Analysis of Trends in Education for Canada

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ABSTRACT

The quality of education dramatically determines the quality of children's lives and opportunities. Schools aim to provide students with skills, knowledge, and interpersonal capability, which are necessary to develop and benefit the economy and society. In a country like Canada, its education system is composed of both private and publicly-funded schools. Education is essential to Canadians, and standards in the country are constantly high. However, the Government is facing new opportunities and challenges concerning recent trends in the education sector. This paper introduces and analyses some trends for education in Canada, such as the micro-credential programs, the attention on boosting the employability of students through interactive and experimental learning methods, the growth of technology-enabled learning and teaching, and the increased responsibility through the evaluation of teaching and learning. Findings reveal that Canada is continuously exploiting new technologies to help the development and creativity in expanding its education system.

Keywords: *Canada, Education Trends, Institutions, Teaching, Learning*

1. INTRODUCTION

The ongoing effort to execute a new version for education prevails beyond the entire educational sector in Canada and across the world. Research has become the focus of school district, ministry, and school-based initiatives to provide curriculum renewal and improvement plans. The entire movement to achieve trends in education in Canada is changing the way students learn, teachers teach, and how learning is assessed and demonstrated [4]. It also influences the type of resources used in classrooms and how these sources are delivered and accessed by teachers and students. This paper introduces six major trends in Canadian Education development, which include education assessment, internationalization, social innovation, the use of digital content, the rising enrolment of students, and the emerging micro-credentials. This paper provides some helpful information for education researchers and students in assessing the education quality in Canada.

2. THE TREND OF EDUCATIONAL ASSESSMENT

In this study, the discussion of Canada through an analysis examines how trends materialize in the country's education. Through examination of actions taken by the Government, the beneficiaries of these trends are also discussed. Evaluation and assessment are central to this analysis. According to Eizadirad et al., an evaluation and assessment system positioned with the scientific perspective to education allows the verification of numerous levels of achievement of particular skills, behaviors, abilities, values, and experiences concerning the rationale curriculum [3]. Every student is under administrative personnel; students and teachers are assessed through a deliberate positivist objective system. As a result, it verifies how unique sets of learning goals consigned in the curriculum are conveyed through particular behavior.

In December 2012, the Ontario, Canada, the education council released a study based on university and college coaching quality and an analysis surveyed over several months at several universities. The key proposals of the findings comprised standardized assessment of courses by learners' approach to evaluation outlines, enhancing promotion decisions reflecting instructor's teaching capability, and teaching resources [8]. Students are assessed with Collegiate Learning Assessment (CLA) at the university level, which focuses on systematic reasoning, problem-solving, evaluative thinking, and communication. However, the nature of the Learning Assessment in various Canadian institutions leads to biased samples and low response figures.

Assessment plays a vital role in education sectors in most jurisdictions in Canada. Hence, the ministry of education oversees evaluations designed to guide students' progress in education. Canada also participates in a Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), intending to measure the knowledge and skills attained in reading, sciences, and mathematics. Another significant trend in the country is that immigrant students show similar achievement levels compared to domestic students. Through findings by Eizadirad et al., the performance gap observed at students with 15 years and 24 years shows that the immigrant student aged 24 performed equally with domestic students but it is recorded lower performance for students at 15 years [3]. These trends indicate Canada has high education equity and inclusive educational policies.

Various health fields have also assigned assessment methods that inspire real medical situations. For instance, there are models including Objective Structured Examinations (OSCE) and high technology simulation labs. Recently an interview was conducted where participants were required to evaluate students on a standardized ranking scale. Each student was required to reflect on an interview; later, reflections were similar to those rated on the scale. Evaluation of this learning model showed a wide range of scores, demonstrating that the interviewers captured variances in students' capabilities.

3. THE TREND OF INTERNATIONALIZATION

Internationalization has continuously emerged to be the most observable trend of education in Canada. Its governments, organizations, and institutions devote considerable energy, resources, and time to internalization. It is no surprise that the international education sector is constantly growing [5]. Nevertheless, despite the effort of Canadian institutions, some concerns are still unavoidable. The challenges colleges and institutions face are skills gaps, lack of funding, and global competition.

