

**The Challenges Facing Learners in Implementing
E-Learning in Hebron Educational Region
at Al- Quds Open University/Palestine**

(Case Study)

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Abstract:

This study aims to identify the challenges of implementing e-learning from the perspective of Hebron Educational Region learners at Al-Quds Open University. The study random sample consisted of (175) learners, who are studying by e-learning method in the second semester, of 2011/2010 at Hebron Educational Region at Al- Quds Open University /Palestine. To achieve the objectives of the study, a questionnaire was developed in accordance with the educational literature, & its validity and reliability have been verified. The study showed that the degree of the sample responses for the challenges of the applied e-learning was "medium." The most significant obstacles were "poor level of English language learner," and "shortage of computers inside the lab which impede the learner's participation. The study also showed no statistically significant differences in the challenges that can be attributed to the following variables: the year of study, gender, owning a computer, & proficiency in using the internet.

In light of these findings, the study came up with a number of recommendations.

Key words: E-learning, Al-Quds Open University, Hebron Educational Region.

ملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة التعرف على الصعوبات التي تواجه دارسي منطقة الخليل التعليمية/ جامعة القدس المفتوحة في تطبيق التعليم الإلكتروني، حيث تكونت عينة الدراسة العشوائية من (175) طالباً وطالبة، ممن درسوا بنمط التعليم الإلكتروني في الفصل الدراسي الثاني، للعام 2011/2010 في جامعة القدس المفتوحة/ منطقة الخليل التعليمية في فلسطين. ولتحقيق هدف الدراسة تم تطوير استبانة وفقاً للأدب التربوي، وقد جرى التحقق من صدقها وثباتها. وقد أظهرت الدراسة أن درجة الاستجابات عن صعوبات استخدام التعليم الإلكتروني من وجهة نظر أفراد العينة كانت بدرجة "متوسطة". بينما كانت أبرز الصعوبات " ضعف مستوى الدارس باللغة الإنجليزية"، و" النقص في عدد أجهزة الحاسوب داخل المختبر". كما أظهرت الدراسة عدم وجود فروق ذات دلالة إحصائية بين استجابات الدارسين حول صعوبات استخدام التعليم الإلكتروني في المتغيرات الآتية: سنة الدراسة، والجنس، وامتلاك الدارس جهاز حاسوب، ومدى استخدام الإنترنت. وفي ضوء النتائج أوصت الدراسة بعدد من التوصيات.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعليم الإلكتروني، جامعة القدس المفتوحة، منطقة الخليل التعليمية.

Introduction:

E-Learning is a new tool which has the potential to enhance and support the open learning system. It is steadily becoming an integral part of the learning tools used by every educational organization; specifically, the blended e-learning approach which has real the potential to combine the best of the traditional approach of face-to-face and eLearning in open & campus-based universities. Adopting eLearning approaches in Palestinian Universities can solve partially some unique critical problems which appeared as a result of the Israeli occupation as well as of the weakness of the governmental financial support. In this paper, the researcher will summarize the experiences of eLearning initiative at Al-Quds Open University, focusing on the challenges in Implementing e-Learning at Hebron Educational Region from the learners' perspective (Osaily, 2010).

Questions of the study:

This study tried to answer the following questions:

1. What are the challenges that faced the learners in implementing e-learning at Hebron Educational Region at Al- Quds Open University?
2. Are there any statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the responses of the learners at Hebron Region at Al-Quds Open University towards the challenges in implementing e-learning due to the following variables: year of study, gender, owning a computer, & proficiency in using the internet?

Objectives of the study:

- 1- To identify the challenges that face the learners in implementing e-learning at Hebron Educational Region at Al- Quds Open University in Palestine.
- 2- To shed light on the experiences of implementing e-learning at (QOU) in Palestine.
- 3- To identify the differences between the responses of the learners towards the challenges in implementing e-learning due to the following variables: year of study, gender, owning a computer, & proficiency in using the internet?

Importance of the study:

This study will address one of the most important topics regarding the challenges that faced the learners in implementing e-learning at (QOU), which is very important to the Palestinian Higher Education because few studies have addressed this subject before because (QOU) was the first to apply e-learning in its programs. It will also develop suitable recommendations according to the finding of this study.

