STRUCTURE SOCIAL PROBLEM COVID-19 THE PRACTICE OF - ONLINE LEARNING IN INDONESIAN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Abstract:

The COVID-19 crisis has affected a radical shift in the learning process, with conventional approaches giving way to online learning. Such an approach necessitates appropriate infrastructure and sufficient human resources. This study shows the failure of suddenly implementing online learning in an emergency. This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach by collecting data through online interviews with students and lecturers at the Kediri Institute of Islamic Studies. It finds that online education has reduced students and lecturers' independence owing to three factors. First, institutions' bureaucratic procurement channels and limited funding allocation have resulted in unmet infrastructural needs. Second, lecturers have not been prepared to adapt to online learning, which requires different attitudes and competencies than conventional learning. Third, students and their families have been unable to handle the expense of internet access in their rural homes, where such infrastructure is limited. This study recommends a more comprehensive study that contrasts the effects of COVID-19 on different types of schools and social classes, as this would provide a strong basis for evaluating the government's ability to continue providing education in emergencies.

Keywords: COVID-19, online learning, higher education, education management, human resources

Introduction

The ongoing novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has severely challenged social education. Around the world, governments and institutions have implemented physical and social distancing policies in response to COVID-19 and its rapid spread. , As a result, despite a lack of infrastructure, there has been a shift from a conventional learning approach to a much-maligned online one—one that has long been rejected as potentially transforming embedded values.¹ In other

¹ Joi L. Moore, Camille Dickson-Deane, and Krista Galyen, "E-Learning, Online Learning, and Distance Learning Environments: Are They the Same?", *Internet and Higher Education* 14 (2), (March, 2011): 129-135.. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2010.10.001., Alexander A. Kist and Lyn Brodie, "Quality of Service, Quality of Experience and Online Learning", In *Proceedings - Frontiers in Education Conference*, FIE, (October, 2012).. https://doi.org/10.1109/FIE.2012.6462223., Heri Widodo, "Potret Pendidikan di Indonesia dan Kesiapannya dalam Menghadapi Masyarakat Ekonomi Asia (MEA)", *Cendekia: Journal of Education and Society* 13 (2), (2016): 293.. https://doi.org/10.21154/cendekia.v13i2.250., Syamsuar and Reflianto, "Pendidikan dan Tantangan Pembelajaran Berbasis Teknologi Informasi di Era Revolusi Industri 4.0", *Pendidikan Dan Tantangan Pembelajaran Berbasis Teknologi Informasi di Ociety* 10 (2), (2019): 1–13., Abidah, H N Hidaayatullaah, R M Simamora, D Fehabutar, L Mutakinati, "The Impact of Covid-19 on Indonesian Education and Its Relation to the Philosophy of Science and Education (SiPoSE) 1 (1), (2020):38–49.



words, COVID-19 has created a situation in which education providers have been forced to adapt to meet human needs.

Technology adoption studies have fallen into two main categories.² The first are those that examine the infrastructure, technology literacy, and human resources necessary to implement internet-based education. Where these are lacking, there tends to be a reluctance to adopt online education technology. Kist & Brodie show that technology often fails to function correctly, disrupting the learning process.³ Furthermore, students' technology literacy correlates directly with their online learning achievements.⁴ Government regulations have similarly promoted conventional offline approaches to education. Second are studies that show that the adoption of online learning systems directly affects lecturer–student relations, promoting depersonalization and transforming their value systems.⁵ Jamil & Tasir stated that online learning systems offer only a limited platform for social involvement and emotional expression.⁶ Rose (2015) even argues that the depersonalization of education results in students "losing face," having "less empathy and ethics," and undergoing "education without relations.⁷⁷

However, such doubts and objections have been squashed in the face of the rapid spread of COVID-19. This article seeks to provide a detailed exploration of online learning in a rural institution whose students mostly come from farming families. Few studies have considered how smaller educational institutions in rural areas, where poverty is rampant, have adopted online

