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Instructors' Role in the e-Learning Environment: The Case of Kuwait

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Abstract:
The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on education have been deep and multi-faceted, with instructors and students forced to immediately shift from conventional face-to-face classrooms to e-learning. This is also the case in organizational training, where it poses a significant challenge to the strategizing of human resource management (HRM). HRM's aim is to help attain organizational goals, which includes the educational aspect, and thus the focus should be on enabling instructors' competencies. This paper aims to review the importance of HRM strategies and instructor competencies in the context of e-learning. It further proposes a model for instructor competence and offers recommendations for education globally and the education system in Kuwait in particular. This study uses a three-phase research methodology. First, the relevant literature is reviewed. In the second phase, a qualitative analysis is performed to examine the key terms in relation to instructors' skills and competencies; this is followed by a review of the existing literature, including technical reports and documentation. The study goes on to highlight the critical success factors in this case by examining the primary and contextual factors of the Kuwaiti education system and its instructors. The third phase proposes a new Instructor Competency Model that incorporates the skills and competencies required of instructors to facilitate learning in the 21st century. This model may serve to guide educational institutions in their efforts to implement both online and blended learning.

Keywords:Human resource management, e-learning, models, competency, instructors, COVID-19

1. Introduction

The practices of human resource management (HRM) work towards the achievement of organizational goals by implementing suitable initiatives and providing guidance and support for the organization's employees. The crucial role of HRM has become glaringly obvious during the COVID-19 crisis, when education was upended – practically from one day to the next. With students and instructors unable to meet face-to-face, education had to shift to e-learning, and developing countries such as Kuwait were no exception. This shift launched a host of new ways to acquire knowledge and skills, and even though it was the only way to feasibly continue education, the readiness for e-learning was not universal. The role of instructors thus emerged as particularly critical to successful e-learning outcomes, however, especially in developing countries, instructors had almost no opportunity to prepare for this change. Instructors who had previously had confidence in their classroom teaching abilities likely became disenchanted by their online teaching efforts. Overall, while the advantages and disadvantages of e-learning are still being explored, it is likely here to remain for the foreseeable future, not only in the education sector but also in different organizations.

E-learning and the concepts underpinning it have a long history. In 1960, the first true e-learning took place on intranets, referring to a set of linked computer terminals that allow students to access academic material (Tom, 2021). Following the widespread adoption of the Internet in 1994, academia saw an opportunity to extend its reach, offering online courses and modules for which students could receive formal accreditation. The final step was the introduction of mobile devices, which uncoupled students from their desks, and social media, which gave them wide-ranging access to tailored learning experiences (O'Doherty, Dromey, Lougheed, Last, & McGrath, 2018). The introduction of e-learning meant that students were no longer tied to their locations or time zones and could learn at their own pace, empowering them to take control of their own learning. However, throughout this history of e-learning, not every organization has been able to fully take advantage of online instruction, especially in less developed countries, which have less-advanced internet infrastructure. Despite this, the realities brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic meant that, temporarily at least, conventional learning modes were unavailable, and e-learning was the only way.

As instructors play a crucial role in e-learning environments, the current work aims to offer guidance for instructors to use e-learning in ways that engage students more effectively (Yengin, Karahoca, Karahoca, & Yucel, 2010). The ability of instructors to adapt to the e-learning environment relates to their understanding of the concept of e-learning as well as its boundaries, such as the work processes at play. The administrators of educational institutions can also benefit from an understanding of some of the basic e-learning concepts, while key decision-makers can use it to inform their decision on whether to implement e-learning in their institutions. Crucially, this decision will also be shaped by the instructors themselves, particularly with regards to digital transformation (Yengin, Karahoca, Karahoca, & Yucel,

2010).This paper thus aims to develop a basic model that will help instructors and educational institutions to effectively implement e-learning.

Institutions worldwide have to adopt various technologies to ensure that students continue to receive a quality education while accommodating the various stakeholder groups in the educational activities. New technologies can be merged with conventional classroom teaching, known as blended learning, or can be wielded to offer remote access to education for previously under-served populations. Numerous educational institutions have begun to offer distance learning, as a facet of e-learning, which is effective as it merges traditional courses with e-learning (Rudestam & Schoenholtz read, 2010). In light of the above, there is some value in examining how the increase in e-learning will influence instructors' participation and students' engagement to education in the Arabic context.

