



Current Situation of Information Technology Application in Organizing Online Events for Students in Vietnam

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ABSTRACT:

The application of information technology (IT) in student learning has become increasingly common. However, in the current 4.0 technology era, the use of IT should not be limited to learning but also extended to organizing student activities. After the COVID-19 pandemic, universities have begun applying IT in organizing certain events and activities for students. Therefore, universities need to consider integrating IT into organizing student activities to diversify the forms of organization and increase accessibility.

Keywords: student activities, IT application, situation

1. Introduction

At universities, information technology (IT) has been utilized extensively in a variety of contexts, including management, learning, research, and teaching. In spite of this, it wasn't until the COVID-19 epidemic that widespread usage of information technology for the purpose of organizing online events for students began. Online events have emerged as the optimum answer as a result of the necessity of keeping contacts and carrying out school activities while also maintaining a physical distance during the epidemic. This is especially true for events that require the participation of thousands of pupils. The purpose of these events is not only to provide a platform for connecting with others, but also to provide students with opportunities to engage, cultivate their creativity, and increase their passion. The utilization of information technology in the process of organizing online events has resulted in considerable benefits for students, as seen from the standpoint of education management. On the other hand, the organization of events that take place online involves a number of obstacles and constraints.

2. Current Situation of IT Application in Organizing Online Events for Students

2.1. Role of Events Organized for Students in Universitie

According to Ottestad et al. (2008), learning should not take place solely through the transmission of information but should also involve the process of creation. This is a reference to the concept that learning is not restricted to the hours spent in a classroom setting but also include the diffusion of information, the direction of professional paths, the sharing of experiences, and the connection with other people. Students at colleges require extracurricular activities that serve as a platform for connection in addition to the academic activities that they participate in. By means of events that are planned specifically for students, these activities are carried out. Students are afforded the option to broaden their social networks and contacts by participation in events that are organized by the university. Furthermore, students from different cohorts have the opportunity to connect with one another, which helps them develop their communication skills and improves their skill set in general.

It is crucial for universities to organize events for students since every student who takes part in such events will generate memories and experiences that they will remember fondly when they graduate from the university. Ceremonies and rituals are frequently a part of these events, and their purpose is to bring students together and instill in them a sense of pride in their educational establishment. Collins (2019) is of the opinion that in order to create an interactive ritual that is successful, it is necessary to have certain components, such as shared presence, barriers against outsiders, mutual attention, and shared mood. Participants are able to feel more integrated and a harmonious flow is created as a result of these factors. As a consequence of this, these rituals contribute to the development of psychological energy, social interactions, ethical standards, and community cohesion. Organizing events is important in any university because it helps establish a link between the university and its students. This connection enables students to feel as though they are an integral part of the university. This demonstrates the significance of event organization.

2.2. Types of Online Event Organization for Students

In this technologically advanced period, as well as the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic that began in late 2019, many facets of social life in a variety of countries, including Vietnam, have been impacted. Included in this category is Vietnam. In addition, students' education has transitioned to internet platforms, and they are now using information technology for both learning and event management. A catalyst for educational transformation is the utilization of information technology. It places the student at the center of the learning process, which contributes to more effective learning and makes it more engaging. An additional benefit is that it fosters higher-order thinking skills and assists in the development of information within a social setting (Ottestad et al., 2008). According to Jo Shan Fu and Fu (2013), the implementation of information technology (IT) in student learning has the potential to improve students' critical thinking skills. Schools are strongly urged to incorporate technology into all learning areas and levels of education. In the course of the COVID-19 pandemic, many activities, like as soccer and tug-of-war, have transferred to online platforms. This is in contrast to the conventional practice of holding these activities in person at universities. Various student events, such as school opening ceremonies, celebrations for Vietnam Teachers' Day (20/11), welcoming new students, talent search competitions, beauty contests for students, and online sports events like "Online Sports" to promote health and share positive energy, have been organized with the help of information technology (IT). According to the University of Buon Ma Thuot (2021), these activities are a significant contributor to the fight against the epidemic, since they provide words of encouragement to both healthcare staff and the general public.

