

# How Do UK University Students Achieve Sustainable Learning in Digital Era

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**Abstract.** The competence and expertise to learn in the setting of a digital society are pivotal for university students. Therefore, this article aims to explore what factors hinder UK university students from achieving sustainable learning in the digitalized realm. It first construed the meaning and characteristics of sustainable learning and digitalization. Then the paper identified the obstacle that hinders learning. Some UK university students suffer from nervousness, tension, and other psychological burdens, which have a substantial influence on the self. Secondly, many international students face barriers to digital learning in the UK, such as culture shock and language difficulties, and they worried that digital learning would interfere with their experience of campus culture. The third factor is the capacity to adjust to a changing learning environment. Many freshmen without the essential experience to acclimate to a minority culture, and the phase shift will affect students' learning results. Simultaneously, growing tuition costs add to their financial burden. The article also provides several suggestions, Firstly, the support of a personal mentor and the assistance of the university's professional information system are then recommended as viable answers to these challenges. Students can also benefit from using the Internet to improve their overall communication and interaction abilities, as well as universities' ability to reply responsibly and academic institutions' engagement techniques. Ultimately, government actions and bank flexibility of the student loan system will alleviate financial hardship.

**Keywords:** Sustainable Learning, Digitalization, UK College Students.

## 1. Introduction

In an increasingly diverse yet interdependent society, data becomes necessary. It is a heated topic how higher education institutions can address these challenges and their consequences, both within academia and beyond, for instance, how to compete effectively while undergoing economic and information society transformations, how to enhance its effectiveness, and keep learning sustainable in the long term, how to foster an adaptive innovation community in universities through digitization, technological advancements, and emerging trends to maximize collaboration, student engagement, scientific studies, and creative thinking in a way that encourages multidisciplinary ability to think critically to aid higher education's sustainability [1]. To promote inclusive and equitable for everyone, higher-education stays up with innovative pedagogy and scientific method in terms of giving students up-to-date insight and applicable areas of expertise for their sustainable learning. It is possible to provide university students with an education appropriate for a knowledge-based society, which necessitates a shift away from traditional educational models and toward innovative pedagogy combined with fun to learn environments supported by information and communications technology. Meanwhile, learning for sustainable growth has become challenging to make a swift or efficient advancement in innovation and telecommunications, digital learning, and worldwide access to information, and knowledge communication technologies. The global development of socio-technical is experiencing digitalization throughout various fields [2]. The digitalization of the higher education system is regarded as an effective aim at promoting student learning, they should be particularly potent when used by teachers to motivate students engagement in productive and stimulating learning activities rather than passive and active learning activities [3]. Digital tools and platforms, such as virtual conferences, as well as brainstorming and editing in about the similar data file, have also greatly aided us in maintaining our collaborative efforts in sustainable learning. The digital space has fostered greater togetherness and a broader learning environment. Universities and colleges have

undergone quick and significant changes as a consequence of a technological improvement in recent times and the drive toward the electronic digitalization of society. The globalized economy has resulted in substantial changes in the socioeconomic education system, which has influenced developments in higher education such as digital learning, independent learning, and so on [4].

Thus, the purpose of the paper is to learn and explore the sustainable learning of UK universities in a digital era. It has the potential to enhance increasing awareness of the constraints involved in the formation of long-term learning. In the meantime, Raising awareness and paying attention to the impact of sustainable learning on university students in the digital age, such as mental health development issues, and that some changes such as curriculum reform need to be judged and used in context, plus, actively discard outmoded thoughts.

## **2. Sustainable Learning**

Sustainable learning development as "the intention to maintain an action or a state indefinitely." [5]. Meanwhile, through education reform, leadership, and creativity, educational sustainability regarding the adoption of sustainable forms is of "successful" practice. And highlighted the sustainability of learning is one type of positive academic motivation that might affect continuing progress. For universities, sustainable learning is more than retaining skills and knowledge. emphasized the importance of critical thinking for sustainable learning. They entail continuous, deliberate, reactive, and purposeful learning in which the learner efficiently grows and regenerates his or her skills and abilities foundation with situations change.

University education Academic institutions and universities worldwide have made significant investments in sustainable learning and e-learning, and the majority of classically displayed lessons have been shifted to e-learning. To want to be a long-term source of learning, E-Learning initiatives should be productive. E-learning is a revolutionary technology that is getting warmed up. Instead of eliminating traditional classroom instruction, e-learning is used to supplement lifelong or distance learning. People use the Internet to obtain multimedia educational creative content from professionals [6].

## **3. Digitalization**

### **3.1. Features**

Digitization of education has the potential to fundamentally alter the university's role as a platform for communication, discourse, and socializing, generating not only information but also communication competence [7]. Various digital technologies, including MOOC, Cloud Computing, and others, exist throughout university education to empower with effective teaching, research, management, and other functions. Higher education is being facilitated by emerging innovations, which use the internet and digital technology to deliver more flexible and adaptive teaching without such high costs associated with a conventional access course.

