

USING E-LEARNING TO ENHANCE EFL STUDENTS' PERFORMANCE

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ABSTRACT

Even with a lockdown of all educational institutions, students are not left out from enhancing their learning needs. The Senate of Albaha University immediately ordered the shift to e-learning using Rafid (an e-learning program installed by the Deanship of E-learning and Information Technology). Therefore, this study was aimed at investigating the use of e-learning to enhance EFL Saudi students' performance. It was performed using a historical and descriptive-analytical approach to study the difficulties faced by students and teachers as well as evaluate how this program can help improve students' performance and the approach that can be used to suitably tackle the same. Two questionnaires were each distributed to 39 (27 males and 12 females) students and 18 teachers who work in the English department. The most important conclusion from this study is that it is easy to launch a program using a mixed in-class (traditional learning) method alongside an e-learning program that involves video conferences and virtual classes along with other related activities. It is recommended that the teachers' role and students' motivation to succeed are prioritized. However, similar studies that involve a greater sample size and varied departments are necessary for the future as this study was limited to the English department.

Keywords: English language teaching; learning styles; language and technology; e-learning

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Educational patterns are processes that require planning to ensure that the teacher is familiar with modern educational trends and theories and chooses material that is appropriate for the students' age and characteristics, providing appropriate activities for their abilities and needs. Before the digital age of technology getting inserted into education settings, education went through a severe crisis that affected all its components: from professors and students to curricula and educational system and from its means and educational supplies to administrative systems. Therefore, it is important to pedagogically work on obtaining valuable results and outputs by exploiting learners' energies and motivating their learning using proper methods and pedagogy. Thus, obtaining knowledge of learning patterns is an important entry point to determine the appropriate activities that lead to increasing students' motivation and achievement levels. Accordingly, active education is one of the most important learning methods that consider different learning styles, and among these most

effective methods is e-learning (Al-Khafaji, 2011). Therefore, this article is focused on an effective and modern means that can help to develop education and harmonize it with the information and communication revolution taking place throughout the world—e-learning. Saudi people are not isolated from the rest of the world and, therefore, need to keep with the educational renaissance that is currently prevailing. The following is a quote from the vision 2030 book of Albaha University:

We will continue investing in education and training so that our young men and women are equipped for the jobs of the future. We will close the gap between the outputs of higher education and the requirements of the job market. We will also help our students make careful career decisions, while at the same time training them and facilitating their transition between different educational pathways. In the year 2030, we aim to have at least five Saudi universities among the top 200 universities in international rankings. We shall help our students achieve results above international averages in global education indicators" (Vision 2030 Book).

Additionally, as most students in this digital age are able to use modern technologies and devices, it is easy to incorporate these methods that motivate them into the field of learning. Therefore, the university has organized a platform for e-learning through virtual classes and other related activities that involve teachers providing examples of using the Internet in creative ways to make students interested and involved in the learning process. By collecting these creative and collegial ways of keeping the intellectual communities going during the lockdown and stimulating discussions around them, the university hopes to expand its repertoire for the use of e-learning and popularize some of the exciting approaches that staff have found to address these challenges. By now, everyone must have heard of the coronavirus pandemic, and from the health sector to business and beyond, everyone is feeling the heat. Unfortunately, students are not excluded from the situation. In fact, over the past weeks, virtually every school has experienced total lockdown, causing students to vacate the school premises. Al-Buasaidi and Al-Shihi (2012) revealed that individual and organizational characteristics can negatively or positively affect students' improvement along with other factors that involve content and learning experiences (Mitchell & Honore, 2007).

