIU can improve in future. However, the SWOT study identified overall sustainability of unique online-media based distance learning education system at AIU. This was aided by AIU mission and vision to achieve sustainability target by complying with UNESCO 2030 goals towards sustainable development.

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