In the first place, digitalization increases the number of courses and disciplines available for study, as well as the ease with which worldwide and multidisciplinary collaboration in science and innovation can be accomplished. It also makes education more accessible and personalized, as well as provides research independence and promotes self-directed learning. Autonomous and sustainable learning facilitates the greater acquisition and motivates to study. It appears to be a win-win situation [8].

Moreover, technological advances and digital trends have intensified the dynamism and adaptability of higher education. Digitalization not only affects the availability of learning by automating tasks and subtracting extra and ineffective work but also continues to change mindsets. As a result, lifelong and sustainable learning mindsets can effectively adapt to rapidly changing technologies and new digital skills [9].

Nevertheless, online advanced technologies have changed the manner teaching- learning are initiated. Traditional methods of transferring knowledge through personal communication are fading out, but there are still opposing aspects, for example, surveys of university teachers in the US, Australia, and the UK reveal that instructors' level of technical proficiency and self-belief in their expertise are the prime motivations why they are not using digital gadgets in the lesson. The global education industry's digital transformation verifies the road plan for the future of sustainable education management. Universities should be prepared to adjust to the macro educational environment's impacting changes to achieve a relatively sustainable position [10].

## **4. Problems of Sustainable learning for College Students**

### **4.1. Impact of Psychological Problems**

University students suffer from stress and depression. In a study conducted on 1,200 college and university students in the United Kingdom (UK), 80% stated they were pressured, 55% said they were worrisome, and 49% said they were depressed. Tests and assignments are the most frequent sources of stress for certain students, and they are typically noted more frequently than other stress-inducing variables. Trying to deliver tasks on time is a primary cause of tension for many students, and also many students feel overwhelmed by their workload. Due to a shortage of time, students frequently skip rest, which may impair their capacity to cope with high-stress levels. University education has gotten greater challenging, and admissions standards have risen, as a response of the clear rise in the number of people that attended university and completed master's degree degrees in the U.K [11]. University is a transitional stage for young people as they gain new skills, perspectives, social networking sites, and expertise. Attending university may be a stressful life experience for many students since they adjust to new lifestyles, communities, and connections, and a growing percentage of university students worldwide are being diagnosed with mental diseases. Furthermore, poor academic performance raises the potential of personal mental health difficulties, university students face the same academic responsibilities as secondary school students, and this pressure brings down their enthusiasm for continuous learning [12].

### **4.2. Digital Learning for International Students in the UK**

Overseas students may not be able to grasp the concept of critical analysis. Language barriers are another key difficulty for both students and educators, which could be addressed by the use of various pedagogic strategies. Meanwhile, foreign students encountered difficulty with examinations, coursework, and comprehending presentations, according to a study undertaken by the Foreign Student Government of the United Kingdom [13]. When overseas university students in the UK study digitally or online, they are more likely to be stressed and despair because they are unduly anxious to blend into the host culture, which leads to a drop in self-esteem and academic achievement. According to related research, many international university students are concerned that digital programs will weaken the desirability of university studies, particularly for global undergraduates, and that the university experience will be fundamentally altered because they will no longer encounter the unique personal stage of social growth and teaching. The digitalization of higher education also will result in the closure of unoccupied colleges and universities, halls of accommodation, student groups, and other facilities [14].

### **4.3. Adaptability of Changing Learning Environment and New Expectations**

As they reach the second or third year of their undergraduate program in the United Kingdom, students going from college to university need swiftly adjust to the new educational changes and study objectives. The transfer process places significant demands on their time. Commuting is necessary for many college students as well. As a consequence, students who begin their studies in the conventional first year may have insufficient academic experience, the move to university will be stressful for many people due to the obvious new obligations involved, especially if it entails leaving

home, and this higher degree of stress may be attributable in part to a lack of the customary personal network of support, such as friends and family [15]. As colleges continue to recruit a much more varied student body, including both experienced and mature students, many of whom are already engaged, a deeper understanding of their transition experience is required. These students can be classified as 'transfer students.' What's more, the transition process period has a substantial impact on both academic achievement and, eventually, their performance, according to findings on the transfer to university [16].

#### **4.4. College Students' Worrying about Increasing Costs of HE During the Period of Ensuring Sustainable Learning**

In England, higher education (HE) initiatives have aimed to increase student options and provider competitiveness. Cost-sharing schemes, particularly higher tuition payable through university loans, are key to this, as they allocate more of the cost of higher education away from the issue and toward students. These regulations are intended to motivate students in making smarter alternatives and to push colleges to use student issues as a form of financing [17]. Nevertheless, these policies have resulted in increased college fees and debt from student loans. Significantly, the government has cut most financing for university education and supplemented it with increasing tuition fees that were recovered with state student loan debt. The expense of higher education increased dramatically after the revisions of 2012. Until 2015, mostly all English institutions had boosted the full-time undergraduate annual university fees, when this survey was conducted, with the negligible difference among programs and colleges [18].