In line with this critical emergency, the Deanship of E-learning and Information Technology at Albaha University initiated a program for an e-learning platform called Rafid. This program provides the opportunity to manage a virtual classroom tool that can be used to remotely deliver lectures and interact with students. Consequently, Rafid is adjusted to help fulfill these goals and improve learnability. Therefore, it was deemed important to conduct a study to investigate the effectiveness of e-learning in improving students' performance. Thus, this study targeted both male and female students during the critical period of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) that resulted in a lockdown of all the schools in the country. The educational system shifted from the traditional delivery of classes to e-learning using the existing e-learning platform Rafid. The study was aimed at understanding the impact of e-learning on improving students' performance and was conducted in the College of Sciences & Arts Qilwah, Albaha University. The general observation of the English Department was that students need a motivational learning style to help them achieve better success in their learning process. They added that the students are keen on using technological devices as well as inclined to the use of technological devices and materials in lectures such as

projectors, smart boards, video shows, etc. Therefore, this study focused on the effectiveness of an e-learning approach to attract students' attention and enhance their learning.

Thus, this study was aimed at addressing these questions: To what extent does e-learning help in raising Saudi EFL students' performance? What are the difficulties that may face Saudi EFL learners during using e-learning? What are the most stimulating and favourable methods in setting up the e-learning program to improve Saudi EFL learnability?

The researcher assumed that e-learning can highly improve students' learnability. However, students may face problems with their Internet quality, technical facilities, and lack of experience. Thus, the researcher additionally recommends tailoring a mixed program with traditional in-class as well as e-learning virtual classes to attract students' interest. The population for this study included all the EFL students at Albaha University. The sample consisted of 39 male and female EFL Saudi students (27 males and 12 females) who were voluntarily chosen during the second term of the academic year 2019–2020 during the lockdown period. All of them joined the e-learning program using the Rafid platform. The experience was tremendously helpful for the students, and they enjoyed it very much.

2.0 E-LEARNING

There has been a huge technological revolution in the field of education, and many have talked about the tremendous growth in e-learning that has not been previously observed. The Internet is the basis for the transformation to make e-learning a fundamental axis in educational policy. Therefore, the concept of e-learning refers to harnessing technologies and all means of technological education through integrated educational systems (Singh, H., 2003; Al-Khafaji, 2011). The goals of e-learning showed the message that came for it, and e-learning channels can be used on an individual or collective basis using available electronic devices such as computers and smartphones, whether in school classes, at home, or at any other place where the student can undergo the education process (Al-Khafaji, 2011). Many reasons had led us to move toward e-learning methods with the massive spread of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19), which has enforced people to practice social distancing to protect themselves from infection. The orientation towards e-learning is an imperative and indispensable necessity (Ahmad, J., 2006) for many reasons such as (1) sharing knowledge and increasing information because educational institutions have become unable to keep pace with traditional education (in-class), making the search for alternatives a very important matter; (2) increased social demands for education, which has led to an increased burden on educational institutions in achieving equal educational opportunities and the necessity of using e-learning; (3) the population explosion that has led to the emergence of many economic and social problems, making traditional institutions unable to meet the educational needs of all their students; 4) the freedom of education, i.e., in a democracy, education has become a component of national security, and it cannot be achieved using traditional education alone, which confirms the urgent need for e-learning; and 5) the shortage of qualified educational staff, and with the qualifications of teachers being very important, this is one of the goals of e-learning, and e-learning helps with making breakthroughs in terms of preparing teachers (Biggs 1999).

2.1 E-learning goals

Since e-learning appears to facilitate and assist the education process, it is necessary to set the goals of e-learning to show the extent of its importance and necessity of its presence in all educational institutions that seek to keep abreast of the developments and latest methods of education. As in Biggs (1999) and Ahmad (2006), the following goals can be set:

1. Create an interactive environment using new electronic devices and technologies as well as a diversity of information and experience sources
2. Support and improve the communication processes between students, teachers, and assistants in the targeted community using electronic communication channels
3. The necessity of not attending classes in the same place to be handled through distance learning, which is one of the most important goals of e-learning
4. Provide teachers with the technical skills necessary to use modern devices and electronic technologies that help in group learning and self-learning
5. Provide students with the technical skills necessary to use the electronic means of communication required for the e-learning process
6. Develop the role of the teacher in the educational environment to keep pace with the scientific developments and successive technologies that arise and continue to change
7. Expand the circle of student contacts through global and local communication networks without relying on the teacher as the only source of information and knowledge
8. Provide education that corresponds to the age group that it is presented to, taking into account the individual differences between students

