

IC4E 2010



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Table of Contents

Preface.....	xvi
Organizing Committee.....	xviii
Technical Committee.....	xix

Session 1

The Role of Cognitive Styles in Investigating E-learning Usability	3
<i>Norol Hamiza Zamzuri, Erne Suzila Kassim, and Melissa Shahrom</i>	
Development of an E-learning Content-Making System for Information Security (ELSEC) and its Application to Anti-phishing Education	7
<i>Masatoshi Kawakami, Hiroshi Yasuda, and Ryoichi Sasaki</i>	
Podcast in Higher Education: Students' Experience and Assessment	12
<i>Simon Fietze</i>	
Study and Design on Data Management Model of SQL Server CE for Mobile Application	17
<i>Ye-bai Li, Bin Zhang, and Hai-bin Wang</i>	
Research of the Verification in Workflow Process Modeling on the Application of Petri Nets	21
<i>Ye-bai Li and Fu-qi Mao</i>	
Knowledge Acquisition, Sharing Intention, and Sharing Behavior	25
<i>Sophia Shu-Chuan Chang and Joseph C. Shih</i>	
Global Feature-Based Image Classification and Recognition in Small Sample Size Problem	30
<i>Lan Gan, Zhongping Yu, and Jie Gao</i>	
Virtual Classroom with Intelligent Virtual Tutor	34
<i>Yan Hu and Gang Zhao</i>	

Multi-modal Medical Image Registration Based on Gradient of Mutual Information and Morphological Haar Wavelet	39
<i>Xiaosheng Huang and Fang Zhang</i>	
Research on Network Cooperative Learning System Based on Virtual Reality	43
<i>Shuang Li</i>	
Study on the Supplier Evaluation Index System of Lean Supply Chain	47
<i>Tchidi Megan Florent and He Zhen</i>	
Study on Copetition Ecology in High-Tech Industrial Cluster	52
<i>Jiang Yunxia and Xiao Huamao</i>	
Subsequence Partition of Time Series Based on Different Width Time Window	57
<i>Hongwei Guo, Jianliang Zhang, Yanchi Liu, and Xuedong Gao</i>	
SWOT Analysis of E-learning System in Bahraini Universities	61
<i>Sarmad Mohammad</i>	
Session 2	
Study on Evaluation Model of the Fourth Party Logistics Enterprise's Core Competence Based on Information Entropy of Fuzzy Matter-Element Theory	69
<i>Ji-yong Li, Yun-pu Xie, and Yan-hong Zhang</i>	
Research on the Evaluation in Alliance E-business Security	74
<i>Lu Xi, Zhang Xiaoyu, Zhu Aimin, and Yu Lijuan</i>	
Study on the Effects of Virtual Community Involvement on Online Stickiness and Repurchase Intention	79
<i>Zilong Liu and Jian Xu</i>	
Using FCM for Color Texture Segmentation Based Multiscale Image Fusion	84
<i>Zhi-Kai Huang, Pei-Wu Li, Sheng-Qian Wang, and Ling-Ying Hou</i>	
The Characteristic Analysis and Design of Oil Exploration Data Services in Digital Oilfield	88
<i>Shen Longbin and Meng Xiangbin</i>	
SWS Based Business Service Composition	93
<i>Anping Zhao, Ke Ren, Xiaoyong Wang, and Yuhui Qiu</i>	
Agent Coalition Formation of Chinese Question Answering System Based on Improved Ant Colony Algorithm	98
<i>Shuling Di, Pilian He, and Huan Li</i>	
Improving Performance and Reliability of IMS by Co-location DHT	102
<i>Yang Peng, Zhang Chunhong, Ma Tao, and Gou Xuerong</i>	
Exploration and Practice of Constructing Computer Curricula in New Media Art	108
<i>Wang Shan and Xie Zhengqiang</i>	
Relation Networks Mining Based on Workflow Logs	111
<i>Ang Gao, Yang Yang, and Yue-Wei Wang</i>	

SWOT Analysis of E-Learning System in Bahraini Universities

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Abstract

This paper will examine a number of E-learning Management and Educational Technology issues related to the introduction of the virtual E-Learning mixed with traditional learning in some Business and accounting faculties in Bahraini universities and may be extended to other programs.

