


A STUDY OF FEMALES DISTANCE LEARNING IN CORONA-VIRUS PANDEMIC TIME

 Elhadi Nasr Elhadi MUSTAFA
dr.elhadi@aou.edu.sa

Arab Open University - Riyadh - Saudi Arabia

 Elnour Mubarak M. A. OMAR
dr.elnourm@arn.edu.sa

ARN Institute for Training –Almadinah – Saudi Arabia

Received: 10.01.2022

Accepted: 27.03.2022

ABSTRACT

There is little doubt that Corona Virus COVID-19 has had a significant influence on the world economy, tourism, health, and educational systems. This problem has had an impact on Saudi Arabian schools and higher education, prompting the government to respond with synchronous education or emergency remote instruction. The current study used a qualitative phenomenological research approach, in which two participants recounted their lived experiences. The study was divided into three themes: The internet connection is bad. The study's findings revealed that learning via online learning during COVID-19 is a difficult circumstance due to students' lack of enthusiasm and the internet coverage service's limitations.

Keywords: Synchronous learning, COVID-19, online interaction, Emergency Remote Teaching.

INTRODUCTION

There is no doubt that the 21st century is the age of technology. Communication devices are used in many fields of knowledge such as science, medicine, and education. It can be seen clearly that this innovation made a great change in our life. Therefore, the internet has increased instructors' engagement with their students and that gave them the chance to be in touch with their students. According to Rosenberg (2001), e-learning gives three advantages namely: Networks that facilitate instant update, storage, retrieval, and sharing of information, and it is delivered via computer using standard internet technology. Remote teaching has been put into practice in order to suit this pandemic time. Remote education, for instance, is a planned activity and its implementation is grounded in theoretical and practical knowledge which is specific to the field and its nature. Emergency remote education is about surviving in a time of crisis (Bozkurt, Jung, Xiao & Vladimirschi, et al, 2020).

First and foremost, the Corona Virus (COVID19) emerged in the world in December 2019, therefore, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced that COVID19 is a global pandemic in March 2020 (WHO, 2020). It spreads and covered many countries in order to prevent strict regulations have been taken such as lockdown and social distancing, while some countries preferred to use immunity methods. To stop the spread of this pandemic. These steps have been adopted such as working from homes, flexible working hours, because the authorities are afraid people infect each other with COVID19. So, many health care ways have been taken seriously for instance, keep distance roughly one meter and sanitized hands and masks are compulsory to be used in public places, shut down schools, universities, stadiums, and many other activities. No doubt that this situation forced all levels of educational institutions to use emergency remote teaching into practice. In the

kingdom of Saudi Arabia situation likewise Corona Virus Disease broke out in March 2019, the way schools and higher institute declared to suspend study entirely and work on a public health emergency. Announced the cancellation of classes and school activities, even training and internships are no exception. Whereby, the continued growth of local transmission cases extends until earlier May 2020 which coincides with Eid Afitr. Whereas, officially the government tries to use alternative ways to compensate wasted time and has suggested remote emergency teaching and other means of teaching and learning delivery, for instance synchronous.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this section, the study provides a review of issues pertaining to online teaching course and challenges of teaching and learning course within COVID-19 time, in context of Oman case a study by (Hamtini, 2008) indicates that fails to accommodate for e-learning environments and in establishing important guidelines and criteria for the remediation as such, addressed the initial concern (Raad, 2020). E-learning tools assist the learning at homes, those who study English have benefited remote teaching within Corona crisis. The government proves that it has supported and provided nine remote teaching materials such as Zoom, Google Meet and Edupage platform in order to facilitate earning and teaching there the quick transition to online education goes successful (Basilaia & Kavadaze, 2020). Clearly, higher education institutes provide online and remote learning and work more and intensively on e-learning by providing students access and they play a crucial role in ICT related to learning, lectures have used remote learning in vast participants to enhance learning especial during expected time within this crisis time, (Ai, 2020). In this time of COVID-19 e-learning becomes an important phase in higher education and schools levels, the studies have confirmed that many factors were related to e-learning usage which motivated learners and institutes to adopt e-learning for instance users feel higher or low self-efficacy, show extend to what students satisfaction with courses, usefulness, interactive community in Malaysia community and the study found out that there were differences in terms of readiness for using blended learning based on gender, age, ethnicity, diversity and level of education in Malaysia (Adams, et al., 2018). Whereby, in situation of Nigerian university and seeks on challenges of e-learning in Nigerian university education based on experience for developed countries for instance Korea, Australia and UK for achieve goals of these strategies government increase federation budget annual 20% for education, beside that improving electricity supply, awareness of training staff on usage of ICT, build solid infrastructure of internet priority to the higher education connectivity to ensure stability of academic research (Oye et al., 2011). The report highlights the future of education and relies on the parents within COVID-19 crisis time and hypothesized that offering connectivity for students of higher education and ensure internet services but the internet service has shown unequal connection community and rate of connectivity for example some are extremely connected vice versa some are with connectivity in Latin America and Africa, so families should work at homes with children and cover a whole course (UNESCO, 2020). Virtual learning facilitates service of connection and continue study at homes and government of Bahrain motivated study for post and undergraduate students in the time of Coronavirus via Virtual learning connectedness environment by providing advanced connection tools (Albdedyem et al., 2020). Therefore, the study focused on students' perceptions and experiences toward e-learning system that provided by university of Tabuk–Saudi Arabia who benefited from this service in terms of training program, received technical program support while they use e-learning system (Aljuda, 2017). Whereas, educational system in Iran likewise affected by COVID-19 crisis so government shifted to a new educational system which is Virtual learning during COVID-19 crisis although it faces challenges in terms of internet connectivity, lack of content preparation becomes compatible with students via Virtua learning, impossibility of using mobile phone connection, nevertheless, higher education has adequate internet infrastructure (Alhmady et al., 2020). There are some countries developed and grow up in