2.2 The role of the teacher in the e-learning environment

As the teacher is considered the backbone of the educational process and is indispensable to the educational environment, the goals of e-learning have to include a focus on the teaching skills that are necessary to use modern electronic devices, allowing the teacher to perform their important role in the e-learning process (Ahmad, J., 2006). The teacher's role would include the following:

- i. Diagnosing the student's needs and characteristics and identifying appropriate strategies for both the student and the content
- ii. Determining the appropriate activities for each strategy as well as the appropriate internet tools to implement these strategies and activities
- iii. Preparing self-assessment forms for the content, performing student feedback operations, and evaluating the results
- iv. Supervising the management of electronic educational situations, and participating in individual and group interaction processes
- v. Carrying out technical programming for the educational system's activities and tools and trying to solve any technical malfunctions during the educational process
- vi. Contributing to the formatting of cooperative learning groups in the light of e-learning to encourage the students' use of e-learning approaches

2.3 E-learning systems and tools over the Internet

Using the Internet in educational systems involves relying on a set of tools through which a set of educational interactions can be created to achieve the goals of e-learning (Ahmad, 2006). Among these tools are the following:

- a- **Conferences:** Conferences are considered among the most important tools that provide real interactions between the participants, as the participants are required to be present at the conference at the same time. This tool is the most widely used because it involves chat systems that sometimes rely on text or video or the two combined. Moreover, conferences allow students to learn many activities such as promptly answering questions, asking questions, and participating in activities with the other participants, among many other features.
- b- **Discussion Forums:** Discussion forums are non-commitment tools of interaction to address a topic that is brought up for discussion, but the simultaneous presence of all the participating members is not required. In such forums, the teacher or one of the learners proposes a topic and writes a comment or a post that everyone can see when they enter the discussion board. The others can then add their comments to that topic at any time. These forums allow each learner to express their opinion and participate in the dialogue, providing the opportunity for learners to ask their questions. It is considered as the most motivating learning tool for students because it allows the students to see the results of their own participation and others' comments on their views on an ongoing basis.
- c- **Web Broadcast:** Broadcast refers to the direct display of a live image, and the webcast tool allows for broadcasting events at the same time via the e-learning site; learners can watch this broadcast via the site. It allows learners to attend lectures in other places without the need to travel, thereby reducing the time, effort, and money spent on doing so. Most sites have special discussion boards that allow students to discuss and ask direct questions to the teacher.

2.4 E-learning in Albaha University

E-learning is one of the most common types of learning today, and educational institutions in the world have highlighted its employment because of its positive impact on students. With e-learning and the outputs of the educational process, students can learn at any time and from anywhere, interacting and getting involved in the learning process. Accordingly, the Deanship of E-Learning and Information Technology in Albaha University designed and installed an e-learning program to help motivate students and unleash their creativity and energies, which would improve their achievement levels and integration into the educational process. Thus, in the same context, the dean stated, on the university site, that more than 21000 people logged on to Rafid every day and offered 4899 virtual classes across the e-learning system (Learning Platform Rafid Site, 2020).

On April 18, 2020, Al-Baha University, represented by the Deanship of E-Learning and Information Technology, provided a number of services in the field of e-learning through the Rafid system. The dean, Dr. Nayef bin Abdullah Al-Zahrani, revealed that the Rafid system witnessed the registration of 109061 beneficiaries within a week, while the number of attendees for each virtual class session was more than 128816 students and faculty members with an average daily entry of 211212 beneficiaries in 4899 virtual classes, which spanned a

total duration of 13914 hours and 55 minutes and 13 seconds. During this time, 1810 files were reviewed, and about 161343 electronic homework pieces and more than 4121 discussion boards were presented in 6866 study divisions. He added that the largest number of concurrent sessions reached 648 sessions, and the total number of attendees in all sessions was 6991 in total (Learning Platform Rafid Site, 2020).

