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# The Extent to which the Academic Staff at Jouf University Applied Distance Learning Strategies during Corona Pandemic (COVID-19): The Blackboard Application as a Model

## Cover Page Footnote

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## The Extent to which the Academic Staff at Jouf University Applied Distance Learning Strategies during Corona Pandemic (COVID-19): The Blackboard Application as a Model

مدى تطبيق أعضاء هيئة التدريس بجامعة الجوف لاستراتيجيات التعلم عن بعد أثناء جائحة كورونا  
(كوفيد-19): تطبيق بلاك بورد نموذجًا

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### المخلص

هدفت الدراسة التعرف على مدى تطبيق أعضاء هيئة التدريس بجامعة الجوف لاستراتيجيات التعليم الإلكتروني والتعليم عن بعد خلال جائحة كورونا من خلال تطبيق البلاك بورد. وتم استخدام المنهج الوصفي، تم تطبيق أداة الدراسة وهي استبيان من اعداد الباحثة، وتم اختيار (40) عضو هيئة تدريس وأظهرت النتائج ما يلي: تأكيد أعضاء هيئة التدريس على اهمية التعليم عن بعد جاءت بدرجة عالية، وجاء استخدام أعضاء هيئة التدريس لاستراتيجيات التعليم عن بعد بدرجة متوسطة. كما ان أعضاء هيئة التدريس لديهم مهارة متوسطة في استخدام وسائل التعليم عن بعد في العملية التعليمية في جامعة الجوف، وان الصعوبات التي تواجه أعضاء هيئة التدريس بجامعة الجوف في استخدام الاستراتيجيات التعليم عن بعد، من خلال البلاك بورد جاءت بدرجة متوسطة. كما جاءت ودرجة رضا أعضاء هيئة التدريس عن استخدام التعليم عن بعد في جامعة الجوف، بدرجة فوق المتوسط، وانتهت إلى مجموعة من التوصيات والمقترحات أهمها: ضرورة اهتمام المسؤولين بتوجيه أعضاء هيئة التدريس لاستخدام استراتيجيات التعليم عن بعد في العملية التعليمية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** [التعليم عن بعد؛ استراتيجيات التعليم؛ فايروس كورونا؛ البلاك بورد].

### Abstract

Abstract: the study aimed identifying the extent to which the academic staff at Jouf University applied distance learning strategies during Corona pandemic (COVID-19) through the Blackboard application. The study followed a descriptive method, a questionnaire was prepared by the researcher and administered to 40 faculty members of Jouf University. Study results showed that the faculty members' recognition of the importance of distance learning came on top, while the teaching staff's use of education strategies came on moderate .

Concerning the difficulties facing faculty members in using distance education strategies, through the Blackboard, they came on a moderate degree. The results also showed that the degree of faculty members' satisfaction with the use of distance learning at Jouf University came above the average. The study ended with a set of recommendations, the most important is that official interest should direct the academic staff to use distance learning strategies in the educational process .

**Key words:** Distance learning, education strategies, Corona virus, Blackboard.

**Introduction:**

At the beginning of the previous year (2020), the world witnessed an event that brought nations into direct confrontation with a health crisis that swept the whole world, represented in the spread of Coronavirus (COVID-19) which caused an imbalance in all areas, including educational systems. To limit the spread of this epidemic, it was necessary to follow several precautionary procedures. The most important procedure was social distancing that necessitated the suspension of all life areas, as well as educational institutions. It was stated in a report of UNESCO that the spread of the virus registered record numbers for children and youth who dropped out of school until March 12, 2020 (UNESCO, 2020).

In this context, the National Planning Institute issued 11 recommendations for decision-makers to help them develop education in Egypt considering the current crisis. Of such recommendations was the expansion of the use of distance learning at universities and institutes. A further recommendation was establishing and modernizing the infrastructure of the Egyptian universities in preparation for the transition towards distance learning. So, the comparative advantages of distance and traditional education were the subject of constant discussion, but soon distance learning became the only option after Corona pandemic. This undoubtedly required good preparation for this stage, as achieving best practices in distance learning requires time and cost resources, as well as preparing and designing electronic courses. (Oranburg, 2020)

on the other hand, teaching strategies play an important role in the educational process. It is considered an essential element in building an attractive and stimulating learning environment for students, and increasing the level of knowledge among students, by focusing on giving information interactively, in addition to providing many benefits to all elements of the educational process, as it provides information to

students in an easy way while allowing time to practice activities. It has no methodology, and it motivates students to participate, interact and develop their learning skills (Rifai, 2012; Shehata, 2015),

Thus, the Ministry of Education has supported all its sectors to confront the pandemic, like the other country institutions, under the umbrella of the wise Leadership of Saudi Arabia - may God preserve it - and its unlimited support of the education sector. This wise Leadership stressed that it is of the Ministry of Education's responsibilities to impose the continuous search for all opportunities and possibilities to reduce the risk of the outbreak of the pandemic which affected education all over the world. In addition, it assured that it is important to search for solutions and easy alternatives to introduce education in general and higher education.

