

The Effectiveness of Distance Learning from the Perspective of Graduate Students of the Faculty of Educational Sciences at Mutah University in Light of Corona Crisis

Mohammad Ahmad Bani Amer

Ministry of Education, Jordan

baniamer2020@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores the graduate students of the faculty of educational science's perceptions towards distance learning during the corona crisis at Mutah University. The study involved 125 graduate students attending Doctorate, Master, and High Diploma programs in Educational Sciences at Mutah University in the second semester of academic year 2020\2021. Data had collected among graduate students of the faculty of educational sciences of Mutah University, Al-Karak, Jordan, through an online questionnaire. The study followed a quantitative approach, where the survey technique was used as an instrument of data collection. Results showed that most graduate students of the faculty of educational sciences were satisfied with the effectiveness of distance learning at Mutah University in light of the Corona crisis. Thus, they didn't face challenges in distance learning, and the majorities of the students preferred distance learning to conventional types and understand the content of virtual classes easily. Besides, the study discovered that Master's students showed a better view than Doctorate and High Diploma students regarding distance learning, and female students have more positive appreciation than male students.

Keywords

corona crisis; Mutah University; graduate students; distance learning; perspectives



I. Introduction

The higher education system in Jordan is based on traditional education and requires the learners to attend the school classes every day. This situation in general education in the country has changed in the second semester of 2020, when the cases of coronavirus COVID-19 infection was detected in Jordan. A virus has infected millions persons worldwide, among these there are 304,071 cases in Jordan.

The learning process in Jordan was suspended from the 15 of March by the recommendation of the Ministry of Higher Education, in a situation where the students are not allowed to go to university; the alternative is to move from traditional to online education. In this case the essential parts are the internet coverage, availability of computers or smartphones. (Bao, 2020; Demuyakor, 2020).

Most countries round the world, including Jordan, licensed unmatched social containment procedures. These procedures inclusive social distancing and the transitory closing of educational foundations. Educational foundations embraced a digital path to teaching learning process, dramatically changing traditional classroom instruction to mainly distance learning where teaching is provided on digital stands. The unscheduled, prompt, and uncertain duration of the approach, is presenting challenges and taking a toll

on students at all academic levels. (Johnson et al., 2020; Agarwal & Kaushik, 2020; Murphy, 2020)

Mutah University has made the Microsoft teams' platform available for all students. The Education Management Information System has created the accounts for all instructors and students and has built-in the virtual classrooms for all classes and relevant subjects by default. Additional online instructions were published to use the system. Mutah University has introduced various solutions during the pandemic to continue the education process. Online libraries, guidelines, resources, video lectures.

So this study examines the effectiveness of distance learning from the perspectives of graduate students of the faculty of educational sciences at Mutah University in Light of the Corona Crisis. This current study aims to evaluate Mutah University new experience and survey the perspectives of graduate students of the faculty of educational sciences, with the aim of measuring the effects related to effectiveness, and the level of satisfaction resulting from the application of distance learning, revealing the challenges, and difficulties that hinder the continuation of the distance education process.

1.1 The Statement of the Problem

Mutah University, as is currently the case for all universities in Jordan, has been affected by the Corona Crisis. To control the spread of the virus, several decisions have been declared including the closure of Mutah University since March 2020 and for an undetermined duration. In response to this decision, which affects graduate students of the faculty of educational sciences, distance learning was adopted to guarantee and complete the graduate programs.

Mutah University used various platforms, to implement distance learning during the health emergency state. Social media channels were also used to reach students.

This sudden transformation in the educational system in Mutah University made matters unclear and raises a lot of controversy about the effectiveness of distance learning issue, and from here the researcher believes that this experiment must be subject to a real evaluation from the perspectives of graduate students.

1.2 The Research Aim

This research aims to:

- To explore the perspectives of graduate students of the faculty of educational sciences in Mutah University towards distance learning practices during the Corona Crisis.

1.3 The Research Question

- What are the perspectives of graduate students of the faculty of educational sciences in Mutah University towards distance learning during the Corona Crisis?

1.4 The Limitations of the Research

This study's primary restraint was that the survey was operated by only a small portion of participants in Mutah University, Al-Karak, Jordan. The study only explored the perspectives of graduate students of the faculty of educational sciences in Mutah University towards online classes during the Corona Crisis in the second semester in the academic year 2020\2021.

