

Inefficiency of Online Education in Unreformed Educational System in Iraq: A Literature Review

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Doi: 10.23918/ijsses.v10i4p1

Abstract: The efficiency of online education varied across institutions, sectors, and countries. It is noteworthy that while switching to online learning helped to remedy the difficult situation during the pandemic in 2020, the weaknesses that arose from it were largely consistent across various domains. While the majority claimed that the main issue was disinterested or indifferent students, others believed that online education was a relatively new strategy that should be highlighted and studied both during and after the pandemic because it would be impossible to return to focusing solely on traditional education in the modern era. Integrating the online method into the curriculum means reshaping the approaches used by the teachers in the first place. This confirmed approach is more linked to the new digital era of education. A step to be taken here is to have the learners aware of the changes and the requirements by doing courses, workshops, and seminars on the ways that may be followed together with the teachers and the administration which would ultimately reduce the burden on the educators, parents, and society.

Keywords: Online Education, Digital Era, Classroom Management, Student and Teacher Professional Development

1. Introduction

Having the students focused on their homework, daily activities, and tasks in the face-to-face lessons is arduous work to manage. Distractions of technology tendencies, applications, games, and social media expose the students to disruption, which is an obstacle to the learning process. What made it worse, the COVID-19 epidemic has accelerated the transition toward distance learning, bringing into further focus the necessity of effective procedures to be followed in online teaching and education. The effectiveness of online classes, on the other hand, has been called into doubt due to several inefficiencies that have a detrimental influence on the level of student involvement and the academic outcomes. To improve the experience of online learning, it is essential to have a solid understanding of the influence that these inefficiencies have on online classes and the level of student participation. With the dilemma of the pandemic of Covid-19, worse still, trying not to miss the academic year, online education and having the students closer to devices, mobiles, computers, and applications made the education wheel heavier to be rolled. An interjection question arises here, "It is imperative to clarify whether a fully online learning environment can develop the art of interpersonal communication, close relationships, reliable learning, and acceptable educational credits" (Garg, 2020, p.280).

Received: Aug 31, 2023

Accepted: Sep 21, 2023

Arif, A. B. (2023). Inefficiency of Online Education in Unreformed Educational System in Iraq: A Literature Review. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 10(4), 1-9.

Thus, the mission of education after the pandemic became worse on parents' as well as teachers' shoulders.

The lack of reform in the educational system in Iraq is the primary reason for the ineffectiveness of online education within the country. One of the most significant problems in the education field is deficiency in the infrastructure as well as the technological resources that are required to enable successful online education. Lack of access to digital equipment and internet connectivity, as well as insufficient training for educators on how to make effective use of online teaching resources are major issues that need to be viewed.

The difficulties that Iraqi students and instructors had when they were compelled to move to online education during the COVID-19 epidemic were explored in research that was conducted by Al-Saadi et al. (2021). According to the study's findings, low student engagement, poor learning results, and increasing dropout rates were due to a shortage of sufficient technical tools and inadequate training for teachers.

At this juncture, Serin (2022) pointed out the significance of educational system reform to overcome the issues of online education. The author proposed that a reformed system should prioritize student-centered learning. In addition, he suggested that a focus on enhancing teacher training should be a primary concern.

Additionally, Al-Samarrai and Zibari (2020) highlighted that the absence of educational reform in Iraq has led in an outmoded curriculum and teaching techniques that do not correspond with the requirements of modern education. This in its turn, has led to a lower rate of student engagement in online learning and poor delivery techniques that were not tailored for digital platforms.

This literature review aimed to illustrate the reasons behind the lack of students' access to the goal of education in an online module with their weak academic performance, as well as it tackles the solutions that must be taken, especially in many institutions in Kurdistan Region of Iraq that are still rudimentary or not out of the race.

2. Students' Engagement in The Lesson

Because student participation has such a direct bearing on the success of online instruction, it is one of the most important considerations in relation to distance education. A reduced level of student involvement might be the result of inefficiencies in online lectures, which may ultimately lead to undesirable academic outcomes. Much research has been conducted to investigate the influence that inefficiencies have on student participation and online classes.

Having the students not engaged or being indifferent is dominant among the several reasons behind not having the meant target in online education.

Although it offers the social isolation needed during the pandemic, convenience, virtual faculty- learner interactions and feedback, a larger audience, lower costs, and access to a wealth of content, online education is lacking in critical components of regular mode interactivity, has no focus, and lacks infrastructure (Garg, 2020, p.280).

This is attributed to many details that may or may not be intentional if we consider the hardworking students who have somewhat lost their perseverance in terms of knowledge acquisition. "According to the

students, it was not as successful as in-person instruction. They grumbled about having difficulty communicating with the teacher and fast forgetting what they had learned" (Kaya, 2021, p. 139).

