

Perceptions of Blended Learning in Saudi Universities

Submitted by

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Abstract

Saudi Higher Education has started to move with the international trend towards blending face-to-face with online instruction when developing new educational processes. As a contribution to the innovations in Saudi Higher Education, this study explores the perceptions of Saudi female lecturers and undergraduate students towards blended learning from their experience as participants in blended courses.

The advantage of blended learning was recognized by the Ministry of Saudi Higher Education as a solution to the challenge of providing college education to the rapidly growing student population. As the move to a blended learning model represents a radical shift in the Saudi educational system, this study shows how Saudi students and lecturers reacted to this change and how it affected the quality of their learning and teaching experience.

The objective of the study is to identify Saudi female undergraduate students' and lecturers' perceptions of the advantages, challenges and future of blended learning. Consequently, the key factors that influence the lecturers' and students' views are discussed, and recommendations for future research, strategy and practice are provided. Qualitative methods were used to obtain rich descriptive data to facilitate the exploration of the phenomena. Based on interpretative philosophy, the data was analysed in the form of explanation and interpretation of the participants' perceptions of blended learning.

The study concludes that blended learning has the potential to offer a successful learning experience in Saudi Arabia. As there are always challenges of adaptation when a new approach is employed, this research provides insight into how the challenges of implementing blended learning in Saudi Higher Education could be addressed. A theoretical blended learning framework is introduced to provide the factors that influence the implementation of blended learning. One of the major conclusions is that a blended learning environment offers Saudi females the flexibility to continue their higher education while maintaining their own cultural values and traditions.

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