As such, the Ministry of Education has responded by moving to the stage of distance learning following a well-prepared plan to come out with the educational goals concerned with all the educational process parties (student, teacher, parent, school leader, educational supervisor). The National Center for E-learning in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia conducted a study in partnership with several bodies such as UNESCO entitled: "*The comprehensive documentary study of e-learning for general education in the Kingdom*". The study highlighted the Kingdom's efforts in transforming towards the digital education compared to 36 countries in terms of a set of standards that measure the strategic transition towards distance learning providing several tools and channels for education such as electronic platforms, YouTube, and satellite channels. The study ended up with a set of developmental recommendations that the Ministry worked on to resume the school year according to the basic elements of distance learning such as leadership, policies and legislation, electronic content design, educational

techniques, training, support, evaluation, and improvement (Ministry of Education, 2020).

Education in all global systems leads the responsibility of change, keeping abreast of the developments of life and rapid interaction with its requirements. Therefore, countries in general assume a prominent position and give priority to pumping budgets that support strategic plans, ensure the progress of educational processes, and face modern challenges where most of the Gulf universities plan to adopt the distance education system due to its advantages. Accordingly, Distance learning also aims to improve the educational process at its various levels and improve its outputs to meet the needs of societies and individuals and find solutions to many of the problems that hinder the achievement of its goals. (Mahmoud, 2012)

Also, distance learning is one of the most important modern methods advocated by the educational community and calls for making an alternative to traditional learning as it is one of the most important means that are used to stop the educational process firmly and steadily in front of the challenges associated with cognitive progress because of its advantages and characteristics that distinguish it from traditional learning, which is its ability to provide Active and flexible learning opportunities for learners. (Al-Hadi, 2011)

One of the most important technical applications that contributed to facilitating instruction in the modern era is the Blackboard system. The Blackboard technology was applied at Jouf University in 2015 as one of the most important e-learning projects that directly affect the educational process. It helps a faculty member to break out of traditional methods and teach courses and activities via technological methods. Besides, this technology provides great opportunities for students to learn according to the latest strategies, interact with the course, and communicate outside the classroom passing temporal and spatial factors. This electronic device also provides students with various tools

to easily view the content of the scientific material and interact with it. Furthermore, this application allows the instructor to build electronic courses, and communicate directly with students through specific windows, thus achieving interaction with all elements of the educational process ([www.ju.edu.sa](http://www.ju.edu.sa))

**Problem of the study:** This year, the world faced the most severe crises represented by Corona pandemic (COVID-19) that spread in most parts of the world and resulted in the death of many individuals and the infection of millions of people. Basically, countries developed prevention plans and programs to reduce the effects of this pandemic taking many precautionary procedures. Hence, the suspension of study and its continuation from a distance was one of these procedures. Consequently, the shift to electronic and distance learning was the best option for all Saudi universities during the Corona pandemic requiring re-arranging priorities at all levels and looking forward to drawing new policies and directions considering a modern vision. As such, the Ministry of Education decided to complete the educational process through distance learning harnessing all capabilities to provide students with information and knowledge knowing that distance learning was not newly established at Saudi universities. Hence the idea of this study was to reveal the extent to which faculty members at Jouf University used distance learning strategies during the Corona pandemic, in response to the decision of study suspension at the university campus.

**Questions of the study:** In light of the above, the study problem was formulated in the main question:

“To what extent do faculty members at Jouf University apply distance learning strategies through Blackboard application during Corona pandemic (COVID-19)?”

This question was divided into the following sub-questions:

- 1- Is there any significance of distance learning from the perspective of the academic staff?
- 2- What is the reality of the faculty members' use of distance learning strategies through the Blackboard before the study suspension at the university?
- 3- What is the degree of the faculty members' skill in using Blackboard in teaching at Jouf University?
- 4- What are the difficulties that face faculty members at Jouf University in using distance learning strategies through the blackboard?
- 5- How satisfied are faculty members with using the Blackboard at Jouf University?