Between 2008 and 2016, international students in Canada rose by 87.0% at an average annual rate of 8.1%. The rise was mainly contributed by the number of long-term students who studied longer than six months. Moreover, enrolment of students in this category doubled between 2008 and 2016, increasing at 10.95% per year. Additionally, in 2005 and 2016, the figure of international students increased to 14.4% since the number of long-term students from India increased. In December 2017, an approximation of 494,500 international students joined Canadian schools and institutions, a significant rise of 20% over the year. According to MSMedia, the number of global students enrolled in Canadian institutions grew to 120% between 2010 and 2017 and 41% between 2015 and 2017 [7]. Experts reveal that international students choose Canada

because of its high reputation and quality in the education system.

Since the 1980s, Canada's education institutions have increasingly established international orientation in their outlook. Competition with other Western countries for global students has received critical attention and analysis in recent decades. Preceding the COVID 19 pandemic, the number of students enrolled in the country's institutions was rapidly rising [5]. Over the last year, findings have shown that Canada is one of the top higher host education nations for international students. It is exceeded in regard by only China, the United States, and the United Kingdom.

International education reflects the need for skills and knowledge for a global economy. This trend has various implications for global student selection, procedures, and policies for recognizing and evaluating curriculum, student mobility, and credentials. Educational authorities work with key agencies and the Government to create a positioning and brand for education. In addition, institutions are working to create more dimensions to the curriculum through international joint programs and courses. According to the MsMedia, as per the findings reported by Canadian Statistics, the country's universities lost 7.5% of revenues in 2020/2021 depending on enrollment reduction for international students and consecutive loss in tuition fees [7].

4. THE TREND OF RISING MICRO-CREDENTIALS

While professionally focused training courses of the short period have been an attribute of Canadian's education system for years, qualifications have been the focus of growing awareness in recent years. In the absence of a globally agreed definition for students, institutions, higher learning accrediting authorities, and governments have sought to create plans to summarize micro-credentials accordingly. The education sector defines a micro-credential as a certificate of assessed capability that is alternate, additional, or an element of formal education qualification. Due to their appearance on digital platforms, documents are acknowledged through digital badges fixed with combined metadata from issuing schools [4]. These certificates, digital badges, and other digital credentials show the achievements and skills.

The Education Council of Ontario revealed that the emerging trend of micro-credentials has taken place in Canadian colleges and universities. A post-secondary survey conducted in November and December 2020 showed that the education council gave 51% of respondents micro-credentials. Moreover, 83% revealed that their institutional leadership encouraged the establishment of documentation; however, less than 40% said they had a strategy in place [1]. Findings have shown

the expansion of this approach in colleges and public universities, private career institutes, indigenous colleges, and degree-granting institutes.

Recent research has highlighted the significance of new approaches, including micro-credentials, to boost secondary graduates' transition to employment and upskill the workforce. While focused on digital skills, the certificates have expanded to include a wide range of delivery models and skills. In the past six years, the program has served over 500 graduates in locations across Canada and consistently surpasses job placement rates during the pandemic [5]. Findings show that 76% of Canadian higher education institutes offered online programs for credit in 2019.

5. THE TREND OF DIGITAL CONTENT

Several schools in the country have traditions trying to reach out to students through interspaced education, sending materials, and recently using web-based technologies. Canadian schools that are present in distant areas have traditionally focused on this method than learning institutions in urban populations. According to Howell & O'Donnell, teachers are learning how to efficiently integrate technology tools like tablets, computers, and 3D printers into daily instructions while students engage in these instruments to engage in learning [4]. Findings show that technology learning also promotes institutional coordination, collaboration, and effective use of resources leading to more improved pathways to student mobility.

A review of information indicates that industrial art combined with technological education and computer technology exists in Canadian schools. Therefore, demand for digital learning in the country has enlarged substantially over the last years, with many institutions offering blended and online programs [8]. Results from surveys conducted in 2017 and 2019 relating to digital education, technologies used, and tracking enrolment data revealed that digital education in Canada is evolving. In 2019, the numbered of institutions using blended courses had increased to 89% from the previous years. Emerging topics in association with training use technology to acquire educational resources and develop credentials.

Immense open web-based courses have lately flooded education attention. Major colleges and universities are endorsing programs that provide membership. The method is being used in a reversed classroom mode of teaching. Students observe lectures and conduct exercises via an internet course program before learning sessions. Given the findings on using technology in the classroom, the trend continues in Canada's education system [4]. Moreover, all universities and colleges in Canada have embraced technology to enhance students' learning and to manage as well as deliver courses.