All educational institutes at all levels in Kuwait necessarily shifted to e-learning during the pandemic. Almost all of these institutions, including their instructors, administrative staff, and students, were unprepared. Nonetheless, the conditions of the pandemic meant that the policymakers had to take action, and the HRM professionals played a crucial role in helping the instructors and students navigate this upheaval of everyday life (Gigauri, 2020; Al-Hunaiyyan, Alhajri, & Bimba, 2021). This paper reviews and analyzes the part played by these HRM professionals to show how they helped instructors develop e-learning competencies. Additionally, it proposes a competency model for instructors that will enable them to enhance their implementation of e-learning during crises such as the pandemic.

The following sections outline how HRM can support the role of instructors in implementing e-learning in educational institutions. First, section 2 reviews the relevant literature, thereby discussing how the pandemic has affected the educational sector as a whole. This will encompass a review of the way online learning was adapted and how competent, prepared, and technologically accepting instructors were for this eventuality. Section three presents the research methodology. Section four reviews Kuwait's e-learning strategy and how it has influenced the e-learning environment, including the most salient modern models and frameworks. Section five proposes the new Instructor Competency Model, and section six concludes the study.

2. LiteratureReview

2.1. Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Education

During the COVID-19 pandemic, new regulations restricting the number of people who could gather in public spaces were introduced, severely disrupting the functioning of educational institutions. According to UNESCO, by April 27, 2020, 186 countries had closed schools, putting over 1.2 billion students out of school (UNESCO, COVID-19 Educational Disruption and Response, 2020). In response, educational institutions found new ways for students and instructors to continue lessons, primarily by creating online classes (Lau, Yang, & Rudrani, 2020). For example, students in China and Hong Kong were explicitly told to stay home and participate in online lessons, whereby New York University Shanghai ensured that students had access to online resources and e-learning applications such as the Zoom video conferencing platform. Similarly, many of the universities in Romania were obliged to shift their educational activities online. Although platforms already existed for students who were participating in e-learning courses, the challenge lay in handling the unprecedented influx of students caused by the shift of the entire education system online (Gherheş, Stoian, Fărcaşiu, & Stanici, 2021). There was thus a particular focus on which platform types would be the most beneficial for e-learning (Edelhauser & Lupu-Dima, 2020). In a similar vein, (Lieberman, 2020) highlighted how private firms and educational institutions helped the public education sector to facilitate e-learning. Meanwhile, numerous national and international databases sprang up, with the aim of enabling access to educational resources online, therein enhancing the feasibility of e-learning for educational institutions across the globe (Coman, Tîru, Mesesan-Schmitz, Stanciu, & Bularca, 2020).

Within the schools and colleges, the instructors were impacted by the abrupt shift to e-learning. In particular, those who are comfortable with classroom teaching tended to struggle in an online learning environment (Alainati s. , 2021). Yet, due to the conditions of the pandemic, there was no choice but to participate in online teaching and learning (Obrad, 2020; Ionescu, et al., 2020). Since the onset of the pandemic, its effects have been subject to much discussion by instructors, students and experts regarding whether it is likely to strengthen or hinder the learning process. Indeed, a number of institutions initially expressed the concern that condensing their existing curricula into online sessions for e-learning would cause irrevocable harm (Gherhes, Simon, & Para, 2021), although the severity and length of the pandemic soon demonstrated that there was no other way forward (Lieberman, 2020).

As a developing nation, Kuwait's use of ICT and e-learning were relatively under-developed, especially before the pandemic. Most teaching was performed in the conventional manner through face-to-face lectures and classroom-based teaching (Al-Hunaiyyan, Alhajri, & Al-Sharhan, 2018). While a plethora of initiatives and programs were implemented to facilitate e-learning, they were rarely successful. Initially, Kuwait introduced e-learning in the public education sector, as is the case in several other countries, but it soon lagged behind other nations despite its wealth, mostly because of low capacity and low innovation (AlKharang, 2014). However, in response to the pandemic, on March 1, 2020, Kuwait closed all schools, colleges and universities, meaning education authorities needed to seek alternative ways to continue instruction, with e-learning being the most practical. There was some debate among Kuwait's leaders on whether this was the best way to tackle the pandemic, and valid arguments were made by both sides (Al-Anbaa, 2020). Specifically, the lack of preparation, inadequate internet infrastructure, and paucity of Arabic-language digital educational content meant that the education authorities were struggling to offer adequate support, especially for public institutions. In contrast, the response from the private educational institutions was far more immediate: Upon approval from the Ministry of Education, private schools and colleges immediately set up and implemented e-learning (Al-Anbaa, 2020).