Important glossary:

Al-Quds Open University (QOU), is the first among Palestinian and Arab universities to adopt the philosophy of Open Education keeping abreast of technological and cognitive advances at the global level (Amro, 2009). It was established in 1991 with the goal to contribute to the expansion of access to public higher education in Palestine. QOU is present in every corner of the Palestinian geography through its network of 22 Educational Regions and Study Centers (MOEHE, 2006). In addition to the tireless efforts of the University to expand the educational services outside the country, it has two educational centers in Saudi Arabia, with intention to establish other centers abroad (Amro, 2009) to provide university services to the Palestinians of the Diaspora (MOEHE, 2006). & provide other Arab institutions with consultation in the open education domain in general, and in producing open education materials in particular (Mohamed, 2009). As a typical Open University, its mission has as a priority of reaching out to disadvantaged and disabled students (MOEHE, 2006).

E-Learning: "Is the delivery of individualized, comprehensive, dynamic learning content in real time, aiding the development of communities of knowledge, linking learners and practitioners with experts." Also "E-learning refers to the use of Internet technologies to deliver a broad array of solutions that enhance knowledge and performance", & "E-Learning is the use of network technology to design, deliver, select, administer, and extend learning" (Li & Huang, 2006).

Illuminate, Inc.:" A leading provider of live e-learning and web collaboration solutions for the real-time organization announced today that the Dealer Services Group of Automatic Data Processing same as data processing. Illuminate provides EDU 2.0 collaboration solutions that encompass web conferencing, teleconferencing, videoconferencing, and social networking products and services. With Illuminate, you can create a 21st century teaching and learning environment that increases student retention and improves results". (<http://illuminate.com>)

Virtual Classes: Is used to enhance communication and correspondence between the various departments and centers of the university, as well as the academic supervisors and students within interactive electronic environment. In fact, it undoubtedly contributes to the gradual transfer process into e-learning (OLC, 2009).

Moodle: Is a Course Management System (CMS), also known as a Learning Management System (LMS) or a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE). It is a

free web application that educators can use to create effective online learning environment (www.qudsopenu.edu).

Blended Learning: Is an approach to learning and teaching which combines and aligns learning undertaken in face-to-face sessions with learning opportunities created online. Blended learning (e.g., typically viewed as a combination of face-to-face and online instruction, though some definitions discuss the combination of technologies or instructional methodologies) (Kyong and others, 2005). The blended learning approach can combine face-to-face instruction with computer-mediated instruction. It also applies science or IT activities with the assistance of educational technologies using computer, cellular or iPhones, satellite television channels, videoconferencing and other emerging electronic media. Learners and teachers work together to improve the quality of learning and teaching. The ultimate aim of blended learning is to provide realistic practical opportunities for learners and teachers to make learning independent, useful, sustainable and ever-growing (Graham, 2005).

Synchronous E-learning: It involves communication in which interaction between participants is simultaneous.

Asynchronous E-learning: It involves communication in which interaction between parties does not take place simultaneously.

Video Streaming: It is a type of technology which is similar to satellite transmission but is done through the internet. It is live transmission which the learner can follow synchronously or asynchronously by going back to the recordings whenever he wants (Abbass, 2008).

E-Learning at Al-Quds Open University (QOU):

Al-Quds Open University is a higher education institution dedicated to the provision of university- level studies which reach beyond access-restricting barriers. The services provided by the University establish more equalizing educational opportunities for all Palestinian and Arab adults who possess the general secondary school certificate. The University is committed to excellence in teaching, research and public services. It is also committed to a high degree of relevance between its academic programs and the developmental needs of the Palestinian society and the whole Arab region.

(QOU) has nearly 67,000 students. Most of those students attend classes face to face and virtually via internet. E-Learning is a key part of QOU development strategy. Communicating with those students via an e-learning system would be a great benefit both to the students and the university. It would also save the university unnecessary costs including managerial as well as

student guidance. E-learning at the university starts moving in the following tracks:

- The Academic Portal.
- Avicenna Virtual Campus Project.
- Production of Multimedia contents.
- Open Learning Centre (OLC, 2009) (www.qou.edu).