Some of the programs that are utilized for the purpose of organizing online events are as follows: Zoom, Skype (for communication and online meetings), Google Hangout (Google's tool for online engagement), Facebook Workplace (for sharing workspaces online), and TrueConf Online (for conducting virtual conferences).

2.3 Students' Experience of Participating in Online Events

The feeling left by online events is somewhat vague for students due to the lack of interaction. However, there is still a sense of excitement expressed through some uncontrolled actions during the event organization. At the same time, students also feel happy to be part of the festive atmosphere, even though they miss the formal atmosphere of the ceremony. While organizing an event is not the same as classroom teaching, it still uses IT and is held online, which inevitably creates a distance similar to the challenges faced in online learning. Students may still feel a lack of motivation, reduced interaction with peers, and a sense of isolation, issues that are often associated with online classes (Alawamleh et al., 2022).

3. Advantages and Disadvantages of Using Information Technology to Organize Online Events for Students

3.1 Advantages

The process of organizing events, whether they are held in person or online, comes with its own unique set of benefits and difficulties. Events that are organized for students are of utmost significance for educational institutions because they serve as a demonstration of the relationship that exists between the institution and its students. The following is a list of the advantages that can be gained from holding events online:

The involvement of a big number of students is made easier through the use of online and hybrid activities, which also make it possible to communicate with a large number of people. During the course of the epidemic, these activities will give students with a platform and a location to voice their opinions, encouraging them to express themselves in a manner that is at their own discretion. When it comes to engaging students, some of the inventive tactics that are utilized include having them participate in online minigames, generating video clips, or performing arts online.

The ease of use that is provided by holding an event online is the key benefit that results from doing so. Provided that they are in possession of a computer or mobile device that is capable of connecting to the internet, participants are able to participate in the event from the comfort of their own homes or from any location around the world while they are traveling. Online events are significantly more accessible than traditional events, and the participation rates of online events have the potential to be ten times higher than those of traditional events.

Third, the reach of the event and its potential to scale up are both improved by virtual events. In comparison to traditional in-person events, they make it possible to reach a far larger audience at the same time. Individuals from all over the world are able to participate in online activities since all they need is a device that is capable of connecting to the internet. This not only makes the event more accessible to a bigger audience but also considerably expands the extent into which it can be held. Internet events have the potential to attract tens of thousands of attendees since they are not constrained by the constraints that are imposed by physical venues. A further alternative that is more cost-effective is the organization of events through the internet. A significant reduction in expenses has been observed, which includes the leasing of the venue, the salaries of people, the charges for setting up, the accommodations, and the transportation of visitors. In addition, the utilization of internet platforms can make it easier to generate reports and collect data in real time while the event is taking place. It is possible that conducting an analysis of this data after the event may be of great assistance in determining which portions of the event were most well received by attendees, as well as which aspects need to be improved upon or eliminated in subsequent events (The Advantages of Hosting Online Events, 2014). As an illustration of this, the ability of event organizers to immediately monitor the quantity of players or the number of responses picked for each game question when they are performing a game at the event is an example of this capability. This functional component is incorporated into the online event organization system, which is a very advantageous feature.