2.5 Previous studies

Some scholars have proposed what is called blended learning (BL). They defined it as an approach that combines in-class practices with e-learning processes (Graham, 2006; Garrison & Kanuta, 2004). Additionally, Dziuban, Hartman, & Moskal (2004) added that it encourages better learning, positively affects learning outcomes, lessens attrition rates, and satisfies learners. Brew (2008: 98) defined it as "a means of integrating the online component with face-to-face formats to create effective learning experiences." Consequently, Yilmaz-Soylu (2008), showed that the concept of this type of learning involves different effective modes of delivery, teaching, and learning styles. The researcher observed that blended learning activities enhance the impact of teaching and learning processes (i.e., it increases learning using traditional learning and teaching practices). Lyons and Evans (2013: 43) added that technology gets incorporated for recalling teaching processes such as podcasts, recorded lectures, chatting, and discussion.

3.0 METHODS

As mentioned above, this study investigated the role of e-learning in improving student performance and the difficulties that students may face students during the e-learning processes to suggest better ways to properly stimulate e-learning. Therefore, a historical and descriptive-analytical approach was used to tackle this investigation. About 39 students (both male and female) and 18 staff members were randomly chosen; the population (all the EFL students of Albaha University) was highly homogeneous, and so a probability sampling type (simple random sampling) was used to choose the participants. Two questionnaires were prepared to collect the participants' views about e-learning. The first questionnaire was tailored for the students (12 females and 27 males) who enrolled in the second term of the academic year 2019–2020. This questionnaire contained 22 items, and a three-point Likert-scale was used to code the students' answers. The answers were coded into three points: yes, which was assigned the value of 1; not sure, which was coded as 2; and no, which was coded as 3. The second questionnaire was distributed to the 18 staff members from the college's Department of English (see Tables 1 & 2). This questionnaire contained 23 items, and a five-point Likert-scale—ranging from strongly agree (coded 1) to strongly disagree (coded 5) with neutral point (not sure, code 3)—was employed for the professors to rate how strongly they agreed or disagreed with each item. For the last question (number 23), a checklist of seven items was displayed for the participants. Generally, 13 of the 27 male students were from the second level, six were from the fourth level, and eight were from the eighth level. Meanwhile, a total of 12 female students participated in the study and were all from the eighth level. Of the staff participants, 13 are male; 11 of them are PhD holders (assistant professors), and of the other two, one has a master's degree (lecturer) and the other a bachelor's degree (teaching assistant). Most of them (9 males and 1 female) have more than

10 years of experience. The others fall into two experience categories: four with 0–5 years and four with 5–10 years.

Table 1. Distribution of students

	2 nd level	4 th level	8 th level	Total
Males	13	8	6	27
Females	0	0	12	12
Total	13	6	18	39

Table 2. Distribution of staff members

Gender	Qualification			Academic Status			Experience (in years)		
	PhD	MA	BA	Assistant Professor	Lecturer	Teaching assistant	0–5	5–10	> 10
Male	11	1	1	11	1	1	3	2	9
Female	4	1	0	4	1	0	1	2	1
Total	15	2	1	15	2	1	4	4	10

3.1 Analysis

To understand the general tendencies of both students and teachers related to using e-learning to achieve better learning performances, the researcher used two questionnaires to study the appropriate ways of using e-learning in the Saudi context, particularly the students from the department of English at a college of sciences and arts in Qilwah. The SPSS program was used to analyze the data collected from the two questionnaires. As mentioned in the Introduction section, the study aimed to address the question, What are the difficulties that may face Saudi EFL learners during using e-learning? To do so, the first six items in the students' questionnaire and the first 15 items in the teachers' questionnaire were calculated and analyzed. From the analysis of the means and standard deviations (SD), item 11 was at the top (mean = 1.1282; SD = .46901), whereas item 16 was at the bottom (mean = 1.9487; SD = .79302). The means of the first six items in the students' questionnaire fell in the range of 1.2051 to 1.8462, and the standard deviations were between .52212 and .81235 (see Table 3). The means of the first 15 items in the teachers' questionnaire were between 1.7222 and 2.8889, and the standard deviation was between .82644 and 1.40958. Accordingly, it can be said that the results are largely homogenous, as the standard deviation does not go far beyond the mean (especially in the students' questionnaire), which means that all the respondents highly agree with these items. Additionally, the analysis of the teachers' items led to a rather convincing conclusion on the acceptability of most of the items by the participants except for items 10, 14, 15, and 19 in the descending order (the means were between 3.1667 and 3.7778, while the standard deviations were between .85749 and 1.11437).