2.2. The Preparation and Readiness of Instructors

It has long been acknowledged by HRM experts that employees experience stress when placed in novel situations or highly uncertain conditions (Stahl, 2005). The employees' general disposition and the coping strategies they possess generally shape their response to this stress (Shaffer, 2012; Stahl, 2005). In the Arab region, during the pandemic, instructors' lack of technical knowledge emerged as one of the most significant challenges in the shift to e-learning. Under normal circumstances, the knowledge and skills of the users of a new technology are assessed before its introduction; this includes not only an evaluation of the instructors but also an estimation of what type of training is needed to ensure the successful implementation of the technology. CoSN highlights the necessity of evaluating the preparedness levels of both instructors and students prior to making the decision to move to e-learning. This evaluation should examine whether the instructors are adequately prepared to teach and collaborate online, which includes an assessment of their skills in delivering content via a learning management system, organizing video conferencing and e-learning activities, and performing student evaluations in an online environment. Preparing instructors for online teaching is exceptionally challenging, especially when the scope for training is very brief.

Online education does offer several advantages, such as its accessibility, flexibility, adaptability towards a variety of learning styles, and the fact that it not only incorporates various useful tools but also offers easy monitoring and documentation capabilities (AlKharang, 2014). Notwithstanding this, the onus is on the instructors to ensure that their students have sufficient technological literacy to participate in 21st century learning (Al-Hunaiyyan, Al-Sharhan, & Al-Sharrah, 2012). The instructors hereby need to not only deliver the content but also organize the students' learning process and enable their access to the technology (Bucea-Manea-Țoniş, et al., 2020). There is, hence, a need for the instructors to be open to new technologies and new skills, and they must be able to handle the anxiety that accompanies the uncertainty in performing an old job in a new way (Mohammadyari & Singh, 2015). Moreover, instructors must go beyond a basic competence in online education, gaining additional competencies that allow them to confidently use the new technology and understand the differences in learning behavior and culture through awareness and training programs. Specifically, technical skills will not be enough as instructors must also understand the presence, cognition and social abilities of the students, despite the lack of face-to-face interaction. Prior studies have underlined the increased need for collaboration and relationship-building among instructors as well as between instructors and students (Al-hunaiyyan, Al-sharhan, & Al-sharah, 2012). Instructors must also demonstrate consistent commitment, facilitate clear communication, promote group discussions, provide guidance for students, and ensure responsiveness to students' needs (Jackson, 2019). In addition, instructors must be capable of designing digital content that not only meets the objectives but is also easily accessible and evaluated (Al-Hunaiyyan, Alhajri, & Al-Sharhan, 2018).

Training is imperative for instructors to be able to effectively design and deliver e-learning, (Batalla-Busquets & Pacheco-Bernal, 2013). During the pandemic, Kuwaiti educational institutions were forced to significantly alter how they taught by moving to online learning and preparing students for the new paradigm (Al-Hunaiyyan, Al-Sharhan, & Al-Sharrah, 2012; Al-Hunaiyyan, Alhajri, & Bimba, 2021). Academic leaders in Kuwait expressed concerns about the numerous substantial challenges inherent in this move, not least the fact that the majority of instructors and students were unlikely to have the necessary knowledge, skills and capacity (Al-Anbaa, 2020). Meanwhile, with the rapidly changing and uncertain pandemic situation, there was likely to be a lack of the right expertise to implement e-learning among instructors and students, introducing further challenges (Academia, 2020).

2.3. Instructor Competency Models

Selznick was among the first to describe the notions of competency in 1957. Briefly, employees need competency/competencies to successfully complete their tasks (Wooten, 2008). (Alainati S. A.-K., 2010). In the context of this study, an instructor's competency is considered their capacity to provide online teaching during the pandemic. In terms of models of instructor competency, the POCCI model permits the elucidation of how resources can be allocated to develop core competencies towards a competitive advantage (Yang B., 2006). Meanwhile, Al-Hunaiyyan developed the e-Learning Instructor Capability Maturity Model (eTCMM) to allow the incorporation of social, cultural, and behavioral aspects to increase instructors' competency levels (Al-hunaiyyan, Al-sharhan, & Al-sharah, 2012). Finally, UNESCO's ICT Competency Framework for Teachers (ICT-CFT) is aimed at helping education authorities design and implement comprehensive policies and standards towards ICT competency among instructors, subsequently integrating them into the general plans for the use of ICT in education (UNESCO, 2022).