The Academic Portal: The aim of the portal is to make learning student-centered, increase productivity, and make better use of human effort and energy. Its usage would be of greater benefit to students and staff, but has to cope with the growing numbers of users and current network performance problems. It is planned to focus first on the content, and then focus on institutional processes, services, technology applications, and process integration. The last phase is to integrate data, voice, and video on a variety of platforms (such as handheld computers), perhaps over wireless networks. The Portal currently planned main functions including:

- Student Information System.
- News & Bulletin Boards.
- Course Learning Management.
- Online Admission & Registration.
- E-Learning Modules.
- Other Activities (Hodali, & Amro, 2004).

Avicenna Virtual Campus Project: Is an ambitious project that aims at creating new community of universities sharing best practices and pedagogical innovations through a network of e-learning centers across the Mediterranean. It involves 15 countries including Palestine which is represented by Al-Quds Open University. To realize one of its important objectives, e-learning has become a key part of QOU development strategy. The project is dedicated to accelerating the adoption and best use of ICT-assisted Open Learning (ODL) in 11 Mediterranean non-EU Member States. Demand for ODL in the target Universities and societies already exist. The project aims at establishing adequate local infrastructures and to transfer best practice and professional know-how within target universities. The project is named after Ibn Sina (981-1037 Ad) the most famous philosopher of his time (www.qou.edu).

Production of Multimedia contents: The implementation of the project started in May 2000 via the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), where the university provided the suitable space and a working team including executive experts and assistants - to carry out the project. GTZ provided the equivalent counterparts to follow up and carry out essential training. It also contracted the center with a German media expert to train and advise the staff on the production of educational multimedia. The center embraces an

Audio/Video Studio, a Full Sound System Studio, PC-based Video Editing Units, and a Central Graphics Workstation. Their main function is the production of high quality Audio/Video educational material that assists the learner in his/her pursuit of higher education based on the Open Learning Systems. The production process utilizes the latest and state of the art technologies, where the EMPC provides the educational media on VHS and DAT tapes, as well as CDs, VCDs and DVDs. Where as the Center conducts training workshops and seminars for Al-Quds Open University's academic advisors and EMPC's employees, thus implementing its mission in continuously developing and advancing the technical know-how of crew and staff (Hodali, & Amro, 2004).

Open Learning Centre (OLC): In 2006-2007, the World Bank and European Union funded a Comprehensive Evaluation of QOU as a component of a larger tertiary education initiative in Palestine. QOU responded to the proposed recommendations with the establishment of the Open Learning Centre (OLC) with a mission to develop and enhance excellence in open teaching and learning across the institution (Matheos & others, 2008). The strategic decision was by the end of the academic year 2011/2012, 50% of the courses at QOU to be delivered as blended courses. (Hamayil, 2009).

The OLC identified the need to move to a more interactive model of course delivery and spearheaded a course redesign project for 10 QOU courses that integrated technology and online learning (Matheos, 2008), to improve student engagement and interaction. Curriculum delivery via distance education requires focused attention to course design (Matheos & Archer, 2004), and curricular alignment is essential to ensure quality programming. Therefore, OLC provided a course redesign workshop, focusing on both pedagogy and technology, and the coordination of ongoing design and technological support for academic supervisors and learners throughout the redesign and delivery process. Each course redesign included the following elements:

- The use of a learning management system (Moodle) and a virtual classroom (Elluminate).
- The inclusion of online learning activities.
- Development of a course blueprint.
- Redistribution of marks normally allocated to assignments and midterm to online activities. (The final exam remained as required in its institutional format) (Matheos & others, 2008).

Central to the redesign project was the development of a course blueprint linking outcomes, activities (face-to-face and online), resources, and assessments (Collins, 2005). The blueprint was a tool for designing for curricular alignment. For most supervisors, this was a new experience, as with

most large open universities, curriculum was standardized. Course materials were prepared centrally including assignments and examinations. Instructors' roles were confined to teaching the prescribed curriculum and in the case of QOU, this was translated into bi-weekly tutorials, office hours, and grading the assignments and examinations (Matheos & others, 2008).

QOU needed to move into online and blended learning to be current and credible as an open learning institution. This initiative was a milestone in QOU's development to build capacity in offering quality programming through the sustained use of technology in teaching. This move positioned them for leadership in demonstrating best practices in open learning higher education institutions. OLC is now involved in implementing the project in Hebron Educational Region in order to convert it into an electronic region as a first step which will subsequently entail all other regions (OLC, 2009).