SWOT analysis have been conducted based on actual feed back from staff and students via online suggested voting system or the traditional way, the outcome will measure the effectiveness of e-learning system by being able to trace the students' preferences, and to find a new opportunities to apply the e-learning environment in Bahraini universities, which will associate or affiliate people in the community to join Virtual university.

Keywords: E-Learning, SWOT analysis, Educational technology

1. Introduction

E-learning is Technology Support education/Learning (TSL) where the medium of instruction is the internet^[1]. It is Web-based tools classroom, delivery of courses, lectures, e-registration, assignments, using web-cam, web mail and e-library. The Kingdom of Bahrain chosen to conduct this study for following issues:

- Strategic central geographical location that opens the door to a large regional global e-learning educational technology
 - Close proximity and easy access to the GCC countries in the Middle East
 - Strategically located between Europe and Asia
- Bahrain's government is seeking to develop Bahrain as the regional centre for training and human resource development in Business and accounting.

- Pioneered by His Majesty the King, the e-learning project adapted as future learning project, was implemented to boost the overall educational level.
- E-learning investment projects which provide education and vocational training services qualify with lower cost as an investment of Bahraini educational institutions.
- Bahrainis business and accounting students have the highest levels of tendency to use internet and Educational Technology.
- Significant increment of Bahraini Business and accounting students attending a educational programs in 2008 as compared to 2000, Business are booming and high demand on accountants.
- High proportions of young Bahrainis speak proficient or fluent English, which is taken as a compulsory second language in schools.

The attractiveness of the concept is often based on the following six advantages:

1. **Ubiquity:** Faculty and students can have access to course information 24/7 wherever they are on the university campus^[2].
2. **E-learning Project Sophistication:** Student projects that use E-learning tend to be more sophisticated and easy to use.
3. **Design of Student Projects and Faculty Activities:** All students have access to the same hardware and software as faculty.
4. **Shift to Learning and Teaching:** Equipment issues are replaced with educational and pedagogical issues aimed at improving teaching and learning.
5. **Savings:** There is a considerable financial reduction in cost.
6. **Standardization:** Universities can minimize technical support problems and improve access to all students by introducing a e-learning standardized platform.

A number of associated problems can also be articulated:

1. **Faculty Workload:** Communicating with students in a E-learning environment can be much more time-consuming (i.e. answering e-mails, reading, correcting and responding to messages on discussion lists, updating online materials).
2. **Classroom Management:** The widespread availability of online communication tools often creates problems such as excessive use of chatting, use of an instant messenger or playing computer software.
3. **Access to Online Resources:** As a consequence, some students may not visit the Information Centre or Self-Access Centre. Student plagiarism is also an increasing problem in assignments^[3].
4. **Learning Styles:** Some faculty and students find it difficult to adapt to the different roles expected of them in the E-learning University. In constructivist models, for example, students must be responsible for their learning and the teacher becomes the facilitator of learning.
5. **Evaluation:** Appraisal methods often need to be adjusted to reflect all of these changes. In some E-learning universities, online examinations are now replacing more traditional tests. The availability of the university network during examinations may increase cheating or technical problems.

2. Implementation of SWOT analysis on E-learning

E-learning were issued to faculty and students from the foundation of the virtual university, this research based on a questionnaire which was distributed to some student population at the survey of students and staff attitudes is based on data gathered from four campuses in Bahrain ASU, DELMON, AL-AHLIA, and RUW. It consisted of (12) questions given in (Table 1) aimed to identify how students have adapted to the introduction of the E-learning concept, and what they use their E-learning for.

The (12) questions are equal weighted on Strengths, Weakness, opportunities and threats illustrated in Table (1). Surveys were disseminated via on line or handed by traditional form to Business and Accounting students in four Bahraini universities, (29%) of respondents agree with E-learning Strengths which will help them to learn better,

Table (1) Questionnaire for SWOT Analysis of E-learning needs in Bahrain universities.

