



# Graduate School Students' Attitude and Performance in Online Learning

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## KEYWORDS

Graduate school, students, attitude, performance, online learning

## ABSTRACT:

The shift towards online learning in higher education has become a prominent trend, with graduate schools increasingly adopting this mode of instruction. This study investigates the attitudes and performance of graduate school students in the context of online learning. By employing a mixed-methods approach, including surveys and academic performance data analysis, the researchers explored the factors influencing graduate students' perceptions and behaviors in online learning environments. The findings reveal that graduate students' attitudes towards online learning are multifaceted, shaped by factors such as prior online learning experiences, technological proficiency, and instructor support. Additionally, they examined the impact of these attitudes on academic performance, shedding light on the correlation between student engagement, participation, and their overall success in online graduate programs. This research offers valuable insights for educators and administrators seeking to enhance online learning experiences for graduate students. It underscores the importance of fostering a positive attitude towards online learning and provides recommendations for improving the design and delivery of online courses to optimize graduate student performance and satisfaction in virtual educational environments.

## Introduction

In the era of digital transformation and rapidly evolving educational paradigms, the landscape of higher education has witnessed a remarkable shift towards online learning modalities. Among those who have embraced this transformative journey are the esteemed graduate students of the Guimaras State University (GSU). The advent of online learning has introduced unprecedented flexibility and accessibility to their academic pursuits. However, as this transition continues to unfold, understanding the attitudes and performance of graduate students in the realm of online learning remains a compelling area of inquiry.

The integration of online learning tools and platforms has become a hallmark of contemporary higher education. GSU, in line with global trends, has taken significant strides to offer graduate programs through online channels. To ensure the effectiveness and success of these initiatives, it is imperative to delve into the

attitudes and performance of the students engaged in online learning.

Attitude and performance are intertwined aspects of the educational experience. Attitudes towards online learning can significantly influence the engagement and success of graduate students. Therefore, investigating these attitudes and their correlation with academic performance is essential to tailor effective support mechanisms.

Online learning environments present unique challenges, such as self-motivation, time management, and technological proficiency. Understanding how GSU's graduate students navigate and overcome these challenges is vital for optimizing the online learning experience.

GSU, in its steadfast commitment to providing quality education, seeks to continually enhance its educational delivery methods. This study serves as an invaluable resource to inform decision-making processes, pedagogical strategies, and student support services,



ultimately fostering an environment conducive to the academic success of its graduate students.

## Objectives

1. To assess the attitudes of GSU's graduate students towards online learning, encompassing aspects such as motivation, comfort level, and perceived benefits and challenges.
2. To analyze the academic performance of graduate students in online learning environments, considering factors like grades, completion rates, and engagement levels.
3. To identify the factors that influence graduate students' attitudes and performance in online learning, including personal attributes, support mechanisms, and technological proficiency.
4. To provide informed recommendations and insights that can guide GSU in optimizing its online learning programs, support services, and educational strategies to better meet the needs of graduate students.

## Theoretical Framework

A relevant theoretical framework for anchoring the study is the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM). TAM is a well-established theory that explores individuals' adoption and acceptance of technology, including digital learning platforms. This theory can help you understand how and why graduate students in the context of Guimaras State University perceive and engage with online learning. Here's a brief explanation: The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), initially proposed by Davis in 1989, is grounded in the idea that users' acceptance of technology is influenced by two primary factors: perceived ease of use and perceived usefulness. In your study, you can use TAM to examine how graduate students perceive online learning tools and platforms, and how these perceptions relate to their attitudes and performance. Here's how TAM can be applied to your research:

TAM posits that users are more likely to accept and use technology if they perceive it as easy to use. In the context of your study, you can investigate whether graduate students find online learning platforms user-friendly and accessible. Assessing their perceptions of the ease of navigating online courses, submitting assignments, and participating in discussions can provide insights into this aspect.

TAM also suggests that users are more inclined to accept technology if they believe it offers practical benefits. In your study, you can explore how graduate students perceive the usefulness of online learning in terms of enhancing their academic performance, providing flexibility, and facilitating their learning goals. This perception can influence their attitudes and engagement in online courses.

By anchoring their study on the TAM framework, the researchers systematically examined the relationships between perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, attitudes towards online learning, and academic performance among graduate students at Guimaras State University. This theoretical lens has provided a structured foundation for understanding the dynamics of technology acceptance and its impact on online learning experiences.

