

Instructors' Perceptions, Motivations, and Competences in e-Learning: The Case of College of Business Studies - Kuwait

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Abstract:

Background: Human resource management (HRM) practices are crucial in determining how well organizations face crises such as the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, during which educational institutions at all levels have had to shift to online learning. Instructors have had to adapt to this change in the way skills and knowledge are delivered, and not all actors have been properly prepared to do so: Instructors' ability to manage online and virtual learning is vital to ensuring its effective implementation. This study evaluates instructors' perceptions of online learning in the College of Business Studies (CBS) in Kuwait, shedding light on factors including learning competency, motivations, commitment to, and perception of online learning, to identify obstacles to the use of technology in this area.

Materials and Methods: A qualitative and quantitative methods were carried out in CBS. First, a focus group session was conducted for deeper investigation, then the result of the focus group helped in shaping out a survey questionnaire which then collected from 309 college instructors to reveal both the challenges and the opportunities presented by online learning.

Results and Conclusion: The results indicated that instructors had a positive experience with the online virtual learning however, barriers such as poor helpdesks, lack of training, less management motivations, and limited electronic educational materials were recorded. However, instructors believed that using online learning while going back to the classroom (Blended Learning) is important.

Key Word: Online learning, e-learning, faculty members, Instructors, Evaluation.

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I. Introduction

The purpose of human resource management (HRM) operations is to enable organizations to achieve their goals by introducing proposals and extending support and counseling on issues related to those working for the organization [1]. This is critical for developing countries faced with situations like COVID-19 pandemic [2, 3]. Educational establishments had to move all their teaching online, forcing instructors to depend on e-learning, especially in developing countries such as Kuwait. This shift to e-learning due to the pandemic introduced a new way of acquiring technical skills. Even though e-learning was the solution to continuing education, not everyone was ready for the new shift. However, the role of instructors is vital for the successful implementation of online and virtual learning [4]. Instructors had no chance to get ready for this change; as a result, their ability to teach their subject matter in the classroom may not be as effective as their technical skills. With these difficulties, e-learning remains beneficial not only for the education sector but also for all aspects worldwide with the customized learning experience [5]. Universities and colleges are adapting such technologies to develop quality education and enable user groups to participate in their teaching and learning processes. Based on blended learning paradigms [6], these technologies can be integrated into classrooms or used to provide virtual access to new teaching and learning settings [7].

Human resource management (HRM) carries out multiple activities, both supporting and proactive, whose aim is to enable employees and organizations to meet their goals. In developing countries, including Kuwait, HRM strategies are critical in deciding how well firms respond to crises such as the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, throughout which educational institutions at all levels have been forced to transition to e-learning.[8]. Both students and educators have had to adapt to this change in the way skills, and knowledge are delivered, and

not all actors have been properly prepared [9], to do so: Instructors' ability to manage e-learning is vital to ensuring its effective implementation [10], but the rapid change from traditional to online methods, with very little opportunity for preparation or training, has undermined the confidence of some instructors. Despite this drawback, however, the advantages of e-learning have become globally apparent within both the educational sector and multiple other types of organization [11]. The role of the educator within learning has been much debated, but it is arguably gaining in importance. Hence, it can be argued that intensive training is required for teachers, in particular, so that they are competent to deal with new modes of delivery with the various learning management systems now adays [12, 13]. That said, it is also important to address other issues which will enable all actors to adapt efficiently to the new environment, and this concern less the educator's role than concepts and work processes. Instructors will then make their own decisions as to whether, or how (e.g., e-learning only or blended), they will incorporate the new technology into their teaching by asking themselves questions including how best a given course can be shifted online to ensure continued student engagement and which tools and technologies (virtual/blended) they can choose (or have access) to best leverage the new technology. Different motivational factors drive these goals and help instructors to answer these questions [14].