² Emma King and Russell Boyatt, "Exploring Factors That Influence Adoption of ELearning within Higher Education", British Journal of Educational Technology 46 (6), (2015): 1272-80. https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.12195., A.D. Salim, Efektivitas Pemanfaatan Internet Sebagai Media Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam di SMPN 22 Surabaya (Doctoral dissertation, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2016)., Nancy J. Stone, "Online Education: The How, Who, Where, and When", Proceedings the Human Factors and Ergonomics Society (October, 2017): 1237-41. of https://doi.org/10.1177/1541931213601791., Yan Wang, Xuan Liu, and Zhenhong Zhang, "An Overview of E-Learning in China: History, Challenges, and Opportunities", Research in Comparative and International Education 13 (1),: (2018):195-210. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745499918763421., Klaudia Bovermann and Theo J. Bastiaens,. "Towards a Motivational Design? Connecting Gamification User Types and Online Learning Activities." Research and Practice in Technology Enhanced Learning 15 (1), (2020): 1-18. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41039-019-0121-4.

³ Alexander A. Kist and Lyn Brodie, "Quality of Service, Quality of Experience and Online Learning",

⁴ Di Xu and Shanna S. Jaggars, "Performance Gaps Between Online and Face-to-Face Courses: Differences across Types of Students and Academic Subject Areas", *Journal of Higher Education* 85 (5), (2014): 633-659. https://doi.org/10.1353/jhe.2014.0028.

⁵ Andrea Hall and Jan Herrington, "The Development of Social Presence in Online Arabic Learning Communities." Australasian Journal of Educational Technology 26 (7), (2010). https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.1031., Alexander J.A.M. van Deursen and Jan A.G.M. van Dijk, "The Digital Divide Shifts to Differences in Usage", New Media and Society 16 (3), (2014): 507-526. https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444813487959., Rachel Buchanan, Kathryn Holmes, Gregory Preston, and Kylie Shaw, "The Global and the Local: Taking Account of Context in the Push for Technologization of Critical Perspectives Technology Education", In on and Education (2015): 227-244. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137385451_13., Thomas Wanner and Edward Palmer, "Personalising Learning: Exploring Student and Teacher Perceptions about Flexible Learning and Assessment in a Flipped University Course", Computers and Education 88, (2015): 354-369.. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2015.07.008., Ellen Rose, "...And Learning." Achieving Class a Business Excellence 56 (1), (2015): 79–94. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119205449.ch6.

⁶ Nur Jannah Binti Jamil and Zaidatun Tasir, "Students' Social Presence in Online Learning System", 195–203.

⁷ Ellen Rose, "...And Learning." Achieving Class a Business Excellence 56 (1), (2015): 79–94. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119205449.ch6.

learning. This study argues that these limitations have hindered not only the implementation of online learning but also the general adoption of technology; ultimately, this limits these institutions' ability to transfer knowledge to students.

This article explores educational institutions' current dilemma. On the one hand, educational institutions have no choice but to implement online learning—despite their limitations due to physical and social distancing policies. On the other hand, inadequate online education cannot realize the mission and vision of education. The adoption of electronic learning in the wake of COVID-19 has not been used as a reason for improving infrastructure quality and providing education for all, nor as an opportunity for transformation. Instead, these shortcomings have been justified and "accepted" as an inevitable part of life.

From Offline To Online Learning

Online learning is an alternative means of systematically applying technology to facilitate students' learning, broaden their competencies, and provide new experiences.⁸ Online learning, also known as e-learning, may be defined as using internet technologies and networks to convey interactive and innovative materials and facilitate learning.⁹ According to Wang, Shannon, & Ross, online learning tends to provide students with more effective learning strategies and increase their control, motivation, and satisfaction.¹⁰ Online learning produces new communities with a specific interest in and commitment to collaboratively and interactively learning in an electronic environment.¹¹ Yacob et al. argue that online learning has four main goals: ease of access, increased interactions, systematic learning, and flexible access to a broad spectrum of knowledge.¹² Online learning enables students to make time to discuss educational materials and thereby develop themselves collaboratively.¹³

⁸ Nancy J. Stone, "Online Education: The How, Who, Where, and When", 1237-41.