terms of distance education systems for example in Turkey, the Russian federation and Saudi Arabia. These countries developed distance because continue to increase demand on higher education, meet these demand urgently, developed personal skills, securing education for personal development emphasizes on distance education to enhance lifelong learning opportunities (Richter et al., 2015). There is necessity of using e-learning for school students and six devices were suggested for teaching students of e-learning directive information content, stimulus, retains, and the mental health, this can develop and deliver nine earning in order to optimize the students' earning (Ahmed & Khaifa, 2011). Although, Pandemic speed spreads throughout the world declined in industrial production and even in the academic programs, higher educational institutions have any option use internet for online learning to ensure continuation of academic activities. A survey conducted to seek the perceptions of Ghanaian international students in China, level of satisfaction toward nine learning they had shown positive perceptions knowledge had gained in n COVID-19 pandemic (Alhmady et al., 2020; Ahmed & Khaifa, 2011; Demugakor, 2020). Virtual learning during COVID-19 pandemic medical education and during spreads of this crisis of COVID-19 pandemic many tools have been adopted and used in education to deliver the content for instance educating trainees and used for instance WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter application in terms of medical discipline shared information and knowledge outlets Technology for medical trainees. Therefore, virtual learning and teaching are important factors during COVID-19 pandemic because they reshaped and innovated how teaching can take place and provide effective engagement environment in medical environment for trainees and give a sense of foster community and unfortunately isolation becomes a part of everyday life (Amarzooq et al., 2020). In fact, China has influenced by Corona virus disease and cases where schools and colleges suspended study and tries to stop speed of spread this kind of disease, in this case there is a chance for Chinese government and university to use distance or online education. In fact around 24 thousands used online education courses with high quality and it managed and monitored by Chinese online education integrated with ministry of education and students improved self-discipline whereas, they complained from unstable networks and lack of live interaction and affordability of videos courses (Sun et al., 2020). So, an exploration of distance education in Saudi Arabia universities which similar to many Arab countries which adopted and recognized benefits of distance education system and this system give a chance for women to study and new programs and courses were offered and enrolled numbers of students were increased in Saudi universities for example King of Faisal and King of Abduaziz university which provide training with as test Technology innovation to boost further e-learning as possible (Aljabre, 2012). Related to situation of educational system in Nigeria and how it will improve educational system in Nigerian through viability of ICT as an effective instrument although it's a change in educational system in Nigeria. But, involve ICT system didn't take pace educational system because there is poor policy, strategies and infrastructure of information Technology (Terande, 2012). Conversely, the administration of ARN Institute for Training had responded and suspended face to face teaching immediately. Since 13th March, 2020, the ARN authority had announced that no way to be physically present with learners because the government of kingdom of Saudi Arabia puts under suspension as a preventive to contain the spread of COVID-19. So, administration of ARN have embarked the internet connection and adopted remote teaching but the coverage internet and speed have been shown weak and limited, lack of learners' motivation.

METHODOLOGY

RESEARCH DESIGN

This study used a qualitative phenomenological research approach to better understand the experiences of students learning amid a pandemic crisis. To elucidate the significance of an individual's life experiences and to comprehend the phenomenon of those who are

directly involved (Creswell, 2014; Hay & Wood, 2011). In fact, the focus of this research was on the lived experiences of two female students enrolled in the ARN Institute's remote teaching program.

THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

Since this study was conducted during a pandemic crisis that affected the entire Saudi Arabia, participants were chosen based on availability of students, and the majority of them declined to participate due to personal reasons and because some Saudi Arabian girls are shy. The research was conducted in a female-dominated atmosphere. Despite the fact that the interview was done in Arabic and then translated into English. They were actually hand-picked and approached via online short messaging. In-depth interviews were done with three female students; since April 2020, these students have found it difficult to present physically since the public authority may have suspended him as a preventive action to avoid the spread of COVID-19. They had acquired a mobile phone internet connection and used WhatsApp as a result of this.

INSTRUMENTATION AND DATA COLLECTION

The researchers fixed a specific meeting time with the target participants through WhatsApp chatting instant messages. If he was willing to share his learning experiences in distant. Interview employed and specifically a purposive sampling method is adopted. The researchers committed that all information will be kept confidential and to ensure privacy and will be deleted after completing the purpose of them all.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND DATA PROCEDURES

Before beginning the initial interview, the researchers scheduled a meeting with the target female participants, with the permission of the institute's administrators and directors of departments, and flashed individuals to see if they were willing to share their experiences in an online learning course (ARN). Only three female students confirmed their participation in this survey because they were engaged students in the classroom. Furthermore, the researchers thoroughly described to the participants the main goal of this study, which is to analyze the participants' experiences in online courses provided by (ARN) during the Corona crisis. The ethical considerations, such as maintaining the participants' confidentiality throughout the interview, were also carefully highlighted to them. The participants' real names were coded in order to protect their privacy and identification, for example, participant 1 (P1) and participant 2 (P2), and so on.

DATA ANALYSIS

The data was transcribed in a word program, and the researchers went through it to see if the data was satisfactory or if it needed to be improved. Transcripts were really coded based on descriptive phenomenological analysis. The students' real experiences with online learning and instruction were revealed in the final transcriptions code. As a result, in order to get through this stage, the researchers divided it into parts and studied them. As a result, in order to discuss and report the outcomes of this study, the researchers refined and filtered themes of participants' impressions.

FINDINGS OF STUDY

In reality, two themes have emerged from the experiences of participants who study at (ARN). The following were the themes: Internet coverage and speed, as well as a lack of student enthusiasm. The first theme is internet coverage and speed. The participants expressed the concept of online education and engagement in light of the presence theory

and accessibility in this theme. "We were quite dissatisfied with our own work due to a poor internet connection." I'd want to tell you about a recent experience I had with an online class at (ARN). I'll tell you straight out that the internet connection during the online classroom environment was a complete disaster. I reasoned that I could learn and take an online class right now. They noted that, as told by participants 1 and 3 (P1, P3), "the internet online service, for example, conveyed their unhappiness."

In fact that, online courses paved the way for higher tertiary institutions, especially at (ARN), in order to develop disabled learners through synchronous teaching and learning environment. As has been discussed that the first and the second theme that were discussed the concepts of two factors such Coverage internet and speed and lack of females' learner motivation. This shows that philosophy of social interaction factors or social presence. No doubt that, massive interaction took place among lecturers and students as well as whereas the internet coverage service which offered at (ARN) the issue of lack motivation is still far to achieve and satisfy students parallel with the internet coverage as shown (Alhmady, et al. 2020; Ahmed & Khaifa, 2011; Demugakor, 2020) take into account the internet coverage geographical disparities. While some researchers claim that importance of online teaching. This study justifies that (ARN) shifts from traditional classroom instruction to online teaching environment or simultaneously learning process. Thus, ARN institute has been offering distance learning during this crisis, solely depending on the online platform such as Zoom. In addition, females do not use internet in a professional way.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The goal of this study is to bring attention to the problem of online teaching by taking into account students' experiences with internet coverage and their motivation to take advantage of the synchronous teaching and learning environment that this study provides (ARN). Furthermore, the conclusions of this study are based on viewpoints and experiences of online teaching and learning, and the extent to which the educational process transforms from a totally traditional learning environment to synchronous learning and teaching at (ARN). Without a doubt, the online learning environment is regarded as a problem in terms of female motivation and internet access. This study found that at this moment of crisis, institutional management can decide the breadth of both students' and academic staff's experiences with online learning and teaching. Furthermore, female students want extra instruction in how to use the internet and zoom in a professional manner.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, A. & Khaifa, H. (2020). E-earning and COVID-19 (six important pieces of device for teachers and academic teaching staff). *European academic research*. 5(9). 1216-1221.
- Ali, W. (2020). Online and remote learning in higher education institutes: A necessity in light of COVID-19 Pandemic. *Higher education studies*. 10(3), 16- 25.
- Alvarez, A. (2020). The phenomenon of learning at a distance through emergency remote teaching amidst the pandemic crisis,. *Asian Journal of Distance Education*,15 (1) . 144-153.
- Adams, D. Sunintono, B. Mohamed, A. & Noor, N. (2018). E- learning readiness among students diverse backgrounds in a leading Malaysian higher education institution. *Malaysian journal of learning & instruction*, 5 (2). 227 - 256.