The entire educational sector has been greatly impacted by the introduction of virtual learning, which, despite its many advantages, has brought with it a new set of challenges [15]. Considerable research globally has been carried out into the role of technology within learning and teaching, particularly since the start of the recent pandemic. In Kuwait, specifically, many concerns have been expressed over the past decade about how to ensure a better and more widespread take-up of technology by teachers in colleges, and the current work is recognized as a pioneering contribution to this area, especially given the scarcity of such research in Kuwait. Hence, the current paper aims to review and analyze the role of HRM professionals within the education sector and show how they can assist instructors to acquire the necessary competences to undertake online teaching. Specifically, this paper evaluates how instructors in the higher education sector used e-learning in the College of Business Studies (CBS) in Kuwait, shedding light on factors including learning competency, motivations, commitment to, and perception of learning and teaching processes, to identify obstacles to the use of technology in this area. First, a review of the literature was undertaken to determine the state of play regarding perceptions of usability, functions, and processes. Thereafter, qualitative, and quantitative research were carried out at the selected research site: A survey was administered to college instructors, in which 309 responses were collected to reveal both the challenges and the opportunities presented by online learning.

This article is organized as follows. Section 2 outline the research objectives. Section 3 provides the literature review; section 4 explains the methodology. The results and a discussion are presented in section 5, while section 6 draws the conclusion.

II. Research Goal and Objectives

This empirical research was conducted to understand the perceptions of online learning among CBS instructors. Guidelines and recommendations were drawn up according to the findings to enhance e-learning and -teaching practices. The focus of the current study is how e-learning is used in HE. The specific research site is the College of Business Studies (CBS) in Kuwait, and the subjects are the instructors working there, whose benefits, motivational factors, and processes are examined. Thus, this study will look closely at obstacles whether academic, technical, or organizational, faced by the instructors using and attempting to further their knowledge of working in the new e-learning environment at CBS [16]. Thus, this research can be considered pioneering within the field, given few studies have, to date, focused on e-learning within the Kuwaiti setting. It is a pioneer study focuses on Kuwait's educational system [17, 18].

It is therefore anticipated that the research will be significant not only by generating new scientific knowledge in the field but also by formulating recommendations to the CBS administration which can promote the successful development of e-learning focusing on human resources including faculty members. A review of the extant literature, alongside data collection from interviews, a focus group, and questionnaires, will enable us to generate administrative and technical recommendations for use by CBS administrators' policy makers. We expect the results to be useful for administrative and technical employees of the CBS in their quest to ensure instructors engage more actively and creatively with e-learning and thus improve teaching and learning processes through uptake of and competence in blended learning. Our recommendations will also be of value to developers seeking to improve future e-learning platforms and content which meet the needs of all stakeholders, from teachers and other faculty through students, administrators, and parents.

Specific Objectives are to:

1. Carry out a literature review in the field of e-learning practices to identify examples of first, success and second, system improvements that enhance teachers' professional activity.
2. Examine perceptions, motivations, barriers, and competencies of CBS instructors regarding e-learning.
3. Compare the e-learning use statistics of male and female instructors.

4. Generate recommendations to enhance current and future virtual and blended learning at CBS.

III. Literature Review

Whatever the information system under analysis, workers are among the principal factors in ensuring its smooth operation [19]. Hence, instructors, as the workers in distance learning environments, have a significant impact on how smoothly it runs. The productivity of this system can be largely assessed by posing two questions: first, whether the importance of instructors decreases as the technology grows; and second, what the role of instructors is within the system [20]. Due to Kuwait's status as a developing nation, the education sector made limited use of information and communication technology (ICT) prior to the pandemic. Online learning, if it existed at all, was in its infancy, and the vast majority of lessons were taught in a traditional classroom setting [21, 11]. Although a number of programs had attempted to promote and support online education in public education institutions, there had been minimal user adoption. Even though Kuwait is a wealthy country, it looked that its low innovation ability and rate had caused it to slip behind other nations in this area [22]. Among the obstacles to greater take-up of e-learning in the Kuwaiti public educational sector were not only a lack of training and infrastructure, but the fact that very few digital educational materials have yet been made available in Arabic. Once approval was granted by the Ministry of Higher Education, however, its offices began the necessary preparations to roll out a widespread program of e-learning delivery [23].

It is known among HRM specialists that placing employees in new or uncertain situations causes them to become stressed [24]. Reactions to this stress vary according to workers' disposition and coping mechanisms [25, 24]. Among the many challenges facing the widespread rollout of e-learning in the educational sector of Arab countries is the technical competence of instructors. In normal circumstances, training programs would be devised for and administered to users of a new technology, as well as post-training evaluations, to ensure successful deployment. However, it is debatable whether, in current circumstances, teachers have had sufficient time and help to equip themselves with the necessary skills to undertake online teaching, including digitalizing content, delivering it, and collaborating online with learners and colleagues through learning management systems (LMS) and video conferencing, or that they are competent to manage virtual student evaluations. When so little time is available to prepare instructors, the challenges abound.