**Purposes of the study:**

- 1- Identifying the extent to which faculty members at Jouf University apply distance-learning strategies during Corona pandemic, through the application of the Blackboard.
- 2- Exploring the strategies and applications used in distance learning at Jouf University.
- 3- Disclosing the difficulties that face faculty members at Jouf University during the distance learning period.
- 4- Identifying the degree of faculty members' satisfaction with the strategies used in distance learning at Jouf University.

**Significance of the study:** the importance of this study comes chronologically with the exceptional circumstances that all educational institutions are going through. As the Coronavirus crisis cast a shadow over the education sector; as it pushed schools, universities, and educational institutions to close their doors, reducing the chances of its spread. This is what pushed educational institutions in general, and higher education institutions (universities) to switch to distance learning as an alternative that has long been talked about and the debate about the need to integrate it into the educational process.

As such, instruction began to move towards using technical applications and appropriate educational strategies in a way that serves students to learn from a distance as the

educational institutions with their different goals and functions are the official body responsible for providing individuals with scientific and practical experiences that qualify them for the labor market. Keeping pace with scientific progress and employing educational technology innovations, including electronic and distance learning, are among the most important policies in the university education.

The study also clarifies the university's role in facing the challenges and problems resulting from the spread of the emerging coronavirus. It derives its standard significance from the researcher's design of the Distance Learning Strategies' questionnaire.

**Operational definitions of the terms:**

**Distance learning:** Al-Arini (2005, 35) defined it as: "a teaching style depends on self-learning, supported by modern technology to transfer the educational material to the students as well as achieve direct and indirect interaction between the teacher and his students and among students themselves passing temporal and spatial barriers."

Salem (2010, 381) defined it as "that type or system of education that provides educational and training opportunities to the learner without direct observation of the teacher and without committing to a specific time and place for those who are unable to complete their studies or work impedes them from regular education; and it is considered as an alternative or complement to traditional education".

**The researcher defines it:** as an integrated educational system in which the learner depends on himself and his experiences in using the technological.

**Operationally:** it is an educational system that does not depend on a specific time or place supported by technological means as measured by the Distance Learning Strategies' questionnaire, which the researcher designed for the purpose of the study.

**Teaching strategies:** Zaitoun (1998,292) defines them as "the teaching procedures that the instructor plans in advance to help him teach in light of the available capabilities."

**The researcher defines it:** as a method used by a faculty member to complete the task of teaching via the Internet with the aim of promoting permanent learning through an application that is officially approved by the educational institution.

**Operationally:** it is the degree that the respondent obtains on the questionnaire used in the study.

**Corona virus:** a type of the emerging (COVID 19) viruses; it is an abbreviation for Corona Virus Disease. Most of the cases of this virus appeared in the Chinese city (Wuhan) at the end of December 2019 in the form of acute pneumonia (*moh.gov.sa*).

**Delimitations and Limitations of the Research:** The current study was limited to knowing the extent to which faculty members at Jouf University apply distance learning strategies during the Corona pandemic through the Blackboard application following the descriptive method.

- **Human limits:** The sample included 40 faculty members at Jouf University.
- **Place limits:** Jouf University in Saudi Arabia.
- **Time limits:** summer semester of the academic year 1441/1442 AH.

The generalization of the results of this study is determined by indications of validity and reliability of the study tool, in addition to the sample of the study and the community from which it was withdrawn, and the extent of generalization of the results.

#### **Study variables**

**Independent variables:** gender, experience, college, degree

**Dependent variables:** Distance learning strategies and includes (the importance of distance learning, the reality of faculty members' use of distance learning methods,

The skill of faculty members in using distance learning methods

The difficulty of accrediting faculty members for distance learning, the satisfaction of the faculty with the use of distance learning)

#### **Research introduction:**

**The philosophy of distance learning:** The information revolution-imposed requirements that made technology a strategic choice with no alternative. Basically, electronic learning came in response to the need for continuous and flexible education going through channels of openness and communication, and making free learning not restricted by time or place. Electronic learning is considered one of the most important pillars that achieve quality in the educational process. It includes all the pillars of the educational process as it improves the educational level. So, teaching through electronic learning meets all educational requirements, and even guarantees the learner's development level and prepares him for future challenges (Tahirishi, 2018).

In turn, electronic and distance learning currently imposed itself on many educational institutions and particularly on higher education institutions as it represents the most important and prominent transformation in education. It also contributed to changing the roles of faculty members at universities into supervisory, cooperative, and advisory roles since it is the designer and planner for the learning methods. On the other hand, distance learning contributed to achieving educational flexibility as it is based on providing learning for all as long as everyone possesses the capabilities that enable them to achieve success in this type of education (Al-Awada, 2012).

