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ARTICLES



## Kuwait University Students' Evaluation of the e-learning Experience during the Coronavirus Pandemic

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### Abstract

**Objectives:** This study aims at exploring Kuwait University students' evaluation of the online learning experience during the Covid-19 pandemic closure of schools and universities in Kuwait. **Method:** An online survey was used to collect data from a sample of 851 KU students during the summer semester 2019/2020. **Results:** The results showed mild positive attitudes toward the e-learning experience with no statistically significant difference between males and females, nor between the year of study. Yet there was statistically significant difference between students' attitudes between humanities and scientific colleges in favor of humanities. Several challenges were raised by students, mainly technical issues, course and class issues, faculty performance, physical and psychological health, besides interaction issues. **Conclusion:** Several recommendations were raised by students to improve the e-learning experiences, including the need to develop the faculty preparation, to employ diverse evaluation tools without depending mainly on exams, besides the need to conduct the practical activities and experiments in labs.

**Keywords:** E-learning, Distance Learning, Kuwait University, Faculty competence, Covid-19.

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## Introduction

Many countries around the world have been affected by the Coronavirus pandemic in late 2019. Some governments had to lockdown their countries including all sectors and institutions, schools and universities were not excluded. The education, hence, witnessed a dramatic distraction since the evolution of this virus, in which some countries had to shift immediately after the shutdown of universities to online learning, others had longer time for their decision to transfer to online learning, such as Kuwait. In Kuwait schools and universities were closed in March 2020, after the growth in Coronavirus casualties. Kuwait University (KU) announced in July 2020 its decision to resume the academic year online in August 2020, after five months of schools' closure (KUNA, 2020).

Such unprecedented decision allowed Kuwait schools, and Kuwait University (KU) specifically to practice the online experience for the first time (Alzayed & Hendal, 2021). KU approved several platforms for delivering and sharing course contents, assignments, exams, and for real-time interactive classes with students. KU permitted Microsoft Teams and Blackboard-initially, and later added Moodle- as the official online platforms, because these platforms are integrated with KU systems which allow users, being faculty members or students, to use their KU ID and password to sign in these platforms (Kuwait University Faculty Association, 2020). Microsoft Teams was also adopted by several universities in Kuwait and by all the public schools in the Ministry of Education because it was the approved platform by the ministry (Alramadan, 2020). While some universities employed different platforms such as the Zoom apps and social media tools like Kuwait International Law School (KILAW) (Alshammari, 2020).

At KU, and before starting the online learning, the E-Learning Centre at KU and all KU colleges offered extensive training workshops for using Microsoft Teams and Blackboard. The workshops were offered in Arabic and English, and were divided into basic and advanced levels in different times of the day to reach all the KU affiliates (Alzayed & Hendal, 2021).

## Objectives of the Study

The students are the only direct and daily observers of instructors' teaching performance; thus, students are considered valuable source of information for instructors (Seldin, 1997). Hence, the objective of this paper is to evaluate the students' novel experience of e-learning. This study precisely focuses on the evaluation of e-learning experience from KU students' perspectives. The evaluations here, include the course and faculty evaluations, in addition to their feedback about the overall e-learning experience. The significance of this study implies in shedding lights on the strength and weaknesses of the e-learning process from the students' views, exploring the student's evaluations of the courses and faculty performances during the online learning, and investigating the reasons for students' preferences between the online and face-to-face learning. Results of this study are expected to be beneficial for decision makers in the education field, and at KU and higher institutions particularly, in order to improve e-learning effectiveness and teachers' performances.

### *E-learning Quality Assurance*

As a response to this sudden and unprecedented shift to online learning, the Association of the Arab Universities (AAU) published The Quality Assurance Practical Guidelines for E-learning Programs in July 2020 (Association of Arab Universities, 2020). These guidelines shed light on the quality standards in approving e-learning programs in order to adopt the best practices that are applied in some of the leading countries in e-learning. Additionally, it is critical to establish an Arabic unified framework for quality assurance in higher education institutions in the Arab world that offer e-learning programs.