Many advantages of online education have been identified, including accessibility, flexibility in terms of scheduling, adaptability to a variety of learning styles, range of tools, and ease of monitoring and recording instruction activities [22]. Although many instructors are aware of these potential advantages and their own important role in realizing them, they are equally aware of the magnitude of the challenge facing them to equip their learners with the standard of IT literacy which 21st-century living demands [26]. Not only must teachers deliver educational content, but they must also coordinate work processes in this new environment as well as facilitating students' access to the technology required for learning [27]. Moreover, while using unfamiliar technologies and acquiring the skills required to use them, they must also deal with the stress engendered by the uncertainty inherent in the situation and their own possible fear of being inadequate to carry out their work properly [28].

As instructors are required to demonstrate a more than rudimentary grasp of the new technologies, they should be given access to awareness and training programs where they can learn to use the platforms being introduced as well as the learning cultures and behaviors which accompany them [29]. Technical skills alone are insufficient in this changed environment; instructors must also acquire the skills of modelling learners' social and cognitive abilities. Research has shown that interaction, collaboration, and relationship-building are vital, both between colleagues and between teachers and students. Among the obligations imposed on instructors using e-learning are consistent participation and prompt communication, as well as acting as facilitators of group discussion, guides for students, and being accessible, on-hand advising for students who need them [30]. Added to this, they must be able to reformulate their teaching content to render courses appropriate for e-delivery while maintaining educational objectives and in such a way that students can easily access them and be properly evaluated on their learning [21].

A considerable body of research has emerged on the role of instructors in e-learning. The model developed by [4] lays out steps which instructors can follow to create online learning content that will effectively engage learners. It also offers teachers access to free-for-use tools that can be used to produce interactive learning. Meanwhile, [31] conducted quantitative and qualitative research to investigate the perspectives, motivations, and e-learning skills of instructors at Mzumbe University, Tanzania. A survey questionnaire was administered to 42 participants, results show that e-learning systems are usually viewed favorably and that they are mostly used to create teaching notes, assessments and feedback, and course outlines, as well as for the online grading of students' work. Moreover, the authors indicate that motivations behind teachers' willingness to engage with e-learning systems include personal beliefs in the potential of such systems to enhance learning, personal interest, course type, and ease of use. Finally, the authors concluded from the

survey that the level of instructors' competence in terms of design and implementation of e-based tuition was average.

The authors [32] explored the relationship between e-learning systems and staff commitment and discovered that four characteristics strongly influenced the latter: learner satisfaction, 24/7 access to training resources, individualized learning, and efficiency. Similarly, [33] investigated instructors' assessments of students' online learning outcomes and whether such outcomes might be predicted by instructors' resilience and competency in online delivery. According to their results, before teachers start online delivery of lessons, they should enhance both their resilience and their teaching competence through interventions which address both these elements and teacher well-being. It is argued that instructors of different ages should be differently trained to enhance their future competence and resilience [34]. The authors [35] stressed that instructors should be trained before they embark on designing and delivering online courses. In Kuwait, the educational sector finds itself with no option, in current circumstances, but to make significant changes to the way teaching is delivered and learning is received by shifting courses online and preparing all stakeholders for the inevitable changes. Many Kuwaiti academics have, nonetheless, pointed out the many and substantial challenges this change will entail, principally the potential that many teachers and students lack the necessary knowledge and skills, as well as means, to make this shift [23], given the widespread lack of experience of working and learning in an online environment [36].

IV. Methodology

The research methodology includes research sample, research instruments, as well as the research procedures. This study used both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A focus group was organized before administering the online questionnaire to the entire study population.

Research Sample

This study involved 309 participants (187 male and 122 female instructors) from the College of Business Studies, The Public Authority for Applied Education and Training (PAAET) in Kuwait. Table 1 presents the demographic data and sample distribution of the study population (gender, IT competency, and teaching experience).

Table 1: Sample distribution according to the demographic variables

	<i>Variables</i>	<i>Frequency (F)</i>	<i>Percent %</i>
Gender	Male	187	60.5
	Female	122	39.5
IT Competency	Little	15	4.9
	Average	99	32.0
	High	195	63.1
Teaching Experience	Less than 10 years	57	18.4
	10 years to 20 years	89	28.8
	More than 20 years	163	52.8

Research Instruments

The study used quantitative and qualitative approaches in means of a survey and focus group. The items in the questionnaire were modified to reflect the specific nature of the instructors.