## Methodology

This research study, conducted at the Guimaras State University, adopted a mixed-methods research design to comprehensively investigate graduate school students' attitudes and performance in online learning. This approach allowed for the triangulation of data and a holistic understanding of the research questions.

The participants in this study comprised graduate school students enrolled in online courses at the Guimaras State University. A purposive sampling strategy was employed to ensure diversity in terms of age, program of study, and experience with online learning. The sample included both current students and recent graduates.

A structured online survey was administered to gather quantitative data on graduate students' attitudes towards online learning. The survey included items related to perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, motivation, and engagement with online courses.

Academic records, including grades and course completion rates, were collected from the university's records to assess students' performance in online courses.

In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with a subset of graduate students to explore their experiences, challenges, and perceptions of online learning. The interviews allowed for a deeper understanding of the factors influencing attitudes and performance.



The online survey also included open-ended questions that encouraged participants to provide qualitative insights into their experiences and perceptions.

Survey data were analyzed using statistical software to generate descriptive statistics and inferential analyses. Correlation analyses were conducted to examine relationships between variables, including attitudes and academic performance.

Academic records were analyzed to determine trends in performance, including course grades and completion rates.

Thematic analysis was employed to analyze the qualitative data from interviews and open-ended survey questions. Themes and patterns related to attitudes, challenges, motivations, and experiences in online learning were identified.

Quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between attitudes and performance in online learning among graduate students at Guimaras State University.

The study acknowledged potential limitations, including the reliance on self-report data, the specific context of Guimaras State University, and the representativeness of the sample. Efforts were made to address these limitations through rigorous data collection and analysis procedures.

By employing this mixed-methods approach, the research aimed to offer nuanced insights into the attitudes and performance of graduate school students in online learning, contributing to the ongoing improvement of online education at Guimaras State University and beyond.

## Results and Discussion

Analysis of the survey data revealed that the majority of graduate students at Guimaras State University had positive attitudes towards online learning. Specifically, 72% of respondents indicated that they found online courses easy to navigate (perceived ease of use), and 78% believed that online learning was beneficial for their academic goals (perceived usefulness).

In-depth interviews provided qualitative insights into these positive attitudes. Students appreciated the flexibility of online learning, which allowed them to balance their academic pursuits with work and personal commitments. Additionally, they acknowledged that online courses provided opportunities for self-directed

learning and enhanced accessibility to educational resources.

Analysis of academic records indicated that, on average, graduate students performed comparably in online courses to traditional in-person courses. Completion rates for online courses were within the expected range, with 84% of students successfully completing their online courses.

Interview data further elucidated the factors contributing to academic performance. Students who reported high motivation and self-regulation skills tended to excel in online courses. They emphasized the importance of time management and setting clear goals for successful completion.

Correlation analyses revealed a significant positive relationship between attitudes and academic performance. Students with more positive attitudes towards online learning tended to perform better in their online courses ( $r = 0.68$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ).

Interviews provided context for this correlation. Students with positive attitudes expressed greater motivation to engage actively in online courses. They found online discussions to be valuable for knowledge construction and peer interaction, enhancing their overall learning experience.

While the majority of students had positive attitudes towards online learning, challenges were also identified. Some students expressed concerns about technical issues, such as internet connectivity and platform usability. Additionally, a sense of isolation in online courses was reported by a few participants.

## Conclusion

Overall, the findings of this study suggest that online learning is a viable and effective mode of instruction for graduate students at Guimaras State University. The majority of students had positive attitudes towards online learning and performed comparably in online courses to traditional in-person courses.

Factors contributing to positive attitudes and academic performance included perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, motivation, self-regulation skills, and active engagement in online discussions. Challenges such as technical issues and a sense of isolation were also identified.



## Recommendation

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are made:

1. Invest in resources to ensure the technical integrity of online courses and platforms.
2. Provide training and support to students on how to use online learning technologies effectively.
3. Foster a sense of community and interaction in online courses.
4. Continue to monitor and assess student outcomes in online courses to ensure that they are meeting the needs of graduate students.

The findings of this study can inform educational policymakers and practitioners in their efforts to enhance the quality and accessibility of graduate education through online learning.

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