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THE REAL STATUS OF DIGITAL LEARNING AS PERCEIVED BY FAULTY MEMBERS IN JORDAN

Abstract:

This study aims to identify the real status of digital learning as perceived by faculty members in Jordan. Digital learning is a new term which imitates the development of contemporary education technology changes. The research uses qualitative method represented by a semi-structured interview. The sample of the study consists of (50) faculty members chosen from Jerash University. The findings of the study showed that there are set of obstacles prevent ideal integration of digital learning as perceived by faculty members at Jerash University. A big portion of faculty members perceived poor infrastructure, lack of time and lack of technological skills as the main barriers that prevent the implementation of digital learning in the learning and teaching process. Some recommendations were set such as holding training courses for faculty members in order to improve their technological skills.

Keywords:

digital learning, barriers, implementation, Jordan.

Introduction

Digital learning defined as delivering content through internet, the main purpose of digital learning is expanded the role of students in the teaching and learning process as well as minimize the role of teachers (Holzberger et al., 2013). Digital learning is a good solution for those who live in remote area, crowded classrooms and students' with special needs.

Digital learning is beneficial for both of students and teachers. On one hand, Students can be up to date with new technologies, as well as their computers' skills will be improved and they can easily involve in future job. On the other hand, teachers can find new and vital strategies for delivering their lessons; also they can improve their subject matter taught. Although of all these advantages of digital learning, but there certain disadvantages for implementation of digital learning result from daily practice and misuse of digital learning in the teaching and learning process (Salavati and Sadaf 2016).

Problem Statement

Digital learning becomes top priority for most modern institution across the world. Because of modern universities try to be keep in peace with contemporary technologies. As we know, faculty members are better in evaluation the real status of digital learning in higher education level than students do. The current study develop a new tool based on literature review to assess the barriers that preventing digital learning in Jordanian universities. This study tries to answer the main research question.

What are the main barriers that prevent faculty members in Jordanian universities from integrating digital learning for educational purposes?

Related Works

Digital learning concentrates on integrating information and communication technology in classroom sitting in order to actively involved students in problem solving tasks. Lin, Chen, and Liu (2017) indicated that digital learning improve students' performance comparing with traditional learning methods, students also were significantly motivated toward learning once the technology fully integrated for educational purposes.

Although of the remarkable benefits of digital learning but there are many barriers of using it in higher education Becker, Newton and Sawang (2013) mentioned that lack of the time consider the main reason in preventing both of teachers and students in using digital learning. Other barriers related to digital learning such as lack of information and skills of using digital learning and content quality of digital learning were reported by (Assareha & Bidokht, 2011). Instructional and pedagogical issues (Sannia et al., 2009; Yunus & Salim, 2008), Poor infrastructure (Chen, 2014) and administrative issues (Pereira Ramos, Gouvêa, & da-Costa, 2015) are represented the main barriers that limit ideal use of digital learning in education.

Harrati, et al,. (2016) conducted study under the title "Exploring user satisfaction for e-learning systems via usage-based metrics and system usability scale analysis". The sample of the study consisted of (60) participants more specifically they were 23 male and 37 female. The experimental approach was used to achieve the goals of the study. The findings revealed that

basic skills play key role in accepting a new innovation as well as improving users' satisfaction toward digital learning.

Kisanga and Ireson (2015) employed study aimed that the barriers of adoption of in Tanzanian higher learning institutions. Semi-structured interview was used as tool for gathering information and data of the study. The results showed that " Five major barriers were identified: poor infrastructure; financial constraints; inadequate support; lack of e-learning knowledge and teachers' resistance to change".

Methodology

Qualitative approach represented by a semi-structured was adopted for achieving the objectives of the study.

Sampling

The sample of the study consisting 30 faculty members were randomly chosen from Jerash University for academic year 2018-2019, they are representing around 16% of population of study

Instrument

A semi-structured interview was adopted in this study for collecting depth information about the real status of using digital learning as perceived by faculty member at Jerash University. The duration of interview was between 20-30 minutes for each participant. The validity and truthfulness of interview was checked.

Results

Three main themes were emerged from interviews analysis they are; poor infrastructure, lack of time,

Poor infrastructure

Most of faculty members revealed that although the university tries to equip the classroom with new technology, but there is still lack of educational means.

" I face some difficulties in using digital learning such as lack of software which is important in facilitating the content and subject matter taught for the students" (Ahmad)

Big portion of the faculty members argued that some computers, laptops, smart boards and software are too old.

"from my long teaching experience in university, I lately noticed that some technological devices are out of date, they are needed to upgrade and update continuously" (Diana). Other faculty members complain from the internet speed especially in downloading and uploading students' assignment. "I heavily depended in YouTube in delivering content, unfortunately the internet and the Wifi inside the university is slow, and sometime I surprised the YouTube site is blocked inside the university" (Amnah).

Lack of Time

As we known the integrating digital learning need extra time if we compare that with traditional learning which teachers start their lecture directly without caring about arranging classroom or operating technological devices.

"Honestly, I prefer to present my lecture through digital learning, but as you know the preparing classroom or asking students to go to the computers laboratory is consuming time"

"Presenting lessons through information and communication technology need a lot of time for preparing the material; moreover, in my case I like to present the content as interactive media in order to activate students. Because it takes time; I rarely involved digital learning in my teaching" (Aws).

The faculty members in all universities around the world they have many tasks such as research, community services and administrative tasks.

"lake of time iis the main obstacle which prevent me in using digital learning, for me I supervised on five master students, and I have to publish papers for academic promotion, in addition to administrative tasks" (Line).

Lack of Technological Skills

Having basic technological skills is an essential factor in using and integrating digital learning in education. Although we life in digital world and we strongly believe most of faculty are able in using new technological means but there still few of faculty members lack the needed skills in delivering their content through technology.

"I would like to present my lessons through using digital learning but I have not sufficient computer skills" (Noor). Certain technology such as smart board and mobile learning required intensive training courses for faculty members. "Because of rapidly developmental changes in information and communication technology I can not to be up to date with a new innovation" (Yacob).

"Frankly speaking I am anti-technology; I prefer to teach my students in conventional way; and I also think using technology is wasting time" (Omer).

Conclusion

Digital learning is contemporary issue in educational technology domain; it plays a key role in facilitating teaching and learning. It is also help both of faculty members and students to attain learning outcomes. Moreover, it helps in changing the role of student from passive into active learner. Finally, the digital learning grasps students' attention through delivering subject matter way in enjoyable way.

The finding of the recent study showed the real status of using digital learning by faculty members at Jerash University faced by group of barriers they are; poor infrastructure, lack of time and lack of technological skills. Those barriers may refer to that the Jerash University begin in implementing digital learning in teaching some courses, and the university also started in equipping classroom with new technology. This create technological gap between

faculty members to be up to date with a new innovation. Based on the finding of this study set of recommendation were presented:

1. The necessity to update and upgrade the technology infrastructure

2. Training beginners' faculty members on using new innovation and how to integrate educational technology in education by holding extensive training courses.

3. releasing faculty members from all administrative tasks in order to improve their teaching and technological skills

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