	Question	YES	NO	Possibly/Don't Know	SWOT Analysis
1	Do you think that e-learning reinforces and enhance courses in your university, so you will learn more?	28%	50%	22%	STRENGTHS
2	Do you think that e-learning will enable an excellent communication between students & staff?	20%	60%	20%	
3	Do you think it is good that you don't have to come into lesson when lectures are put online, which provide students with satisfactorily integrated resources, software, notes and lectures to be utilized on line?	38%	40%	22%	
1	Is Professional Development of IT tools, facilities & training satisfactorily into the concept of e-learning in your university?	22%	54%	24%	WEAKNESSES
2	Is e-learning used by all staff, is it developed with close cooperation between all partners Computing centers, Services, faculty, register and students.	54%	22%	24%	
3	Is e-learning works only for self motivated students?	72%	14%	14%	
1	Is e-learning better to upload student's works, lectures delivered by web cams and live messaging?	34%	42%	24%	OPPORTUNITIES
2	Is the concept open to adapt of mixed traditional & e-learning to improve learning outcomes?	62%	18%	22%	
3	Is more convent to provide web space for lecturers to enable them to upload notes & develop more courses than included in traditional learning?	60%	18%	22%	
1	Do you think e-learning will reduce admission rates	50%	22%	28%	THREATS
2	Is e-learning lack of accuracies, interaction and feedback in online materials? lack of opportunity to ask lecturer questions?	50%	18%	32%	
3	Do you think e-learning will cause of job losses,	47%	15%	33%	

improve their technology skills and help them to communicate better, while (48%) of respondents agree with E-learning Weaknesses, concluded that 'using E-learning in their universities is difficult due to lack of infrastructure and cooperation between all partners. (52%) of respondents agree that using E-learning was also linked to find new room for improvement and good opportunities. (48%) of respondents stated that there are threats of job losing and lack of accuracy. Some students have no idea about e-learning, so this approach better to implement in universities already implemented e-learning system.

SWOT Analysis reflects student's satisfaction, conversion rate (switching from traditional learning to E-Learning. This will increase university revenue & decrease its expenses.

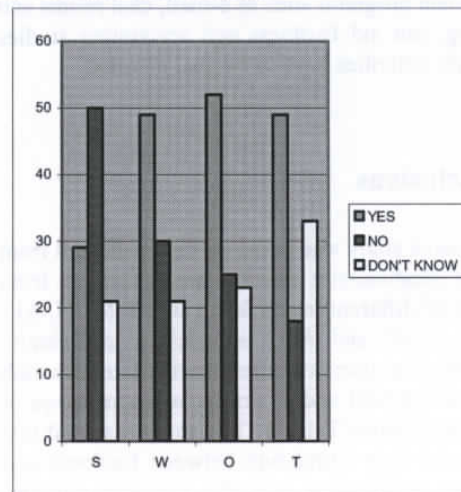
These themes are in their attempt to balance the individual and social levels of cognition when e-learning meets constructivism [6]. Both concepts are important. Collective understanding must be internalized by individuals so that there is balance learning should ultimately occur in the learner's head, and not just at the social level. They therefore promote the idea of a learning community, in which there is a mutual dependency on one another's expertise. This community is based on sharing and respect for each other's views is also part of the rules of the community. The acknowledgement of the social construction of knowledge leads Students to understand the negotiated basis of understanding [5].

In the practical situation of an e-learning context, Students would be able to log onto a university network and they would find themselves in a learning context determined by their personal profile. Instructional content would be targeted to individual needs. Consequently, the system would be so responsive that the personal profile it compiles would make a 'history of the students' activities' and the 'e-learning environment would be able to recommend timely and appropriate resources and materials for the students' learning'. Furthermore, 'it would be able to recommend directions for the students, for example, possible projects or assignments in which the student would most likely be interested [6].

Student responses to SWOT questions (three equal weighted) outcomes are shown in the charts (Table 2). An extra-academic work activities would have acquired higher percentages if registered, the use of the E-learning concept in Bahraini Universities provide some interesting findings on students' use of this new learning environment. It's clear that students find the new infrastructure useful both for classroom-based and autonomous study.