1.5 Related Researches

Daraghmeh (2021) conducted a study aimed to identify Palestinian university students' perceptions of using distance education in light of the Coronavirus crisis from the students' point of view, depending on the differences between gender or the university in which they study. The descriptive approach was used for the current research. The 25-paragraph questionnaire was distributed electronically through social media sites due to the closure of universities. The sample of the study was formed from (73) distributed among (16) males and (57) females and distributed to universities came (42) students of Palestine Technical University Khudouri, and (19) students of Al-Najah University and (12) students of Arab American University. The study found that Distance Education was a problem for students because of the constant need for Internet service, while Distance Education helped them with multiple sources of information. Moreover, Distance Education did not make it easier to understand teaching subjects better, nor did it make education popular for students. They preferred education that was more remote than Distance Education. The study also did not find any differences in the perceptions of Palestinian university students to use distance education in light of the Coronavirus crisis due to the variable of gender or university. The most important recommendations are providing an appropriate educational structure for implementing e-learning in Palestinian universities and removing all human, material and technical obstacles that prevent its spread in the educational system in various stages and fields. And that there is a need for Palestinian universities to offer materials that provide students with e-learning skills and techniques to facilitate the process of interaction and benefit by students with educational materials provided electronically

Miqdadi (2020) conducted research aimed to uncover the points of view of high school students in government schools in Jordan for the use of distance education in light of the Corona crisis and its developments. The researcher used a descriptive survey approach and the research sample consisted of (167) students. The research indicated that there was a positive impact on the use of distance education in light of the emerging Corona crisis in the schools of the Irbid, to a very large extent. Paragraph (1), which states that "Distance education enriches my education," came in first place, with an average of (4.78). Paragraph (19), which reads: "It helped eliminate many student problems in the last rank, with a mean of (3.60).

Obeidat (2020) conducted a study aimed to reveal the perceptions of primary school teachers in public schools in Jordan for the use of distance education in light of the Corona crisis and its developments and to identify the significance of the differences in the perceptions of primary school teachers for the use of distance education in Jordan according to the gender variable, the study was applied in the classroom The second 2021 AD, and the descriptive survey approach was used, as the study population consisted of teachers of the primary stage in public schools in the Bani Kenana District in Irbid Governorate, and the study sample consisted of (100) male and female teachers. The number of teachers in the sample was (50), and the number of female teachers was (50), who were chosen by the simple random method. The results showed that the arithmetic averages ranged between (3.00-4.98 for teachers, and between (3.12-4.95) for female teachers, and the general average for teachers' perceptions was (4.23) with a standard deviation (0.58), while the arithmetic average for the perceptions of female teachers came with (4.26). With a standard deviation (0.78), the study also concluded that there are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between male and female teachers' perceptions of the use of distance learning attributable to the gender variable.

II. Research Methods

2.1. Population of the Research

The research community consisted of all graduate students of the faculty of educational sciences at Mutah University in the academic year 2020\2021.

2.2. Sample of the Research

The sample included (125) graduate students of the faculty of educational sciences at Mutah University in the second semester of the year 2020-2021. Table (1) shows the sample's distribution.

Table 1. The Sample Distribution

Educational Level	Male	Female	Total
Doctorate	30	17	47
Master	21	35	56
High Diploma	9	13	22
Total	60	65	125

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics of the sample included in this study. The current study included 125 participants: 60 male and 65 female. Regarding the categorization according to the education level, 47 were doctorate students, 56 were master students, while the remaining 22 were high diploma students.

2.3. Research Instrument

The electronic questionnaire was designed via the Google Forms application on 20\3\2021, and it was stopped to begin analyzing data on 5\4\2021. The questionnaire included general information on the participants in addition to the items for each axis of the study. The researcher designed a questionnaire of five-Likert type scale items: strongly agree , agree ,undecided , disagree , strongly disagree

2.4. The Validity of the Instrument

The validity of the questionnaire was calculated by submitting it to a jury of referees in the specialty of curricula and methods of teaching and educational technology, and then the researcher modified it based on the jury's observations by reformulating some phrases.