Concurrently, the rest of the items (7 to 22 in the students' questionnaire and 16 to 22 in the teachers' one) were used to investigate the study question, To what extent does e-learning help in raising Saudi EFL students' performance? Again, the students greatly agreed with these items (the means were between 1.1282 and 1.9487, and the standard deviations were between .46901 and .89382). Further, items 16 to 23 in the teachers' questionnaire were also

used to investigate the third question of the study, What are the most stimulating and favourable methods in setting up the e-learning program to improve Saudi EFL learnability From the statistical details given below, it is clear that the teachers moderately agree with items 16–23 (the mean was 1.7778 and the standard deviation was within .54832), but they disagreed with items 10, 14, 15, and 19 (the means were from 3.1667 to 3.7778, and the standard deviations were between 1.11437 and .85749). For item 23, the frequency and percentage of each participant’s use of e-learning methods were considered, because the participants were asked to choose from a checklist given to them (see Table 4), and showed that all the teachers approve of the methods and materials that can be used in the process of e-learning (the mean was 13.43).

Table 3. Analysis of the student and teacher questionnaires

Descending order	Student Questionnaire				Teacher Questionnaire			
	Item No.	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Item No.	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	11	39	1.1282	.46901	2	18	1.7222	.82644
2	9	39	1.1538	.48874	3	18	1.7778	1.00326
3	4	39	1.2051	.52212	17	18	1.7778	.54832
4	8	39	1.2308	.53614	7	18	1.9444	.72536
5	13	39	1.3333	.57735	8	18	2.0556	.53930
6	19	39	1.3846	.67338	22	18	2.0556	.87260
7	17	39	1.3846	.71139	20	18	2.1111	.58298
8	7	39	1.4103	.67738	21	18	2.1111	.67640
9	1	39	1.4359	.82062	13	18	2.1667	.92355
10	6	39	1.4615	.64262	1	18	2.2778	1.22741
11	15	39	1.4615	.75555	5	18	2.3333	.97014
12	20	39	1.4615	.68234	12	18	2.3889	1.03690
13	10	39	1.5128	.75644	9	18	2.5000	.92355
14	12	39	1.5641	.71800	11	18	2.5000	.98518
15	21	39	1.6154	.74747	16	18	2.6111	.77754
16	3	39	1.7179	.68628	6	18	2.7778	1.06027
17	18	39	1.7692	.80986	18	18	2.8333	.78591
18	22	39	1.7692	.80986	4	18	2.8889	1.40958
19	14	39	1.7949	.89382	10	18	3.1667	.85749
20	2	39	1.8462	.74475	14	18	3.6111	1.03690
21	5	39	1.8462	.81235	15	18	3.7222	.89479
22	16	39	1.9487	.79302	19	18	3.7778	1.11437

Table 4. The participants’ choices for the item 23 categories

Methods/materials that can be used in e-learning processes	Total	Frequencies	Percentage
Video conferences and virtual classes.	18	15	83.33%
Electronic materials containing books, videos, audios, CDs.	18	17	94.44%
Recorded lectures.	18	13	72.22%
Direct communication using virtual classes with the course instructor.	18	15	83.33%
Electronic libraries and scientific research.	18	9	50.00%
Discussions and assignments.	18	15	83.33%

Mixed program using traditional and e-learning education.	18	17	94.44%
Mean	13.43		