While few studies have examined social presence in the context of e-learning (Komninou 2017, Satar 2018), the research has acknowledged its importance for effective teaching (Caligiuri, 2020). It has been shown that the extent to which instructors and students can interact, collaborate and form relationships dictates the level of student satisfaction (Biasuttie, 2011; Al-Hunaiyyan & Al-Sharhan, 2009), significantly enhances learning community cohesiveness (Komninou, 2017), promotes knowledge construction across the board (Jackson, 2019; Navimipour & Zareie, 2015), and shapes the mode of education (Bicen, 2014). Meanwhile, instructorsrarely change their methodologies to reflect an absence of interactions or difficulties in building relationships among students. Collaboration has been found to be key to the ability to gain benefits from e-learning (Theelen, 2020; Brown & Charlier, 2013), while effective ways to enhance social presence include consistent participation, fast and responsive communication, group discussions, students' commitment, and prompt and relevant contributions to learning (Vinagre, 2017; Yoo, Huang, & Kwon, 2015). For a more detailed outline of instructors' competencies in implementing e-learning via ICT, see (Husain, 2010).

3. Methodology

This study employs a three-phase research methodology. First, it performs a literature review to identify the gaps in the literature concerning the role of instructors in the e-learning environment. The second phase comprises a qualitative analysis examining the key terms referring to instructors' skills and competencies, in addition to a review of existing research, specifically technical reports and documentation (Al-Sharhan, Al-hunaiyyan, & Gueaieb, 2006; Al-Sharhan, Al-hunaiyyan, & Gueaieb, 2006; AlKharang, 2014). Furthermore, by elucidating the primary and contextual factors of the Kuwaiti education system and its instructors, this study identifies the critical success factors as well as the boundaries of the current system. Finally, the third research phase develops a new model of instructor competency that describes the skills and competencies that instructors must have to teach in the 21st century.

4. Kuwait's E-Learning Strategy

To promote e-learning in the country, Kuwait's Ministry of Education and Higher Education outlined a far-reaching and comprehensive plan to develop an e-learning strategy for the country to empower the population to use modern and scientific approaches in accessing a variety of knowledge sources and using advanced technology, both professionally and in their daily lives (Al-Siderawi, Al-Sharhan, & Al-Sharrah, 2010). This e-learning strategy stipulates that e-learning at all educational levels will lead to a new paradigm of a modern technological education environment that will help instructors to teach (Al-Sharhan, Al-hunaiyyan, & Gueaieb, 2006). By promoting the role of students as active learners, this strategy aims to ensure that the next generation will be capable of self-learning and can serve the nation's interests by staying abreast with global developments. To this end, instructors are encouraged to coordinate the modern learning process and ensure that Kuwait's educational model is both advanced and effective and possess a clear vision in line with the international standards of academic quality (Al-Hunaiyyan, Alhajri, & Al-Sharhan, 2018; Al-Siderawi, Al-Sharhan, & Al-Sharrah, 2010; AlKharang, 2014). Furthermore, the strategy seeks to ensure preparedness among the next generation towards innovation and creativity, fostering the nation's capabilities to employ ICT and handle multiple knowledge sources as part of the education process(Al-Siderawi, Al-Sharhan, & Al-Sharrah, 2010; Zain, 2005).

The practical aspects of this strategy encompass setting the direction for e-learning through plans, budgets and programs. To achieve this, the strategy is translated into a tangible reality through operational goals set under consideration of the need to coordinate with the various stakeholders (Al-Siderawi, Al-Sharhan, & Al-Sharrah, 2010). Moreover, the e-learning strategy is grounded in a scientific model that incorporates all the aspects required for successful e-learning implementation. This model targets optimal results for both students and instructors as well as society as a whole. As per (Al-Siderawi, Al-Sharhan, & Al-Sharrah, 2010), the strategic objectives are to:

- Strengthen the ability of instructors to actively participate in e-learning.
- Develop a teaching model for the State of Kuwait, making it a regional e-learning pioneer.
- Accelerate the cultural movement towards the construction of a knowledge economy for the State of Kuwait.
- Disseminate a culture of scientific excellence in Kuwaitto strengthen the capability of educational programs to enrich learning.
- Bring the State of Kuwait's educational system into the 21st century.
- Ensure educational development by proactively using ICT to fully develop the individual elements of the education system.
- Promote a self-learning culture among Kuwaiti society.
- Foster a technological learning environment in Kuwait to encourage society to adopt the latest educational technologies.
- Create a richer learning environment through additional resources and non-conventional methods.
- Use electronic tools and resources to build an educational environment suited to swift communication between learners and instructors.
- Acknowledge that learners have individual differences and allow them to learn in settings that are appropriate for them.

