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**COVID-19 AND ONLINE TEACHING IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A CASE STUDY  
OF PRIVATE COLLEGES - SAUDI ARABIA**

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**Dr. Nesrin Goda Afify Abdelghany**

Ph. D in General Translation of English Language

Administrative and Humanistic Sciences collage - Buraydah Private Colleges - Saudi Arabia

**Walid Mohammed Elsayed Mohammed**

Physical Therapy Lecturer

Applied Medical Sciences collage - Buraydah Private Colleges - Saudi Arabia

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**Abstract**

This study aims at showing how isolation measures force schools, colleges and universities to move their educational classes online, how they are doing with the digital tools and online platforms. Covid-19 is an infectious disease caused by the last detected virus of the Coronavirus. There was no knowledge of this new virus and its disease before it began spreading in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. Covid-19 has now turned into a pandemic affecting the world. Technology and online learning platforms have become an essential part of the educational process. Educational institutions in KSA have quickly evolved their digital tools and platforms to their students. At all levels of education, instructors, institution leaders, and policy makers are facing an unprecedented challenge, trying to ensure that high quality and equitable teaching and learning continues under rapidly changing and unpredictable conditions. This study provides a summary of an actual experience

that occurred to change the learning system, and here is a case study of private universities and their use of electronic distance learning platforms.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Saudi Arabia Universities, Online Education.

**Introduction**

Corona virus COVID-19 2020 and its effects are alarming throughout the world. Educational and learning process is also affected badly throughout the affected regions. We all know that many educational institutions and other professional organizations have converted their educational activities to distance learning/education environment. The outbreak of COVID-19 lead to the closure of KSA universities and forced them to start teaching online. This paper sheds the light

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on the state of online education at Private Colleges - KSA. The study concludes the online educational platforms, the rapid growth in the use of online systems, it is important to understand how these technologies are being used and how they affects users. Apart from providing resources for distance learners, learning management systems may add a virtual dimension to traditional campus-based study (Coates, 2007).

The essential basics such as delivery of educational classes online, high support from colleges, teaching assistants to students, and the good participation to improve the quality of student learning.

**Literature review**

The COVID-19 pandemic is a health crisis. Many countries have decided to close schools, colleges and universities. Teaching is moving online, on an untested and unprecedented scale. Student assessments and their different tasks are also moving online. Assessments have simply turned to have different online types.

The COVID-19 was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, the capital of China's Hubei province, and has since spread globally, resulting in the ongoing 2019–20 corona virus pandemic (Hui, et al., 2020, p. 264).

The 2019–20 corona virus pandemic was reported to have spread to Indonesia on 2 March 2020, 4 days after Indonesian vice president presumptuously said that Indonesia avoid Corona virus, because of the blessing of the *quantum*—he didn't said because *Allah's* authority (Hartini, 2020).

COVID-19 spread to Indonesia when a dance instructor and her mother were infected from a Japanese national (Ratcliffe, 2020). Researchers suggest the main reason for the high rate is probably a lack of testing; resulting in many cases going undetected (Barker & Souisa, 2020).

The Educational systems worldwide has affected due to corona virus pandemic, leading to the widespread closures of schools, colleges and universities. Learners have been affected due to school closures in response to the pandemic, 191 countries have implemented nationwide closures and five have implemented local closures, affecting about 91.3% of the world's student population (UNESCO, 2020). In response to school closures, UNESCO recommended the use of distance learning programmers and open educational applications and platforms that schools and teachers can use to reach learners remotely and limit the disruption of education (UNESCO, 2020).

In response of the outbreak in Indonesia, multiple universities opted to cancel classes and instead would teach

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students online (Kemendikbud, 2020). It affected approximately 60.228.569 learners enrolled from pre-primary to upper-secondary education and 8.037.218 learners enrolled in tertiary education programs (UNESCO, 2020).

Based on this situation, we designed student worksheets, to guide distance learning that is not much different from activities in school. As teachers, we have implemented scientific literacy learning since the beginning of the learning year (Setiawan, 2020).

Lavy (2015), states the impact on learning of differences in instructional time across countries. Perhaps surprisingly, there are very substantial differences between countries in hours of teaching. For example, Lavy shows that total weekly hours of instruction in mathematics, language and science is 55% higher in Denmark than in Austria.

Traditional exams with different online assessment tools were given to the students in many universities and colleges. This is a new area for both teachers and students, and assessments will likely have different measurement error than usual. Research shows that employers use educational credentials such as degree classifications and grade point averages to sort applicants (Piopiunik et al. 2020).

**Statement of the Problem**

This paper therefore identifies the high-impact practice principles of online higher education and provides a case study for colleagues at universities to consider conducting online education in similar circumstances.

One of the most challenging tasks for both students and teachers is how to learn through online education classes; it is the most difficult task for both of them. In this study, researchers attempt to investigate the actual problems and difficulties that encounter in learning online higher education. Therefore identifies the high-impact practice of online higher education and provides a case study of Private Colleges – KSA.

**Methodology**

To achieve the objectives of this research, a number of teachers and students from different departments were taken as random sample. The sample consists of (20 teachers and 50 students). The teachers were asked to summarize their online classes experience, what are the difficulties, and which programs they used to give their classes. The students from different departments were asked to explain how they manage and used to do through online classes and what are the difficulties? These responses and answers were analyzed and the findings were explained to enable the

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researchers build a suitable recommendations upon them.