1. Focus Group

A focus group session was organized in the college of business studies (CBS), in which 15 instructors piloted the adapted questionnaire. The objective was to find any uncertainty in the questions and change them accordingly. The final version of the questionnaire was formed by findings from the focus group and the pilot study. During the focus group, the administrator asks the participants to give their opinions, notes, ideas about their experiences, including their recommendations.

2. A Questionnaire

The final version of the questionnaire used in this study consists of three parts. The questionnaire was specifically designed for this research with the aim of eliciting opinions from participants and examining both problems and opportunities in CBS' current e-learning system. Part 1 collects participants' demographic data, including gender, professional experience, and IT competency, Part 2 investigates their opinions about the

online learning at the college, and Part 3 addresses obstacles and barriers found while implementing e-learning during the pandemic. Answers use a 5-point Likert-type scale, where 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly agree. A pilot study was carried out on all research instruments to ensure the questionnaire meets its intended aims, assess the feasibility of the survey, and verify initial results.

Research Procedures

Multiple methodological approaches were used. A literature review sheds light on the state of play among researchers and practitioners regarding instructors' perceptions and use of e-learning. A qualitative approach enables an understanding of rationales, perspectives, motivations, opinions, etc. among participants, which, in turn, enables the generation of insights into challenges as well as new ideas. Consequently, 15 CBS instructors were invited to participate in a focus group session considering their individual differences [37, 38]. The session was organized in a meeting room in the college which lasted one hour and administered by the assistant dean. Instructors were encouraged to discuss possible system problems and give recommendations and to help in shaping out the final version of the questionnaire. A quantitative approach was then taken through the design and administration of a questionnaire in which 309 instructors reflected their opinions in the current e-learning environment at CBS, including systems and processes. The questionnaire was administered online to all instructors at the college in which 309 responded.

The data collected were statistically analyzed using SPSS to shed further light on practices, challenges, and benefits, after which recommendations and suggestions for administrative staff at CBS to help in the successful development of both educational and administrative processes and guide the development team in terms of improving e-learning systems and platforms. Several statistical methods were used, including frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation (SD), an independent-sample t-test. The independent-sample t-test is carried out to detect any statistically significant difference between means in two independent variables (in this case, male and female instructors). In addition, SPSS was used to calculate the correlation coefficients. The correlations between the individual dimensions and the overall score were high ($p < 0.01$) and ranged from 0.805 to 0.902, which indicates high internal reliability and construction integrity. Similarly, the reliability of the questionnaire has been calculated through finding Cronbach's alpha by using SPSS. The dimensions of the questionnaire have a high degree of reliability, where the co-efficient degrees range between (0.79-0.92). The total score of Cronbach's Alpha is (0.94). So, the questionnaire can be generalized to the basic study sample, and the results can be trustworthy.

V. Results and Discussions

Instructors' Perceptions of Online Learning

Table 2 shows the results which reflect instructors' perceptions of online learning. The data analyzed using frequency, mean, and standard deviation (SD). Among the 15 items presented in Table 2, each item's mean value is higher than 3.0, which indicates that instructors have positive perceptions about online and virtual learning at CBS. Item 9 got the first rank with a mean value of 4.61, which demonstrates that instructors agree that teaching online has reduced the use of papers and photocopying. Also, item 15, "I prefer teaching in the classroom while getting the benefit of e-learning platforms and tools" got the second rank with mean value 4.50. One participant stated that the combination of physical education and taking advantage of the features of online learning platforms is valuable. Another stated that "e-learning platforms serve as an aid to physical classroom education and not a substitute for it." Similarly, one added "E-learning is considered a valuable addition and an important means in the field of education and can also be used to provide lectures remotely in the event of the professor's illness or difficult conditions and circumstances that prevent attendance". Another said, "I see that blended learning helps to achieve the goals of modern education reducing the use of paper and photocopying machines."

Item 1 "E-learning tools facilitate managing and correcting exams and tests" comes in third with a mean value of 4.30. An instructor stated that the platform is excellent for exams, excellent for submitting assignments online, and excellent as a means of communication between the professors and students. Another stated that "With the online education experience, we must renew the concept of returning to normal life and attendance education, benefiting from this experience by integrating technology into the physical learning in the classroom through blended learning".