A high level of security is provided by the online presentation of events, which is an additional advantage. The use of virtual meetings allows for the facilitation of discussions, training sessions, proposal presentations, and participation in cultural or corporate events, all while reducing the risk of direct contact with other individuals (Why It Is Worth Organizing Online Events, n.d.). Due to the fact that only students who have been pre-designated will be allowed to speak at the event, the likelihood of terrible events occurring will be significantly reduced. It is possible to livestream events that take place on the internet, which makes them easily available to audiences that are interested in attending. This is because internet events may accommodate an infinite number of participants. It is not necessary to make travel arrangements to the event or bookings for lodging in order to participate. Due to the fact that these events are borderless, participants are able to attend them regardless of where they are located geographically. In addition, participants most of the time have access to recordings and presentations, which enables them to review the content whenever it is considered necessary. The search for speakers who are able to deliver live presentations from the comfort of their own homes is made easier for event organizers as a result of this (Why It Is Worth Organizing Online Events, n.d.). Online events are more environmentally sustainable than traditional ones since they do not require actual venues, which results in a reduction in the amount of garbage that is produced during the event. Participants will no longer be required to travel great distances in order to attend the event; rather, they will be able to enjoy it from the comfort of their own homes, which will result in a considerable reduction in the amount of pollution and carbon dioxide emissions that are produced by air and automotive travel (Anianet, 2020). Students are able to participate in online events from the comfort of their own homes by accessing a link, which allows them to save money on travel expenses and reduce their impact on the environment. Additionally, it prevents direct contact during the COVID-19 pandemic, which is a time period that is defined by prohibitions on gatherings of a large number of people.

3.2 Disadvantages

There are advantages and disadvantages associated with any type of event format, and the process of creating online events for students is not an exception. One can summarize the drawbacks by saying that they are as follows:

First, there is a greater degree of variation in attendance. Those who attend in-person events are less likely to leave fast after spending a significant amount of time getting to the location of the event. Participants that participate online, on the other hand, have a tendency to sign up rapidly but also depart just as soon (Anianet, 2020). As is the case with online learning, the organization of online events presents difficulties in terms of controlling the involvement of students. If they are unable to attend for the entirety of the event, they might use problems with their internet connection as an excuse. Should the program fail to captivate pupils, there will be a dramatic decrease in the number of participants before the event is wrapped up.

The second problem that arises when presenting online activities is the presence of different time zones. Attendees at physical events are all located in the same location, and as a result, they are all in the same time zone. On the other hand, when it comes to online events, the visitors who are invited could be located in different time zones, which makes it more difficult to schedule virtual conferences and presentations (Anianet, 2020). This problem frequently arises when the program includes visitors from other countries or people who are currently located outside of the country, as the time zone variations may prevent them from attending at the time that was originally arranged.

Third, in contrast to in-person events, where students can be supervised and the atmosphere can be electrified to engage them, the majority of students in online programs mute their voices and turn off their cameras, which reduces the effectiveness of the interactive experience.

Fourth, the experience of watching a show might be negatively impacted by technical issues such as problems with network connectivity, malfunctioning computers, or audio-visual mismatches. In live settings, artistic performances do not have the same level of vibrancy that they would have.

Fifth, the quality of the event may be directly impacted by uncontrollable circumstances, such as the guests' network connection or technical difficulties, if they are invited to attend (FPT, 2022).

As a result, the author have brought attention to the significance of organizing events for college students and have provided a list of some pros and downsides associated with making online events available. For the purpose of enhancing the efficiency of online event organization, potential solutions might be given on the basis of this information.

4. Conclusion

In every university, one of the most important activities is the organization of events for the students. Student participation and promotion of the university's activities are the goals of these events, regardless of whether they are held annually or not. When it comes to the current situation, the organization of online events for students comes with a number of benefits as well as certain limits. On the other hand, it is impossible to deny the adaptability, relevance, and efficacy of utilizing information technology in the management of online events.

A number of potential remedies are proposed by the writers in order to improve the overall quality of online events:

1. Introduce activity-based competitions that are specifically designed to cater to the interests and requirements of the pupils.
2. Extend the event's publicity by working together with sponsors from the media.
3. In order to promote the event to a larger audience, you should make investments in event platforms, come up with unique concepts, and collaborate with a variety of organizations.

4. Improve the infrastructure and equipment of the network, and designate support teams to provide assistance to students whenever it is required.

To summarize, the utilization of information technology in the process of arranging online events has been demonstrated to be a technique that is both timely and successful, delivering considerable benefits despite certain limits. It is possible for educational institutions to make the most of the potential of online events to engage and connect with their students if they pursue constant improvements.

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