In the published guidelines, several aspects were discussed including but not limited to the following: (1) designing the learning environment of the institution to assure applying the quality assurance standards, and to include learning resources, students' services, technical support, and administrative staff; (2) assess the outcomes and compare them with the traditional learning outcomes; (3) compare

the success percentage of e-learning students in the professional exams, which are conducted by their professional workstations; (4) the institutional self- evaluation that includes students' feedback, graduates' evaluations, and quality observation techniques of learning plans and exams etc.; (5) external evaluation which is conducted by an exterior specialist professional committee to evaluate all the e-learning programs' components; (6) academic and professional accreditation, in which the educational institution obtains the required accreditation for its programs from the national or international accreditation organizations and councils; and (7) finally, continuous development procedures of quality assurance that indicate the educational institution' sincerity in adopting the best practices of e-learning (Association of Arab Universities, 2020).

Considering the fourth concept of quality assurance that appraises the self- evaluation process, which includes the institution's internal procedures to achieve its programs' quality assurance. One of these procedures is to consider the students' feedback and evaluation, to develop the programs, which will be the main concern in this paper.

### ***The need for Students' evaluation***

Evaluation plays a significant role in the education process and improving the ongoing learning (Tosuncuoglu, 2018), while course evaluation is the primary tool used to measure the effectiveness of how courses are taught (Remedios & Lieberman, 2008). The importance of evaluation is manifested in improving and extending students' learning, assessing students' knowledge, and providing teachers with feedback on the effectiveness of their teaching (Bates, 2015).

One of the main tools of evaluation, and course evaluation in particular is student evaluation or student feedback. According to Joye and Wilson (2015), students' evaluation provides instructors with rich information and feedback about their teaching performance, which helps in considering their teaching style and course content and policies. Accordingly, the paper focuses on students' feedback in order to help policymakers at KU to improve teaching policies and to provide instructors with the feedback to be aware of their teaching

strengths and weaknesses in order to improve and develop their teaching styles.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Students' Perceptions of Online Learning***

The closure of the educational institutions that synchronized Covid-19 pandemic, has affected 1.6 billion learners in about 190 countries (United Nations, 2020). The consequence of this closure caused most countries to shift to the e-learning solution. Since the start of this extraordinary online experience during Covid-19 lockdown, the academia has been perceiving a significant proliferation in the number of publications concentrating on the e-learning experiences and all related aspects worldwide, being the implementation of e-learning, the usage of platforms and their impact and usability, the challenges faced the faculties or students.

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, some scholars explored students' attitudes toward particular e-learning platforms such as Moodle (Holbl & Welzer, 2010), or Blackboard (Hamade, 2012; Alshebou & Alawadi, 2013), others have examined the overall e-learning experiences. Bali and Liu (2018) for instance, explored the perceptions of Indonesia Open University, Taiwan Branch toward online and face-to-face learning in the regard to the social presence and interaction, and satisfaction. The sample included 107 students who were enrolled in blended education courses in humanities and social sciences field. The results of the study supported the researchers' hypothesis that face-to-face learning led to more positive perceptions compared to the e-learning. The reason for such conclusion is the lack of social presence and social interaction in e-learning experience. Although traditional classes perceived more satisfy than e-learning classes, yet many students chose online classes due to the convenience, ease of time, efficient coast, in addition to allowing learners to work at their own pace.

Similarly, Paechter and Maier (2010), highlighted students experiences and preferences in both e-learning and face-to-face learning in 29 Austrian universities. A sample of 2196 students

indicated their appreciation of e-learning courses for its clear and coherent structure of the learning and course materials, cost-benefit ratio of the learning outcomes, distribution of information with other students, and the fast feedback from their instructors. Regarding the face-to-face learning, they preferred it for communication purposes such as establishing social relation with students and instructors, in addition to the cooperative learning.

