Research Conference 2021

Challenges and Prospects of Business Education in a Post Covid-19 World

Wednesday, 07 July 2021

Online event

Overview

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has been a watershed and a catalyst for unprecedented changes and disruptions in higher education. A sector that has previously remained most insulated from global forces, the emergence of the pandemic, compounded by the proliferation of technology, has forced stakeholders in higher education not only to adapt to the disruptions, but to evolve and re-invent itself.

Tentative Program
All times are in Central European Summer Time (CEST)

14:00 - 14:05   **Welcome Address**
by Dr. Suddha Chakravartti

14:05 - 14:15   **Keynote Address**
by Dr. Michael Williams

14:15 - 14:45   **The Fourth Industrial Revolution, COVID-19, Educational Disruption and Flexible Learning: Exploring the potential of the TPACK Framework.**
by Dr. Jon-Hans Coetzer

14:45 - 15:15   **Reflecting on Pedagogy of Online Learning Environments in the Post COVID-19 World**
by Dr. Lucia Morales
(with Dr. Daniel Rajmil & Dr. Jon-Hans Coetzer)

15:15 - 15:45   **Examining the impact of Covid - 19 on Higher Education. How Universities responded to the emerging need for innovative and highly engaging learning environments?**
by Konstantinos Biginas, SFHEA, CMgr, FCMI
(with Dr. Aaron Taylor & Dr. Gratien J.J. Pillai)

15:45 - 16:15   **The Impact of COVID-19 on Business Schools – A Threat or an Opportunity to Executive Education?**
by Dr. Daniel Rajmil
(with Dr. Lucia Morales & Dr. Jon-Hans Coetzer)

16:15 - 16:30   **Break**

16:30 - 17:00   **Mature Undergraduate Students' Satisfaction with Online Teaching During the COVID-19**
by Tayyaba Zia
(with Fayyaz Qureshi, Sarwar Khawaja)

17:00 - 17:30   **Higher Education and Sustainable Development Goals after Covid-19 Pandemic: Rethink or Retrench?**
by Dr. Anastasia Naranova-Nassauer

17:30 - 18:00   **Promoting Cultural Diversity in Online Learning Environments**
by Antonia Koumproglu FHEA, MCMI
(with Konstantinos Biginas, SFHEA, CMgr, FCMI)

18:00 - 18:30   **Business Education in the Era of COVID-19: A Catalyst for Personal, Professional, and Organizational Transformation.**
by Dr. Michael Williams
(with Dr. Tami Moser)

18:30 - 18:40   **Closing Statements**
by Dr. Anastasia Naranova-Nassauer

Speaker Profiles

Dr. Michael Williams: *Dean, School of Business and Management, Thomas Edison State University.*

Dr. Tami Moser: *Chair, Professor of Pharmacy Administration, Coordinator, Center of Excellence in Pharmacy Leadership, Innovation, and Quality Outcomes, Southwestern Oklahoma State University.*

Dr. Jon-Hans Coetzer: *Academic Dean,EU Business School Online Campus.*

Dr. Lucia Morales: *Researcher, School of Accounting and Finance, Technological University Dublin.*

Dr. Anastasia Naranova-Nassauer: *Research Coordinator & Lecturer, EU Business School & Associate Editor, ONResearch.*

Konstantinos Biginas SFHEA, CMgr, FCMI: *Senior Lecturer, University of East London & Lecturer, EU Business School, Online Campus.*

Dr. Aaron Taylor: *Principal Lecturer, University of Sunderland.*

Dr. Gratien J.J. Pillai: *Senior Lecturer, Coventry University London.*

Dr. Daniel Rajmil: *Professor of International Relations/Director of Master in Conflict, Peace & Security/Director of Master in Diplomacy and International Affairs, University Oberta de Catalunya.*

Tayyaba Zia: *Research Associate & Associate Lecturer, Oxford Business College*

Antonia Koumproglu FHEA, MCMI*: Senior Lecturer, University of East London & Lecturer, EU Business School, Online Campus.*

Dr. Fayyaz Qureshi: *Director of Research, Oxford Business School.*

Sarwar Khawaja: *Chairman of Business Development, Oxford Business School.*

Dr. Suddha Chakravartti: *Head of Research, EU Business School & Editor-in-Chief, ONResearch.*