⁹ Ahmad Zanin Nu'man, "Efektifitas Penerapan E-Learning Model Edmodo Dalam Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam Terhadap Hasil Belajar Siswa (Studi Kasus : Smk Muhammadiyah 1 Sukoharjo)", *Journal of Chemical Information and Modeling* 7 (1), (2014). https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107415324.004., A.D.. Salim, *Efektivitas Pemanfaatan Internet Sebagai Media Pembelajaran Pendidikan Agama Islam di SMPN 22 Surabaya* (Doctoral dissertation, UIN Sunan Ampel Surabaya, 2016)., Mohammad Yazdi, "E-Learning Sebagai Media Pembelajaran Interaktif Berbasis Teknologi Informasi", *Jurnal Ilmua Foristek* 2 (1), (2012).

¹⁰ Chih Hsuan Wang, David M. Shannon, and Margaret E. Ross, "Students' Characteristics, Self-Regulated Learning, Technology Self-Efficacy, and Course Outcomes in Online Learning", *Distance Education* 34 (3), (2013): 302–23. https://doi.org/10.1080/01587919.2013.835779.

¹¹ Komang Setemen, "Pengembangan Evaluasi Pembelajaran Online." *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran* 43 (3), (2010):: 207–14. https://doi.org/10.23887/jppundiksha.v43i3.124., Kuan Chung Chen, and Syh Jong Jang, "Motivation in Online Learning: Testing a Model of Self-Determination Theory", *Computers in Human Behavior* 26 (4), (2010): 741-752.. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2010.01.011.

¹² Azliza Yacob, Aini Zuriyati Abdul Kadir, O. Zainudin, and A. Zurairah, "Student Awareness Towards E-Learning In Education", *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 67 (December, 2012): 93–101. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.11.310.

¹³ Yi Luo, Rui Pan, Jea Choi, Linda Mellish, and Johannes Strobel, "Why Choose Online Learning: Relationship of Existing Factors and Chronobiology." *Journal of Educational Computing Research* 45 (4), (2011): 379–97. https://doi.org/10.2190/EC.45.4.a.

Structure Social Problem Covid-19 The Practice of - Online

Online learning refers to transferring knowledge and skills through internet technology (i.e., e-learning).¹⁴ It enables students to learn at any time and place, reducing costs.¹⁵ In its practice and application, online learning is intended to increase the efficiency of learning; where conventional learning positions teachers as central and dominant actors, providing information, assignments, and evaluations, teachers monitor students' search for information in online education.¹⁶

Online learning drives students to think critically and actively search for information.¹⁷ Bovermann & Bastiaens argue that online learning motivates students to think creatively and be individually responsible for their education, as knowledge can be applied more quickly and easily.¹⁸ It also has a broader scope and more robust materials than conventional systems.¹⁹ At the same time, however, students become dependent on technology and information networks.²⁰

Implementing online learning is complex in developing countries such as Indonesia. According to Sari, many Indonesian educators are unprepared to adopt new approaches because they remain constrained by the conventional systems and mindsets.²¹ Capogna argues that this is exacerbated by educators' and students' limited access to technology due to insufficient funding and institutional support.²² The state, similarly, has only halfheartedly supported the development of information technology and integrated technology into the education system.²³ Available facilities do not maximally support independent learning, and many students lack the skills and

¹⁴ Yan Wang, Xuan Liu, and Zhenhong Zhang, "An Overview of E-Learning in China: History, Challenges, and Opportunities", *Research in Comparative and International Education* 13 (1), (2018): 195–210. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745499918763421.

¹⁵ Robert Shaw, "Heidegger and E-Learning: Overthrowing the Traditions of Pedagogy", *E-Learning and Digital Media* 11 (2), (2014): 123–34. https://doi.org/10.2304/elea.2014.11.2.123., Azliza Yacob, Aini Zuriyati Abdul Kadir, O. Zainudin, and A. Zurairah, "Student Awareness Towards E-Learning In Education", 93-101.

¹⁶ Emma King and Russell Boyatt, "Exploring Factors That Influence Adoption of ELearning within Higher Education", 1272-80., Eunice Ratna Sari, "Online Learning Community: A Case Study of Teacher Professional Development in Indonesia", *Intercultural Education* 23 (1), (2012): 63–72. https://doi.org/10.1080/14675986.2012.664755.