- Aljabre, A. (2012).AN exploration of distance education in Saadian universities: Practice and future possibilities. *International journal of business, humanities & technology*, 2 (2). 132 -137.
- Amarzooq,Z . lopes, M. & Kochar, A. (2020). Virtual learning during COVID-19 pandemic: A disruptive technology in graduate medical education. *Journal of the American college of cardiology*. Retrieved from www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov
- Albdedyem, M. Aldulaimi, S &Abdualrazaq, M. (2020). Virtual learning and students' connectedness in the time of Coronavirus. *International journal of advanced science & Technology*, 29(5).12634 -12645.
- AlJuda, M. (2017). Distance learning students' evaluation of e- learning system in university of Tabuk, Saudi Arabia. *Journal of education & learning*, 6(5).324- 335.
- Alhmady, S. Shabazi, S. & Heidari, M. (2020). Transition t Virtua learning during COVID-19 crisis in Iran: Opportunity or challenge. Retrieved from www.researchgate/publication.
- Bozkurt, A. Jung, I. Xiao, J. Vladimirschi, V. & Schuwer, R. et al. (2020). A global outlook to the interruption of education due to COVID-19 Pandemic: Navigating in a time of uncertainty and crisis. *Asian Journal of Distance Education*, 15. (1) ,1- 126.
- Basilaia, G & Kvavadaze, D. (2020). Transition to online education in schools during A Sars-Carz, Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in Georgia pedagogical research ,5. (4). 1- 10.
- Demugakor, J. (2020). Coronavirus (COVID-19) and online learning in higher educational institutions f education: A survey the perceptions of Ghanaian international students in china. *Online journal of communication & media technology*, 10(3). 1- 9.
- Hay, S. & Wood, C. (2011). Infusing qualitative transitions in counseling research designs. *Journal of counseling & development*, 89. 288- 295.
- Hamtini, T. (2008). Evaluating E-learning Programs: An Adaptation of Kirkpatrick's Model to Accommodate E-learning Environment. *Journal of Computer Science*, 4(8), 693- 698.
- Sun, I. Tang, Y. & Zu, W. (2020). Coronavirus pushes education online. Retrieved from nature.cm/nature materials.
- Oye, N. Salleh, M. & Iahad, N. (2011). Challenges of e- learning in Nigerian university education based on the experience of developed countries. *International journal of managing information technology*, 3(2). 39 – 48.
- Rosenberg, M. J. (2001). E- learning strategies for delivering knowledge in the digital age. McGraw –Hill.
- Rosenberg, M. (2001). E-Learning: Building Successful Online Learning in Your Organization. 1st Edn. McGraw Hill, New York, U.S.A.
- Richter, O. Aldraiweesh, A & Alturki, U. (2015). The development f distance education systems in Turkey, the Russian federation and Saudi Arabia. *European journal of pen, distance & e- learning*, 18(2). 113 - 129.

Raad, B. (2020). The role of e-learning in COVID-19 crisis. International journal of creative research thoughts, 8 (3) 3135 -3138.

Terande, T. (2012). Application of e- teaching and e-learning in Nigerian educational system. Academic research international, 3(1). 1- 7.

UNESCO, (2011). COVID-19 and higher education: Today and tomorrow, impact, analysis, policy, responses and recommendations.

BIODATA and CONTACT ADDRESSES of the AUTHORS



Elhadi Nasr Elhadi MUSTAFA received his PhD in Applied Linguistics from Sudan University of Science and Technology, College of Languages in the year 2019. Currently, he works as an English language lecturer at Arab Open University, Saudi Arabia branch. He has written a lot of articles in teaching English as a Foreign Language. He is also an author of a book entitled: Psychological Factors Affecting Sudanese EFL Learners' Oral Performance.

Mobile Phone: +966509427526

Email: dr.elhadi@aou.edu.sa



Elnour Mubarak M. A. OMAR received his PhD degree from Islamic University Malaysia in E-learning 2009 and was a lecturer at Open University of Sudan, Albayan College for Science and Technology, Peace College for languages and Translation. Currently is an advisor at ARN Institute for Training, Madinah, Saudi Arabia. He was an academic writer for educational issues at Sudan vision newspaper. He translated several academic books from English into Arabic. He has written Pace series English books for ARN Institute for Training. Also participated in 21 international conferences in Educational

discipline Canada, Italy, Spain, France, Thailand, Bahrain, South Africa, China, etc.

Mobile Phone: +966578223542

Email: dr.elnourm@arn.edu.sa