OLC Role: To promote the positive and effective role of the university in higher education both in Palestine and the Arab world, to encourage and develop this modern approach of higher education and employ it for societal and economic sustainable development. The center initiated many programs in four areas:

- Upgrading employees' teaching efficiency to match the ongoing development in open learning.
- Disseminating the philosophy and practices of distance education, e-learning and blended learning.
- Developing e- learning environment through cooperation with the various centers and departments of the university.

Implementing the good teaching practices in accordance with the good quality standards related to open education and the standards of e- learning and effective blended learning (OLC, 2009).

Implementation:

Hebron educational region had been selected to start the implementation of the blended model of Education, in order to convert it into an electronic region as a first step which will subsequently entail all other regions in Al-Quds Open University under the monitoring of OLC. So we (Hebron Educational Region) took the responsibility to launch the biggest step in implementing the electronic courses through the blended learning technique in the second semester of the academic year 2008/2009. There was a need for developing the academic supervisors (full- time as well as part- time) capabilities, to connect teaching and learning with open learning environment & adopting of quality standards. So the trainers in the university started in training supervisors &

students using the learning management system (Moodle), and a virtual classroom (Elluminate), design courses, and teach students with e-learning methods such as online courses, video Streaming Mode, Blended courses using Moodle with assignments, or Moodle with activities, using virtual class (Elluminate), and the academic portal.

Hebron Educational Region held several workshops such as "Building Capacity through Self-Assessment," to disseminate the philosophy of e-learning and blended learning and relevant topics in the university campus, in the local community by holding seminars through the technique of virtual classes, conferences, writing about the new concepts of the new methods in the local media (press releases). Also there enhancing was the infrastructure, the training for workers, and equipping of laboratories. Several brochures to students and supervisors were made for the quality standards in course design, good practices in using virtual class, good practices in open learning ...etc. In 2010 QOU held several workshops to assess the experience of QOU in blended learning, to know the achievements and challenges in order to continue on solid ground.

Previous Studies:

Matheos, Rogoza, Hamayil (2008), this study constitutes the report of an evaluation which was conducted at QOU. The sample included five academic supervisors who were recommended by their Deans and 67 students who volunteered to be interviewed. A qualitative approach was taken to investigate faculty and student response to participation in the course redesign project. This study showed that the academic supervisors and students found blended learning a positive teaching and learning experience, and believed that it was both a timely and necessary agenda for QOU. Both teachers and students recognized that the new mode of delivery was more work, but that formative assessment, interaction among students, and online discussions were valuable learning tools. Both teachers and students used technology for personal use to a greater extent than for educational purposes, although students clearly used new technologies more than the instructors. Teachers and students both identified the need for more computers, and better connectivity, although only students commented on the need to expand hours of operation of computer labs, and the need to ensure access to all websites for search purposes. Although teachers and students both raised concerns about costs of home computers and Internet connections for those in lower economic classes, only faculty members raised the concerns about access issues for female students. Many students also commented on the importance of the transferability of technological skills from the classroom to the workplace. All students supported the redistribution of marks and the formative assessment. They confirmed that many of them submitted copied assignments in traditional courses, rarely attended tutorials,

and often only opened the self-study textbook before the mid-term or final. The blended learning redesign required them to engage weekly with the content, instructor, and other students, promoting a better learning environment. All students stated that the final examinations should be reviewed for both content and structure. The redistribution of marks remained a controversial issue within QOU with underlying concerns that students in the redesigned courses may not be as well prepared for the final examinations. Data was collected for both traditional and blended learning courses and final grade results reflected no difference.

Mohamed, (2009), this paper considers endeavors to disseminate distance higher education in the Arab region. In particular, three different structures are examined: distance education programs provided by traditional universities, open or distance education universities offering only programs from a distance, and a virtual university. Shortcomings of these endeavors due largely to the lack of quality assurance procedures and accreditation policies are examined in detail. The need for developing quality assurance frameworks and accreditation policies for such modes represents a major step towards gaining accreditation by internationally recognized organizations. Key parties are also identified and discussed that have a great impact on promoting quality assurance and the accreditation of distance higher education in the Arab region. The study finds that the only university that has taken steps toward developing quality policies for its programs is QOU.