2.5. The Reliability of the Instrument

Cronbach's Alpha was used to determine the scale. Table (2) shows the scale had a reassuring reliability coefficient, and the scale axes separately also enjoyed reassuring stability coefficients indicating its suitability for use.

Table 2. Alpha Formula of Instrument Reliability

Number of Cases	Number of Items	Alpha
124.0	24	.87

2.6. Statistical Analyses

Descriptive statistics which include the mean scores and standard deviations were computed by using The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to answer the questions of the study. Depending on the jury's suggestion, The researcher adopted the following criterion to decide whether the students' responses to the questionnaire in general were considered to be : low , medium , high)on the five –Likert type scale.

maximum degree(5) - minimum degree(1) =The Period Length
three suggested estimations (3)

$5-1/3=4/3=1.33$ (The Period Length)

*(1_2.33) is considered low

*(Over 2.33_3.67) is considered medium

*(Over 3.67_5) is considered high

III. Discussion

This part presents the analyses and results of the data collected and their interpretations. The data used in this study was primarily collected through the distribution of close-ended questionnaires amongst graduate students of the faculty of educational sciences at Mutah University; the final survey population totaled 125 graduate students. The results were statistically treated to identify the mean scores and standard deviations on each of the statements of the questionnaire. Also, the total means and standard deviations of each of the main parts of the questionnaire were computed.

Results related to the Research question: What are the perspectives of graduate students of the faculty of educational sciences in Mutah University towards distance learning during the Corona Crisis?

Table (3) shows the mean and the standard deviation of each item of the perspectives graduate students of the faculty of educational sciences at Mutah University survey about the distance learning experience:

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviation for All Items According to Graduate Students of the Faculty of Educational Sciences in Mutah University

Rank	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Available of e-learning instruction courses on the use of the distance learning system for students	3.39	1.36
2	High reliability in student evaluation through remote learning	3.17	1.31
3	Satisfaction with the use of distance learning as an alternative to the regular learning system	2.96	1.48

4	Remote learning raises achievement	2.81	1.55
5	Continuous assessment of students during distance learning	2.77	1.33
6	Remote testing and duties as an appropriate means of assessing student achievement	2.64	1.40
7	flexibility to move from regular to distance learning	2.64	1.42
8	Provides appropriate technical support to facilitate the use of technology in educational materials	2.60	1.33
9	Remote learning technologies effectively contribute to a successful learning process	2.60	1.37
10	The University's distance learning site makes it easy to display educational materials in an interesting and enjoyable way	2.52	1.35
11	The technical methods used for distance learning are effective and cover the subject areas	2.52	1.32
12	distance learning system helps you understand the learning material clearly	2.51	1.44
13	Educational content includes learning-friendly exercises and duties	2.51	1.35
14	There are appropriate and varied methods in student evaluation	2.48	1.42
15	Faculty members have sufficient skills to design and produce electronic educational content	2.41	1.28
16	Distance Learning System Adapted to Course Nature	2.32	1.37
17	Remote Learning Helps Discussions Efficiently	2.24	1.34
18	Distance learning system provides direct communication between faculty and students	2.22	1.32
19	Remote learning is more time- and effort-efficient	2.19	1.28
20	Receiving and sending distance study materials without technical difficulties	2.05	1.27
21	Faculty members answer students' queries easily and consistently	1.88	1.20
22	Remote learning encourages self-learning	1.88	1.30

23	The distance learning system allows students to access the learning material at any time	1.76	1.15
24	Remote learning increases and develops computing skills	1.72	.97
	Total	2.45	1.32

It is clear from table (3) that the five highest arithmetic means were (3.39, 3.17, 2.96, 2.81, 2.77) and they stated as follows:

- Available e-learning instruction courses on the use of the distance - learning system for students
- High reliability in student evaluation through remote learning
- Satisfaction with the use of distance learning as an alternative to the regular learning system
- Remote learning raises achievement
- Continuous assessment of students during distance learning

As for the lowest arithmetic means, and the arithmetic mean for these items had (2.05, 1.88, 1.88, 1.76, 1.72) and they stated as follows:

- Receiving and sending distance study materials without technical difficulties
- Faculty members answer students' queries easily and consistently
- Remote learning encourages self-learning
- The distance learning system allows students to access the learning material at any time
- Remote learning increases and develops computing skills

The results show that the effectiveness of distance learning from the perspectives of graduate students of the faculty of educational sciences at Mutah University in Light of the Corona Crisis was medium, the highest rating was given to the item "Availability of e-learning instruction courses on the use of the distance learning system for students" (3.39), where the lowest rating was given to the item "Remote learning increases and develops computing skills" (1.72). Graduate students of the faculty of educational sciences at Mutah University expressed their satisfaction with the effectiveness of distance learning at Mutah University in Light of the Corona Crisis.