Table 2:Instructors' Perceptions of Online Learning (Frequency)

NO	Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	SD	t
1	E-learning tools facilitate managing and correcting exams and tests	164	103	21	12	9	4.30	0.965	3
2	Teaching through the e-learning platforms is exciting	74	110	53	49	23	3.53	1.223	10
3	e-learning platform motivates the students to learn	40	80	72	80	37	3.02	1.233	15
4	e-learning platform has increased the quality of teaching practices	68	89	59	69	24	3.35	1.259	12
5	e-learning platform helped increase the interaction between instructors and students	54	79	63	69	44	3.10	1.321	14
6	Teaching through e-learning platform saves my time and effort	121	121	32	25	10	4.03	1.055	6
7	Educational electronic materials are available for my courses	93	116	61	33	6	3.83	1.037	8
8	Students get high grades through e-learning	108	120	55	25	1	4.00	0.940	7
9	Teaching online has reduced the use of photocopying	219	64	23	2	1	4.61	0.682	1
10	E-learning help students to be well prepared for the labor market	66	92	69	61	21	3.39	1.214	11
11	The e-learning LMS "Moodle" is easy to use	40	63	153	37	16	3.24	0.997	13
12	The e-learning platform "TEAMS" it easy to use	143	128	27	8	3	4.29	0.810	4
13	The e-learning platform support creativity in learning	76	130	65	26	12	3.75	1.041	9
14	E-learning helps students learn anytime and anywhere	141	117	32	11	8	4.20	0.947	5
15	I prefer teaching in the classroom while getting the benefit of e-learning platforms and tools	200	76	25	5	3	4.50	0.792	2

The lowest mean values in item 3 ranked 15 with a mean value of 3.02, implies that the instructors moderately believe that online learning motivate the students to learn. The fifth element, "e-learning platform helped increase the interaction between instructors and students," ranked 14, with a mean value of 3.10. However, [39] stated that students and instructors have the flexibility to collaborate through LMS, allowing better collaboration and interaction [40]. Item 11 "The e-learning LMS "Moodle" is easy to use" ranked 13 with a mean value of 3.24. On the other hand, instructors believe that Ms-Teams is easy to use LMS (mean=4.29) compared to Moodle (mean=3.24). Similarly, item 4 "e-learning platform has increased the quality of teaching practices" ranked 12 with (mean=3.35), this is supported by [41], who indicated that online learning is not the best answer for student participation in teaching and learning, emphasizing the importance of instructors in inspiring students to use the features to improve the quality of online learning practices. One comments from an instructor "The use of e-learning platforms reduces the effort of Instructors and saves money for the institution." While another said, "I recommend the blended learning in which there is online education (recorded and live) while at the institute for exams and quizzes".

Barriers of Online Learning

This section presents the results of instructors' opinions about barriers to online learning adoption. Data were analyzed using frequency, mean, and standard deviation. The mean values, which are close to 3 in the ten items listed in Table 3, indicate that the instructors do not see the obstacles as aessential element that hinders the use of online learning at CBS. Item number 2 "Students cheat to a large extent through online learning," ranked first with a mean value of 4.40. A faculty member stated that "teaching online is exciting, however, many students of CBS are not prepared for online learning, and cheating spreads easily in exams using MS-Teams platform and the grades do not reflect the level of students". He added "I agree to use the online learning platforms as a teaching tool, but I refuse to use it to conduct exams".

Table 3:Barriers of Online Learning (Frequency)

NO	Item	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	SD	Rank
1	I was well trained to use the e-learning platform	86	138	55	28	2	3.90	0.933	2
2	Students cheat to a large extent through online learning	185	79	28	17	0	4.40	0.868	1
3	I see a need to provide incentives for	86	80	69	42	32	3.47	1.306	6

	instructors who use e-learning platforms								
4	There are various digital educational resources covering my curriculum	64	115	81	43	6	3.61	1.025	4
5	Technical support is available to solve my problems with the e-learning	47	135	84	32	11	3.57	0.987	5
6	I face problems related to interruption of networks with students while using the e-learning platform	13	89	74	104	29	2.85	1.072	7
7	The Kuwaiti conservative culture plays a role in not accepting e-learning	18	57	81	110	43	2.67	1.106	8
8	There is a difficulty in applying e-learning to courses of a practical nature	4	24	76	102	103	2.11	0.999	10
9	It is difficult to control and manage the classroom remotely	13	74	54	111	57	2.60	1.160	9
10	Instructors use electronic notes and summaries more than books	71	140	70	26	2	3.82	0.905	3

