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Obstacles Facing Female Students Using Blackboard in Curriculum Courses at the College of Education in King Saud University

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Abstract
The purpose of this study is to investigate the difficulties encountered by female students at the College of Education at King Saud University while using Blackboard in courses. The study sample consisted of 52 female students enrolled in the course *334 CSI-Introduction to Learning and Teaching*. The students specialize in Psychology, Kindergarten, and Special Education. All female students used Blackboard in some courses. The main results of this study reveal that 59.6% of female students indicate that the faculty are using less tools that support discussions in Blackboard. And 51.9% of female students have high levels of difficulty in getting training to use Blackboard—46.2% have high difficulty for technical support and 44.2% have high difficulty in performing electronic tests—the study also revealed that 46.2% of female students face high difficulty in communication between students on the Blackboard, and 57.7% indicate a lack of activation of the bulletin board in Blackboard. The female students answered the open question, and they suggested that the University should provide a special unit to support Blackboard users and provide continuous maintenance and workshops at the beginning of each semester to explain the contents of Blackboard, as well as activating the discussions more among the students, and interaction with the faculty. Therefore, it is recommended that faculty and Blackboard administrators should encourage students to communicate in Blackboard, providing enough training programs for students to master Blackboard implementation in university courses, and urge academic departments to encourage faculty to use Blackboard.
Keywords: Obstacles Using Blackboard (LMS), Female Students College of education, Saudi Arabia

1. Introduction

The development of modern technologies has had a significant impact on all aspects of life, especially in the field of education, where many technologies have emerged and their use has become of great importance in the development of educational learning. Technology enables faculty to organize course materials, and for the students to be active in learning processes rather than relying on traditional methods. The integration of technology has introduced significant changes in education in self-learning skills, higher thinking skills, and critical thinking skills, transforming the role of the student from the recipient of the information into a researcher. The Blackboard is a management learning system (LMS), a tool to retrieve all courses offered by the University for all materials including assignments, lecture notes, and slides. Students can submit their assignments as soon as they are complete with better organization of their learning materials.

Although the Blackboard system is not a new technology, it faces some difficulties in application, not from Blackboard itself, but mainly due to obstacles facing students and faculty in using it as a tool of learning. As El Zawaidy (2014) revealed, the main obstacles are a lack of needed training and experience in using Blackboard in online learning at Saudi universities, as well as faculty member's perceptions and existing obstacles. Heirdsfield et al. (2011) stated that staff acknowledged the possibilities for human interaction and collaborative learning inherent in the more interactive features in Blackboard, but they viewed their use more negatively than did the student body. In many ways, staff still viewed face-to-face interactions and modelling provided in class as being the most valuable learning experience for teaching. Although Saudi university faculty members were negative toward LMS, the results showed positive attitudes. As Hussein (2011) mentioned in his study, the results showed that there was a need for training in using the system and, in particular, learning content management and file sharing forums. Also, Aborayyan (2017) revealed in his study that the degree of technical and technological difficulties faced by faculty members in their use of the academic portal of Al Quds Open University was at a medium level.

Al Suleiman (2010) indicated that the findings confirm those reported in the literature that inefficient central project management and inadequate resources influence the integration of ICT in the science curriculum. Further, qualitative and quantitative findings confirm that teachers' access to training is affected by time constraints, ineffective ICT course materials, and, inadequate access of female teachers to external training.

Alhabeeb & Rowley (2017) indicated that three Saudi universities in this study have been developing their eLearning services. The two most important groups of critical success factors in this process were regarded as those related to student and instructor characteristics. And the results suggested that participants regarded instructor

knowledge with learning technologies, student knowledge of computer systems, and technical infrastructure as important facilitators of success. Blackboard is not only used as a supplemental tool but is blended with traditional instruction. As Alebaikan and Troudi (2010) mentioned, blended learning in Saudi higher education has been a major challenge in the adaptation of this element in the traditional university culture. Finding the right design of blended learning is another challenge, and the time issue is considered a crucial difficulty facing blended learning faculty. Also, Mirza and Al-Abdul Kareem (2011) indicated that, even though a good number of Saudi universities and colleges have already started moving toward the application of e-learning, most of them mainly use learning management systems to support their students. Also, there is a need to change policies to allow students to take virtual online degrees.

The success of Blackboard implementation depends largely on student and instructor knowledge of the LMS. As Alhabeeb and Rowley (2017) argued, the three Saudi universities in their study have been developing eLearning services, but the two most important groups of critical success factors in this process were regarded as those related to student and instructor characteristics. Further analysis within each group of factors suggested that participants regarded instructor knowledge with learning technologies, student knowledge of computer systems, and technical infrastructure as important facilitators of success. However, the Electronic Saudi University (SEU) uses the technology of eLearning and, according to AL Hussain (2017), the Blackboard system has a positive impact on the individual at Saudi Electronic University (SEU). The analysis of these results indicates that using the Blackboard system has helped students to learn much, and increased their ability to interpret and recall relevant information. The findings also highlight that the Blackboard system has enhanced student effectiveness in the educational process, and has increased the overall productivity of students in the learning process, which indicates knowledge of Blackboard through training for human resources and provides required material for operation of the LMS.