According to the study results of Almahasees et al. (2021), the students were unable to decide whether their living situations were suitable for them to take part in online lectures. This suggests that the students may have been subject to outside distractions from members of their families when they were taking part in online classes. They also discussed that the rapid switch from face-to-face to online education caused several obstacles for students, including adapting to online learning, having adequate Internet connectivity, and managing their time to complete and submit their assignments. Several students have also complained about the absence of peer engagement while reflecting on their accomplishments (Almahasees et al., 2021).

Now, Tang & Hew (2019) found that students' social presence affected their motivation and engagement, satisfaction with the course and teacher, interest in and commitment to online education, the likelihood of finishing coursework, and retention of knowledge.

Likewise, Song and Hill (2007) conducted research to investigate how the online learning environment influences the level of student involvement in higher education. According to the findings of the authors, variables such as a lack of connection with peers and instructors, low levels of enthusiasm, and insufficient instructional design greatly influenced the degree to which students participated in online sessions. The authors suggested that teachers consider these aspects while developing online classes to increase the level of student participation.

This brings us to the following point: giving the learners mobiles, iPad, or any device to replace the physical lessons is not the issue that obstructs learning in online education. In fact, "In terms of the lower cost of transportation, lodging, and the overall expense of institution-based learning, online learning is considered a comparably more affordable way of education. It is also easily accessible and can even reach rural and remote places" (Dhawan, 2020, p.6). So, to speak, having Zoom sessions facilitates gathering the students and doing the lesson; however, it does not stop here. "Students' nonserious behavior in terms of time and flexibility can cause a lot of problems" (Dhawan, 2020, p.14). Let alone being distracted by the applications, they are always 2-3 steps away from clicking on irrelevant topics, games, or websites which reflect not being adherent. According to the findings of yet another study, conducted by Li and Lalani (2020), it was discovered that the use of social media during online classrooms was a significant reason for distraction for students. The students' concentration and participation in the lesson declined because of the continual alerts and the urge to surf social media during class, which eventually influenced the students' academic achievement.

The influence of student distraction on the results of online learning has been the subject of several research. For instance, the study by Gao et al. (2020) reported that students were often sidetracked during online learning by their electronic devices such as cell phones, and laptops. Due to this distraction, students became less engaged in their coursework, which led to poorer academic accomplishment levels. Conversely, Fidalgo-Blanco et al. (2021) discovered that students who were easily distracted during online learning reported increased mental burden and reduced motivation, both of which linked to worse academic achievement.

3. Reforming Curricula

Genuinely, it is not always the learners' responsibility to not be interested in education, in a matter of fact, it is so rare to find a learner who is interested in being educated unless the system (the administration and parents) provides the utility circumstances. "There is a lack of standards for quality, quality control, development of e-resources, and e-content delivery" (Dhawan, 2020, p.16). And so, to say, it means the necessity of sufficient curriculum planning, choice of materials, lesson planning as well as many other aspects are supposed to be connected, starting with the face-to-face system, and merging it with E-learning that is aimed. "Internet and education have merged to equip people with the abilities they will need in the future" (Haider & Al-Salman, 2021). Putting into consideration that it is not only about filling it with technology and digital features. According to the findings of a study that was conducted by Wilmot and Wei (2020), one of the most major obstacles to successful online education is the absence of well-defined learning goals and evaluation methods in online courses. They recommended that the curriculum should be modified to incorporate clearly defined learning objectives, assessments that relate to those learning outcomes, and interactive learning activities that increase engagement and motivation in students.

In a different research study, Y. Zhao et al. (2021) underlined the significance of reworking educational programs to include the digital skills that are necessary for online instruction. They discovered that students

lacked the necessary digital abilities to interact with online learning platforms and proposed that the curriculum should integrate digital competencies such as online interaction and collaboration.

During 2008-2018, the language centers in my country had been using technology- including our center- by computers, applications, online activities, and more, which led to satisfying results for the learners, parents, teachers, and administration. Learners can use hundreds of real-time tools using technology. Simplified dictionaries, flashcards, and browsing the internet in the target language can help learners advance the language learning process. (Altun & Ahmad, 2021) However, when the system was modified in 2019-starting with the curriculum, the materials employed, and the facilities-the centers began to experience a deteriorating state. It is known that reading exercises, choosing the correct grammar, and forming questions, etc. are important, however; they cannot help new learning to be improved. Learning through reading a generic textbook and answering fill-in-the-blank questions is not a natural process, hence the best online courses avoid using such formulaic readings. Instead, they work to involve pupils with material that naturally fits with learning about the subject (Littlefield, 2019). Worse still, when this was incessant in 2020 -2021, it put the standards of education in a critical situation. Learners are locked at home due to the pandemic along with new circumstances and actions to be taken not to stop the academic year. Here the system is going to be the administration as well as the parents.