Because of cheating, the respondents almost confirmed this issue as they see a downside of online learning is lack of confidence in the test results with a mean value 4.40 displayed in item 2. Besides, participants may feel relatively weaker in controlling online examination and evaluation, as indicated in item 9. Question number 1, "I was well trained to use the e-learning platform", got the second rank with a mean value of 3.90. Comes third item number 3 "Instructors use electronic notes and summaries more than books" with a mean 3.82. Also, item number 4 "There are various digital educational resources covering my curriculum" ranked 4, with a mean value of 3.61. Item number 5 "Technical support is available to solve my problems with the e-learning platform" rank five with a mean value of 3.57.

Question number 3 "I see a need to provide incentives for instructors who use e-learning platforms" ranked 6 with a mean value of 3.47. Question 3 reveals respondents' opinions, which imply that instructors do not feel confident that their institutions encourage the use of online learning. Item number 6 "I face problems related to interruption of networks with students while using the e-learning platform" comes seventh with a mean value of 2.85. An instructor suggested to "Strengthening the Internet within the college buildings to facilitate the conduct of electronic exams in presence instead of paper exams". The author [22] listed some technological barriers: infrastructure, network maintenance, and low internet connections, which will impact the learning process with restricted access. Item number 7 "The Kuwaiti conservative culture plays a role in not accepting e-learning" rank eighth with a mean value of 2.67, while item number 9 "It is difficult to control and manage the classroom remotely" rank nine with a mean value of 2.60. Finally, item number 8 "There is a difficulty in applying e-learning to courses of a practical nature and laboratory" rank tenth with a mean value of 2.11. One comments from an instructor stated, "As for the theory and the nature of verbal lectures, it is easy to explain the topics for the student who can listen and understand through e-learning platforms". She added "As for the subjects of a digital nature, mathematics, equations, and laboratories, it is difficult to communicate and explain topics through e-learning, especially for our students who need follow-up and explanation, and their academic background for most of them is weak". She believed that "E-learning needs a student who wants to learn to benefit, and not for a student who just wants to succeed and get high grades". Many instructors in Kuwait believe that online learning could be useful with theoretical subjects and difficult for scientific subjects[36].

As for barriers of online learning used in CBS, one comment "Our institution did not evaluate the e-learning experience in a neutral manner. Unfortunately, the experience and application of e-learning was bad and does not reflect the actual educational attainment of students". Another stated "Students do not actually attend the online lecture, I mean fake attendance, and sometimes having another person take the test online instead of the student while getting high grades".

Competencies

Before we can attempt to define instructor competency, we must first define competency. Reference [42], defined the many aspects of competency, distinguishing between competence and competency. Competency/competencies are the elements that an individual must have to do their job successfully [43]. Instructors must learn to accept new technology and gain new abilities; they must tackle any pressures or worries they may have because of their uncertainties to adequately perform their duties. In this model, instructors must demonstrate more than just basic competence; competence must be raised through awareness and training programs so that they not only operate the technology but also understand learning cultures and behavior [44]. In this setting, instructors must model more than just technological aptitude; they must also model social skills, intellect, and presence for students.

Question number 1, "I was well trained to use the e-learning platform", got the second rank with a mean value of 3.90. One comment from an instructor stated that if we want to implement e-learning in our

educational institutions and there must be a holistic view to benefit from all the electronic services available in the virtual learning platforms and their use should not be limited to teaching only. According to [45], the lack of technological expertise among teachers is one of the hardest challenges to the proper adoption of online education in the Arab world. In the past, introducing new technologies would necessitate evaluating instructors' skills and expertise prior to deployment, as well as the types of training necessary to assure the adoption of online learning (CoSN). Distance learning is a teaching method that has been applied for decades and has become easier with modern education methods. In addition, it is important to teach male and female students study skills and time management to avoid problems with distance education.” The analysis shows that instructors and students need to improve their knowledge and skills to be competent in the use of e-learning tools and applications.