Even in trainee teacher training programs difficulties are faced. Hamadat (2016) examined the degree of educational supervisors' use for communication and information technologies in teacher training programs, and the difficulties they face from their perspective. Hamadat's study indicated moderate use of communication and information technologies by educational supervisors in teacher training programs. Therefore, it is recommended that training programs, for both educational supervisors and teachers concerning the optimal uses for communication and information technologies in schools, are implemented.

Most students are using Web 2.0 for communication and conversation, but it is used less in education. Bingimlas (2017) indicated, in his study, that most participant teachers were familiar with Web 2.0 applications. However, their uses in education were rarely mentioned. They reported that the top barriers preventing them from the effective use of Web 2.0 applications in education are related to school level barriers, such as the large number of students in the classroom, the lack access to the Internet in schools, and the lack of a clear plan for the use of Web 2.0 in education. Kutbi (2015) revealed that most participants had positive perceptions of the use of social media in education. The reasons include personal, educational, social, and technical factors. Student suggestions regarding improving the use of social media in education varied.

Using any online technology improves not only student skills in university courses, but also other skills. This may be seen in Al-Jarf's (2006) study showing significant difference between students in an experimental group, who were exposed to a combination of online instruction and traditional in-class instruction, and those in the control group who were exposed to traditional classroom instruction only. Although experimental students were a lot poorer in their writing ability in English than the control group, the use of online learning boosted the writing ability of less able college students in ESL.

The literature shows positive attitudes of faculty members toward technology, and a low level of computer anxiety, according to Alanazy (2018). The literature has noted that the obstacles of Blackboard, or any online programs, lay in the operation—especially in developing countries with low technology infrastructure, and a lack of proper training of human resources for both faculty and students. The criticism of Blackboard in Saudi universities mainly concerns the implementation of Blackboard, such as a lack of proper training for both students and faculty. Also the Blackboard system is not integrated into course learning, so the use of Blackboard is up to the faculty. Thus, some faculty do not use Blackboard or any learning management tools in university courses, as academic departments are not incorporating management learning systems as part of their faculty evaluation. Therefore, my study aimed to reveal difficulties facing female students using Blackboard in some curriculum courses.

2. Problems of the Study

Several studies have pointed out the importance and effectiveness of using Blackboard in the educational process. Also, the literature shows difficulties in using Blackboard and other online programs. With researcher experience in teaching female students, there is a need for an effective use of Blackboard as a management tool for courses offered by the University. This study aimed to reveal some obstacles facing the application of Blackboard, experienced by female students at the College of Education of King Saud University, to provide better methods of

instructions for curriculum courses, our own and other courses offered by the College of Education.

2.1 Objectives of the Study:

The study aimed to accomplish these objectives:

1. Identify difficulties using Blackboard related to students.
2. Identify difficulties using Blackboard related to faculty.
3. Identify difficulties using Blackboard related to technology.

2.2 Method

This study was conducted with descriptive research methodology, using a questionnaire. This questionnaire was designed by the researcher depending on the review of the literature, and the experience of the researcher in teaching curriculum courses at the department of Curriculum and Method of Teaching at the College of Education. The instrument consists of three main areas: difficulties related to students, difficulties related to the faculty, and difficulties related to technology.

2.3 Sample of the Study

The sample data for this study consisted of 52 respondents of female students selected from those enrolled in course curriculum *334* (*Introduction to Learning and Education*), and the majors of respondents were: Special Education, Psychology, and Kindergarten.

For better results, the study was limited for female students not specialized in computer education.

The survey was distributed at the end of the first semester in 2017.

2.4 Description of the Sample Study

There are eight levels in order for the students to finish the B.S. Degree at King Saud University, and the College of Education accepts the students from level 3 after they complete level 2. The following tables describe the student level, major, and number of courses students are enrolled in using Blackboard.

Table 1. Student Level

level	number	Percentage
1. Level 3	44	84.6
2. Level 4	4	7.7
3. Level 5	4	7.7

Table 1 shows that 84.6% of students are in level 3, which indicates that they just transferred to the Collage of Education, and there are only a few students in level 4 and 5.

Table 2. Students distributed by Major

Major	number	percentage
1. Special Education	6	11.5
2. Psychology	16	30.8
3. Kindergarten	30	57.7

Table 2 shows that most female students (57.7%) are specialized in kindergarten, 30.8% are specialized in Psychology, while only 11.5% specialized in Special Education.

Table 3. Number of courses used Blackboard

Courses number	number	percentage
1. One course	4	7.7
2. Range from two to four courses	10	19.2
3. Range from five to nine courses	26	50
4. Range from ten to twelve courses	12	23.1

Table 3 shows that 50% of female students enrolled in courses ranged from five to nine using Blackboard; 23.1% of female students enrolled in courses ranged from ten to twelve using Blackboard; 19.2% of female students enrolled in courses ranged from two to four using Blackboard; but only 7.7% of female students enrolled in one course using Blackboard.