Comparable to the above two studies, Horspool and Lange (2012) reached similar results comparing students' perceptions in online and face-to-face versions of Principles of Microeconomics course at California State Polytechnic University, USA. The main reason for students to choose e-learning courses is the great schedule flexibility that accommodate their work and family responsibilities, besides avoiding time spending with traffic. However, all students in favour of online or face-to-face courses agreed that traditional classes are easier, they learn more in face-to-face format, and that online learning required more effort.

In India, on the other hand, Gohiya and Gohiya (2020) explored students' attitudes and usage of Microsoft Teams during the pandemic in Gandhi Medical School. The results showed positive attitudes toward the online classes and the instructors, yet they emphasized the need for more collaborative classes and their main concern was the poor internet connection.

Whereas during the Covid-19 pandemic, Fidalgo et al. (2020) examined students' attitudes, perceptions, and willingness on distance education in three different countries: Ukraine, Portugal, and UAE (United Arab Emirates). In both UAE and Portugal, the female participants were more than 90%, while 57% female participated from Ukraine and 43% male. The main reasons for students' preferences of distance learning in the three countries were managing classes, studying time, saving time by choosing study location without having to travel to school, and working at their own pace. On the other hand, the students referred the reason for their unfavourable of being enrolled in distance learning courses to many reasons, but the

frequently chosen reasons were difficulty studying motivated and their preference to face-to-face classes. In addition to the difficulty in receiving immediate feedback (UAE), difficulty in contacting the instructors and interacting with colleagues, and missing campus life. Other reasons relate to accreditation of these courses, not having sufficient knowledge about distance learning, access to technology, great expense and feeling of isolation.

In Jordan, Rababah (2020) examined Jadara University EFL-English as Foreign Language- students' attitudes towards the use of Microsoft Teams platforms in their e-learning. Six students were interviewed, and their responses included both positive and negative themes. Positive theme included first convenience; in which Teams is easier, does not require transportation, students can access from anywhere, and communication with instructors is more comfortable online compared to the difficulties in asking questions in class. Second, time efficiency, students claimed that traditional learning is time consuming while e-learning helped them to be more skilful in time management. Third, sharing and receiving resources become easier and faster with Teams, regardless of the format, whether audio, video, or others. The negative themes, nevertheless, included technical problems such as internet disconnection, in addition to the difficulties in doing particular types of exercises, such as pronunciations.

While in Pakistan, Abbasi and Ayoob (2020) examined the perceptions of medical college students towards e-learning at Liagat College Medicine and Dentistry, including 382 students. The results of this study showed that the majority of students are using mobile gadgets for their e-learning, and most of them (75.7%) had negative perceptions towards e-learning. The majority preferred face-to-face learning over e-learning because students are not prepared yet for the e-learning.

The overall results of most studies had similar preferences of both format of learning being e-learning or face-to-face learning, yet Ana et al. added more benefits that e-learning provides for both learners and instructors. They claim that online learning "is an alternative to

learning compared to conventional learning with lectures, where learning can take place outside the classroom, establish independent learning, help make learning as lifelong learning, and encourage students to interact with one another” (2020, p.23). On the other hand, e-learning also provide instructors with opportunities to change their teaching styles which have an impact on their work professionalism, in addition to supporting instructors to assess students and evaluate each student’s learning.

In New Zealand, likewise, Ali et al. (2020) suggested that student engagement in e-learning has successes and challenges. Several techniques were employed to facilitate student engagement, such as ensuring the course design adequacy to the e-learning delivery method, availing class recordings in advance of live sessions, providing timely feedback, and making frequent course announcements. The challenges, on the other hand, including the irritation of the e-learning technologies and frustrations of establishing personal connections with students, plus, students are less participating in online sessions because of lacking proper computer devices, connection issues, proper environment, or family responsibilities.