### **5. Suggestions**

#### **5.1. Dealing With Psychological Issues**

Focusing on an individual's adjustability and/or support systems may be one method to potentially improve their mental wellbeing. Since social media platforms (e.g., peers, family, and/or notable others) can boost an individual's mental health, any endeavors (with students or non-students) to satisfy the current societal expanding need for supplies are advantageous. Moreover, student supervisors may be a useful technique for conversation and advice on effective tactics, as well as help and treatment that may be accessible as part of that effort [19]. The University's major role in stress management is to provide adequate assistance to help students handle stress. This is especially crucial for first-year students, who are more prone to stress and may require resources for adequate well-being. By expanding access and boosting the student-to-faculty ratio, it is possible to encourage more students to seek aid for stress-related disorders. Remarkably, one way to stimulate the network of support accessible to university students facing mental health issues is to use emergency contact techniques. When students register for their academic studies, they typically supply their university with basic urgent personal details from a trusted source. Besides, a helpful suggestion would be for colleges to identify and identify resources for families dealing with mental health issues. This would relieve family stress while also ensuring kids that if they do sign up, their essential links will have accessibility to their assistance. Special consideration should be given to the usefulness of these services for overseas students' contact details [20].

#### **5.2. UK International Students Engage in Digital Sustainable Learning**

Digital technology has numerous advantages, such as immediacy and interconnection, and may thus be used to address these difficulties, and the cultural and scientific context in which students live has changed dramatically [21]. In addition, Wiki pages, blogs, chatting, and peer-to-peer activities have all been enlarged to provide additional chances to learn for collaboration and interactive communication in university students. Students should be encouraged to gain confidence and generate ideas to deal with any issues that arise while utilizing the online learning platform. Moreover, digital training system layout, whereas educational software should also emphasize characteristics such as

interaction, simplicity of use, and the efficiency with which students can execute active learning. These improvements have accelerated the shift to digital technology in education, and digitalization fits students' current expectations [22]. Universities should collaborate with teachers in modifying and revamping lesson plans based on different students' cultural backgrounds to ensure higher quality learning content. To raise the amount of sustainable online learning, instructional technology and learning outcomes assessment should be modified to substantially restrict the number of online assignments presented to students. As a result, higher education should carefully merge technology, collaborative learning, and flipping learning with more conventional learning and teaching techniques. This will give students more options for monitoring and evaluation, especially when it comes to dealing with the digital age.

### **5.3. Solving the Problems of Adaptation**

Colleges and universities may then attempt to fix adaptation, for instance, by assisting students in recognizing unpredictability and unexpectedness that may necessitate a proper regulatory reaction, adequately adjusting comprehension, actions, and feelings, emphasizing the effectiveness of supervisory reactions, and improving/adjusting them as needed. This transition may empower learners (students) to react more imaginatively to ambiguous and distinctive events and situations, leading to a better degree of independence and a reduction in failure behaviors (e.g., disengagement and personality), which may increase student excellence [23]. Intervention strategies should focus on reducing serious behavioral interaction as a means of improving students' academic attainment. Intervention research does, demonstrate the viability of efforts to minimize problematic involvement.

### **5.4. Alleviating Economic Pressure**

According to previous research, some students may reevaluate their subject choices and switch to areas that they hope will improve their graduation employment. This choice was made by students to assure that the price of college will benefit their future employment. Due to the obvious rising cost of higher education, more students are staying at home during their courses to save costs and decrease debt. In the meantime, some surveys pointed out that including all full-time undergraduate degrees in the United Kingdom, many universities charge the same tuition costs. Tuition fees are paid by publicly available funds or conditional mortgages that postpone students' tuition repayment obligations for years, if not indefinitely, weakening the efficacy of pricing in behavior modification.

## **6. Conclusion**

This paper investigates how UK university students learn sustainably in the digital age. It gives insight into the issues that UK university students face when learning by analyzing the characteristics of sustainable learning and digitalization. In the first place, many UK university students suffer from anxiety, stress, and other psychological burdens, and self-management, and academic achievement have a significant impact on their self-learning. Additionally, many overseas students have obstacles with digital learning in the UK, such as culture shock and language barriers, and many international students are concerned that digital learning may impair their experience of campus culture. The third factor is adaptability to a new learning environment. Many freshmen lack the necessary experience to adjust to an international culture, and the transition period will have an impact on students' academic. Subsequently, rising tuition prices add to their financial load.

A set of effective solutions to these issues are then proposed. First and foremost, the assistance of a personal mentor and the assistance of the university's professional information system. Also, students can benefit from the usage of the internet to increase their overall communication and interaction skills, as well as the ability of universities to respond promptly and the engagement tactics of academic institutions of higher education. At last, government initiatives and bank loosening of the student loan system will relieve financial stress. One contribution of this study is that it integrates

contemporary international trends in education, technology, and economics with the sustainable learning context of university students.

Furthermore, to realize the benefits of the digital age as well as provide educational resources, colleges need to make some changes and adjustments. People live at a time when growing digital technologies are more focused than ever on all parts of our lives, and these advances are already influencing university activities. Each college's facilities and platforms for students to seek sustainable learning and development should be suited to the unique characteristics of each university and its students.

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