Flipped classrooms, blended learning, and online programs are standard in post-secondary institutes in Canada.

Canada has geography and history that demands distance education resources and models, and the country recently views K-12 learning as a method to provide public education. Although tablets and laptops are used in Canadian education, two devices used mainly in K-12 are Google chrome books and Apple iPad. According to Kirby, the tools are used in individual or group learning, note-making, accessing digital content, and doing assignments [5]. However, the shift from print to digital sources is the primary goal of schools and provincial districts across the country; the K-12 system is portioned to the degree and pace to which the change is taking place.

Students from all thirteen territories and provinces in Canada continue to participate in online learning opportunities and K-12 distance learning. The exception to this education trend is mainly in Northern Canada and Atlantic Canada. Regarding online learning activities and the distance across the country, the K-12 population between 2019 and 2020 was approximately five million students. Moreover, findings on estimated and actual enrolment data reveal that 6% of the student population engaged in K-12 distance and online learning [2]. Hence, there has been a continued increase in overall engagement level from the previous years.

Online and distance platforms are available in the public K-12 system in almost all territories and provinces, similar in the post-secondary sector. Fewer years ago, the industry's enrollment remained constant between 5.5% and 6%, whereas there has been a fast growth in all secondary sectors over the last five decades. However, the significant barrier in the industry is the lack of funding and financial resources dedicated to buying digital tools specifically developed for classroom use [4]. Meanwhile, students and teachers have access to more content via the internet and databases, portals, applications, and content repositories. A report in 2014 revealed that 25% of secondary teachers and 36% of elementary teachers are likely to use accessible online sources when they need new learning strategies.

6. THE TREND OF SOCIAL INNOVATION

The growing interest in social innovation is continually influencing the education sector in Canada, which has subsequently created a variety of initiatives such as hubs, labs, centers, programs, projects, and networks. According to Milley et al., the growth of innovation in universities and colleges is finding ways to educate students through research hubs in inclusive designs, online modules, and e-textbooks [6]. For instance, Ontario University in Canada provides technology-enabled learning experiences for learners through the e-Campus portal. Students find information

about tuition and fees, scheduling, online courses, and registration details through the portal.

The movement to transform school libraries into digitalized libraries is gaining attention in most Canadian jurisdictions. A traditional part is developed into a hub for learning within and beyond the physical learning environment. The digitalized libraries are technology-enabled, collaborative, virtual, and physical learning spaces where students work independently and other learners evaluate and share information. According to Kirby [5], groups or individual students engage in assignments, projects, and research involving 3D printers, digital devices, crafts, hardware supplies, and robotics. Moreover, the library brings flexibility in schools and school-based learning environments that give learners engagement and achievement in their education. Findings have shown that various numbers of schools in Canada are diligently designing and implementing digital libraries.

7. THE TREND OF RISING ENROLMENT

Between 2000 and 2019, student enrolment in Canada increased by 50%; this growth shows a sign of increased enrolment into the following years. Enrolment growth in the country represents several trends, including labor market demands, demographic shifts, and enlarged involvement in education, particularly among girls and women. Additionally, the involvement of females in post-secondary institutions has changed greatly. However, they are not justly distributed across education practices and still diminished in many math, engineering, technology, and science fields. In addition, part-time enrolment continues to rise as students pursue educational upgrading to increase academic requirements in particular professions. This trend is towards youthful learners who seek various certificates on a regular basis before commencing on careers. Nevertheless, costs related to learners' assistance, infrastructure, and salaries are on the rise.

8. CONCLUSION

Canada is known for its high reputation and quality of education. In all provinces and territories in Canada, departments of education are responsible for assessing and delivering education at secondary and elementary levels, technical and vocational institutes, and post-secondary education. As of this year, eight provinces positioned early childhood development and learning under the education sector. In addition, the country is ranked among the top across the world in providing quality education. However, education continues to have low costs in salaries, education infrastructure, and student support.

The education sector in Canada continues to improve its education to provide knowledge and skills to students to benefit the economy and society. Trends in education influence how teachers teach and students learn in schools. Findings have shown that the major trends in Canadian education include the enrolment of international students, the use of micro-credential programs, the advanced digital content in classes, and the various methods that have been used in assessment for teaching and learning. However, further studies are still needed to be done in the future to collect more data and stronger evidence.

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