Abstracts

THE FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION, COVID-19, EDUCATIONAL DISRUPTION AND FLEXIBLE LEARNING: EXPLORING THE POTENTIAL OF THE TPACK FRAMEWORK

Jon-Hans Coetzer

ABSTRACT: The Coronavirus brought massive disruption of immense proportion. Some of the immediate and visible impacts resulting in hybrid remote work, the growth of e-commerce, and the adoption of automation and artificial intelligence. Educational institutions and universities moved classes online. In this context both businesses and business schools are having to manage, plan, and deliver value within the framework of the dual forces of COVID-19 and the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). This requires a review of how business schools can offer a business curriculum with technology in order to support the ongoing changes in business models and consumer behavior. The dual forces place a premium requirement on adaptability and self-directed learning and thinking. What then is the role for the traditional business school curriculum and lecturer in this self-directed online learning environment? In this context, the paper will explore the pedagogical framework of transformational learning in the digital age. The author will make use of the TPACK framework to review and propose specific online teaching strategies by considering (i) content knowledge; (ii) pedagogical knowledge; and (iii) technological knowledge, can be used to interact in value creation for both businesses and adult learners in a synchronous online classroom setting.

Keywords: flexible learning, TPACK framework, teaching strategies, content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, technological knowledge, synchronous online classroom.

REFLECTING ON PEDAGOGY OF ONLINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS IN THE POST COVID-19 WORLD

Lucía Morales, Daniel Rajmil, Jon-Hans Coetzer

ABSTRACT: The COVID-19 pandemic has created significant hardships to the world across all industries and sectors, with a substantial impact on nations' educational systems. Students have been severely affected, and the shock's magnitude will undoubtedly have lasting and unknown consequences for learners during the years to come. Schools and Higher Education Institutions worldwide closed their doors in 2020 as a response to COVID-19 health measures that required economic lockdown and social distancing actions aiming to counteract the spread of the virus. Within this context, many schools and universities transitioned their courses to a remote or online learning format seeking to maintain some level of educational continuity. Unfortunately, as educators with a substantial level of experience teaching in online and traditional learning environments, we cannot say that the transition has been smooth for learners, neither for educators that were asked and expected to immerse in a new learning environment unfamiliar to them. A new variety of challenges became apparent as educators with insufficient training and/or experience in online learning environments transitioned to some sort of online learning overnight. The outcome has been quite damaging, as lack of knowledge of online education led to educators bombarding learners with unplanned content that led to uncountable hours spent in front of a webcam. Online distance education is more than simply uploading educational content; that combined with the lack of experience and understanding of online learning environments and their intrinsic features and pedagogical approach has led to considerable levels of frustration among students. In addition, the levels of distress, dissatisfaction, and isolation added to students as they have to cope with our new reality of living with COVID-19 and keeping up with their studies are unknown. In this paper, we reflect on the impact of COVID-19 on online learning environments as we aim to explore the literature and integrate our experiences as experts on online and traditional learning environments as we explore the impact of the global health crisis on education and, in particular, on the student community.

Keywords: challenges, cross-culture, diversity, inclusion, pedagogy, skillset; technology.

EXAMINING THE IMPACT OF COVID - 19 ON HIGHER EDUCATION. HOW UNIVERSITIES RESPONDED TO THE EMERGING NEED FOR INNOVATIVE AND HIGHLY ENGAGING LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS?

Konstantinos Biginas, Gratien JJ Pillai, Aaron Taylor

ABSTRACT: The global pandemic has had a significant impact on Higher Educational institutions to deliver high quality learning experiences for its learners across the world. Institutions which embraced technology and online platforms in its delivery of courses prior to the pandemic found it much easier to make the transition to online delivery mode as opposed to counterparts who had heavily relied on traditional methods of delivering classes to students. Most of the students who decided to join universities, were very much keen on a 'campus' experience which included having face to face classes. Students were of the view that online sessions did not provide them with the same experience and were not getting value for money. Universities have been put under tremendous pressure to address the concerns of the students and were required to act immediately. Universities who were willing to invest on new innovative platforms were able to create a much more interactive learning experience for their learners. Rebranding the traditional terms such as lectures and seminars to 'learning journey' and creating a community page within each course and module page provided students with the opportunity to engage actively with their fellow students and share different perspectives in a virtual space. This new and innovative approach provided the students with the opportunity to develop new technological skills which are vital for their future employment prospects. The new online platforms also enabled students to take control of their learning and they were able to access materials and content from across the world.

