

Digital Trust in Education: Investigating the Relationship between Cyber security Practices and Student Confidence in Online Learning

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Abstract: *The acceleration of digital transformation in education, especially post-pandemic, has made online learning platforms a cornerstone of modern academic delivery. However, this digital shift brings with it a host of cyber security challenges, including data breaches, identity theft, and unauthorized access to personal and academic information. As educational institutions increasingly depend on digital platforms, establishing digital trust has become essential for sustaining student participation and confidence in online learning environments. This research paper investigates the critical relationship between cyber security practices and student confidence in digital education using secondary data from global studies, institutional reports, and peer-reviewed literature. The study explores how students' perceptions of online safety are shaped by the presence—or absence—of robust cyber security measures such as encryption protocols, two-factor authentication, secure login systems, and transparent data privacy policies. It examines institutional case studies to highlight the impact of data protection strategies on digital trust and educational engagement. Findings suggest that students are more likely to trust and actively participate in online learning when they are confident that their data is secure and their digital identities are protected. Moreover, institutions that openly communicate their cyber security frameworks tend to foster greater trust and learning continuity among students.*

This paper concludes that digital trust is not merely a technical or operational concern but a psychological and educational imperative. Strengthening cyber security measures and ensuring their visibility can significantly enhance student confidence, reduce digital anxiety, and promote broader adoption of online learning systems. The insights gained from this study have important implications for educational policy makers, EdTech developers, and academic institutions committed to ensuring a secure and trustworthy digital learning experience.

Keywords: Digital trust, cyber security in education, online learning, student confidence, data protection, digital anxiety, educational technology, trust in virtual learning