4.1. E-learning Implementation Models

Throughout its various e-learning projects, Kuwait implements its e-learning strategy in line with an integrated framework based on a scientific model (Al-Siderawi, Al-Sharhan, & Al-Sharrah, 2010), aiming to realize the best possible e-learning outcomes. As a result, the e-learning system uses a unique set of educational tools, including appropriate resources, an online curriculum, and interactive digital libraries (AlKharang, 2014). Furthermore, as part of the system, instructors can hone their skills and educational toolset to take on the role of educational mentors, while educational administrators can activate additional resources to improve the process for all stakeholders, i.e., students, instructors, parents, and the broader community.

In order for an e-learning system to be successful, its implementers must identify the critical success factors by understanding instructors' role and teaching practices. With technological advances driving the research on e-learning, new models are emerging to facilitate the development of valuable frameworks that consider both the stakeholders and the technological challenges. These frameworks call attention to the nexus between pedagogy and technology in e-learning and can thereby assist in delineating the current state while showing the path to the desired outcome. By integrating these frameworks into strategic planning, educational institutions can identify the critical success factors for effective implementation and ensure that instructors are fully capable of playing their role.

In Kuwait, the ministry's e-learning strategy bases on a scientific model that considers the important aspects of a successful e-learning system, targeting optimal results for all stakeholders in Kuwaiti society. This holistic model incorporates educational, administrative, institutional, economic/labor and cultural/social aspects, as presented in Figure 1.
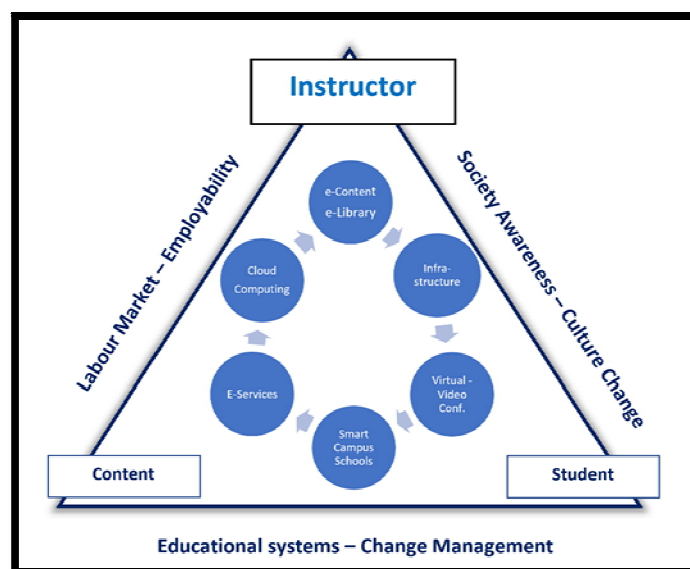

Figure 1:E-Learning Implementation
Model (Al-Siderawi, Al-Sharhan, & Al-Sharrah, 2010)

4.2. The Implementation Framework of E-learning Projects in Kuwait

In 2009, the Kuwaiti Ministry of Education and Higher Education initiated e-learning projects based on its e-learning framework, considering all relevant factors of its e-learning strategy to produce successful outcomes. The following projects, and their foci, represent a core part of this framework, and together they create the foundations for the e-learning system:

- The infrastructure
- Establishing data centers and school infrastructure
- Linking schools to a fiber-optic network
- Kuwait's educational portal
- Interactive e-content
- Smart classrooms
- Interactive whiteboards
- Classroom management system
- Display devices
- Smart schools
- Wireless networks
- Visual and audio telecommunication systems
- Cloud computing and storage
- Learning Management Systems (LMS)
- Learning Experience Platforms (LXP)
- E-services
- E-Library
- Administrative and educational systems
- E-management
- IT helpdesk
- Training and preparation of the teaching staff
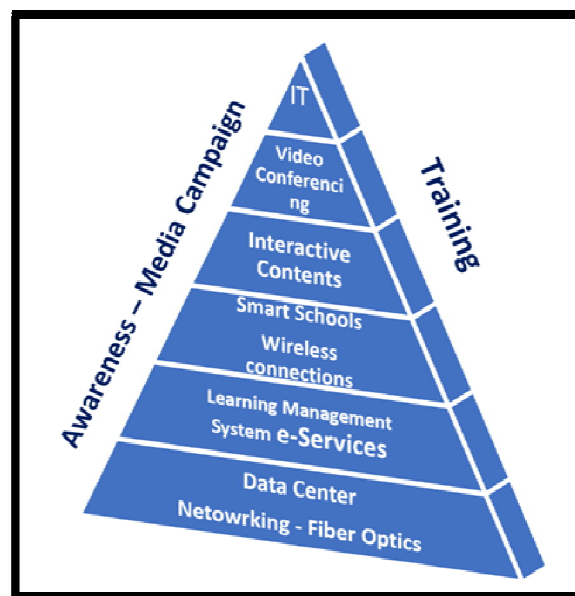- Awareness-building, education, and media campaigns