Keywords: learning journey, online education, higher education, innovation, student experience.

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON BUSINESS SCHOOLS – A THREAT OR AN OPPORTUNITY TO EXECUTIVE EDUCATION?

Daniel Rajmil, Lucía Morales, Jon-Hans

ABSTRACT: COVID-19 has impacted the educational sector significantly and, business schools around the world have been challenged on their responses to executive education. Business schools that have been capable of developing and building alliances with learning platforms and have created online learning expertise have moved ahead. At the same time, those who transitioned to Emergency Response Teaching without much planning face additional challenges and will need to reconsider their educational model. Undoubtedly, the educational landscape is changing, and online education will play a critical role in shaping executive education in the years to come, with technology becoming a vital and central player. The labour market demands flexibility, adaptability, and rapid responses to a fast-moving working environment that requires different skills. The transition towards short courses for business executive education has been identified as a successful strategy as various types of learners could access an educational offer that was not available to them before. The Imperial College Business School in London is an example of how a quick movement towards digital programmes could adapt existing courses and make them available to their students over a short period of time, contributing to broadening the corporate education market by addressing learners demands under very challenging learning conditions. The pandemic has had a significant impact on the pace of change of executive education, and the new reality is that those schools that can adapt and respond to change quickly and efficiently will be the ones that will prosper and progress in the future. The global health crisis is forcing business schools to reconsider their existing educational models. In addition, employers seem to be shifting from education to skills and experience, where a degree is no longer sufficient to secure a job and respond to employers' needs. Employers are assessing to which extent their future employees have developed skills needed to perform, to which extent they will be able to keep building on those skills while they adapt and adjust to fluctuating market conditions. Within the outlined context, this paper seeks to offer critical insights on the impact of COVID-19 in business education and, by reflecting on the potential transition from education to skills training, that might bring the desired effects to the business sector and contribute to sustainable economic development.

MATURE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH ONLINE TEACHING DURING THE COVID-19

Tayyaba Zia, Fayyaz Qureshi, Sarwar Khawaja

ABSTRACT: The online teaching accelerated at an unprecedented pace in the wake of the physical closure of educational institutions in the United Kingdom on 23 March 2020 due to the COVID-19 crisis. This study is based on a survey of mature undergraduate students in private higher education institutes in the South of England and their experience with online teaching during the COVID-19. The questionnaire was sent out to mature undergraduate students studying in three private higher education institutes, and we received 225 responses. A quantitative approach was used to analyse the results. Majority of students 95% were using online teaching for the first time, and they were novice with the online teaching software (Zoom and Microsoft Teams, etc.). They were provided with training for online teaching, especially how to use the software, and they were satisfied with the training. The study also identified challenges students faced during the online teaching such as weak Internet connection, old devices (computer and laptop etc.) low level of digital competency especially among older students, lack of technical support from the institute and stressful transition period. The final findings from the study indicated that the quick decision of switching to online teaching was right, and the majority of students found online teaching excited. Consequently, the majority of students wanted to continue online teaching after the COVID-19 because it provides ease and convenience, no travelling time & cost, freedom and autonomy. The online teaching training for students could be made more effective, and private higher education institutions could also address challenges such as weak Internet connection and old devices (computer, laptop, etc.).

Keywords: COVID-19, mature undergraduate students, online teaching, student satisfaction and private higher education institutions.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS AFTER COVID-19 PANDEMIC: RETHINK OR RETRENCH?

Anastasia Naranova-Nassauer

ABSTRACT: It is widely accepted that Covid-19 pandemic had far-reaching consequences for higher education, which could compromise the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The pandemic disrupted business and society, rising a major question: will the crisis propel global society to rethink the ways of achieving greater equity and opportunity or will it retrench the existing inequities? Higher education constitutes a part of the SDGs and represents an approach to achieving other SDGs. It affects a wide variety of stakeholders through its functions of education, research, and service. Higher Educational Institutions (HEIs) such as universities are important members of local communities and make valuable contributions to sustainable development at the local level. The impact of Covid-19 pandemic on higher education has been widely researched by scholars, however, there is a relative scarcity of research on the effect of pandemic on higher education's connection with and contribution to the global pursuit of SDGs. This developmental paper discusses how SDGs could be applied as a lens to re-imagine higher education and evoke positive change. Using qualitative approach, it examines whether SDGs could bring a new paradigm to facilitate post-Covid recovery in higher education through advancing the importance of a knowledge-led society and the value of expertise. An additional focus is provided for understanding the emerging effects on SDGs interconnectedness through new conditions under the influence of the pandemic.