¹⁷ Emma King and Russell Boyatt, "Exploring Factors That Influence Adoption of ELearning within Higher Education", 1272-80.

¹⁸ Klaudia Bovermann and Theo J. Bastiaens, "Towards a Motivational Design? Connecting Gamification User Types and Online Learning Activities", *Research and Practice in Technology Enhanced Learning* 15 (1), (2020): 1–18. https://doi.org/10.1186/s41039-019-0121-4.

¹⁹ Kevin P. Brady, Lori B. Holcomb, and Bethany V. Smith, "The Use of Alternative Social Networking Sites in Higher Educational Settings: A Case Study of the e-Learning Benefits of Ning in Education", *Journal of Interactive Online Learning* 9 (2), (2010): 151-170., Euis Karwati, "Pengaruh Pembelajaran Elektronik (E-Learning) Terhadap Mutu Belajar Mahasiswa", *Jurnal Penelitian Komunikasi* 17 (1), (2014). https://doi.org/10.20422/jpk.v17i1.5., Cathy Cavanaugh, Jeanne Repetto, Nicola Wayer, and Carrie Spitler, "Online Learning for Students with Disabilities: A Framework for Success", *Journal of Special Education Technology* 28 (1), (2013). https://doi.org/10.1177/016264341302800101.

²⁰ David Mathew, "E-Learning, Time and Unconscious Thinking." *E-Learning and Digital Media* 11 (2), (2014) : 135-40. https://doi.org/10.2304/elea.2014.11.2.135.

²¹ Eunice Ratna Sari, "Online Learning Community: A Case Study of Teacher Professional Development in Indonesia", 63-72.

²² Stefania Capogna, "University and E-Learning Classes in Italy", *E-Learning and Digital Media* 9 (2), (2012): 143–56. https://doi.org/10.2304/elea.2012.9.2.143.

²³ Syamsuar and Reflianto, "Pendidikan dan Tantangan Pembelajaran Berbasis Teknologi Informasi di Era Revolusi Industri 4.0", 1-13., Heri Widodo, "Potret Pendidikan di Indonesia dan Kesiapannya dalam Menghadapi Masyarakat Ekonomi Asia (MEA)", 293.

competencies necessary for accessing online media.²⁴ Consequently, online education cannot be readily or broadly implemented.

Technology literacy is the main requirement for online learning, and Somaratne (2016) argues that its implementation has been constrained by limited socialization and poor infrastructure.²⁵ Often, students do not have adequate internet access and rarely use internet applications for their online discussions.²⁶ Xu & Jaggars argue that there is a significant gap between students' learning achievements in the conventional and online systems, with the latter being considerably lower. They add that students experience a higher level of dissatisfaction, isolation, and confusion during online learning and that their involvement in the learning process is limited.²⁷

Online learning poses several problems. If students cannot see the faces of their peers, they cannot adjust their behavior to recognize their peers' race and gender.²⁸ Indeed, they often act more individually, relying more on technology than human interactions. Meanwhile, Rath finds that literacy suffers when students rely on technology as a learning medium and material.²⁹

Technology is no longer something 'learned' by students but rather something with which students learn.³⁰ Globalization has influenced education worldwide, causing rapid structural transformations in the information and communication systems.³¹ However, this new approach to learning—identified as cheaper and more practical than 'traditional' approaches, as it does not require students to attend classes physically—cannot replace conventional systems if it is inappropriately provided.³² Indeed, Moore et al. doubt that online strategies can convey materials clearly and comprehensively.³³ There is concern that online learning can cause the depersonalization of education.³⁴

²⁴ Abidah, H N Hidaayatullaah, R M Simamora, D Fehabutar, L Mutakinati, "The Impact of Covid-19 on Indonesian Education and Its Relation to the Philosophy of 'Merdeka Belajar', 38-49., Ruth Chen, "Learner Perspectives of Online Problem-Based Learning and Applications from Cognitive Load Theory", 195-203.

