Exploring LinkedIn Learning in Management Education

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Abstract. The shift to remote learning necessitated by the global pandemic encouraged the use of varied technology and approaches to providing quality instruction to students around the globe. As educators scrambled to retool and create instructional materials, some turned to established supplemental content via e-learning. LinkedIn Learning, a business social networking website that also offers video courses taught by industry experts on various topics, provides valuable established content. This study, beneficial for novice to seasoned business faculty, explores the use of LinkedIn Learning in a virtual MBA Conflict Resolution course and measures student satisfaction with LinkedIn Learning. Using regression analysis, we found overall good model fit and some support for the study hypotheses. This indicates that students are satisfied with LinkedIn Learning as a supplemental learning tool and that certain quality aspects of the website explain user satisfaction. Overall recommendations and implications are provided.

Keywords: LinkedIn Learning, e-learning, satisfaction.

> *"Online learning is not the next big thing, it is the now big thing."*
>
> Donna J. Abernathy

1. Introduction

Due to the global pandemic brought about by COVID19, higher education institutions around the world have made a dramatic shift from face-to-face instruction to remote instruction (Krishnamurthy 2020). An unprecedented percentage of business courses, graduate and undergraduate, are now offered online and business faculty quickly adapted to online teaching modes. Higher education consultancy firm, CarringtonCrisp, questioned 600 business students and found that 66 percent perceived their school made good use of online resources to continue course delivery, despite the quick move to online learning

(De Novellis 2020). According to the Graduate Management Admission Council (GMAC) the demand for business education has increased during the pandemic with 67% of 1,000 responding business schools reported a recent increase in business school applications (GMAC 2020). Business school administrators and faculty, now more than ever, are trying to figure out how to keep students engaged with innovative curriculum to meet the needs of this new environment (McMurtrie 2020; Stewart 2020).

E-learning options frequently provide quality, timely, relevant, and interesting supplemental content that instructors don't have to create themselves. There are several e-learning systems available in the online learning marketplace to cater to this new reality in higher education. One resource is LinkedIn Learning, a business social networking website that also offers video courses taught by industry experts on a number of topics. The site provides videos that are short, concise, accessible to students with disabilities, and accessible from laptops, mobile phones, and tablets. LinkedIn Learning offers videos on a range of topics and there are hundreds of classes available and accessible on demand. Many colleges and universities pay for a subscription and offer free access to faculty, staff, and students.

Learning and teaching are both significant and it is therefore necessary to consider student perceptions of e-learning systems. Specifically, student satisfaction with e-learning systems may indicate whether these resources contribute to student learning. Researchers have created or adapted several different frameworks to measure the success of various e-learning systems (Al-Fraihat, Joy, Masa'deh & Sinclair 2020). In this study we adapted a popular model from the e-commerce success literature to measure student satisfaction of LinkedIn Learning (DeLone & McLean 2004).

This study has two primary contributions to literature on teaching and learning in management education. We will provide details about how we incorporated LinkedIn Learning in a graduate Conflict Resolution course and we will measure student satisfaction of LinkedIn Learning. Based on student satisfaction results, this study provides our overall recommendations and implications of using LinkedIn Learning in management education.

1.1. LinkedIn Learning in Conflict Resolution Course

LinkedIn Learning (https://www.linkedin.com/learning/) provides over 16,000 up-to-date, on-demand videos led by expert instructors and provides unlimited access to subscribers. There are a number of business topics to explore: business analysis and strategy, business software and tools, career development, customer service, finance and accounting, human resources, leadership and management, marketing, professional development, project management, sales, small business/entrepreneurship, and training/education. Users enjoy up-to-date content to keep

skills current and to learn new skills; new courses are added regularly; access is provided to instructors' exercise files to follow along as learning occurs; closed captioning and searchable, time coded transcripts are available; beginner to advanced level courses are offered; and users have the option to watch complete courses or individual videos as needed.

In this study, LinkedIn Learning was incorporated into courses at no additional cost to students via the university's paid subscription account. Students were provided the instructions for gaining access to LinkedIn Learning using their university's single sign on (SSO) system. They were also informed that upon completion of the courses, a certificate would be earned that could be posted on their LinkedIn profile for others to see. Completion of the LinkedIn Learning courses was required by the end of the MBA course and submission of the completion certificate counted as a graded assignment. Note: if a university does not have a LinkedIn Learning paid subscription, some city/county libraries may have a LinkedIn Learning subscription and offer library membership to university faculty, staff, and students located in their area.

LinkedIn Learning videos were assigned to graduate students enrolled in a seven-week, 100% online management course. Students in the MBA Conflict Resolution course completed a total of 8 LinkedIn Learning courses from a specific learning path, *Develop Conflict Management and Resolution Skills* (https://www.linkedin.com/learning/paths/develop-conflict-management-and-resolution-skills?u=57685713). The total learning path, with all 8 courses, included 8 hours and 24 minutes of engagement for the students. The stated goal of the learning path, according to the LinkedIn Learning website, was to "Learn how to deal effectively with others in antagonistic situations. Discover how to reduce tension or conflict. Review how to effectively settle disputes by focusing on solving the problems at hand—without offending egos. Evaluate the feasibility of alternative dispute resolution mechanisms". The classes included in the learning path:

- Conflict Resolution Foundations

- Improving Your Conflict Competence

- Fred Kofman on Managing Conflict

- Managing Team Conflict

- Working With Difficult People

- Working on a Cross Functional Team

- High Stakes Communication

- Compassionate Directness

The courses contained features to keep students engaged and to allow networking and engagement among others taking the course. For example, each course included chapter quizzes at the end of the different topics within the course to ensure students were paying attention and comprehending the content. Some courses within the learning path required students to pass exams at the end before completion. There was also a Q&A section that allowed students to ask questions and view feedback from instructors and other viewers of the course. The courses in the learning path were easily aligned with topics in the required class textbook (Lewicki, Saunders, & Barry 2014). The courses were spread across the duration of the class in different modules, enabling students to gain a perspective of the class material from industry experts as they completed other course activities and assignments such as instructor-led discussions, online class discussions, mini research papers, and quizzes. See Table 1.

Table 1: MBA Course Modules and Corresponding LinkedIn Learning Courses

Course Module	Module Title	LinkedIn Learning Courses
1	Introduction to Conflict Resolution	Conflict Resolution Foundations Improving your Conflict Competence
3	Resolving Conflict Through Negotiation	Fred Kofman on Managing Conflict Managing Team Conflict
4	Resolving Conflict Through Negotiation	Working with Difficult People Working on a Cross Functional Team
6	Negotiation Tools for Women	High Stakes Communication Compassionate Directness

1.2. Student Satisfaction with LinkedIn Learning

We utilized the Delone and McLean (1992) IS Success Model model to gauge students' experiences with LinkedIn Learning.