While in Kuwait, Diab-Bahman and Al-Enzi (2021) focused on the students in higher education in three private universities, to examine their emotional and social impact of the pandemic on the e-learning education. The results showed that the pandemic has impacted higher education students emotionally and socially as well. Such impact has in turn affected their capability to learn online and to find the new learning methods efficient. In Kuwait University, on the other hand, Baskaradoss and Al-Asfour (2021) examined the impact of the pandemic on the College of Dentistry at KU and the required modifications to operating the dental school. They had to adopt several strategies to ensure a safe environment for its affiliates, such as establishing a Covid-19 response team, adopting the blended-learning model.

In general, the Coronavirus pandemic has imposed the transformation to e-learning globally, regardless of the challenges the students are exposed to. The studies above showed a sample of the challenges in



addition to the preferences of e-learning in some countries. In our case, KU students are engaged for the first time in e-learning experience and for the whole semester. The study aims at investigating the obstacles and preferences confronted KU students in this precedent experience, to overcome these challenges in the future, specially that students, based to Diab-Bahman and Al-Enzi (2021) are usually left out of the conversation during developing the education related policies.

### **Methodology**

The main goal of this study is to examine the student's evaluation of the e-learning experience, including the overall experience, course, and faculty evaluations. Accordingly, the e-learning practices and teachers' performances can be improved considering students' feedbacks. In other words, the study precisely aims at answering these questions:

- What are the students' overall attitudes of the e-learning experience based on their evaluations of:
  - A. The courses during the e-learning?
  - B. The faculty competence during the e-learning?
  - C. The challenges they faced during the e-learning?
  - D. Their preferences for the e-learning in the future?

### **Approach**

A descriptive quantitative approach is employed in this paper. Yilmaz claims that quantitative research "seeks to develop explanatory universal laws in social behaviours by statistically measuring what it assumes to be a static reality" (2013, p.312). The main advantage of this approach is that it enables researchers to measure answers of a few participants to identify the general pattern of the participants feedback towards a particular treatment or program. Therefore, the quantitative method enables researchers to acquire generalized findings to represent the examined society (Hendal, 2019).

## Tool

A modified version of the University of Wisconsin- Madison course-evaluation tool was used in this study. The original survey consisted of seven sections and 34 items. Besides the two open-ended questions in the last section. All items were in 5-level Likert scale form. The modified survey was translated into Arabic and created using Microsoft Office Forms. It includes four main sections: the demographic section (gender, college, studying year, and GPA), course evaluation section with nine items, faculty evaluation section with eleven items, and the last section includes two open-ended questions. Except the demographic and open-ended sections, all items were in 5-level Likert scale form.

To assure validity of the modified version, the survey was approved by a group of colleagues; two translation instructors and three educational technology instructors. The reliability was assessed using the Cronbach's alpha coefficient on preliminary data collected from 35 subject (not part of the sample). Result indicates a high internal consistency for each section, and the overall survey as shown in table 1.

**Table 1**

*Cronbach's Alpha scores on the preliminary sample.*

|         | Items | Alpha |
|---------|-------|-------|
| Course  | 9     | 0.888 |
| Teacher | 11    | 0.928 |
| Overall | 20    | 0.948 |

## Results

### Context and Limitations

After the Coronavirus pandemic in March, Kuwait closed all the schools and universities for about 5 months, in August 2020 Kuwait University has resumed the second semester for the academic year 2019/2020 (Alzayed & Hendal, 2021). Thus, the second semester

included both traditional learning -campus based- and e-learning, therefore, we chose the summer semester which was completely an online semester. The target was KU students only who were enrolled in the summer semester.