²⁵ R.M.P.N. Somaratne, "Exploring the User Experiences of Collaborative Online Learning",

²⁶ Kan Min Lin, "E-Learning Continuance Intention: Moderating Effects of User eLearning Experience", *Computers and Education* 56 (2), (2011): 515-526. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2010.09.017.

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²⁹ Matthias Rath, "Media Change and Media Literacy – Ethical Implications of Media Education in The Time of Mediatization", In *ICERI* (2017) *Proceedings*. https://doi.org/10.21125/iceri.2017.2329.

³⁰ Rachel Buchanan, Kathryn Holmes, Gregory Preston, and Kylie Shaw, "The Global and the Local: Taking Account of Context in the Push for Technologization of Education", 227-244.

³¹ Alexander J.A.M. van Deursen and Jan A.G.M. van Dijk, "The Digital Divide Shifts to Differences in Usage", 507-526.

³² Wayne Journell, "Walk, Don't Run? To Online Learning", *Phi Delta Kappan* 93 (7), (2012). https://doi.org/10.1177/003172171209300711.

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³⁴ Ellen Rose, "...And Learning." *Achieving Class a Business Excellence* 56 (1), (2015): 79–94. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119205449.ch6.

Method

The research was conducted in a small city in East Java, Indonesia. In this rural institution, most students come from farming families and lack knowledge of information technology. As such, they have had difficulty transitioning from offline to online education. A lack of internet infrastructure has exacerbated this; the available bandwidth is insufficient to fulfill the needs of the institution's 12,400 students and 360 lecturers.

Data were collected through WhatsApp groups for students and lecturers. Fifteen students were interviewed to collect information regarding their learning process, experiences, obstacles, and families' backgrounds (including their income source and ability to access critical internet systems). Six lecturers who have continued teaching during this time of crisis were interviewed to reveal their involvement and experiences with online education. Administrators were interviewed online regarding the institution's physical and social distancing policies and their use of online learning to combat COVID-19.

Recognizing that online learning is a new experience for many lecturers, interviews also sought to identify the difficulties and obstacles they experienced. Technology literacy levels were also mapped during the data collection process. Various challenges were identified through interviews with persons involved in implementing emergency policies.

Results And Discussion

The adoption of education technology has been limited and sometimes even rejected. Such technology is expensive and requires a paradigm shift amongst students and educators. In the conventional top-down approach to education, the teacher has the sole authority to transfer knowledge, while students passively accept this information.

The COVID-19 pandemic has challenged this approach. Prevalent paradigms and beliefs regarding education have given way to electronic learning as institutions have committed themselves to be physical and social distancing. This study explores institutions' difficulty implementing information technology, educators' difficulty adapting to this technology, and students' ability to use such learning media.

Infrastructure and Internet-Based Education

Under the Circular of the Minister of Higher Education and Research No. 4 of 2020, online education is necessary to respond to the COVID-19 emergency. This has been implemented at the Kediri Institute of Islamic Studies through Rector No. 172/IN Circular.36/ PP.09/03/2020 requires all learning activities to be conducted online to control the COVID-19 pandemic. However, at the institutional level, this approach to education is significantly hindered by a lack of

funding. According to administrators, the Kediri Institute of Islamic Studies—under the purview of the Ministry of Religion— must consult and coordinate with the ministry before making any changes to its budget. As such, funding cannot be allocated for online learning without ministerial approval, even in the current state of emergency.

Due to these bureaucratic constraints, infrastructure improvements (such as bandwidth expansion) cannot be made quickly. Although the Center for Databases and Information Technology has created tutorials to help lecturers and students use online learning, the limited funding availability has hindered this process. Furthermore, this bureaucratic inflexibility has left administrators unable to compensate students for the cost of internet access—even though Circular requires this of the Minister of Higher Education and Research No. 4 of 2020.

The institution lacks any crisis, as it has yet to take any emergency measures to continue its educational processes or ensure that students receive the education they have paid for. Since classes were canceled, students have demanded the return of their tuition fees. This demand has not been fulfilled, as the institution must coordinate with the central government before making any financial decisions. Institutional autonomy is insufficient to address the crisis.