4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As seen from the analysis (the first six items in the student questionnaire and first 15 items in the teacher questionnaire), not all the students seem to face the same problems (see Table 3 above and Appendix 1) in making the quick switch from traditional classes to e-learning methods. However, some of the English department staff members revealed that e-learning processes can face many problems, which can be summarized as pre-knowledge, the sure desire to be involved in the program, and the expected training. The results of this research study indicated that there are still various challenges related to the following: a lack of clarity about the systems and methods; encouragement in the form of incentives in the learning environment and safety (Kerres & Witt, 2003; Al-Buasaidi & Al-Shihi, 2012; Mitchell & Honore's, 2007); lack of awareness among the society members, previously reported by Shepard (2000: 4–14); and the Internet quality. On the other hand, the teachers do not consider these factors to be undermining their roles in the entire education process. Moreover, the teachers stated that they do not find it difficult to apply assessment tools, the non-recognition of e-learning certificates is not a problem that can reduce their importance, and the high cost cannot stop the success of e-learning in Saudi Arabia. But some of them revealed that e-learning requires students to be hardworking and have a desire to learn and that they cannot be sure that students will not cheat during electronic exams and quizzes. Further, some complaints were made about the availability of Internet facilities and quality (items 1 and 2). Additionally, a few of the students said that they do not have the ability to solve the technical problems they may face (item 3), as was stated by Pena and Yeung (2010) as well. They stated that they find it easy to browse the course content and information displayed on the e-learning platform (items 4 and 6), and finally, most of them expressed that they feared not having the chance to lodge a complaint about their results (item 5; the mean was 1.8462, and the SD was .81235).

For the second hypothesis, items from number 7 to 22 investigate the students' feelings and attitudes toward an e-learning program. They showed positive behaviors related to e-learning: Most of them said that the availability of online course content helps them a lot (item 7) and the appropriate content in terms of size, equipment, and materials eases their performance (item 8). The results also showed that students like to be aware of the requirements for success in the course, as Richardson and Long (2003: 240) have previously revealed, with the assignment, discussion, assessment, and other activity scores clearly given on the e-learning platform (item 9). Almost all the students revealed that the instructor's enthusiasm and interest in using e-learning courses attract their own attention and make them learn better (items 10 and 11). The most interesting result was that the students agree that using technology and e-learning courses supports their learnability, and they prefer the grades for the assignments, quizzes, and exams to be shown within a fair and reasonable amount of time (items 12 and 13). Additionally, consistent with the results of Schumm, Webb, Turek, Jones, and Ballard's (2006) study, they stated that studying using an e-learning site makes them active and creative because they are encouraged to ask questions and develop their own ideas through discussions as well as have a clear mechanism to track their performance (items 14, 15, 16, and 17). They also prefer courses that contain self-learning assessments and

assignments, discussions, quizzes, and exams that are fairly and appropriately corrected (items 18 and 19). Finally, they state that e-learning helps them improve their ability to think and solve problems on their own, rather than just retaining the provided information, and their teamwork skills, which will benefit them in the future (items 20, 21, and 22). Items from 16 to 23 in the teachers' questionnaire were used to address the third research question and propose a mixed program that integrates in-class and e-learning virtual classes, attracting the students' interest. The results are given above (Table 3 and 4) show that the staff members find the display of teaching materials interesting while using e-learning platforms, but they said that standards should be developed to easily make any required modifications and updates to the e-learning process. Additionally, they argued that the teacher should be a top priority when considering the e-learning process (Biggs 1999). Moreover, they agreed that e-learning technology effectively contributes to the success of the educational process. They believe that undergraduate students can easily shift from traditional education to e-learning methods and would be as eligible for admission into the job market as those who completed their education in classroom settings (traditional education). Finally, the best approach that is adopted by teachers includes the use of electronic materials that contain books, videos, and audios; video conferences; direct communication through virtual classes; discussions and assignments; and recorded lectures. Further, the mixed program that involves using traditional and e-learning educational processes (the third hypothesis of this paper) was highly approved by the teachers (17 out of 18 instructors; 94.44%), but the electronic libraries and scientific research item gained the lowest approval level from the participants.