## **Participants**

To ensure the variation of participants in terms of major and colleges, and study level, a semi random sampling approach was used in this study. First, a Purposive sampling technique was used to collect general elective courses offered during the summer term. Then, a simple random technique was used to select several classes of these courses to survey. The survey was distributed during the last week of the summer semester in November 2020. The participants (N= 851) represent all the 16 colleges at KU, 781 female and 70 male students. Participants from humanities' colleges (660=77.6%) exceed others from scientific colleges (191=22.4%). Humanities colleges included Education, Arts, Social Sciences, Law, Business Administration, and Sharia and Islamic Studies, while scientific colleges included College of Engineering and Petroleum, College of Sciences, Public Health, Medicine, Pharmacy, Life Sciences, Allied Health Sciences, Architecture, Dentistry, and College of Computing Sciences and Engineering.

As the results showed, a significant number of the participants are female; 781 female and 70 male. This reflects the actual students' disruption among KU. According to KU students' statistics in 2016/2017, the total number of the enrolled female students is 26565 and 9559 male students (Office of Vice President of Planning, 2017). Similarly, the number of students in humanities colleges exceeds those enrolled in scientific colleges. For example, the highest number of students at KU is in College of Education (6065), followed by College of Arts (5363).

## **Research Questions**

The main question of this paper is: What are the students' overall attitudes of the e-learning experience, and to answer this question, the following sub-questions were explored:

- 1 - What is the students' evaluation of the courses during the e-learning?
- 2 - What is the students' evaluation of the faculty competence during the e-learning?
- 3 - What are the challenges they faced during the e-learning?
- 4 - What is their preference for the future, the e-learning or face-to-face learning?

To answer the research questions, the data was analyzed using SPSS 26.

***Q1. What is the students' evaluation of the courses during the e-learning?***

To answer this question, descriptive analysis was used. Table 2 illustrates the mean (Max 5) and standard deviation for each item and for the overall course evaluation.

**Table 2**

*Means and standard deviations of participants' responses of the course evaluation criteria.*

| Course evaluation Criteria                                                           | Mean   | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------------|
| a. Course evaluation and grading were clearly defined.                               | 3.71   | 1.077          |
| b. Graded assignments were useful.                                                   | 3.62   | 1.100          |
| c. The text and assigned readings were valuable.                                     | 3.61   | 1.003          |
| d. The course followed the syllabus well.                                            | 3.60   | 1.081          |
| e. The course was well organized.                                                    | 3.50   | 1.114          |
| f. The course environment was a safe space where I was encouraged to express myself. | 3.48   | 1.153          |
| g. Exams and assignments were reflective of course content.                          | 3.45   | 1.146          |
| h. Overall, the course met my expectations for the quality of e-learning course.     | 3.45   | 1.137          |
| i. The workload for this course was appropriate.                                     | 3.39   | 1.136          |
| Total                                                                                | 3.5352 | 0.80345        |

As demonstrated in Table 2, the overall students' attitude was above medium ( $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = 0.80$ ). The highest item was a course evaluation ( $M = 3.71$ ,  $SD = 1.08$ ), and the lowest was i the workload for this course ( $M = 3.39$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ). Other items scored above the medium value (3/5) and ranged between ( $M = 3.62$ - $3.45$ ). This indicates a mild positive attitude toward course.

It was important to determine whether there were any differences between 1) males and females, 2) humanities and sciences, and 3) year of study. Based on this information, conclusion could be drawn as well as recommendations for future studies. The independent sample t-test showed that there was no statistically significance differences between males and females [ $t(849) = .445$ ,  $p = .656$ ]. However, the analysis showed statistically significant difference between students in humanities ( $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = .78$ ) and scientific ( $M = 3.29$ ,  $SD = .85$ ) colleges [ $t(849) = -4.762$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $\eta^2 = .025$ ] in favor of humanities students. In term of year of study, one way ANOVA showed that there was no statically significant difference between students in difference years of study [ $F(874, 3) = 1.073$ ,  $p = .36$ ].

## ***Q2. What is the students' evaluation of the faculty competence during the e-learning?***

A descriptive analysis was employed to answer this question. Table 3 demonstrates the mean (Max 5) and standard deviation for each item and for the overall faculty competence evaluation.