Figure 2: Implementation Framework for Kuwait's E-Learning
System (Al-Sharhan, Al-hunaiyyan, & Gueaieb, 2006)

At the center of the model is the element of e-learning, grounding in robust Internet infrastructure and connectivity, including updated hardware and software such as learning management systems and learning experience platforms, as well as high-quality content, delivery and service through appropriate design and development (Al-Hunaiyyan, Al-Sharhan, & Al-Hajri, 2020). The purpose hereby is to provide high-quality computing resources that users can easily access through the cloud or via a hybrid interface, i.e., through both public and private cloud resources. To do so, the curriculum designers must work together with experts to produce high-quality learning materials to realize smart classrooms. In general, smart classrooms enable learning processes that incorporate materials with high usability that are tailored to the needs and culture of the students and instructors and integrate the latest technologies, whereby the instructor remains the main supervisor of the learning process.

5. Instructors' Role in the E-learning: Towards Instructor Competency Model

The rapid advances in ICT have reached all spheres of life and pose new challenges – politically, economically, educationally, and socially. This includes the use of e-learning systems in education as part of the new technological reality. At the forefront of this shift, instructors are facing numerous challenges that oblige them to stay informed about the latest developments in the fields of education, technology, and even behavioral science.

The role of the instructors has been elevated in the modern and highly technological educational environment as they constitute the cornerstone to the success of education in the 21st century. Specifically, the instructor must not only engage their creativity to explore new ways of learning but must also take on additional responsibilities as managers and coordinators of the educational process, leading students and guiding them through an interactive learning environment. The instructors' role thus becomes indispensable, and hence there is an urgent need to make sure that their skills are adequately developed to effectively meet this challenge. In addition, some of the important aspects of the character of the instructor are shifting in this new technological environment, as shown in our Instructors Competency Model presented in Figure 3. A modified version of the model developed by (Al-Hunaiyyan, Al-Sharhan, & Al-Sharrah, 2012), our model incorporates five aspects of competencies, which are discussed in the following:

- Knowledge Aspects
- Technical Aspects
- Behavioral Aspects
- Planning Aspects
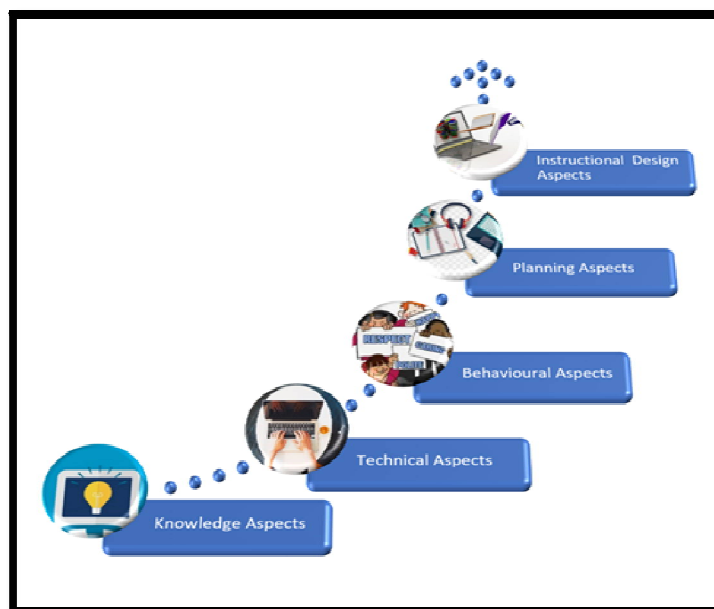- Instructional Design & Course Development Aspects

Figure 3: The Instructor Competency Model

5.1. Knowledge Aspects

Knowledge aspects refer not only to the knowledge being taught but also to the vast amounts of knowledge available to instructors, e.g., on the Internet, through computer networks, and via learning sources such as e-libraries. These aspects essentially shape the personality of instructors in the e-learning environment.Unlike in conventional classrooms, instructors in the e-learning environment must use ICT to lead and monitor students' learning process (Mahafza, 2011). They must furthermore participate in the instructional design by preparing not only educational materials but also suitable methods to deliver them. Knowledge is enhanced non-passively, namely through instructors and students' interactions, with different types of knowledge being sought in line with the individual student's abilities. Meanwhile, the broad base of knowledge, often sourced online, that students bring poses a new reality for instructors that raises challenges from a cultural perspective (Zain, 2005).