QOU has a quality control department; however, it is still in development stages. This department will be responsible for achieving a high level of quality teaching and learning, and assuring the quality of services and products on the basis of scientific and professional criteria in all fields. This paper concludes that developing such a framework is essential for ensuring quality, but is not enough on its own to ensure quality distance education offerings. It should be regarded only as the beginning of an ongoing comprehensive process that has to be supported effectively to produce the desired results. For successfully executing such a framework, all essential synchronous conditions which foster quality assurance have to be present, such as integration of the quality assurance into the institutions commitments, staff persuasion and engagement, commitment by each of the organizational units involved to ensure the quality in all of the services provided, and the development of a positive corporate culture.

Amro, Hodali (2004), this study aims to shed light on implementation of e-learning at Al-Quds Open University. There are a number of obstacles that lay ahead and could derail the implementation of the e-learning projects. One of these issues is the continued Israeli occupation and control of 4 million Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. This political instability has negatively

affected all aspects of the Palestinian life. The financial problem is another annoying issue where many Palestinian universities nearly pay salaries to employees and allocate very few resources for research and usage of modern technologies. The Palestinian communication infrastructure has problems keeping pace with the latest advancements in the field partly due to Israeli restrictions. The geographical distribution of the university necessitated the establishment of a wide area network that links all its centers. Data and information in these centers are not immediately synchronized with the headquarters due to slow and sometimes unacceptable network performance. This has adversely affected the development of the Academic Portal. Diagnosis revealed that such problem is attributed to two factors: Palestinian communication infrastructure and lack of hardware capabilities at the university.

Su-Chen Wang & others (2008). This paper explores the challenges faced by university instructors in a national research-based university in Taiwan. An interpretive paradigm utilizing qualitative and quantitative methods was adopted. The paper outlines the findings from 27 e-learning instructors in in-depth interviews and 55 of 69 e-learning instructors who responded to the questionnaire. Instructors noted they faced pedagogical, personal, and technological challenges. The findings suggested instructors needed to adopt different pedagogical approaches to work with new media in developing their e-learning courses so new curriculum design, new teaching methods, new ways of assessment, and new interaction approaches were needed. The instructors faced personal challenges in time management and role change if they needed to provide course materials online and respond in time. Instructors noted they also encountered four categories of technological challenges: easy access to necessary computer equipment, technical skills to access computer technology and the e-learning system, technical skills for communication, and the quality of e-learning computer facilities and technology.

Sife & others (2007), this paper discusses new learning and training technologies considering their pedagogical, cost and technical implications. It also discusses challenges for integrating these technologies in higher learning institutions with examples from Tanzania. Despite the achievements revealed by some of the Tanzanian universities in implementing ICT for teaching and learning processes, these universities still face a lot of challenges in undertaking such a process as: Lack of systemic approach to ICT implementation, awareness and attitude towards ICTs, administrative support, technical support, transforming higher education, staff development, lack of ownership and inadequate funds.

Sabbah (2010), in response to an international evaluation in 2007, Al-Quds Open University (QOU) has implemented e-learning from the first semester 2008/2009 and has achieved significant growth in this task. It has implemented various blended learning models using learning management system (Moodle), video streaming technology, and virtual class technology (Elluminate Live). In the first semester 2009/2010, QOU announced three educational regions as electronic regions, in which 30% of its curricula is offered in blended learning (half of classes are face-to-face, and half are virtual via internet). In the previous four semesters, QOU implemented more than 150 courses in various models of blended learning using the above technologies. This new trend required the university to redesign some of its courses as well as training its academic staff to enable them develop the courses suitable for delivery in a blended environment. However, this study finds that some obstacles and difficulties have been encountered in many respects, such as faculties' readiness, ICT infrastructure weaknesses, and lack of technical support. Moreover, an important obstacle was the resistance to change in some educational methodologies at the University. This research aimed at investigating the current situation to measure the extent to which the obstacles and difficulties described above affect the process. Also, it investigates the efficiency of the training courses conducted for academic and administrative staff, and how they improved their performance in implementing e-learning.

Tilya, H. Twaakyondo (2008), this paper reports on the research conducted with the purpose of establishing the acceptance of eLearning, analyses the challenges of eLearning and designs an assistive tool for people with disability at higher learning institutions in Tanzania. The information was gathered through documentary review. Primary data was collected from a sample survey by means of structured questionnaires and interviews. Study population was carried out at higher learning institutions conducting e-Learning. The research identified several factors that challenge the implementation of adaptive eLearning at higher learning institutions. These included management support, methodology, technology, resource accessibility and availability, culture of education and learning styles, design of assistive tools, intellectual investment, and global business. It was concluded that eLearning is more highly accepted in higher learning institutions than in basic education. However, there were doubts about the certificates obtained from online courses. The factors that challenge implementation of eLearning are very interrelated in bringing the success or failure of eLearning projects. However, accessibility of resources of e-Learning was found to affect disabled people more than normal person.