Distance learning is considered an educational field that focuses on teaching methods and technology. It aims to provide instruction to students who are not physically present in a traditional educational environment such as the classroom. The term distance learning represents the approach that focuses on accessing

education and training and liberating learners from the constraints of time and space. This flexible learning provides opportunities for learners whether individually or in groups. The following are benefits and advantages of electronic learning that contributed to facilitating instruction (Marija, 2012):

- 1- Electronic learning is a means of implementing education and it can be applied in different educational models, as it provides a form of educational convergence.
- 2- Electronic learning provides unique forms of education that are compatible with the current models, whether face-to-face or distance learning. To this end, it represents a more advanced form of current teaching methodologies, such as blended learning.
- 3- The choice of electronic learning tools reflects the teaching method. If electronic learning is a means of education, it can be applied according to different educational methods such as cooperative and problem-based learning.
- 4- Electronic learning leads its pioneers to mature educational innovation.
- 5- Careful designing of electronic learning tools is a feature of mature learning through a responsive teacher that facilitates instruction and encourages learners to explore.

#### **Previous literature:**

Albania (2020) aimed at identifying the mechanisms used in controlling electronic exams at the Jordanian universities during the Corona pandemic from the perspective of the academic staff. The study followed the descriptive analytical approach, and a questionnaire was applied to a sample of 150 faculty members in some Jordanian universities. Of the most significant results was that there was a statistically significant effect at ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) of the mechanisms used in controlling electronic tests at the Jordanian universities during the Corona pandemic from the perspective of academic staff.

The study of Orhan and Beyhan (2020) aimed to investigate perceptions and teaching experiences of the teachers on the distance education during the Covid- 19 pandemic. The case study in qualitative research methods was conducted in this study, this study was carried out with 15 teachers in Turkey, the data was obtained through a semi-structured interview form. For analysis, the content analysis was conducted. According to the results, most of the teachers perceived distance education as a technology-oriented process rather than a new teaching model. Engagement of students had a key role in teachers' satisfaction. The teachers kept traditional teaching techniques during distance courses. For the teachers distance education was less successful than formal education because of lack of communication and interaction quality. Perceptions affect behavior and the quality of distance education applications affects the perceptions so, determining the perceptions of the teachers and taking the necessary measures in this direction is crucial to enhance quality of the system.

The purpose of Bozkurt (2019) study is to examine Distance Education (DE) and Open and Distance Learning (OLD) from different perspectives to discern their future directions. The Study applied a traditional (narrative) review method, which is generally used to "provide a much needed bridge between the vast and scattered assortment of articles on a topic and to link together many studies on different topics, either for purposes of reinterpretation or interconnection. The study concludes that DE and ODL are developing, evolving and adaptive multidisciplinary fields. The different ages and generations of DE and ODL have all been affected by the technology's dominant at their respective times. Therefore, it is possible to say that information and communication technologies are an intrinsic part of these disciplines, yet they must not be taken as the ultimate goal, but rather, as viable solutions to



reduce barriers and increase interaction and communication. Considering the speed of the technology used today, it is difficult to predict the future of these disciplines.

Forson and Vuopala (2019) aimed to explore readiness of distance education students for online learning. Descriptive research design was employed for the study. A multistage sampling procedure was used to select three regions in Ghana and six study centers from the regions out of which 306 first year students enrolled in distance education program in the University of Cape Coast participated in the study. A five-point Likert type of questionnaire was used for the data collection. Findings from the study suggest that distance education students had a positive attitude towards online learning. Further, it was also revealed that students possessed good self-regulated learning, collaborative and information communication and technology skills relevant for online learning through the distance education mode. Management of Universities running distance education specifically the university of Cape Coast, College of Distance Education (CoDE) should direct their focus to the formulation of appropriate and operational distance education policies to guide the college towards successful implementation of online learning since their target audience (students) have positive attitude toward online learning.

Al-Mulla (2016) focused on knowing the extent of applying two experiments of distance learning one was implemented in Malaysia and the other in Saudi Arabia. The researcher used the qualitative approach and the descriptive approach, He analyzed the documents and distributed a questionnaire to the study sample of (30) female students in the College of Education for Girls in Saudi Arabia. The results displayed that the most important factors of quality in distance learning are good preparation of the infrastructure, availability of material support,

human and administrative expertise, quality centers and technical multimedia.