5.2. Technical Aspects

The e-learning environment implies the need to be adept with ICT equipment, including computers, display devices, interactive whiteboards,networks, the Internet, and learning and class management systems. Instructors must, therefore, have the skills to utilize such tools during the class, modifying them as necessary to achieve the learning goals and assisting students in their proper use. The Kuwaiti Ministry of Education and Higher Education, as part of its e-learning projects, ensures that the latest technologies are available to facilitate qualitative educational development. It hereby ensures that the latest scientific-technological advances in the field of education are used to produce interactive courses that meet international educational standards. In this new environment, the instructor is akin to an interpreter, as they explain – rather than deliver – the curriculum to the students via technology. This further underlines the need for them to understand and be competent in the use of modern technological tools (Al-Sharhan, Al-hunaiyyan, & Gueaieb, 2006).

In this new role, the instructors must fully understand the Internet and have the ability to utilize its various elements. For example, they must be able to search for and identify online sources of appropriate information, then extract it and effectively integrate it into their teaching process. They also, therefore, need to be able to evaluate the value and appropriateness of online information. Instructors must also gain familiarity with the peripherals of e-learning, e.g., search engines, chats and emails, chat, and uploading files, among other facets of educational applications and learning management systems. Another required competency in this aspect is the ability to assess whether the students' technological skills are adequate for learning and consequently make sure that they can cope with the learning management system. In e-learning, an interactive environment is created for students and instructors via technology, including modern communication tools and platforms for curriculum access, thereby enriching students' learning experience. For example, instructors can use video conferencing platforms, not only to deliver content themselves but also to ask guest speakers to present on specific topics. Finally, instructors must be competent in the use of other modern e-learning methods designed to foster students' critical thinking skills and encourage them to move interactively throughout this environment, such as multimedia, smart whiteboards, and interactive e-curricula.

5.3. Behavioral Aspects

In an e-learning environment, instructors also play a leadership role in that they direct the learning process while interacting with the students. As a result, they must be able to discern and understand the students' needs, abilities and behaviors. During their interactions, they must engender positive behaviors by emphasizing the need to act ethically and consider issues of values, ethics and religion. The following are some examples of such behaviors:

- Seek content that is scientifically and educationally useful
- Ensure that all devices and educational software are properly handled
- Use social networking tools ethically
- Interact with other instructors in an atmosphere of friendly scientific competition
- Cite information sources to instill the value of preserving intellectual property rights
- Raise awareness about safe behavior online

With new technology come new roles for instructors in developing the teaching methodologies and classroom learning strategies. They must create an appropriate learning environment that incorporates the latest technology through modern educational approaches that promote interactive learning (Mahafza, 2011). Meanwhile, instructors must also take into account the abilities of their students to ensure that the new learning processes are in line with their social and mental needs. In light of this, they must employ different teaching strategies to help students hone their skills and improve their performance, especially in the crucial areas of critical thinking and problem-solving (Al-Hunaiyyan, Alhajri, & Bimba, 2021).

5.4. Planning Aspects

In an e-learning classroom, the instructor coordinates, supervises and guides the learning process, and thus they must be able to design, develop and prepare the appropriate tools and methods to strengthen students' communication capabilities and skills. As part of instructors' planning capabilities, they must be able to identify the following (Mahafza, 2011):

- The curriculum's educational objectives
- The curriculum's requirements
- Students' age group characteristics and previous experience
- Suitable teaching tools, methods and strategies
- Learning and extra-curricular activities to promote student interaction
- Different interaction forms between students, instructors and the curriculum
- Appropriate evaluation tools and feedback methods

5.5. Instructional Design and Course Development Aspects

The monumental shift of the classroom in the 21st century is introducing a new paradigm into the field of education, especially concerning the instructional design process, wherein the role of the instructor is gaining new importance. This is because the successful outcomes of e-learning rely not only on the learning material quality but also on the instructor's ability to motivate students (Munoz Organero & Kloos, 2007). The role of the instructor hereby includes contributing to instructional design, determining the learning objectives and students' learning reality, and identifying the most suitable tools and methodologies. The Roberts Model (Roberts, 1996) is an instructional design model that highlights the cruciality of instructors in the e-learning environment in terms of course development and instructional design. This model comprises 13 steps, with each step leading to the next (cf. Figure 4). The 13 steps are (Roberts, 1996):

