The Feasibility and Sustainability of e-Learning Systems in Vietnam:
Higher Education Transformation in the Digital Era

Nguyen Thi Thanh Hoa
Hanoi University of Science and Technology, Vietnam

Kyoung Ryoul Min
Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea

Sung Min Park*
Sungkyunkwan University, South Korea

Abstract  E-learning is not a new topic in scientific research particularly and in education system generally. Many countries in the world have adopted e-learning to optimize the teaching and learning not only in higher education but also in all levels of education. In such scenario of globalization, Vietnam is not an exception. However, there is still much suspicion about the feasibility of e-learning in Vietnam. This study analyze the benefits that e-learning brings about to enhance the feasibility and sustainability in Vietnam. From that point, this research mainly aims at conducting the survey on e-learning for higher education. The findings of the study suggests that e-learning environment need supports from government such as ICT infrastructure, political support, financial support and institutional support. The users also show their satisfaction on e-learning and have positive opinions about e-learning efficiency.

Key Words: E-learning, education transformation, learning satisfaction, learning efficiency

INTRODUCTION

It is nearly 16 years since appearing in Vietnam, the Internet has been having great impact on the cultural life of Vietnamese people. It can be realized that the Internet has increasingly proved its significant role in every aspect of the social life, especially in the field of education and training. During the past few decades, education and training reform has become a global trend. Science and technology in the world have developed strongly making great advances mostly in electronics, telecommunication, informatics and ICT. Through the technology, educators easily
get approach to the lessons, knowledge by getting access to the Internet or directly connect with their colleagues. Thanks to ICT, learners and educators themselves can also consider evaluating teaching and learning capacity nationwide. After many years of implementation, e-learning process in Vietnam has gradually gained the first achievements as a whole. However, besides advantages, the process of implementing e-learning in Vietnam still meets many difficulties because of the shortage of suitable policies to realize an e-education in Vietnam.

Thus, this study is to analyze and understand the advantages and disadvantages of e-learning application in the Vietnamese education system. From that point, the study will contribute to enhance the feasibility of e-learning in Vietnam to realize the transformation of higher education in the digital era. Through this study, we will answer the following questions: (1) what conditions facilitate e-learning environment in Vietnam?; (2) how is the interaction between e-learning and participants? What are the outcomes and how to evaluate?; (3) how is the transformation process of higher education in the current digital era in Vietnam?; and (4) how to realize the feasibility and sustainability of e-education in Vietnam successfully?

Overview of e-Learning in Vietnam

There are many definitions related to e-learning and have been used as a replacement for e-learning such as online learning, distance learning, technology based learning, web-based learning, computer-based learning, etc. We should look at these definitions carefully to use the term of e-learning precisely. Even though many researchers give no clear definition compared with online learning, web-based learning, and others (Dringus and Cohen, 2005; Khan, 2001; Triacca, Bolchini, Botturi, and Inversini, 2004; Wagner, 2001), e-learning can be defined as any educational offering that makes use of ICT for asynchronous, decentralized content presentation and distribution, as well as for interpersonal communication and interaction (Halstead and Billings, 2005, p. 424).

Since its appearance in 2007, e-learning has been boosted in Vietnam with an estimated value of almost 50 million US Dollars. E-learning market in Vietnam has a growth rate of 46% passing Thailand, Malaysia and China as of March 2014. This growth rate is associated with the growth rate of internet users in Vietnam. As in the White book on Information Communication Technology 2014 issued by Ministry of Information and Communication; by 2013 Vietnam had 33 million internet users, increasing from 31 million in 2012 accounting for 37% of the total population. On the other hand, Vietnam has 90 million inhabitants with the age group of 15–64 accounting for over 50%. Many of the youth are willing to receive new learning method, replacing the traditional learning.