Keywords: SDGs, higher education, equality, Covid-19.

PROMOTING CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN ONLINE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

Antonia Koumproglou, Konstantinos Biginas

ABSTRACT: Online education has grown in popularity in recent years. With the arrival of the COVID-19 pandemic, online learning has become especially important as an alternative to traditional classrooms. As more instruction in higher education takes place online, it is critical to find ways to shape online environments that create a sense of community and positive learning experiences for all students. In this paper, we are going to address the critical importance of promoting cultural diversity that extends beyond the traditional categories of ethnicity and race to embrace individual differences in education, gender, sexual orientation, ability, religion, and socio-economic status. Our argument for culturally responsive instruction design and delivery calls for the integration of diverse student voices and experiences, individual learning preferences, and the inclusion of teaching methods that are responsive to individual cultural learning processes. Our aim is to critically discuss the challenges of managing diverse student populations in online environments and make recommendations for a truly inclusive and equitable online educational classroom environment.

Keywords: Online education; diversity management; individual differences; cultural intelligence; higher education.

BUSINESS EDUCATION IN THE ERA OF COVID-19

A CATALYST FOR PERSONAL, PROFESSIONAL, AND ENTERPRISE TRANSFORMATION

Michael Williams, Tami Moser

ABSTRACT: We have been called to change. American architect, systems theorist, author, designer, inventor, and futurist R. Buckminster Fuller wrote *We are called to be the architect of the future, not its victims*. The COV-19 Pandemic has changed our ways of life, interpersonal interactions, and modalities of conducting business.The socio-economic carnage for this catastrophic global event witnessed the following in America; currently, June 2021 nearing 600,000 deaths, May 2020, 23 million Americans receiving unemployment benefits, and agency mismanagement and fragmented messaging concerning all aspects of the Pandemic. As a result, organizations of all types worldwide shifted their focus from enterprise growth and sustainability to reinventing themselves to survive. As a result, leaders in business and higher education needed to chart the future of their organizations with minimal data and no experience associated with a modern-day global pandemic. The immediate questions become "how do we survive?" and "what will we become?" In higher education, institutional leaders, specifically deans and chairs of schools of business and closely related professional schools worldwide, have been engaging government, industry, community leaders in dialogue and discussion focused on reimaging the cultural structures and business practices that are evolving and reframing the global economy. As business education leaders, we have responded to Dr. Fuller's call *to be the architects of the future and not its victims*" by leading and reshaping business and management education during and toward the Post-COVID-19 environment. Partnering with fellow higher education leaders, business professionals, and entrepreneurs, we are re-envisioning the cultural contexts, business knowledge competencies, and professional skills needed to reimagining and rebuilding companies and fuel entrepreneurial ventures revitalized cultures economies, and countries. Our objective is to transform business and management education to meet the academic and professional requirements of the emerging *New World of Work*. With a change in mind, we offer the concept of *Metanoia* - a foundational "*shift-of-mind* as a conceptual frame for thought and action for transforming our world. The shift – our collective ability to adapt to the global business conditions of the Post-COVID-19 environment and then how we innovate, adopting new ways of thinking about and advancing business and management education, anticipating and meeting workplace requirements for performance and productivity. Our world has radically changed. What we knew concerning businesses' purpose and practice is fading and increasingly unfamiliar. Therefore, a first step toward framing the *New World of Work* is jointly creating a reimagined vision of global business,

knowledge, competencies, and skills necessary to realize it. In doing so, we can determine what is relevant and viable from current business and management school degree programs, curricula, and instructional practices and use these insights and materials as the foundation for *Creating the Future Today*.

The COV-19 Pandemic is a *Call-to-Arms!*

Using this research conference as our global platform for evaluating the *Challenges and Prospects of Business Education in a Post Covid-19 World,* let us commit ourselves and work collectively to become *the architects of business and management education* for this decade and beyond!

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