- Identifying learners' needs
- Identifying the learning objectives
- Conducting formative assessments of the educational goals and needs
- Analyzing the learning objectives and learners' characteristics
- Conducting formative assessments to analyze the learning objectives and learners' characteristics.
- Analyzing the performance objectives and test objects
- Conducting formative assessment for the performance objectives and test objects
- Identifying the learning strategies
- Conducting formative assessments for the educational strategies
- Developing the learning planning process
- Initiating the testing for the curriculum
- Determining the design as needed
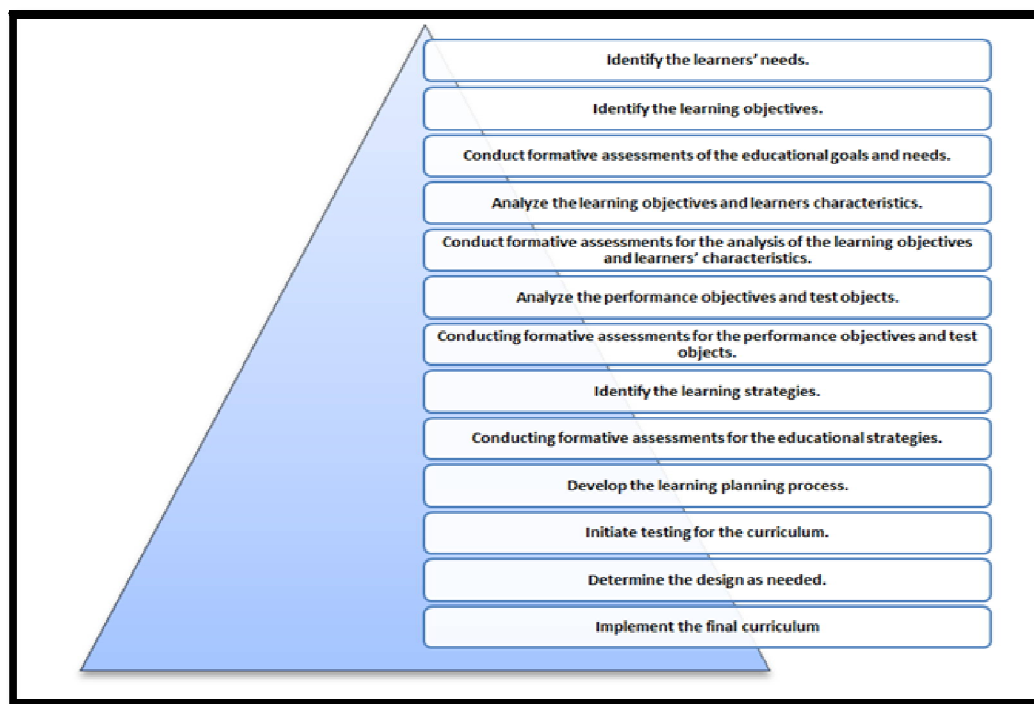- Implementing the final curriculum

Figure 4: Instructional Design Model (Roberts, 1996)

6. Conclusion

Against the backdrop of the shift to e-learning necessitated by the global pandemic, HRM plays a crucial role in the educational sector as it enables institutions and their decision-makers to achieve targets, most importantly by supporting instructors in effectively fulfilling their duties. In this new e-learning environment, the instructor's role gains even more importance. In light of this, the current work develops a framework for instructors to effectively implement e-learning by motivating and engaging students, thereby achieving the educational objectives. The crisis instigated by the pandemic has meant that some of the aspects and functions of HRM have faded into the background, while instructors have had to acquire new technological skills to implement e-learning. While students have faced similar challenges, they have had a lesser burden in terms of developing the competencies to use the appropriate technology. Using a three-phase research methodology, namely a literature review, a qualitative analysis, and a proposed new model of instructor competency, this paper has explored the strategies and instructor competencies necessary for e-learning. The proposed instructor competence model offers recommendations for the education system of Kuwait and highlights the skills that are particularly salient for learning in the 21st century. Thus, it may be considered as a guide for both instructors and the HRM of their educational institutions to ensure effective e-learning at institutions during crises such as the pandemic.

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