According to previous study, there is a need for connection, cooperation, and relationship development amongst teachers as well as between instructors and students. They must consistently participate, communicate effectively, facilitate regular exploration discussions, provide students with direction, and make themselves available when needed. When the epidemic struck, educational institutions were forced to provide training for their teachers on how to conduct online classes. However, according to [46], most organizations provided far less training during the pandemic, either by reducing training time or by not providing any training at all. Employee training has been used to acclimate employees to their new working conditions by organizations that have maintained a focus on it. Different organizations concentrated on various areas of training, with some focusing on remote working and others bringing new applications. Professionals in education and training have seen a unique emphasis on the use of new technology, with organisations being forced making a quick transition to online teaching to avoid disruptions in course delivery. Even when employees were instructed to attend their workplace, training sessions were held online.

Motivations

Blended learning (BL) is an effective teaching strategy, which also promotes learning outside of the traditional face-to-face learning setting. Furthermore, BL is currently trending across universities and colleges because to its excellent impact on student motivation and overall performance, as evidenced by [47]. Motivated instructors can foster learning and engage students in active online learning, which promotes skills like communication, information literacy, creativity, and cooperation, all of which translate into the ability to use digital technology for a variety of purposes. If used correctly, online learning can transform colleges into more flexible and agile entities capable of fast adapting to contextual changes while being cost-effective [48]. Although online learning has several advantages for academics, there are certain difficulties to its implementation, including the lack of an institutional vision shared with front-line teaching staff. There may be a gap between the required degree of engagement for teaching staff and capacity building for BL. The lack of proper institutional support for BL may also reduce instructors' incentive to adapt their courses into the blended format, which may discourage their commitment to change [49].

Question number 3 “I see a need to provide incentives for instructors who use e-learning platforms” ranked 6 with a mean value of 3.47. Regarding motivation, one person offered the following advice: "I recommend recognizing the instructors who excelled in their performance and teaching through e-learning platforms”. Also, it was determined that motivation was a key element in creating a successful online learning environment [50]. A faculty member mentioned that some instructors fully utilized the tools available in the learning management systems including creating digital educational content while others just turn on the camera and teaches online like the way they teach in the classroom. He added that management should encourage and promote active instructors for their effort and get priority in all benefits such as promotion, teaching in the summer, or engage in supervising positions.

Gender Differences in the Perceptions of Online Learning

This section discusses the third research objective “Compare the online learning use statistics of male and female instructors”. The finding indicates that there is significant difference between male and female instructors, “level of significance” ($p=0.02$), and “level of significance” ($p=0.00$) in favor of female (t-test) $p < 0.05$ as in Table 4.

Table 4: Gender Differences in the Perceptions of Online Learning (T-test)

Item	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Instructors Perceptions of Online Learning	male	187	3.61	0.692	-2.413	307	0.02

	female	122	3.80	0.651			
Barriers of Online Learning	male	187	3.24	0.433	-2.857	307	0.00
	female	122	3.38	0.416			

People's differences, which can be influenced by gender, may have an impact on how users interact with online systems. Instructor perceptions fluctuate depending on user variables such as personality, cognitive styles, gender, age, and prior knowledge, all of which can influence users' perceptions and attitudes about technology [51]. Because of societal conventions, the usage of technology may differ between male and female. In view of their collectivist cultural setting, considering that the Kuwaiti school system is gender-segregated, it would be assumed that both males and girls would utilize web applications largely for social purposes.

Focus Group Results

From the focus group session that was conducted at CBS, participants mentioned advantages and disadvantages of the online learning experiences. As for the advantages, one participant said that online learning was a solution while facing Corona virus, another participant believed that teaching online was enjoyable specially with small number of students, another stated that it was a very interesting experience at the beginning. A faculty member mentioned that online learning motivated instructors and students to develop themselves on using technology. Similarly, the college provided online training to upskills instructors with technical skills, while one believes that it is useful for sending assignments to all students. It is also mentioned that there are many helpful features in online platforms that instructors can use. While another participant stated that online learning help to prepare students for the labor market by using more technologies. One said that using e-learning platforms helped in creating a paperless environment and the auto correction feature specially for exams, saves a lot of time for instructors. During the focus group session, it was mentioned that cameras help to monitor students during exams, fast response for the help desk for technical problems, and students' attendance is easier online. It was also said that instructors can use multiple media and tools for teaching, and that online learning was efficient and time consuming.

