

論 文 要 旨

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学位論文題目 An Empirical Study on Online Learners' Continuance Intentions in China (英訳又は和訳：中国におけるオンライン学習者の持続意向に関する実証分析)				
<p>The United Nations formulated the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are a collection of 17 long-term development objectives, to replace the Millennium Development Goals and serve as the guiding spirit of global development work from 2015 to 2030. The 17 goals are about taking the path of sustainable development and addressing development issues in social, economic, and environmental areas. Among them, SDG 4 is dedicated to ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all. Acquiring high-quality education is the basis for improving people's lives and for achieving sustainable development. As one of the most significant components of quality education, online education has unique characteristics that facilitate the sustainable development of education, such as low cost, convenience, flexibility, repetition, high efficiency, a low threshold, rich teaching resources, and broadly accessible user groups. These points provide e-learning with an edge over the traditional classroom setting. Likewise, online education has the potential to offer learning opportunities to new learners and fundamentally transform learning delivery and the competitive environment. Online learning breaks through the constraints of time and place by providing learning experiences to distant learners and allowing flexible learning modes so that learners can freely select and pace their learning paths in accordance with their real conditions, and benefit from contingent teaching.</p> <p>In recent years, the online education model has been continuously upgraded with the help of information technology. With the launch of the 4G network and the popularity of smartphones, phone applications have become convenient, easy-to-use learning tools. Similarly, various online education platforms are constantly emerging. Statistics from the professional website e-student.org show that the corporate e-learning sector is expected to grow by as much as USD 38 billion from 2020 to 2024. Major EdTech companies, such as Coursera, are already valued at well over USD 1 billion, and will be the driving force of the entire online education industry. Meanwhile, according to iResearch data, the scale of China's online education market exceeded RMB 320 billion in 2019, with a 28.1% year-on-year increase. Higher education and vocational training accounted for 74.6% of this figure, and K12 education accounted for 21.3%. Thus, the online education market is still dominated by adult education, but the share of K12 education is growing. It is also expected that the growth rate of the market will remain between 19 and 24% for the next three years.</p> <p>However, with the rapid development of online education, the problems of high dropout rates and the</p>				

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low retention of online learners has become increasingly prominent. The dropout rate at the Open University, a renowned online educational institution in the UK, was up to 78% according to statistics in 2010. Data from a survey conducted by Duke University in North Carolina showed that the dropout rates for Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) were up to 90%. A report on the development of online education in the United States stated that a high dropout rate was the primary obstacle to the future growth of online education. Thus, this study aimed to explore the factors that influence learners' continuous use of online education and put forward corresponding countermeasures to promote the sustainable development of online education in China. Specifically, we explored three research questions:

- (1) What are the main factors that influence learners' continuance intentions in an online education environment?
- (2) Are all our hypotheses valid? How can the results be explained?
- (3) What are our recommendations for the improvement of the online education environment?

The second research question relates to the nine hypotheses that we framed to predict the determinants of online learning continuance intention. Furthermore, the validity of the hypotheses was verified, and correlations were demonstrated. To address the research questions in this study, an online survey was conducted, and 382 valid responses were collected from Chinese respondents from 32 provinces in China in April and May 2020. Additionally, statistical analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLSSEM) to verify the reasonability of the constructed model. The principal conclusions are as follows: service quality, course quality, and student–instructor interaction indirectly influence online learners' continuance intentions, while perceived value is a significant mediator with a direct influence on online learners' continuance intentions. However, student–student interaction and student–content interaction do not have direct or indirect effects on online learners' continuance intentions.

We believe this study will contribute to a better understanding of the factors influencing learners' continuance intention toward e-learning, which can help promote the sustainable development of online education in China. Research on online education has broad significance in education and social development.