Comment on previous studies:

The studies shows that the need for developing quality assurance frameworks and accreditation policies for such modes represents a major step towards gaining accreditation by internationally recognized organizations. Mohamed, (2009), study finds that the only university that has taken steps toward developing quality policies for its programs in Palestine is Al-Quds Open University. On the other hand, Sife & others (2007) discussed challenges for integrating technologies in higher learning institutions and found that these universities still face a lot of challenges in undertaking such a process as : Lack of systemic approach to ICT implementation, awareness and attitude towards ICTs, administrative support, technical support, transforming higher education, staff development, lack of ownership, & Inadequate funds. Also Sabbah (2010), finds that some obstacles and difficulties have been encountered in QOU, such as faculties' readiness, ICT infrastructure weaknesses, and lack of technical support. Moreover, an important obstacle was the resistance to change in some educational methodologies at the University. Finally, Tilya (2008), from Tanzania finds that there were doubts about the certificates obtained from online courses. The factors that challenge the implementation of e-learning are very interrelated in bringing the success or failure of eLearning projects. However, accessibility of resources of e-Learning was found to affect disabled people more than normal person.

Study methodology and procedures:

This chapter reviews the methods and procedures used in the field study and discusses the way the research was developed. The current study used descriptive and analytical approaches.

Tool of the study:

The researcher used a questionnaire developed in accordance with the educational literature, to study the challenges in implementing e-learning at al Quds Open University in Palestine. It consisted of (19) items. Likert scale was used as follows: given a numeric value 5 of the response very much, 4 to a large degree. 3 to medium, 2 to a low degree, and 1 to very few. The statistically packages used for the analysis, was "Statistical Package for Social Sciences" (SPSS).

Validity and Reliability of the tool:

The questionnaire was reviewed by experts in the field of the study. They all approved its validity and suitability for the purposes of the study. The

reliability of the instrument was verified by using the Cronbach's Alpha and it reached (0.795).

Statistical tools used in the research:

- Alpha (Cronbach) used to verify the reliability.
- Means and standard deviation, to answer the first question.
- t-test, to answer the second question.
- Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS), used for the analysis.

Population of the study:

Population of the study consisted of all the learners who have studied courses in e-learning at Hebron Educational Region at Al-Quds Open University, in the second semester in the year 2010/2011, as in the following table:

Table (1) study population

The study population	
No.	Program
150	Technology and Applied Sciences
207	Social and Family Development
200	Administrative and Economic Sciences
1287	Education
1844	Total

Study sample:

The researcher chose stratified random sample which consisted of (184), (10% of the population). (175) learners of the total sample responded as shown in the following table:

Table (2) characteristics of the sample according to demographic variables of the study

Total	No.	Levels	Variables
175	115	third	Year of study
	60	fourth	
175	74	Male	Gender
	101	Female	
175	157	Yes	Owning a computer
	18	No	
175	159	Yes	proficiency in using the internet

	16	No	
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Analysis and results of the study:

This part of the study deals with the description and analysis for the results of the study.

First question:

What are the challenges that faced the learners in implementing e-learning at Hebron Educational Region at Al- Quds Open University? To answer this question, the means and standard deviation for the items of the questionnaire were calculated and the following tables show these results.

Table (3): Means and the standard deviation for the challenges that faced the learners in implementing e- learning in Hebron Region

Degree	Standard Deviation	Means	Items	Item No.
High	.92	4.17	Poor level of the English language of the learner.	10
High	1.02	3.92	Shortage of computers in the laboratory hinders the student's participation.	12
High	.97	3.76	Density of the curriculum creates problems in the e-learning process.	11
High	.94	3.76	Slow speed of the Internet leading to wasting time and effort.	16
High	.93	3.68	Lack of training students to search for the required sites.	15
Medium	1.01	3.61	Students' difficulty in accepting the idea of e-learning.	19
Medium	1.02	3.60	Weakness in students' average in achievements in general.	7
Medium	.92	3.60	Weakness in students' skills in finding the required information in a timely manner.	14
Medium	1.19	3.54	Crowded classrooms, and students confuse the student academic supervisor.	13
Medium	1.00	3.53	Frequent disconnection during use of virtual classes	6
Medium	1.06	3.51	Access to the sites not required distract students during the learning process.	4
Medium	1.07	3.48	Lack of awareness of the importance of students' use of modern communication technology in learning.	5