5.0 CONCLUSION

To conclude, it can easily be said that a mixed program involving traditional and e-learning educational methods is the best approach and type that can be adopted and applied to assist EFL students' learning. The community under investigation revealed that this program still faces challenges, such as a lack of clarity about the framework employed, and this aligns with the conclusions of previous studies (Kerres & Witt, 2003). For this program to succeed, it requires a solid base; the online course content, size, equipment, and materials should be appropriate and suitable for the students' abilities. Similarly, Bueno-Alastuey and Lopez Perez (2014) found a mixed program to have a significant level of effectiveness in improving students' skills and language components. However, to fulfill this goal, the instructor's enthusiasm and interest should be active and attractive, and activities like assignments, discussions, quizzes, and exams must be delivered and justified in ways that motivate students to be highly involved in the program as well as satisfy their needs. This is a part of the teachers' role of motivating the students as Marsh (2012) pointed out in his study. Additionally, the present study's results show that this program can improve the students' ability to think and solve problems on their own rather than just retaining information and improve their teamwork skills, as Aliweh (2011) found in his study as well, and it is important to present this program in a way that benefits the students in the future. These findings are consistent with those of Jonson (2011) and Lyons and Evans (2013), i.e., technologies are supposed to highly engage students in learning. During the period of the e-learning program, it is important to commit a higher level of intercommunication and cooperation among the students by using the discussion board provided on the e-learning platform. However, these two demands of live communication and teleconferencing should be actively added to the platform and activated to ease and engage students in learning

activities. Finally, the participants (students and teachers) stated that technical equipment and Internet supplies should be checked and presented before starting the program to satisfy the students' learning requirements (Chang, 2011: 33). Despite its challenges, the e-learning approach has many benefits. In fact, during this critical coronavirus pandemic, e-learning is the surest way of facilitating students' learning. First, it is flexible and allows the students to tweak their respective schedules to suit their convenience. However, every student should have a high level of self-discipline and strive to not misuse the flexibility of online learning. Second, it can help the student save time and money that would otherwise be expended on going to the educational institution; this has also been previously mentioned by Aliweh (2011) in his findings. Here, students can access the online learning platform while at home and without incurring higher costs, and the courses online are cheaper, available at any time, and can be accessed from any location. During this digital age, it is the best option for education and is quite easy to access using a computer system or a smartphone. Students can easily attend lectures, participate in discussions and assignments, download recorded materials, and even take exams; e-learning should not be a substitute for traditional education but, rather, a supplement to it (Al-Khafaji, 2011). Finally, the use of a mixed program that includes activities to involve students in e-learning and help them succeed is recommended. However, because of the limited nature of this study with the low number of female participants (voluntary) and staff members in the English department, it is necessary to conduct further studies to include other sample participants and departments from the university.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1

Teachers' questionnaire for e-learning

Dear students,

I appreciate your participation in this questionnaire. This questionnaire is collecting your opinions about e-learning. It contains two parts. Part 1, includes information about you. Part 2, collects your opinion about the e-learning.

This questionnaire is shown to the participants after taking the permission from Albaha University by His excellencies the Dean of the Scientific Research; the Dean of College of Sciences & Arts in Qilwah; and the Head Department of English Language. The data collected by this questionnaire is going to be used for academic research purposes only.

Part 1: Name/_____ (optional); **Level** _____; **Gender** _____ (Male/Female).

Part 2: Please provide your opinion about the e-learning program by writing the appropriate choice number in the box on the right. **yes** (1); **not sure** (2); **or no** (3).

Items/Questions	Choice
Do you have any of the modern technologies available such as a laptop or desktop computer?	
Can you get high quality internet service available easily?	
I think I am qualified enough to solve any technical difficulties that I may face?	
I think it is important to find information (such as course overview, learning plan, activities schedule	