Lecturers' Technology Literacy

Most lecturers lack technology literacy and are thus reluctant to adopt online learning systems. Generally, they have only used information technology to find references and communicate with others. As such, most have been unable to independently understand the tutorials created by the Center for Databases and Information Technology instead of requiring support to understand the applications and the language they use.

According to the Center for Databases and Information Technology, only 30 lecturers at the Kediri Institute of Islamic Education have accessed electronic learning and classroom applications; this represents only 8% of the institution's 360 lecturers. Others use WhatsApp Groups and Zoom. Most lecturers have argued that electronic learning and classroom applications are too complicated to use, requiring new skills and abilities.

Lecturers have three main complaints. First, they feel it is too difficult to prepare the required Semester Learning Plans (which cover the materials, methods, evaluation systems, and indicators used). By ministerial guidelines, all lecturers must file these plans before teaching, and program qualification depends on their completion. Second, lecturers feel that online learning systems hinder their ability to convey their knowledge and their students' ability to voice their difficulties with course materials. Lecturers believe classroom interactions facilitate communication, allowing students to understand course materials better. Third, owing to the inflexibility of e-learning applications, lecturers perceive these programs as limiting their ability to use dynamic and innovative lesson plans.

The complaints indicate that lecturers have been shocked by a shift from conventional learning methods to electronic ones. Online learning necessitates a student-centered and participatory sharing of knowledge, one for which lecturers and students are unprepared.

Students' Objective Conditions and Obstacles

According to data from the Academic Office, 80% of the 11,600 active students at the Kediri Institute of Islamic Studies are from rural villages. In these villages, where students have resided since the lockdown policy, internet access is limited; students thus cannot readily access online classes. Online interviews indicated that students required Rp. 30,000 (approximately US\$2.00) to attend a single 75-minute class. Attending 10 classes a week would thus cost Rp. 300,000; for many, this is more than they ordinarily spend on all of their expenses combined.

To attend online classes, students also require more advanced cellular phones than they usually use. Students have generally only used their gadgets to find literature, information, and social communication. Students' families must bear a significant financial burden, exacerbated by these families' already tricky financial situation in this crisis.

Students' limited technology literacy poses another challenge. They have been unable to independently follow the tutorials prepared by the Center for Databases and Information Technology, and many have required support. The Center, however, lacks the human resources to provide the necessary guidance. This is further complicated by distance and time factors.

As a result, lecturers have avoided unfairly burdening students by tasking them independently and reviewing the literature. Students' end-of-term evaluations are based on these reviews. Materials are also provided for students to study independently. Administrative requirements for learning activities are thus met, even as students continue to experience difficulty and fail to achieve the expected learning competencies.

Conclusion

In responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indonesian government has sought to use online learning as a replacement for classroom learning. However, such online learning has been limited by a failure to improve students' competencies and general academic failure. This study shows that online learning has been sub-optimal for three reasons. First, institutions have not provided students with the necessary internet infrastructure, and inflexible and bureaucratic procurement processes have hindered efforts to install said infrastructure. Second, lecturers' lack of technology literacy has left them unwilling to utilize online learning systems. Semester Learning Plans cannot be quickly drafted; interactions are stiff and stagnant, and materials are not conveyed

in their entirety. Third, students lack technology literacy and are required to cover all costs, which has hindered the learning process.

This study has shown that online learning has been ineffective because the necessary infrastructure and human resources are lacking. Without proper preparation, the shift to online education has not provided the opportunities imagined by the government. This has been exacerbated by the state's failure to manage information and provide support. Online learning requires active participation, while students and lecturers are more familiar with the conventional lecturer-oriented system. Implementing electronic learning in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has only burdened lecturers and students. This crisis has not been used to improve the existing situation or cultivate the necessary competencies for open and participatory learning. Somewhat, shortcomings in the system have been excused and concealed.

Limitations And Opportunities For Further Research

This study has focused on only one case and cannot be readily generalized. Understanding COVID-19's broader implications for global education will ultimately require a historical approach that can understand the objective conditions that have provided the foundation for the adoption of internet technology. Such a study must compare and contrast the experiences of diverse educational institutions, as informed by their specific characteristics.

Conflict Of Interest

The authors declare they have no conflicts of interest.

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