**Table 3**

*Means and standard deviations of participants' responses of the faculty evaluation criteria*

| Course Evaluation Criteria                                   | Mean | Std. Deviation |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|------|----------------|
| a. The instructor was well prepared for class.               | 3.94 | 0.978          |
| b. The instructor used class time effectively.               | 3.86 | 1.032          |
| c. The instructor was available to students.                 | 3.79 | 1.029          |
| d. The instructor encouraged student participation in class. | 3.75 | 1.027          |

**Table 3 Cont.**

*Means and standard deviations of participants' responses of the faculty evaluation criteria*

| Course Evaluation Criteria                                                                    | Mean   | Std. Deviation |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|----------------|
| e. The instructor presented course material in a clear manner that facilitated understanding. | 3.72   | 1.078          |
| f. The instructor stimulated my interest in the subject matter.                               | 3.70   | 1.056          |
| g. The instructor provided feedback in a timely manner.                                       | 3.63   | 1.085          |
| h. Overall, the instructor met my expectations for the quality of e-learning teacher.         | 3.61   | 1.142          |
| i. The instructor's teaching methods were effective.                                          | 3.61   | 1.107          |
| j. The instructor provided helpful feedback.                                                  | 3.58   | 1.100          |
| k. The instructor returned assignments and exams in a timely manner.                          | 3.57   | 1.111          |
| Total                                                                                         | 3.7052 | 0.81519        |

As demonstrated in Table 3, the overall students' attitude was above medium ( $M = 3.71$ ,  $SD = 0.815$ ). The highest item was a the instructor preparation ( $M = 3.94$ ,  $SD = 0.978$ ), and the lowest was k the time of returning assignment ( $M = 3.57$ ,  $SD = 1.111$ ). Other items scored above the medium value (3/5) and ranged between ( $M = 3.86$ - $3.58$ ). This indicates a mild positive attitude toward faculty. The independent sample t-test showed that there was no statistically significance differences between males and females [ $t(849) = -.658$ ,  $p = .513$ ]. However, again, the analysis showed statistically significant difference between students in humanities ( $M = 3.77$ ,  $SD = .77$ ) and scientific  $M = 3.46$ ,  $SD = .90$ ) colleges [ $t(849) = -4.25$ ,  $p = .000$ ,  $\eta^2 = .021$ ] in favour of humanities students. In term of year of study, One-way ANOVA showed that there was no statically significant difference between students in difference years of study [ $F(874, 3) = 2.033$ ,  $p = .108$ ].

***Q3. What are the challenges they faced during the e-learning?***

Open-ended answers were downloaded and saved in an excel file. Thematic analysis was conducted where Open-ended answers read by both authors, separately, to establish main themes. Multiple discussion sessions were made to validate the key themes and to ensure that all data were represented in those themes. The analysis concluded into five main categories based on the types of challenges: Technical issues, courses and class issues, faculty performance, physical and psychological health, and interaction.

According to the results the main technical challenges were the connection and internet issues (51%), followed by devices issues (18.5%), platform issues (18.4%), while 11.2% had more than one technical issue during their e-learning process. While non-technical issues included the large number of tasks and homework (28.39%), misunderstanding and miscomprehending the online content (24.22%), the difficulty of conducting the online evaluations tools (14.84%), lack of interaction and communication (11.72%), lack of practical activities and experiments (6.26%), and finally the psychological issues such as anxiousness, shyness, and lack of motivation (2.6%).

***Q4. What is their preference for the future, the e-learning or face-to-face learning?***

When students were asked about their willingness to continue with the e-learning after this pandemic, 54% indicated their rejection, and 45% agreed to continue. Chi Square Test of independence was used to determine the relation between students' preference and gender/ major. The results showed no relation between gender and preferences [Chi Square (1, n = 851) = 1.842, p = .175, phi = .051]. In term of the major and preferences Chi Square showed no differences [Chi Square (1, n = 851) = 1.345, p = .246, phi = -.034].