In addition, many disadvantages were also mentioned such as: teaching certain subject was challenging, it's hard to communicate with the students, and hard to control the classroom virtually. In addition, the e-learning platforms were abused by instructors and students, and Internet connectivity is one of the barriers specially on campus. Another believed that students don't have a private and quite place to interact online, and that digital educational content are not sufficient online. One said that instructors use PowerPoints more and neglecting the textbooks. While other stated that students cheat easily with online exams. A faculty member believed that students suffer from small cell phone screens, and that instructors were not able to see students' facial expression. In addition, there are students with learning disability who need more attention, so online teaching added challenges to this issue. Others said: there are some cultural issues when asking students, especially girls to turn on the cameras; Students don't have a good technical support; Sometimes students may attend online yet they are not present; Poor interaction between student and instructors. Other stated that it is hard for students to concentrate while teaching online, and that some instructors don't have the skills to utilize online tools and features.

VI. Conclusion and Recommendations

Human resource management (HRM) practices are crucial in determining how well organizations face crises such as the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, during which educational institutions at all levels have had to shift to e-learning. Numerous educational institutions use online education to foster a collaborative learning environment. Before investing in systems, institutions should determine their needs and comprehend the functionality and benefits of the systems. This research seeks to investigate existing practices, opinions, and obstacles that administration and academicians might use to contribute to improved learning practices and academic accomplishment. Using qualitative and quantitative methodologies, a focus group and questionnaire were administered to 309 faculty members from the College of Business studies (CBS). Findings obtained from the questionnaire and the focus group indicated that instructors were comfortable and had positive perceptions about online learning. The study also pointed to some challenges and barriers overcoming the proper implementation of online learning platforms such as poor helpdesks, lack of training, less management motivations, and limited electronic educational materials were recorded.

This study highlighted certain small challenges that can hinder the adoption of e-learning, such as student interaction with the system, the complexity of online learning interfaces, and instructors' and students' preparation. Additionally, there are personal, technological, and institutional constraints. Personal comprises

self-assurance and knowledge of online learning's potential and the functionality of platform tools and resources that enhance the teaching and learning process. Technological possesses the infrastructure, technical support, internet connections, and collaboration tools necessary to inspire teaching and learning. Institutional obstacles include strategic planning, management aid, encouragement, incentive, and training programs for utilizing, delivering, and developing e-learning courses. In addition, cultural and social factors play a crucial influence in the acceptance and adoption of online learning. Over time, instructors who had been averse to adopting technology in the classroom will become more receptive to their newest teaching approaches. Considering this, the institution should assist in training its faculty to promote the use of online instruction to succeed in their courses.

VII. Recommendations

The results of this study helped to suggest some recommendations that my help in getting the best outcome from online learning and the new step toward blended learning at the college of Business Studies:

1. Educational authorities in Kuwait should focus on activating, designing, and implementing e-learning platforms, and overcome its barriers.
2. Provide instructors and students with appropriate training and guidance to use online learning tools and functions. An extensive instructors' readiness programs are vital.
3. Reduce in cognitive load and increased interactivities during online teaching, for example focus on online Project and Case Based Learning.
4. Encourage and focus on learning strategies through the rich tools and functions available in the e-learning platforms to achieve pedagogical objectives
5. Stress that instructors play an important part in inspiring learners especially that some learning methods and strategies are more effective than others by taking advantage of e-learning platforms features
6. Suggests that once the students are self-directed, motivated, and confident, by instructors, giving learners control of their interactions with media and prompting learner reflection
7. Discourage cheating in online examinations, by using premium software and other proctoring software to detect cheating and plagiarism. Among the tools are video surveillance, timed quizzes, random questions, biometrics, and other authentication tools.
8. Provide robust infrastructure, budget, technical assistance, and strong wireless internet connections in campus.
9. Encourage the development of educational digital content that achieve the educational objectives and learning outcomes of the courses at the college (electronic interactive courses).
10. Build engagement and motivation with course content and learning activities and foster the interaction between students and the learning community.
11. Provide incentives to instructors to design interactive online courses.
12. Promote training programs in the use of technologies for the students.
13. Consider data privacy and data security.
14. Develop distance learning rules and conduct while monitoring students' learning process.
15. Create communities of instructors, social workers at the college, parents, and advisors to facilitate sharing of experience and discussion on coping strategies and advising.
16. Install data show and projectors in each classroom so instructor can project learning materials to students allowing them also to present their works and projects.
17. Conduct a periodic evaluation of the entire online learning system at the college which helps ensure the accountability and quality of teaching and learning online.

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