Medium	1.11	3.46	lack of references in the university library, such as electronic studies, etc.	9
Medium	.99	3.40	lack of cooperation in the exchange of technological information between students and technical support.	2
Medium	1.16	3.32	Weakness in communication skills among the supervisors and students through the portal.	1
Medium	1.15	3.29	There are no benefits due to the high number of students in the class.	3
Medium	1.05	3.28	Students' fears to register in e-learning courses does not make it move forward.	18
Medium	1.11	3.14	Low skill in dealing with the internet and computer	8
Medium	1.05	2.90	Absence of accreditation in e-learning by the Ministry of Higher Education.	17
Medium	.52	3.55	Total	

The table above shows that the total degree from the students' viewpoint was "medium", where the mean (3.55), and a standard deviation (0.52). Items (11, 12, 10) a "poor level of English language learners", and "Shortage of computers in the laboratory hinder student participation", and "Density of the curriculum creates problems in the e-learning process", got the highest means, (4.17, 3.92, 3.76). Perhaps this is due to general learners' weakness in English language, which hinders the ability to use technology that is often in English, and follow-up research and developments in foreign studies, which affects student achievement. The "Shortage of computers in the laboratory hinder student participation", because the present laboratories are not equipped for this huge number of students, in addition to being expensive, so it became the duty of every academic supervisor and the student to provide a personal computer, Internet line if he wants to complete his university education, because the e-learning has become an integral part of open education. The university is trying hard to get fund to enhance the laboratory and infrastructure. "Density of the curriculum creates problems in the e-learning process", this result shows the difficulties that faced the students because they are requested to submit the final exam in the whole book, which is often beyond 400 pages, two electronic assignments, attend at least four virtual lectures, with four face to face lectures, in addition to online activities for each unit in the course, with the compulsory interaction learning through management system (Moodle) for each course taught in a blended learning. While the items 17& item 8, got the lowest means "Low skill in dealing with the Internet and computer", at the beginning there was lack of training, (supervisors, and students & workers) to use the software learning management (Moodle), (Elluminate Virtual Room), lack of technical

support, but now things are getting better. And “Absence of accreditation in e-learning by the Ministry of Higher Education”, got the lowest mean (2.90) the fact that students of Al Quds Open University do not face this problem in B.A, but in masters' degree.

Second question:

Are there any statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the responses of the learners in Hebron Region at al-Quds open university towards the challenges in implementing e-learning due to the following variables: year of study, gender, owning a computer, & proficiency in using the internet?

1- Year of study:

Are there any statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the responses of the learners in Hebron Region at Al-Quds Open University towards the challenges in implementing e-learning due to year of study variable? To identify the differences in this question, t-test was run to determine whether a difference exists between the responses of the learners towards the challenges in implementing e-learning due to the variable year of study as shown in the following table (4):

Table (4): Results of learner's responses for the year of study variable

Year of study	No.	Means	Standard Deviation	df	t	Sig.
Third year	115	3.5913	.54902	173	1.297	*0.196
Fourth year	60	3.4833	.46762			

The previous table shows that there are no statistically significant differences in learner’s responses. Probably due to the fact that students in third and fourth year have completed study courses in computer and English language, that make it easier for them to deal with an e-learning course through internet, and portal.

2- Gender:

Are there any statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the responses of the learners in Hebron Region at Al-Quds Open University towards the challenges in implementing e-learning due to gender variable? To identify the differences in this question, t-test was run to determine whether a difference exists between the responses of the learners

towards the challenges in implementing e-learning due to gender variable as shown in the following table (5):

Table (5): Results of learner's responses for the gender variable

Sig.	t	df	Standard Deviation	Means	No.	Gender
*0.114	1.588	173	.49871	3.6274	74	Male
			.53743	3.5007	101	Female

The previous table shows that there are no statistically significant differences in learner's responses. Because all students have the same requirements, & nowadays all students like electronics, especially in using the internet & social networks.

