

# Research maGma

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### **EFFECT OF PREDICTOR VARIABLES ON STUDENT'S SATISFACTION TOWARDS DISTANCE LEARNING**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

The purpose of this study is to analyze the effect of important predictor variables on student's satisfaction in distance learning. Most of the students perceive distance learning as of poor quality. Therefore, the researcher is conducting this study to find out whether it's only a student's perception or is there anything in reality, concerning the poor performance of the distance learning students and how students' satisfaction could be measured in distance learning. In the present study, descriptive method of research was used by the researcher. The design adopted in the study was survey design. Students enrolled for graduate courses in Kuvempu University Directorate of Distance Education was selected as the sample for this study in order to analyse the students' satisfaction with distance learning courses, a structured questionnaire was used, this questionnaire includes 50 items related to satisfaction, Instructor Performance, Course Evaluation and Technology and collected the data through self-administered questionnaire. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data in the study using SPSS. The statistical techniques used were Descriptive Statistics, Pearson Product Moment Correlation (r) and Multiple Linear Regression. Findings revealed a significant positive correlation exists between student's satisfaction towards distance learning with Instructor Performance, Course Evaluation and Technology. Course Evaluation is the first predicting variable followed by Instructor Performance and Technology. Quality Distance Learning requires careful attention to learning design, effective faculty training, organizational commitment to adequate program support, selection of appropriate delivery technology, and a focus on student learning outcomes.

**KEYWORDS:**

Student's Satisfaction, Distance Learning, Instructor Performance, Course Evaluation and Technology.

**INTRODUCTION:**

Distance learning may enable students who are unable to attend a traditional school setting, due to disability or illness such as decreased mobility and immune system suppression, to get a good education. Distance education may provide equal access regardless of socioeconomic status or income, area of residence, gender, race, age, or cost per student. Applying universal design strategies to distance learning courses as they are being developed (rather than instituting accommodations for specific students on an as-needed basis) can increase the accessibility of such courses to students with a range of abilities, disabilities, learning styles, and native languages.

Distance Learning may also offer a final opportunity for adolescences that are no longer permitted in the General Education population due to behavior disorders. Instead of these students having no other academic opportunities, they may continue their education from their homes and earn their degrees, offering them another chance to be an integral part of society.

Students' satisfaction surveys are important in ascertaining whether colleges and universities are fulfilling their mission. It is well known that the most important product of educational institutions is qualified graduates. In order to best prepare students so that they are sought after by employers upon graduation, an effective curriculum is needed. Students must understand the value of their education and be satisfied with their overall experience in order to promote and support their higher educational institution as a student and as an alumnus.

**KUVEMPU UNIVERSITY DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION**

With the objectives of Education of Future, Education for All and Life Long Learning, the Directorate of Distance Education of the Kuvempu University, has been established during 2002-03, through a Statute, Under Section 40(1) Read with Section 4(1) of K.S.U. Act 2000, with a well-laid down Regulations governing its functions. The DDE commenced with M.A, M. Com and M.Sc., (Mathematics) Courses, to begin with.

The DDE has introduced many courses during the year 2003-04 among which P.G. courses in Chemistry, Physics, Botany, Zoology and Environmental Science are included. This is a land mark in the history of 15 years of existence of the University. Kuvempu University is the first to take up this venture of offering P.G. Science courses through Distance Mode in the state of Karnataka. In the same year, P.G. Diplomas in: Tourism, Folklore, Kannada Computer Application, Modern Kannada Literature, English, Translation Studies, Functional Hindi, Tourism, Social Psychology, Financial Institutions and Markets, Business Administration, Human Resource Management, Marketing Management, Sports Management, Plant Tissue Culture, Hydrogeology, Dairy Science and Genetics and U.G. Diplomas in Panchayat Raj and Human Rights were introduced. The DDE also began to offer U.G. courses of B.A. (with nine different Optional subjects), B.Com., and B.B.M. All these courses are being received well by the education seekers across the country. The increasing demand for Legal Education has been met by the DDE (beginning 2003-04) through introducing LL.M. (Business Law) course, which has been receiving good response from the legal fraternity seekers all over the country. During the year 2004-05, the University has also offered P.G. course in Biotechnology to meet the growing demand for such a course in these days of advancement in the field of Science Education. In the year 2005-06, Kuvempu

University introduced B.Sc. (PCM & CBZ) to which University has sizeable admissions. Added to this, B.Sc. (IT) and M.Sc. (IT) courses are being offered, to a large number of candidates, following Semester Scheme.

The Distance Education programmes are also a part of the University's outreach programmes to foster University-Society relationship with the motto of "Education for All", to take quality education to the doorsteps of desirous individuals who want to take up higher education, for the discontinued who could not take up regular education, housewives and employees who want to improve and enhance their knowledge. The University firmly believes that education and seeking knowledge is a lifelong learning concept.

