Deanship of Graduate Studies
Al-Quds University

Evaluating the Quality of an e-Learning Course

Dima Rateb Badawi

M.Sc. Thesis

Jerusalem- Palestine

1429/2008

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Thesis Approval

Evaluating the Quality of an e-learning Course

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Dedication

This thesis is sincerely dedicated

To

My loving Parents

For

Raising me to be the person I am today. You have been with me every step of the way, through good times and bad. Thank you for all the unconditional love, guidance, and support that you have always given me, helping me to succeed and instilling in me the confidence that I am capable of doing anything I put my mind to. Thank you for everything. I love you!

And

To

My dear husband, Derar, and my son Omar. A very special thank you for your practical and emotional support, to the competing demands of business, work, study and personal development.

And

To

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Dima Rateb Badawi

Declaration:

I Certify that this thesis submitted for the degree of master in the result of my own research, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this thesis (or any part of the same) has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other university or institution.

Signed ……..

Dima Rateb Badawi

Date ……..

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Abstract:

A lot of Palestinian higher education institutions are currently using e-learning scheme to offer their academic and professional programs regardless of time and place. Thus, it is badly needed to address the quality issue of these e-learning programs. This thesis has addressed the available e-learning evaluation models and dimensions. Most of these studies, as reported in the literature focus on dimensions including interface design, functionality, efficiency, portability of e-learning, etc. However, very few authors who have focussed on issues including e-learning costing, and there are very rare ones who have addressed other dimensions of e-learning. These include ethical, motivational, institutional, technological, and pedagogical dimensions.

This thesis has addressed several quality-related issues. The first one is a comparison between the traditional learning and the e-learning scheme focusing on the achievements and attitudes of the students. The sample we have used consists of forty nine students from three national universities, 24 of those have joined the e-learning course, whereas the rest joined the traditional one. The comparison has been tested through a course entitled "Introduction to Computer". Pre and post tests have been used to test the achievements of both groups. The preliminary obtained results indicate that e-learning's students have achieved a higher degree (the mean equals 17/20) than those (the mean equals 14.6/20) who have joined the traditional learning one. Regarding the comparison of students' attitude toward e-learning, we have used special questionnaire to discuss learner's attitude before and after learning. The preliminary obtained results demonstrate that students' attitudes towards the e-learning have been more than that of the traditional one.

The second issue has focussed on quality assurance approach, which has been implemented for evaluating the quality of e-learning from a pedagogical dimension. This approach has been tested through a sample of 24 students for the e-learning scheme, 7 teachers, and the same course. Two questionnaires have been developed to evaluate the course from the two points of view, the instructors' and the learners'. These evaluating questionnaires have addressed several sub dimensions. These include contents analysis, audience analysis, goal analysis, media analysis, design approach, organization and learning strategies. The preliminary obtained results verify that the course under consideration needs a major development enhancement from the developers and designers to meet the required e-learning specifications.

The third issue has addressed costing analysis. A costing model has been proposed and tested on the same course under consideration. In this model, the total costs are a function of the number of semesters. The total costs have been divided into two main types of costs namely, the fixed and the variable costs. In addition, the Breakeven Point analysis has been used to determine the number of semesters for the course to determine when the course will be profitable. Furthermore, the costing model has been used to compare the e-learning and the traditional courses' costs. The initial achieved results show that traditional learning cost is nearly less five times than the e-learning. This huge difference is due mainly to the high development costs of e-learning. It is also found that, for the course to be profitable it requires 8.8 semesters.

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