It is difficult for teachers to determine the legitimacy of the work and the actual learning taking place because all the students' assignments and exams are completed at home. Additionally, a lot of parents monitor and assist their kids throughout the learning process, but the level of guidance and assistance varies tremendously. Another topic of investigation is student grading because no appropriate standards have been set and are being applied. (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021, p. 139)

Additionally, using the same curriculum and materials while applying it in the online lesson in such a case is not the place where the learners make any progress. "They worked to start the online experience by shifting instruction mode from traditional to virtual" (Almahasees et al 2021, p.2). So, deploying modern technology in educational institutions is difficult, as well as changing the curriculum to help students and faculty with digital skills (Dhawan, 2020). Thus, even sending the students tasks, homework, and links to check or videos to watch and have feedback on are not things to be done alone by the students without training them first. Simply because if they seek interaction from students, it means the students should be as good as the teachers at IT skills first to be able to interact. College professional development programs include exercise to train workers. This criterion underlines the need of Faculty Academic Development Centers having contingency preparations for emergencies like COVID-19 where both learners and educators must join the training programs (Almahasees et al., 2021). As well as increasing parents' awareness of the importance of education and students' self-reliance, and merely supporting and guiding them, and creating a healthy environment for them during the study.

4. Teacher Training

Raising the awareness of the importance of considering teaching, not only as a vocation but as a technique that needs to be acquired first within any sudden circumstances. Insufficient experience with the concepts they learn prevents instructors from properly absorbing and applying them, which is the second factor that makes their education ineffective (Willingham,2018). To acquire this, it is required to feel and practice teaching to differentiate how to merge education and training to reach the target. Taking after a particular approach is the most point of exploring the method of instruction to the proper target. Like tennis, education might be a skill that requires practice to master. Nobody would consider starting a child's tennis instruction with lengthy book readings and no actual court time. Little wonder that teachers claim their lessons overemphasize theory. These suggest that these apprenticeships mostly produce better understudy results (Willingham, 2018). Which is exactly the same for teaching.

Saying so does not mean it is about the teacher's attitude as much as it might also be the lesson's rhythm. It can be from the curriculum, the activities, and the objectives all together. The role of pedagogy in such cases is conspicuous. "The application of appropriate and pertinent pedagogy for online learning may depend on the knowledge and experience of both educators and students with information and communications technology (ICT)" (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021, p. 129).

If the teacher still follows the old approach of reading and asking students to read or asking the students to memorize then asking them about the tasks that were taught in the earlier session will not be the device that the student using that makes the student distracted, it is the method itself. "Although many academic units have also started blended learning, still a lot of them are stuck with old procedures" (Dhawan, 2020, p.5). Thus, expecting to give the learner a device and being distracted by the applications or even social media is not always true. To relate that the learners are interested in what they might find in the application, games, or social media is a hope to understand that it is a matter of seeking interesting things rather than the boring method used during the lesson. At the same time, "the use of various online resources by students at a time when they are just interested in online learning poses a risk to the real learning process since it may cause them to lose interest and focus" (Garg, 2020, p.280). It is about the well-planned objectives and the steps taken towards them, as well as the assignments that the teachers ask the students

to do after the successful online lesson in which the teachers cover new approaches and materials of the way the learners should follow and implement in real life. To maximize learning, students must be involved in the practice rather than in the theory. Unfortunately, online learning is dependent on theoretical classes entirely which makes it hard for learners to practice (Dhawan, 2020). Hence, memorizing might be the barrier between students' well of learning and online education. Which considers the students as empty vases that need to be filled with the syllabus as fast and as much as the teacher can. It focuses on memorizing lists and lists of vocabularies, rules, tenses, etc. with no practice at all. Thus, it makes the learners not motivated at all -if not tending to look at the book while the teacher is asking during the online lesson or cheat just to pass the exam. The difference with online education is that it is supposed to make the students tend to debate and be creative as it is purely student-centered. Online education turns education to be student-centered, where students take part in the learning process, and teachers work as supervisors and guides for students (Al- Salman & Haider, 2021). So, when the teacher-centered method and having the students memorize every detail the teacher explains was practiced for a while, it was noticed that it became the morass that drags all the other sequences of not being engaged, lack of interaction, missing the willingness to search and practice or even do basic activities. Willingham (2018) added in his article that the potential for education cannot be used blindly. A first-grade teacher should not make them drill a tiny set of math facts for two hours straight after learning that practice improves memory: Although practice improves memory, it can also undermine motivation in certain situations.