#### **NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY:**

Most of the students perceive distance learning as of poor quality. Therefore, the researcher is conducting this study to find out whether it's only student's perception or is there anything in reality, concerning the poor performance of the distance learning students and how students' satisfaction could be measured in distance learning. The distance learning in this study refers to the use of the Internet, audio and video lectures along with correspondence of the instructors as a medium of instruction as well as a source of information etc., Consistent with this rationale, the main purpose of this study is to examine the relationship between student satisfaction and the following variables of the distance learning environment: Instructors' performance, course evaluation, student-instructor interaction, Physical Environment, Technology, Flexibility, Task Orientation and Personal Involvement. Students enrolled for Undergraduate and Post graduate courses in Kuvempu University Directorate of Distance Education will be selected as the sample for this study. The results confirm the reliability and validity of the six factors of distance learning satisfaction, which are Instructor Performance, Course Evaluation, Physical environment, Technology, Study material and Orientation program. These factors can be understood as the way the course content is delivered, feedback and interactions take place with instructors, effectiveness of instructors, students learning experiences, workload and evaluation criteria in their distance courses, Instructor Performance, Course Evaluation, Physical environment, Technology, Study material, Orientation programme means of communication, the simplicity of system operation for the learners, and the quality of content the students receive. This also may contribute to the students feeling a greater sense of support, since they have ongoing and regular access to their instructors and other students. The purpose of this study is to analyze the effect of important predictor variables on student satisfaction in distance learning.

#### **STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:**

"Effect of Predictor Variables on Student's Satisfaction towards Distance Learning."

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- ✦ To study the Relationship between Student Satisfaction in Distance Learning with Associated Factors.
- ✦ Instructor Performance, Course Evaluation and Technology are not predictors of student satisfaction in Distance learning programme.

#### **RESEARCH HYPOTHESES**

- ✦ There is no significant relationship between student satisfaction towards distance learning with

associated factors.

✦ There is no significant difference in the contribution of predictor variables (Instructor Performance, Course Evaluation and Technology) in predicating the criterion variable (Student Satisfaction in Distance Learning Programme).

#### **VARIABLES:**

Independent variables are the cause and the dependent variable is the effect. In the present investigation six independent variables were taken up with one dependent variable. The independent variables in respect of the present study are Instructor Performance, Course Evaluation and Technology and the dependent variable is Students satisfaction.

#### **RESEARCH METHOD:**

The descriptive survey method was used in the present investigation. The design adopted in the study was correlation -cum- causal comparative design. The design did not entail any experiment or the manipulation of any independent variable. Correlation method, to establish the relationship between two or more variables and Causal- comparative method, to know the cause and effect relationship between two or more variables.

#### **SAMPLING:**

For this study the Researcher was used Convenience sampling method. The researcher was selected 05 Study centres of Kuvempu University Directorate Distance Education across Karnataka. The researcher selected 200 Undergraduate and Postgraduate students from main campus study centre (KUDDE) and 200 Undergraduate and Postgraduate students from the other study centres of Kuvempu University.

#### **INSTRUMENTATION**

**Students' Satisfaction in distance learning courses:** Questionnaire contains 20 items related to the students' satisfaction in distance learning courses and it is a five-point scale with response pattern of Extremely Satisfied, Very Satisfied, Moderately Satisfied, Slightly Satisfied and Not at all Satisfied. The item to item correlation for that the cronbach's alpha technique was employed. The item validity was computed based on cronbach's alpha Corrected Item-Total Correlation. The reliability test was found to be 0.8.

**Opinion towards Instructor Performance, Course Evaluation and Technology of Distance Learning Courses:** Questionnaire contains 30 items and 10 items each in three factors viz., Instructor Performance, Course Evaluation, Technology related to distance learning courses and it is a five-point scale with response pattern of Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree and Strongly Disagree. The item to item correlation for that the cronbach's alpha technique was employed. The item validity was computed based on cronbach's alpha Corrected Item-Total Correlation.

#### **TREATMENT OF THE DATA:**

The Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23.0 was used to analyse the data. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to describe and summarize results.

## MAJOR FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

Major Findings of the study are as follows.

- ✦ Positive high degree correlation exists between Student Satisfaction in Distance Learning with Course Evaluation Course Evaluation is more influenced on Student Satisfaction in Distance Learning.
- ✦ Positive good correlation exists between Student Satisfaction in Distance Learning with Instructor performance and Technology. Factors like Instructor performance and Technology are influenced on Student Satisfaction in Distance Learning.
- ✦ Instructor Performance(X1), Course Evaluation(X2) and Technology(X3) are the significant Predictors of Student Satisfaction in Distance Learning. ( $F=102.14$ ,  $p<0.01$ ). 48.2 percent of the variation in Student Satisfaction in Distance Learning accounted for whatever is measured by Instructor Performance(X1), Course Evaluation(X2) and Technology(X3) taken together.
- ✦ The Course Evaluation(X2) is the First Contributor/predictor followed by Instructor Performance(X1) and Technology(X3).

## IMPLICATIONS:

- ✦ The University student support system should include student training, technology and technical assistance, library and information services, registration, assessment, and advising.
- ✦ University to provide Student assessment in a technology-based environment.
- ✦ University/Study centres must be provided for quality Resource materials and Laboratory facility for Science Students.
- ✦ The university management support or assistance (monitory and technical) should be on a continuous basis for maintaining and improving the Distance Learning Courses.
- ✦ Study centres are facilitate to learners, can access e-libraries, e-learning and virtual classrooms.
- ✦ Study centres are conducting course wise Tutorials must be organizing for learners.
- ✦ Study centres must make space available and study group use at times suitable and convenient for learners.
- ✦ Study centres increase the frequency of the contact/orientation programmes.
- ✦ Quality Distance Learning requires careful attention to learning design, effective faculty training, organizational commitment to adequate program support, selection of appropriate delivery technology, and a focus on student learning outcomes.
- ✦ Quality Study materials must be provided for learners.

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