etc.) at the first lecture.	
I have no chance to easy lodge complaint about my results.	
It is easy to browse the course and access information that shown in the e-learning site.	
The availability of courses content online can help me a lot.	
I think the appropriate content in terms of size, equipment, and materials eases my performance.	
The requirements for success in the course (assignments, discussions, other activities, and the assessment scores) were clear to me.	
I think enthusiasm of the instructor when using e-learning courses is highly attracted my attention.	
Interestedness of the instructor in responding to our discussions and other inquiries will help me learn better.	
I think presenting course activities in the e-learning site is recent and useful.	
The effectiveness of using technology support my learnability in e-learning courses.	
prefer providing grades for the assignments, quizzes, and exams to be fair and in a reasonable time.	
. Learning using e-learning site made me active and creative.	
I found encouragement to ask questions and develop my own ideas through discussions.	
Clear mechanism to see my performance can easily satisfy my learning.	
I like courses that contain self-learning assessment.	
Correcting my assignments, discussions, quizzes, and exams was fair and appropriate.	
What I learned through e-learning is important and will benefit me in the future.	
Learning using e-learning helped me improve my ability to think and solve problems rather than just keeping information.	
E-learning helped me improve my team work skills.	

Appendix 2

A questionnaire for getting staff members' opinions about e-learning

Dear colleagues,

This is a questionnaire for taking your opinion about the effectiveness of e-learning in improving students' performance. The questionnaire contains two parts. Parts one collects information about the participants. Part two surveys the opinions of the staff members of the College of Sciences & Arts in Qilwah, Albaha University. This questionnaire is shown to the participants after taking the permission from Albaha University by His excellencies the Dean of Scientific Research; the Dean of College of Sciences & Arts in Qilwah; and the Head Department of English Language. The data collected by this questionnaire is going to be used for academic research purposes only.

Part 1: Name/_____ (optional). **Qualification/**_____ **(BA; MA; Ph. D).**

Gender: _____ Male _____ Female _____ Prefer not to say

Academic Status: _____ (T.A; Lecturer; Assistant Professor; Associate Professor; Professor).

Experience: _____ (0-5 years) _____ (5-10) _____ (more than 10 years).

Part 2: Please write the number that appropriately describes your opinion about the following:

1=Strongly agree; 2=Agree; 3=Not sure; 4=Disagree; 5=Strongly disagree.

Items/questions	Choice
1. I have had a pre-knowledge about e-learning.	
2. I would like to get actively involved in the e-learning program.	
3. I would like to join training session in e-learning.	
4. I think training sessions are appropriate to my specialization and aspirations.	

5.	In my opinion, e-learning is still facing challenges due to a lack of clarity in the systems and methods.	
6.	Encouragement incentives for the learning environment is one of the obstacles hindering the effectiveness of e-learning for students.	
7.	E-learning is broadly not safe.	
8.	The lack of awareness among society members of this type of education and the negative view against it impede its implementation.	
9.	The high internet quality that e-learning sites need is hampering its progress.	
10.	E-learning reduces my role in the entire education process and turns me into a software designer and education technology specialist.	
11.	I find it difficult to apply tools of assessment.	
12.	The non-recognition of e-learning certificates on the part of the authorities in some countries reduces its importance.	
13.	E-learning requires a hardworking student with a self-desire to learn because there is no face to face interaction.	
14.	The high cost of designing and producing educational software impede its success.	
15.	I can guarantee that the student will not attempt to cheat on electronic exams and quizzes	
16.	The teacher should be a top priority in relation to e-learning.	
17.	I prefer delivering e-learning classes because students can grasp and interact more.	
18.	I find the display of teaching materials interesting in using e-learning platforms?	
19.	Standards should be developed to easily make possible modifications and updates to the e-learning process.	
20.	E-learning technology contributes effectively to the success of the educational process.	
21.	I think undergraduate student can move from traditional education to e-learning easily.	
22.	I think graduate student of e-learning is eligible for admission into a job market.	
23.	In your opinion, these are the most effective methods used in the educational process at e-learning.	
	A. Video conferences and virtual classes.	
	B. Electronic materials containing books, videos, audios, CDs.	
	C. Recorded lectures.	
	D. Direct communication using virtual classes with the course instructor.	
	E. Electronic libraries and scientific research.	
	F. Discussions and assignments.	
	G. Mixed program using traditional and e-learning education.	

Thanks for your contribution.