3- **Owning a Computer:**

Are there any statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the responses of the learners in Hebron Region at al-Quds open university towards the challenges in implementing e-learning due to owning a computer variable? To identify the differences in this question, t-test was run to determine whether a difference exists between the responses of the learners in Hebron Region at Al-Quds Open University towards the challenges In implementing e-learning due to owning a computer variable as shown in the following table (6):

Table (6): Results of learner's responses for the owning of a computer variable

Sig.	t	df	Standard Deviation	Means	No.	Owning a Computer
*0.076	-1.787	173	.52409	3.5305	157	Yes
			.48569	3.7619	18	No

The previous table shows that there are no statistically significant differences in learner's responses. This result can be explained by the fact that learners are forced to deal with computers in their study, in e-assignments, e-interaction with supervisors during panel discussions, and e-mail via the web portal, registration at the beginning of the semester. All of the previous reasons force them to buy computers, and there are some students who use university computer laboratory.

4- **Proficiency in using internet:**

Is there any statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the responses of the learners in Hebron Region at Al-Quds Open University towards the challenges in implementing e-learning due to

proficiency using the internet variable? To identify the differences in this question, t-test was run to determine whether a difference exists between the responses of the learners towards the challenges in implementing e-learning due to proficiency in using internet variable as shown in the following table (7):

Table (7): Results of learner's responses for proficiency in using the internet variable

Sig.	t	df	Standard Deviation	Means	No.	Proficiency in using the internet
*0.145	-1.466	173	.51614	3.5359	159	Yes
			.58012	3.7366	16	No

The previous table shows that there is no statistically significant difference in learner's responses. This result can be explained by the fact that a student at Al-Quds Open University is obliged to use the internet through interaction in discussion groups through the portal with their academic supervisor, e-assignments, attending virtual lectures (VRoom), in addition to online activities, with the compulsory interaction learning through management system (Moodle) for each course taught in a blended learning way ...etc.

Recommendations of the study:

Based on previous results, the study recommends the following:

- 1 - Improvement of the technical infrastructure and facilities. This should include providing higher internet speed, wireless internet at the university campuses and stronger servers.
- 2- Working on supporting the notion of e-learning among teachers and students.
- 3 – Intensifying English language courses.
- 4 - Reconsidering the load of the academic supervisor.
- 5 - Social mobilization of community members to interact with this type of education.
- 6- More research on these issues is to be conducted.

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Questionnaire:

This questionnaire is within a scientific study about "*The Challenges Facing Learners in Implementing E-Learning in Hebron Educational Region at Al- Quds Open University/Palestine (Case Study)* ", please check out the questionnaire to answer the questions accurately and objectively. Note that your responses will be used for scientific purposes only.

Part 1: General information.

Please mark (X) in the appropriate box for you:

Variables	Levels
Year of study:	<input type="checkbox"/> Fourth <input type="checkbox"/> Third
Gender:	<input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/> Male
Owning a computer:	<input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Proficiency in using the internet:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Part 2: Challenges Facing Learners in Implementing E-Learning

No.	Items	very much	large degree	medium	low degree	very few
1	Weakness in communication skills among the supervisors and students through the portal.					
2	lack of cooperation in the exchange of technological information between students and technical support.					
3	There are no benefits due to the high number of students in the class.					
4	Access to the sites not required distract students during the learning process.					
5	Lack of awareness of the importance of students' use of modern communication technology in learning.					
6	Frequent disconnection during use of virtual classes.					
7	Weakness in student's average in					

	achievements in general.					
8	Low skill in dealing with the internet and computer.					
9	lack of references in the university library, such as electronic studies, etc.					
10	Poor level of the English language of the learner.					
11	Density of the curriculum creates problems in the e-learning process.					
12	Shortage of computers in the laboratory hinder student participation.					
13	Crowded classrooms, and students confuse the student academic supervisor.					
14	Weakness in students' skills in finding the required information in a timely manner.					
15	Lack of training students to search for the required sites.					
16	Slow speed of the Internet, leading to wasting time and effort.					
17	Absence of accreditation in e-learning by the Ministry of Higher Education.					
18	Students fears to register in e-learning courses does not make it move forward.					
19	Students difficulty in accepting the idea of e-learning.					

Thank you

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