Some questions could be usefully deployed in further studies of this kind to find correlations across the global e-learning spectrum.

Table (2) Outcomes chart of SWOT questionnaire in Bahraini universities.



One deficiency of the study is the absence of a specific focus on what pedagogical tasks and activities students actually use their E-learning, this research focus specifically on the use of E-learning in a Business learning context in Bahrain.

At the outset, we suggest five questions for examining the role of Business learning [7]:

- First of all, does the university have unlimited high-speed Internet access to promote Business and accounting programs access to e-learning?
- Secondly, does Business and accounting proficiency contribute to the choice of English or Arabic Internet use?
- Thirdly, do students believe that computer technology is an essential element of their Business study learning?
- Fourthly do students enjoy using computer technology as part of their learning process?
- Lastly, do students mainly use their E-learning with traditional learning?

This study is primarily concerned with 'student use and perceptions of technology outside of the classroom. This includes student activities such as using the Web as a research tool, a reading tool and a place to exchange information. Research on the use

of computers at home and performance in university to address such developments through the lens of the many E-learning initiatives are currently underway across the pedagogical spectrum around the world. The use of high-speed Internet access and concomitant programs such as e-mail, chat rooms and searching, can aid Business and accounting studies use but the activities have to be goal oriented.

3. Conclusions

This research study was based on data collected from a student questionnaire issued to ninety students from the range of different levels found at DELMON, AL-AHLIA, RUW, and ASU universities in Bahrain. Data from the questionnaire provided information about both internal and external classroom usage of e-learning facilities Table 1. The study assumed that there would be a correlation between Business and accounting proficiency and the use and attitudes toward the computer technology. This is reflected in the high response rate of students who registered that. Computer technology at the university has enhanced my English language learning using computer to enhance student's learning outcomes.

Main goal of this research is to use an E-learning mixed with traditional university, few studies have focused on the role of faculty's attempt to come to terms with teaching and learning in this new environment. Nevertheless, general research studies have addressed the IT proficiency of faculty, and these provide a useful context to discuss issues related to this project. The need for effective programs of staff development and the attempt to bridge the gap between technology and educational technology competence are the main elements of discussion in this area. Effectiveness of e-learning measure the impact IT has on business processes & activities.

3.1. The survey focused on five important central research questions regarding faculty:

1. How knowledgeable is the faculty about instructional technologies?
2. How much experience does the faculty have with these technologies?
3. How important does the faculty think technology is to teaching^[8]?
4. How likely is the faculty to adopt a new technology in the near future?

3.2. E-Learning regarding Infrastructure

- 1- E-learning are required with software are provided by the institution^[9]

- 2- E-learning infrastructures should be installed in universities.

- 3- Courses Materials is provided in full at the commencement of the business & accounting. Positive attitude to computers is indicated by the accounting students. This is a statement that requires further research 'so teachers can better guide the Business language learner into effective utilization of the technology.

3.3. The research illustrated how constructivist principles could be used to guide the design of an e-learning environment. This environment would be based on six factors regarding students:

1. Students would be acting within the context of a problem
2. The problems would be dealt with in a simulated environment
3. Cognitive tools or construction kits would be used to allow Students to solve the problems
4. Information resources or banks allow Students to search for knowledge
5. Communication and collaboration tools allow Students to engage in the active sharing and construction of knowledge
6. Task managers and social context support provide administrative, mentor and peer guidance support

3.4. Feed back from students point of view regarded as strengths of SWOT analysis

1. E-learning helps me learn better.
2. E-learning is important to me.
3. E-learning helps me communicate with others better including my teaching staff.
4. Using E-learning in my studies is fun.
5. I believe that using E-learning helps I increase my technology skills.
6. I believe that using E-learning in my studies will help me find a job when I graduate.
7. I believe that I learn better when I study with E-learning.
8. I prefer to take exams where I can use E-learning during the exam.
9. I think that it is better to use E-learning every day with traditional learning.
10. I use my E-learning for e-mail, for Internet searches every day.
11. I prefer to use E-learning mostly for university work (to do my homework, etc.).

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