The study of Hantouli (2016) aimed to identify the reality of e-learning at An-Najah National University and its role in achieving interaction between learners from the viewpoint of students at the College of Graduate Studies of College of Education programs and faculty members, and to show the effect of the study variables on that. The study population consisted of nine faculty members in the College of Graduate Studies in the programs of the College of Education, and the students of (428) students of the College of Graduate Studies in the programs of the College of Education, the researcher used the descriptive and analytical approach through the use of a number of quantitative and qualitative tools, namely: the questionnaire And the interview, and the documents issued by the e-learning center were analyzed, in addition to a number of publications issued by the center. The study reached a set of results, the most important of which are: The total score for the realities of e-learning in An-Najah National University from the point of view of students at the College of Graduate Studies in the programs of the College of Education came with an average of (3.73) and a percentage (74.6), and that the role of e-learning in achieving interaction Among the educated, it came with the highest score (78.2%).

#### **Commentary on previous literature:**

Throughout the review of previous literature, it became clear that the studies were different in their purposes, whereas they were similar in their samples and approaches. In terms of purposes, the current study aimed at identifying the extent to which the academic staff at Jouf University applied electronic and distance learning strategies during the Corona pandemic, while the purposes of the other studies varied. For example, Albania (2020) aimed to identify the mechanisms used in controlling electronic exams in the Jordanian universities during Corona

pandemic from the viewpoint of the faculty members. Forson and Vuopala (2019) aimed to explore readiness of distance education students for online learning. Hantouli (2016) aimed to identify the reality of e-learning at An-Najah National University and its role in achieving interaction between learners from the viewpoint of students.

In accordance with samples, the current study and the previous studies were similar as all the samples were faculty members. Considering the approach, the current study and the previous ones followed a descriptive approach. It should be noted that the researcher has benefited, by reviewing the previous studies, in enriching the theoretical framework, developing the appropriate instrument for measuring the study variables, discussing the results, and linking them to the current results.

#### Method and procedures:

**Design of the study:** The current study relied on the descriptive approach as it is suitable to the nature of the study. In this approach, all members of the research population or a sample are asked to respond to questions in order to describe the addressed phenomenon in terms of its nature and degree of existence only (Al-Assaf, 1432H).

**Population of the study:** The population of the study is the academic staff of the scientific and humanitarian colleges at Jouf University. The number is 60 members assigned to the summer semester, for the academic year 1440/1441 AH. On the other hand, the study sample included 40 faculty members who responded to the study instrument with a percentage of 67% of the study population. The tables below illustrate the sample description.

**Table 1: Distribution of the sample members by gender**

Gender	Number	%
Female	30	75
Male	10	25
Total	40	100

**Table 2: Distribution of the sample members by experience**

Experience	Number	%
More than 20 years	13	32.5
20-15	4	10
15-10	5	12.5
10-5	8	20
5-2	10	25
Total	40	100

**Table 3: Distribution of the sample members by faculty**

Faculty	Number	%
Humanitarian colleges	24	60
Scientific colleges	16	40
Total	40	100

**Table 4: Distribution of the sample members by degree**

Faculty	Number	%
Assistance Professor	25	62.5
Associate Professor	2	5.0
Professor	1	2.5
Lecturer	12	30.0
Total	40	100

#### Instruments of the study:

**Description of the questionnaire:** The questionnaire in its initial form consisted of (25) statements distributed on (5) dimensions with answers rated on a triple grade scaling (agree, neutral, disagree). After it was given to experts in the field to prove its validity, three statements were excluded, and the questionnaire in its final form consists of ( 22 ) statements distributed as follows: statements (1- 4 )represent the dimension of the distance learning significance, statements (5 – 8) represent the reality of the faculty members' use of distance learning methods, statements (9 – 12) represent the dimension of faculty members' skills in using distance learning methods, statements (13 – 17) represent the difficulty the academic staff face in relying on distance learning, and statements (18 – 22) represent the dimension of the faculty members' satisfaction with the use of distance learning.

**Internal consistency of the instrument:** To measure the consistency of the degree of each statement of the instrument with the total score of

the dimension to which the statement belongs, Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated. The results are shown in table 5.

**Table (5): Pearson correlation coefficient between the degree of each statement and the total degree of the dimension to which the statement belongs.**

Dimension	Statement	correlation coefficient	Statement	correlation coefficient
The significance of distance learning	1	**0.458	3	**0.556
	2	**0.690	4	**0.443
The reality of faculty members' use of distance learning methods	1	**0.529	3	**0.500
	2	**0.483	4	**0.519
The faculty members' skill in using distance learning means	1	**0.522	3	**0.454
	2	**0.590	4	**0.646
The difficulty faculty members face in relying on distance learning	1	**0.781	4	**0.686
	2	**0.782	5	**0.690
	3	**0.509		
Faculty members' satisfaction with the use of distance learning	1	**0.854	4	**0.687
	2	**0.856	5	**0.579
	3	**0.723		**0.556

\*\* at level 0.01

It is evident from Table (5) that the values of the correlation coefficient of each of the statements with the dimension to which they belong are positive and statistically significant at ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). This indicates that all the statements of the instrument have a high degree of internal consistency confirming the strength of the internal correlation among the statements. Accordingly, this result demonstrates the consistency of the instrument statements in an integrated manner, and its validity for field application. Furthermore, Pearson's correlation coefficient between the degree of each dimension of the instrument with the total degree was calculated.