5. Recommended Solutions

It is crucial to accept online education across all higher education programs since it is projected that the adoption of the online mode of education would increase the availability of university education and expansion (Garg, 2020, p280). It is necessary to mention the rapid technical leap that all the countries witnessed recently, inclusively Arab Gulf countries who have made good progress in this field. They have been using several advanced educational means, especially in the last 20 years. Yet, some other countries are still trying hard to make a slight difference due to the weak technological environment in most of the institutions and recently in the education field. The adoption of online learning as a major component of higher education varies greatly by country, with those with more advanced technological infrastructure embracing it as quickly as possible as a radical solution to a variety of unfairness issues in the classroom. (Allen & Seaman, 2014). In other words, progressing in technology is not the key to an advanced improvement in the education field. The key is E-literacy, a scientific and pedagogical E-literacy. Learners should be trained first to monitor themselves as the way they are making progress in education as well as the way they are using the tools to do so. The use of a blended learning strategy, which incorporates online and offline learning activities, is one solution that has been offered to overcome the issues that are associated with online education. Graham, Woodfield, and Harrison (2013) discovered that mixed learning was more successful than entirely online or entirely offline forms of instruction.

Another approach would be to increase the amount of training and assistance offered to educators so that they can make efficient use of the tools and resources available online for teaching. According to Tallent-Runnels et al. (2006), for instructors to provide compelling and dynamic online learning experiences that are tailored to the requirements of a wide range of students, they need to be prepared with the information and abilities necessary to do so. Each institution needs to start annual coaching for all the staff and at the

top of the list are the teachers. The coaching must cover all the aspects of the methods used, the technology that should be acquired as the academic sites and the technical issues, adding more, the ways students or learners are supposed to follow while having the process of learning and the non-digital and digital materials they ought to provide and use. (A. Kraft & Blazar, 2018) showed Student achievement and instructional practice are both greatly benefited by teacher coaching. The impacts of coaching on teacher instruction and student success are often improved by 0.49 standard deviations and 0.18 standard deviations, respectively. The amount of the impact of coaching is comparable to or greater than the biggest published estimates of the performance gap between a new instructor and a seasoned veteran for both outcomes. That is correct to a limited extent. Considering the massive number of beginners who had been coached and the affirmative results that were shown, it reflects the importance of the training, and the magnificent role coaching has for the E-generation, so to speak. The majority have the seed, it is all about navigation. It might take time, but it is better to focus on the destination rather than the time it takes. According to Mishra and Koehler (2006), the efficiency of online education might be hindered when teachers do not receive enough training in applying technological tools properly.

Although there are many diverse types of online learners, there are some others that can help instructors create effective courses and pedagogies. Learners usually want a flexible timetable so they may balance all the demands of their time with their educational objectives and pursue self-paced learning (Cull, 2010). Having said so, one more suggested solution is to provide learners with adequate training in the proper use of technology. The absence of instruction on how students can appropriately utilize technology might cause learners to get frustrated and disengaged. Eventually, it can eventually lead to low involvement and poor academic achievement. The author asserts that providing learners with appropriate training on the use of technology will help them effectively manage the learning platforms online. Students' training is to prepare a pre-study for them to be coached on how to use the platform practically, safely, and efficiently. Coaching does not only mean instructing them of the platform that is used. It means full training on how not to be distracted while being online, how to manage the time, how to control the schedule, how to plan the lessons, and how to stay focused as well as the ways that they might use to take part. Furthermore, a study conducted by Lee (2020) showed that a lack of instruction on the appropriate use of technology might influence a student's motivation level. According to the findings of Lee, students who had received training on the proper use of technology reported being motivated enough to engage in online classroom activities and complete the tasks assigned.

Such training might take time before the actual course starts, but the results will be massively different. Placing the learner under *fait de accompli* will lead to a severe mistake that will put the whole course at risk or put the main goal of education on the cliff as students will lose the will to learn.

6. Conclusions

"The results of the research show the reluctance of learners to use only the online mode of education, as they find it less productive in terms of their knowledge building and skill development due to deficient pedagogy and assessment" (Garg, 2020, p.284). Starting with the students as having them under an online systematic structure means it is a lengthy process to follow and achieve. It may be difficult for students to

adjust to the format of online classes, and there is little opportunity for contact between students and their instructors. These are just two of the difficulties that students experience when taking online classes (Almahasees, et al. 2021). Students' learning outcome and their academic satisfaction set up the efficacy of any educational course and evaluation systems. Online learning does not meet learners' academic expectations neither does it help students' educational development (Garg, 2020). Likewise, Dhawan (2020) mentioned that instructors are used to face-to-face lectures and resist change. However, in this situation, their only alternative is to adapt and embrace change. Thus, further research and analysis are needed into the effective use of pedagogy in the context of online teaching and learning. It has been shown in another area of research that there is a demand for the creation of tools that can provide authentic assessments and immediate feedback (Pokhrel & Chhetri, 2021). Planning needs to be uncompromising about the students and the curriculum to guarantee at least a good result where the student's level of education is improved.

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