The findings of the study question show that the means scores for the graduate students of the faculty of educational sciences at Mutah University toward the effectiveness of distance learning at Mutah University in Light of the Corona Crisis were medium. The total mean of the evaluated items was (2.45).

In addition, Table (4) shows that female students (1.93) have more positive appreciation than male students (1.65).

Table 4. Means and Standard Deviation for All Items According to Sex

Sex	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Male	1.65	60	.73
Female	1.93	65	.68
Total	1.80	125	.71

Also, Table (5) shows that Master students (1.62) showed a better view than Doctorate (1.36) and High Diploma students (1.59) regarding distance learning.

Table 5. Means and Standard Deviation for All Items According to Educational Level

Educational level	Mean	N	Std. Deviation
Doctorate	1.36	47	.49
Master	1.62	56	.49
High Diploma	1.59	22	.50
Total	1.52	125	.50

IV. Conclusion

The outbreak of the Corona crisis impacted public health and safety and the educational systems worldwide. Most educational institutions in Jordan, including Mutah University, have postponed their face-to-face teaching. Therefore, this study explores the graduate students of the faculty of educational science's perceptions towards distance learning during the corona crisis at Mutah University. The study involved 125 graduate students attending Doctorate, Master, and High Diploma programs in Educational Sciences at Mutah University in the second semester of academic year 2020\2021. Data had collected among graduate students of the faculty of educational sciences of Mutah University, Al-Karak, Jordan, through an online questionnaire. The study followed a quantitative approach, where the survey technique was used as an instrument of data collection. Results showed that most graduate students of the faculty of educational sciences were satisfied with the effectiveness of distance learning at Mutah University in light of the Corona crisis. Thus, they didn't face challenges in distance learning, and the majority of the students preferred distance learning to conventional types and understand the content of virtual classes easily. Besides, the study discovered that master students showed a better view than doctorate and high diploma students regarding distance learning, and female students have more positive appreciation than male students.

Recommendation

Since the current study was conducted within Mutah University system in Jordan, further studies on professors, students in different levels, teaching and learning strategies, and online teaching impact might be conducted in to gain a deeper understanding of the crisis's overall effect on the Jordanian education system.

References

- Bao, W. (2020). COVID-19 and online teaching in higher education: A case study of Peking University. *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, 2(2), 113-115. <https://doi.org/10.1002/hbe2.191>
- Demuyakor, J. (2020). Coronavirus (COVID-19) and online learning in higher institutions of education: A survey of the perceptions of Ghanaian international students in China. *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*, 10(3), Article

e202018. <https://doi.org/10.29333/ojcmt/8286>

- Daraghmeh, R. (2021). Palestinian University Students' Perceptions of Distance Education in Light of the Coronavirus Crisis. *Modern Applied Science*, 15(5),1-11
- Johnson, N., Veletsianos, G., & Seaman, J. (2020). U.S. faculty and administrators' experiences and approaches in the early weeks of the COVID-19 pandemic. *Online Learning*, 24(2). <https://doi.org/10.24059/olj.v24i2.2285>
- Miqdadi, M. (2020). Perceptions of high school students in public schools in Jordan of using distance education in light of the Corona crisis and its developments, *The Arab Journal for Scientific Publishing*, 19(7)
- Murphy, M. P. A. (2020). COVID-19 and emergency eLearning: Consequences of the securitization of higher education for post-pandemic pedagogy. *Contemporary Security Policy*, 41(3), 492-505. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2020.1761749>
- Obeidat, S. (2020). Perceptions of primary school teachers in public schools in Jordan for the use of distance education in light of the Corona crisis and its development. *International Journal of Psychosocial Rehabilitation*, 24(10), 7570-7584