Based on their answers, the reasons for continuing with e-learning was the easiness of the content, comfort attendance, easiness of communication with the instructor by email or by the direct Microsoft Teams chat, the faculty performance, the diversity of teaching methods

and employing different multimedia, and it is safer for health. While those against pursuing e-learning after the pandemic referred the reasons to the difficulty of the content, insufficient learning competency, deficiency of faculty competence. In addition to the e-learning regrettable influence on health, including eyes, back pain, psychological issues such as isolation and introversion, and the technical problems including weak signals, lack of devices, and platforms issues.

## Discussion

This main goal of this paper was to examine students' feedback and evaluation of the e-learning experiences, namely: their evaluation of the course and faculty, and to determine the challenges they faced/are facing, and their preferences for the future between the e-learning or face-to-face learning.

The results of Q1 showed overall positive students' evaluation of the courses, yet the mean of students at humanities' colleges was higher than those of scientific colleges. This could be referred to the nature of study of these colleges which depend mostly on readings and theoretical contents, opposite to the scientific colleges where the study depends mostly on experiments, applications, and practical exercises. Remarkably, various issues were raised by students regarding the course, including the difficulty of content, lack of evaluation tools, and lack of practical activities and experiments, comparable to what was introduced by Rababah (2020), the difficulty in doing some types of exercises such as pronunciation.

Similarly, Q2, the faculty obtained high evaluation by students with no difference between male or female or the studying year, yet again the humanities students' evaluation of the faculty was higher than those scientific colleges though both had positive and high evaluation. However, the students presented several reflections concerning the faculty, such as using inappropriate teaching tools like debates and group work, depending mostly on reading without further explanation, deficiency of time and class management, lack of employing different multimedia.

Different challenges were highlighted by the students (Q.3).



the challenges were classified and grouped according to the main theme. For example, all challenges relate to the course, content, and evaluation were classified under "Course and Class" Issues. Table 4 shows the main five classification for these challenges, namely; technical issues, course and class issues, faculty performance, physical and psychological issues, and interaction issues, with examples of the problems raised by the students.

**Table 4**

*The classification of E-learning challenges*

| E-Learning Challenges Classification |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Technical Issues                  | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Internet disconnection, poor signals.</li> <li>2. Lack of devices.</li> <li>3. Platform freezing.</li> <li>4. Using several platforms.</li> </ol>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| 2. Course and Class Issues           | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Large number of homework.</li> <li>2. Misunderstanding the lessons.</li> <li>3. Lack of evaluation tools.</li> <li>4. Insufficient time for exams and exercises.</li> <li>5. Lack of practical activities.</li> <li>6. Heavy and difficult content.</li> <li>7. Large number of students prevents the participation of all of them.</li> </ol>                                                                                |
| 3. Faculty Performance               | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Depends mostly on reading and lecturing.</li> <li>2. Lack of online teaching qualification.</li> <li>3. Depreciate students' urgent circumstances.</li> <li>4. Fast teaching to cover all the content.</li> <li>5. Taking extra time than the schedule.</li> <li>6. Class management.</li> <li>7. Using inappropriate tools like debate and group discussions.</li> <li>8. Lack of employing different multimedia.</li> </ol> |

**Cont. Table 4***The classification of e-learning challenges*

| <b>E-Learning Challenges Classification</b> |                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4. Physical and Psychological Health        | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Body pain (back and shoulder).</li> <li>2. Eyes issues.</li> <li>3. Anxiousness.</li> <li>4. Lack of motivation.</li> <li>5. Shyness.</li> </ol> |
| 5. Interaction                              | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Lack of interacting with other students.</li> <li>2. Difficulty in conducting group work.</li> </ol>                                             |

The technical issues were introduced by Rababah (2020) as internet disconnection, Gohiya and Gohiya (2020) study where poor internet connection was the main students' concern, and by Ali et al. (2020) as lacking proper computer devices. Absence of motivation (4.4) matches Fidalgo et al. (2020) who presented the absent of studying motivation in e-learning classes. On the other hand, lacking interaction (5.1) matches Bali and Liu results (2018), lack of social presence and interaction, Paecher and Maier (2010) study, where students preferred traditional study over the e-learning because the ability to establish social relation with instructors and students, Gohiya and Gohiya (2020) presented the students' need for more collaborative classes, and lastly by of Fidalgo et al. (2020) study, where students were unfavourable of being enrolled in distance learning because of the feeling of isolation.