**Table (6) Pearson correlation coefficient between the degree of each dimension of the study instrument and the overall degree of the instrument**

Dimension	Pearson correlation
The significance of distance learning	**0.665
The reality of faculty members' use of distance learning methods	**0.624
The faculty members' skill in using distance learning means	**0.587
The difficulty faculty members face in relying on distance learning	**0.633
Faculty members' satisfaction with the use of distance learning	**0.557

\*\* at level 0.01

The results of the correlation coefficients in Table (6) show that the correlation of each dimension of the study instrument with the total score was positive and statistically significant at ( $\alpha = 0.01$ ). This signifies the strength of the internal correlation between the dimensions of the instrument. Consequently, this result demonstrates the consistency of the dimensions of the study tool in an integrated manner, and its suitability for field application.

#### Reliability of the instrument:

The reliability of the internal consistency was evaluated using the Cronbach Alpha coefficient. Table (7) shows the results.

**Table (7): Cronbach coefficient for the study instrument's dimensions.**

Dimension	No. of Statements	Correlation coefficient
The significance of distance learning	4	0.542
The reality of faculty members' use of distance learning methods	4	0.672
The faculty members' skill in using distance learning means	4	0.596

**Table (8): Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations of the study sample responses on the dimension of distance learning significance.**

Statement	No	Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Mean	SD.
		T	%	T	%	T	%		
Distance learning is a global challenge	40	36	90	4	10	0	0	2.90	0.304
Distance learning increases the burden on the faculty member	39	21	53.9	7	17.9	11	28.2	2.26	0.880
Distance learning is an educational luxury	39	6	15.4	5	12.8	28	71.8	1.44	0.754
Distance learning is considered a development for the faculty member's performance	39	31	79.4	4	10.3	4	10.3	2.69	0.655
The mean and standard deviation of the dimension								2.34	0.361

\*\* at level 0.01

Table (8) indicates that the statement "distance learning is a global challenge" came first with a percentage of (90%), followed by the statement "Distance learning is considered a development for the faculty member's

Dimension	No. of Statements	Correlation coefficient
The difficulty faculty members face in relying on distance learning	5	0.724
Faculty members' satisfaction with the use of distance learning	5	0.705
Number of the dimension's items	22	0.664

\*\* at level 1.01

Table (7) clarifies that the Cronbach alpha coefficients for the questionnaire dimensions ranged between (0.542) and (0.724), while the coefficient of the instrument as a whole is (0.664). This signalizes that it is an appropriate and educationally acceptable reliability coefficient indicating the reliability of the instrument to achieve the purposes of the current study.

#### Discussion of the results:

To answer the first research question (Is there any significance of distance learning from the perspective of the academic staff?), frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations of the study sample responses were calculated considering the dimension of the distance learning significance.

performance" with a percentage of (79.4%). The statement "distance learning increases the burden on the faculty member" ranked third with a percentage of (53.9%), while the statement "distance learning is an educational luxury

"came fourth with a percentage of (15.4%). The overall score of the dimension statements was (2.34) which is a high degree.

A possible explanation for these results is that faculty members emphasize the distance learning significance as it is considered an alternative to traditional education. This is because distance learning helps students overcome difficulties and obstacles to continue their education being free of the constraints of time and space. In addition, distance learning facilitates instruction, encourages innovation and development, and uses the latest means of technical communication. Moreover, it supports the individual's intellectual and mental capabilities with written words, image, and sound. Besides, distance learning supports self-education, and thus pushes the individual to develop his capabilities and potentials in the era of explosion and information competition.

Finally, this type of education is helpful in keeping pace with the development and advanced education. The results of this study are consistent with *Ahmed* (2017), who confirmed the faculty members' satisfaction with the reality of implementing distance learning programs. They are also consistent with *Ali* (2011) and *Al-Qahtani* (2010) who concluded that the degree of electronic learning from the perspective of the faculty members was great.