3. Analysis of data

Data was analyzed to meet the objectives of the study, as the tables show below**:**

Table 4. Difficulties related to students

Difficulties	high	percentage	low	percentage	none	percentage
1. Fear of using technology	1	1.9	10	19.2%	41	78.8
2. The Embarrassment of misusing technology	3	5.8	21	40.4%	28	53.8
3. Difficulty of uploading tasks in Blackboard	2	3.8	12	23.1%	38	73.1
4. Poor communication between students at the Blackboard	24	46.2	18	34.6%	10	19.2

Table 4 shows that 46.2% of female students admit that there is a high difficulty due to poor communication between students on Blackboard, and 34.6% show low difficulty. Forty-point-four percent of female students suffer low levels of embarrassment for misusing technology, and the table also shows that there are low difficulties related to students. However, 78.8% of students do not have difficulties because of the fear of using technology, and 73.1% of students do not have difficulties in uploading tasks to Blackboard. The results show that faculty and Blackboard administrators should encourage students to communicate in Blackboard, and train students to be better acquainted with Blackboard to remove the embarrassment of misusing technology.

Table 5. Difficulties related to faculty

Difficulties	high	percentage	low	percentage	none	percentage
1. Lack of use of Blackboard by some faculty	25	28.1	27	51.9	0	0
2. Lack of interest of the department to follow up the use of Blackboard by the faculty	26	50	19	36.5	7	13.5
3. Most faculty prefer the traditional way of teaching	17	32.7	32	61.5	3	5.8
4. Lack of desire of some faculty to use Technology	18	34.6	28	53.8	6	11.5
5.Lack of student guidance by faculty in using Blackboard	22	42.3	22	42.3	8	15.4
6. Requesting assignments from students without prior knowledge of their Blackboard background	24	46.2	21	40.4	7	13.5
7. Lack of addressing problems in Blackboard faced by students	17	32.7	30	57.7	4	7.7
8. Difficulties of faculty managing content	4	7.7	27	51.9	21	40.4
9. Lack of activation of the bulletin board in Blackboard	30	57.7	12	23.1	10	19.2
10. Lack of activation of discussions in Blackboard	29	55.8	18	34.6	5	9.6
11. Lack of electronic tests via Blackboard	46	88.5	6	11.5	0	0
12. Lack of using tools that support discussions in Blackboard	31	59.6	19	36.5	2	3.8

Table 5 shows that 88.5% of female students have high difficulties in electronic tests via Blackboard, and 59.6% of female students have high difficulties due to faculty using less tools that support discussions in Blackboard.

Table 5 also shows that 88.5% of female students have high difficulties in electronic tests via Blackboard, 59% in using discussions in Blackboard, as well as 57.7% in a lack of activation of the bulletin board in Blackboard. Fifty-five-point-eight percent have high difficulty in using bulletin board discussions in Blackboard. Faculty requesting assignments, without prior notice, from Blackboard causes difficulty for 46.2%. Forty-two-point-three percent indicate a lack of guidance by faculty to use Blackboard, while 50% of students indicate a lack of interest of the academic department to follow up the use of Blackboard by the faculty.

Table 5 also shows that female students have low difficulty where:

1- Most faculty prefer the traditional way of teaching (61.5%).
2- Problems in Blackboard faced by students are addressed (57.7%).
3- Faculty desire to use the technology (53.8%).
4- Some faculty use Blackboard (51.9%).
5- Faculty manage content (51.9%).

4. Conclusion

The study reveals that female students attending course *334 CSI-Introduction to Learning and Teaching,* come from the different majors of Psychology, Kindergarten, and Special education. Fifty percent of female students enrolled in five to nine courses using Blackboard, and 23.1% enrolled in ten to twelve courses using Blackboard. Nineteen-point-two percent enrolled in courses ranged from two to four, but only 7.7% of female students enrolled

in one course using Blackboard, which means that the all-female students use Blackboard in more than one course during semester. Fifty-nine-point-six percent of female students see that faculty are using less tools that support discussions in Blackboard. Also, the study reveals that 51.9% of female students experience high difficulty in getting training for using Blackboard, 46.2% with high difficulty for technical support, and 44.2% have high difficulty in performing electronic tests. The study also revealed that 46.2% of female students face high difficulty in communication between students on Blackboard, and 57.7% in a lack of activation of the bulletin board in Blackboard. Although 78.8% of female students do not have a fear of using technology, 40.4% face low-level embarrassment of using technology, 40.4% suffer low difficulty due to continuous maintenance of the Blackboard site, and 36.5% suffer low difficulty in uploading assignments.

5. Suggestions and Recommendations

The female students answered the open question, and they suggested that the University should provide a special unit to support Blackboard users and provide continuous maintenance due to the importance of the delivery of assignments in a timely manner. They believe that the University should provide workshops at the beginning of the semester to explain the contents of Blackboard and activating the discussions more among the students, and interactions with them by faculty. Therefore, it is recommended that faculty and Blackboard administrators should encourage students to communicate in Blackboard, providing enough training programs for students to master Blackboard implementation in university courses, and urge academic departments to encourage faculty to use Blackboard.

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