Finally, Q.4 showed the reasons for their preferences to continue with e-learning, including the easiness of the content, which contrast with some of the responses that highlighted the difficulty of the course and misunderstanding the content. Moreover, this results also conflict with Horspool and Lange (2012) where students believe that traditional classes are easier, and they can learn more. Another reason was the easiness of communication with the instructor, contrasting Fidalgo et al. (2020) where students found difficulties in communicat-

ing with the instructors through the e-learning, by email or by the direct Microsoft Teams chat, the faculty performance, the diversity of teaching methods and employing different multimedia, and it is safer for health.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

Some students added few recommendations to improve the e-learning experiences, including the need to improve the faculty preparation, to employ diverse evaluation tools without depending mainly on exams thus the grades can be distributed on several tasks and assignments, providing the students with recording of the classes so that they can consult the recordings anytime, and to conduct the practical activities and experiments in labs employing the face-to-face teaching instead of the e-learning. A remarkable issue also should be considered by KU administration is the special need students and the difficulties they may face during the e-learning experience, providing them with the assistance needed and the alternative solutions for teaching and assessing them.

Although the focus of this paper is on one aspect of evaluation which is students' feedback, but there are several aspects need to be examined as well in order to improve the quality of e-learning at KU. For example, the performance of IT supporting Centre, the teaching assistants, administration of each college and their response to such extraordinary circumstance. In addition to the rest of e-learning quality assurance aspects which were introduced by AAU.

### **Declaration of Interest**

We have no known conflict of interest to disclose.

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## تصورات طلبة جامعة الكويت لتجربة التعليم الإلكتروني خلال جائحة كورونا

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### ملخص

**الأهداف:** هدفت الدراسة إلى استكشاف تقييم طلبة جامعة الكويت لتجربتهم في التعليم الإلكتروني خلال جائحة كورونا، بعد إغلاق المدارس والجامعات في الكويت. **المنهج:** أجريت الدراسة خلال الفصل الدراسي الصيفي لعام 2019 / 2020 باستخدام استبانة مكونة من ثلاثة أقسام: (1) تقييم المادة، (2) تقييم الأستاذ، و(3) الصعوبات التي واجهت الطلبة، وطبقت على عينة مكونة من 851 طالباً وطالبة. **النتائج:** أظهرت النتائج اتجاهات ايجابية متوسطة نحو تجربة التعليم الإلكتروني دون وجود فروق إحصائية بين الذكور والإناث أو السنوات الدراسية، في حين ظهرت فروق في الاتجاهات بين الكليات الإنسانية والكليات العلمية لصالح الكليات الإنسانية. وتوصلت النتائج إلى وجود العديد من التحديات والمشكلات التي واجهت الطلبة، تم تصنيفها إلى مشكلات تقنية، ومشكلات في المنهج الدراسي، وكفاءة عضو هيئة التدريس، ومشكلات صحية ونفسية، ومشكلات في التواصل. **الخلاصة:** خلصت الدراسة إلى مجموعة من المقترحات لتطوير تجربة التعليم الإلكتروني تتضمن الحاجة إلى تدريب أعضاء هيئة التدريس، وتنويع وسائل التقييم وعدم الاعتماد على الاختبارات حصراً، وكذلك إقامة الأنشطة التطبيقية والتجارب في المختبرات بصورة تقليدية وليس عن بعد.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التعليم الإلكتروني، التعليم عن بعد، كفاءة أعضاء هيئة التدريس، كوفيد 19.

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