To answer the second question (What is the reality of the faculty members' use of distance learning strategies through the Blackboard before the study suspension at the university?), Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations of the responses of the study sample were calculated considering the dimension of the reality of the faculty members' use of distance learning methods.

**Table (9): Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations of the study sample responses on the dimension of reality of faculty members' use of distance learning methods before the suspension of the study.**

Paragraph	No	Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Mean	SD.
		T	%	T	%	T	%		
Once a week	40	20	50.0	3	7.5	17	42.5	2.08	0.971
At the rate of a lecture per day	40	7	17.5	11	27.5	22	55.0	1.63	0.774
I never used it	40	2	5.0	2	5.0	36	90.0	1.15	0.483
As directed by the department	40	30	75.0	3	7.5	7	17.5	2.58	0.781
The mean and standard deviation of the dimension								1.86	0.38

\*\* at level 0.01

Table (9) above shows that (75%) of the faculty members used distance learning methods according to the department's directions in the first place. This indicates the academic departments' role in urging and following up members to use distance learning strategies. It is also clear from the table above that (50%) of the faculty members used distance learning strategies once a week confirming that (50%) of the faculty members used distance learning strategies more than once a week. Further, the results reveal that (17.5) of the faculty members used strategies "at

the rate of a lecture per day", while 5% of the staff "did not use the means at all" which is a very weak percentage.

The above results reflect the extent to which faculty members use distance learning strategies. A probable interpretation of these results is that the university has a great interest and orientation towards electronic learning and sharing it with traditional education as it facilitated instruction during the period of the study suspension at the university's campus. It was stated on the University's website that the Blackboard application helps a faculty member

break out of traditional methods and use technology in planning the educational courses and activities. The results of this study are congruent with the findings of Al-Saif (2009) who affirmed that the degree of the university providing easy access to the Internet to facilitate instruction was high. However, this differs with Ali (2011) who concluded that the degree to which faculty members used electronic learning was moderate.

To answer the third question (What is the degree of the faculty members' skill in using Blackboard in teaching at Jouf University?) frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated for the responses of the study sample on the dimension of the faculty members' skill in using distance learning methods in teaching.

**Table (10): Frequencies, percentages, And the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the response of the study sample on the axis of the degree of skill of faculty members in using the blackboard in the educational process.**

Statement	No	Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Mean	SD.
		T	%	T	%	T	%		
Advanced in using it	40	23	57.5	11	27.5	6	15.0	2.43	0.747
I need training in the use of distance learning tools	40	22	55.0	6	15.0	12	30.0	2.25	0.899
I have a good experience using it	40	27	67.5	9	22.5	4	10.0	2.58	0.675
Not a good user of the technique	40	4	10.0	6	15.0	30	75.0	1.35	0.662
The mean and standard deviation of the dimension								2.15	0.339

\*\* at level 0.01

Table (10) demonstrates that most of the faculty members had "*a good experience using electronic learning methods*", and this came first at the level of the dimension statements with a percentage of (67.5). Next came the statement "*advanced in using it*" with a percentage of (57.5), followed by the statement "*I need training in the use of distance learning methods*" with a percentage of (55.5%), and the statement "*was not a good user of technology*" came last with a percentage of (10%). The total score of the dimension statements came with an average of (2.15) which is a moderate degree.

An explanation to these results might be due to the fact that the majority of faculty members have good skill in using electronic learning methods. Furthermore, the university has an effective role in developing the technical skills of faculty members, so they did not face any

difficulties in using electronic learning strategies. The results of this study are in line with Al-Mulla (2016) who maintained that human and administrative experience is one of the most important quality factors in distance learning. They are also in line with Ali (2011) who found that the degree of the academic staff's use of electronic learning was moderate.

To answer the fourth question, which reads (What are the difficulties that face faculty members at Jouf University in using distance learning strategies through the blackboard?), frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated for the responses of the study sample on the dimension of the difficulty faculty members face in relying on distance learning.

**Table (11): Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations of the sample response on the dimension of the difficulty faculty members face in relying on distance learning.**

Statement	No	Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Mean	SD.
		T	%	T	%	T	%		
Difficulties due to weak technical support	40	20	50.0	8	20.0	12	30.0	2.20	0.883
Weakness of the web	39	22	56.4	8	20.5	9	23.1	2.33	0.838
Unfamiliar with the use of distance learning methods	39	9	23.1	8	20.5	22	56.4	1.67	0.838
Lack of incentives for users of distance learning methods	39	22	56.4	8	20.5	9	23.1	2.33	0.838
Students complained about teaching by means of distance learning	39	20	51.3	8	20.5	11	28.2	2.23	0.872
The mean and standard deviation of the dimension								2.17	0.60

\*\* at level 0.01

It is evident from table (11) that the statements “*weakness of the web*” and “*lack of incentives for users of distance learning methods*” came first with a percentage of (56.4%). Next came the statement “*students complained about teaching by means of distance learning methods*” with a percentage of (51.3 %), then came the statement “*difficulties due to weak technical support*” with a percentage of (50%), while the statement “*unfamiliar with the use of distance learning methods*” came last with a percentage of (23.1%). The overall score of the dimension statements was (2.17) which is a moderate degree.