The present case study focus on the responses of both teachers and learners, and discuss how private collegescan implement effective learning attitudes of college students and ensure the effectiveness of online education process.

**Analysis of the results and discussion:**

The teachers were asked the following questions:

- 1- What are the programs they used to deliver their online classes?
- 2- What are the difficulties of online classes?
- 3- What are the university measurements and procedures for online classes?

The researchers interviewed sample of the teachers from different departments in the college. Their answers for the first question about the programs that they used to deliver their online classes for the students.The education sector are a very exciting place to be right now. There are many effective digital tools that can help in the educational process, as well as improve results.

Effective digital tools were Edmodo, blackboard, and Zoom Video Communications. The previous platforms present a vital role to the educational process by increasing engagement, Encouraging new and repeat enrolments,

removing geographical barriers, reducing teacher marking and preparation time, open communication channels, developing community, and improving the overall experience for both students and teachers.

Blackboard (Blackboard Learn™, 2009) at the forefront of recent technological advances in Higher Education. Teaching staff and student comments in relation to Blackboard were positive and negative.

Edmodo is an educational technology company offering a communication, collaboration, and coaching platform to students and teachers. Edmodo network enables teachers to share content, distribute quizzes, assignments, and manage communication with students, colleagues, and parents.

Zoom Video Communications, Inc. is an American communications Technology Company headquartered in San Jose, California. It provides video telephony and online chat services through a cloud-based peer-to-peer software platform and is used for teleconferencing, telecommuting, distance education, and social relations.

Staff members used to deliver the lectures through video zoom, and to achieve the maximum benefit, they upload their lectures again in the Edmodo s in order to

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praise the students to take advantage of the content or for those who were unable to attend the lecture on zoom. As for the evaluations related to the tests, the oral tests were held through zoom, and the written tests were uploaded with a specific and announced time. The correction of the tests was done transparently through the Edmodo platform.

Students assured on the importance of having lecture notes before the lecture in order to submit homework and tasks posted by the lecturer at any time of the day or night. Direct contact with their teacher created opportunities for collaboration.

The second question was about the difficulties of online classes. Based on this situation of The COVID-19, E-learning helped to strengthen the educational process, and to find a new way to provide information, which contributed to the concentration of information in the brains of students. E learning is characterized by freedom, as it gives the student the ability to receive information from a distance, the student does not need to go to the field of education, and wait for the teacher to give lectures. The ease of access helped students to meet deadlines and be more time efficient. The learners acquire their classes at any time and place they want. Obstacles to e-learning puts websites at risk of penetration at any time, which makes the educational process completely unsafe, and

lack of confidence in what websites offer completely. The need for effort and time in training teachers and leaders in the educational fields on how to deal with modern e-learning methods. Lack of full awareness by the community about the principles of e learning. The difficulty of eliminating traditional education, and directly replacing it with e learning... Lack of availability of people with experience and competence in the field of managing e-learning fields.

The third question was about the university measurements and control for online classes. Colleges began to prepare giving lectures electronically by addressing the deans of colleges, departments and program managers to prepare for e learning. Workshops and seminars were held for all faculty members to train them to activate e learning. All members of the teaching staff participated in the Zoom, Blackboard, Edmodo platforms to activate the colleges account for e learning. It was confirmed to all members that the account is licensed by having a registered mark in the account data. There is a difference between the free and paid version. Among the most important differences is the time for the lecture, with a maximum of 40 minutes and 100 students at the same time. Unlike the paid version, the maximum is more than 7 hours for one lecture and the number is more than 100 students.

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Therefore, the program can be used in the future to make meetings between colleagues and every one in his office with audio and video, offer presentations, and communicate in writing as well.

In short, the programs were excellent platforms for work and not only to provide lectures to students. It was confirmed that the members of the teaching staff participated in the e-learning platform Zoom.

All emails of faculty members that were sent to the IT department were activated on the Zoom, and Blackboard website. Each faculty member was required to log in to the application with the personal official email that was sent to the IT department.

Colleges have followed up on delivering electronic lectures with daily schedules with all the details of the lecture time, timing and specific day, and presenting them to faculty members daily through communication colleges within colleges.

The technical support unit was available throughout the e-learning period and provided support and advice for any inquiries from faculty members.

**Conclusion**

Online platforms provide learning resources available and accessible as a

resource for students 'revision and examination. The results proved that accessibility and availability of resources is a key feature of improving online environments. To conclude teaching staff presented the possibilities for human interaction and collaborative learning inherent in the more interactive features. Some teaching staff still viewed face-to-face interactions in class as being the most valuable learning experience for teacher education students. Similarly; learners were sharing their ideas via the use of chat. The results indicate that online platforms provided the opportunity to engage with their teaching staff and other students. The benefit of the online education environment increased online interactions, and enhanced their learning experience.

It is clear that online technologies offer much more potential for interaction than is currently being realized by academic staff. The findings support the view that educators could use learning management systems more creatively and consistently as part of their pedagogy (West, Waddoups, & Graham, 2007). Staff need training, support and encouragement if they are to move towards more interactive and innovative pedagogies online.

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