One of the above results stated that difficulties facing faculty members came with a moderate degree. This means that there are no obstacles hindering the distance learning process, but rather the university network and technical support services need support and development to perform this task. As for the weakness of the

network, it might be due to the size of pressure on it, as all educational institutions as well as other institutions use the Internet to accomplish their tasks. Considering the lack of financial incentive, it might refer to the circumstances that dominated all areas of life. Besides, students usually prefer to study at the university campus to enjoy university life and share in its various activities. The results of this study go align with Al-Mulla (2016) who revealed that among the most important quality factors of distance learning are: good preparation of infrastructure, availability of material support, human and administrative expertise, quality centers and the multiplicity of technical media with good quality.

To answer this fifth question (How satisfied are faculty members with using the Blackboard at Jouf University?), frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations of the response of the study sample were calculated on the dimension of faculty members' satisfaction with the use of distance learning.

**Table (12): Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations of the study sample response on the dimension of faculty members' satisfaction with the use of distance learning.**

Paragraph	No	Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Mean	SD.
		T	%	T	%	T	%		
Suitable for modern educational process	39	26	65.0	6	15.4	7	17.9	2.49	0.790
Suitable for developing faculty member performance	39	27	67.5	4	10.3	8	20.5	2.49	0.823
I find it is fun to use it	39	23	59.0	10	25.6	6	15.4	2.44	0.754
Using it gives me additional value in front of students	39	23	59.0	8	20.5	8	20.5	2.38	0.754
I get anxious and nervous when using it	39	8	20.5	3	7.7	28	71.8	1.49	0.823
The mean and standard deviation of the dimension								2.26	0.543

\*\* at level 0.01

The above table shows that the statement "*distance learning is suitable for developing the faculty member performance*" came first with a percentage of (67.5%), the statement "*suitable for the modern educational process*" came second with a percentage of (65%), while the statements "*I find it is fun to use it*" and "*Using it gives me an additional value in front of students*" came third with a percentage of (59%), and the statement "*I get anxious and nervous when using it*" came last with a percentage of (20.5%). The overall score of the dimension statements was 2.26 which is moderate.

The results revealed a high degree of satisfaction with the use of distance learning methods reflecting the faculty members' good experience, good infrastructure, availability of technical means, and training of staff on using them. The results of this study are in consistency with *Al-Mulla* (2016) who manifested that the most important quality factors of distance learning are represented in good preparation of infrastructure, availability of material support, human and administrative expertise, quality centers, and the availability of qualitative multimedia. They are also consistent with *Al-Saif* (2009) who displayed that the electronic learning competencies, the design of electronic courses and the use of learning management systems were of a moderate degree, while the adequacy of computer and internet use was of a high degree.

### **Conclusion**

The current study sought to identify the significance of distance learning, and the opinions of faculty members at Jouf University towards the strategies used to facilitate distance learning during the Corona pandemic. Based on the previous results, the study ended up with the following conclusions:

- 1- The faculty members' affirmation of the distance learning significance was of a high degree.

- 2- The faculty members using distance learning strategies came with a moderate degree.
- 3- The faculty members at Jouf University have moderate skill in instruction via distance learning methods.
- 4- The difficulties faced by faculty members at Jouf University in using distance learning strategies, through the Blackboard, were of a moderate degree.
- 5- The degree of faculty members' satisfaction with the use of distance learning at Jouf University, was above the moderate.

### **Recommendations**

- Taking distance learning and the development of assistive devices into consideration
- Encouraging and motivating faculty members to use distance learning strategies.
- Preparing workshops and courses that develop the skills of faculty members to use distance learning strategies.
- Providing good technical support and solving problems that face members in using distance learning tools.
- Providing financial aid to users of distance learning strategies.
- Urging and directing students to implement distance learning strategies.

### **Suggestions**

- Conducting a comparative study between Jouf University's experience in using distance learning methods and other universities.
- Conducting an evaluation study to test distance exams at Jouf University from the perspective of the faculty members.
- Examining the effectiveness of a guiding program to address study anxiety during the Corona pandemic.



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