


THE IMPACT OF INSTRUCTORS' IMMEDIACY IN A FEMALE DISTANCE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT ON STUDENTS' SATISFACTION AND STUDENTS' ACHIEVEMENT IN ENGLISH COURSE: A CASE STUDY OF ARAB OPEN UNIVERSITY

 Elhadi Nasr Elhadi MUSTAFA
dr.elhadi@aou.edu.sa

Arab Open University - Riyadh - Saudi Arabia

 Elnour Mubarak M. A. OMAR
dr.elnourm@arn.edu.sa

ARN Institute for Training –Almadinah – Saudi Arabia

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ABSTRACT

The primary goal of this research is to see if a model can predict the association between female instructors' immediacy, female students' pleasure, and students' performance in a synchronous learning setting. The study's data was gathered from 109 female Arab Open University students in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, using e-survey questionnaires. The method employed was structural equation modeling. This investigation was used to test the hypothesis model. The findings revealed that instructors' immediacy (verbal and non-verbal) was negatively related to students' performance in a distance learning environment, but that instructors' immediacy (verbal and non-verbal) was positively related to students' satisfaction, and that students' satisfaction was also positively related to students' performance in an English language course offered to undergraduate students at the university (AOU).

Keywords: instructors' immediacy, students' satisfaction, online environment, students' performance.

INTRODUCTION

Saudi Arabia (KSA) is a pioneer in ICT infrastructure in the entire Western Asia region, particularly during the Coronavirus outbreak. E-learning is being used in higher education and even basic schools in Saudi Arabia. The (KSA) has gradually improved its ability to provide the infrastructure required to expand e-learning through educational and corporate organizations (Alfawaz & Yamin, 2020). Furthermore, it should be noted that King Abdulaziz University in Saudi Arabia was the first to implement an e-learning system in 2006, utilizing Blackboard as the primary LMS (Aldiab. et. al 2019, Alfawaz & Yamin, 2020). E-Learning is a constantly changing environment that incorporates numerous aspects of the educational process. E-learning not only provides a wealth of material, but it also encourages learners to absorb information, process it, share it with others, and convert it in a good way (Syeda, 2014). Syeda presented arguments for Saudi Arabia's remarkable rise in e-learning. For starters, there is a demand for higher education.

IMMEDIACY IN TEACHING ONLINE ENGLISH COURSE

In fact, several studies have defined immediacy as a degree of perceived physical or psychological proximity between people, with two traits: verbal and nonverbal immediacy. For example, immediacy has been described as a degree of felt physical or psychological closeness between people (Richmond, 2002, p: 68). Teachers' verbal communications that

reflect empathy, openness, friendliness, reward, praise, feelings of inclusiveness, personal expertise, and eagerness to involve students in conversation, among other things, are graded according to their immediacy. Verbal immediacy has been connected to higher cognitive and affective learning as well as increased motivation. It is inextricably tied to nonverbal immediacy actions. Nonverbal immediacy, on the other hand, is characterized as communication actions that "increase proximity to and nonverbal engagement with another (Mehrabian 1969, p. 203).

Immediacy is a measure of verbal and nonverbal communication according to the implicit communication hypothesis. Thus, human verbal immediacy relates to the verbal expressions utilized by teachers, as opposed to nonverbal immediacy.

STUDENTS' SATISFACTION

The pleasure of EFL students with the classroom setting is another crucial aspect that determines their performance. "The extent to which a student's perceived educational experience meets or surpasses his/her expectations," according to the definition (Demaris & Kritsonis, 2008, p. 5). According to this definition, student satisfaction is a subjective assessment of how they feel about the learning process and how their needs are addressed in the classroom. The willingness to continue the learning process because expectations and personal needs are met in the classroom environment is also defined as satisfaction (Asakereh & Dehghannezhad 2015).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The major goal of this research is to shed a light on the impact of instructors' immediacy during teaching English in a synchronous environment and students' satisfaction and achievement. This study investigates the effects of instructors' immediacy behaviors (high - low versus) and online delivery modality (audio versus video). Findings also established a strong relationship between participants' perception of instructor immediacy behaviors and their perception of the instructor's social presence (Schutt et. al. 2009). This study indicates that teachers who were more immediate had both greater frequency and breadth of classroom participation. More specifically, the warmth of the professor is a composite of immediacy behaviors (Roberts & Friedman, 2013). Interviews and observations were used. The model of the determinants of EFL teachers' immediacy comprised body gestures. The results showed that among the determinants of teacher immediacy, body gesture and rapport making factors exhibited the highest frequency and among the consequences factors, affective and cognitive were found to be the most frequent ones (Kalat et al., 2018). So, the study showed that distantly located learners did not indicate significant differences in social presence. Also, results indicate that the predicted social presence score for distance instruction is slightly lower than the on-site instruction for high nonverbal behavior. Both nonverbal and verbal behaviors increase, the predicted social presence, instructors' nonverbal and verbal communication skills enhance learners' social presence in either environment (Bozkaya, 2008). This study had conducted on Korean students who reported higher or lower levels of instructor verbal and nonverbal immediacy in Korean versus US students. Verbal immediacy was positively related to the satisfaction of Korean students in the US, whereas it was not significantly related to the satisfaction of Korean students in Korea (Park et al, 2009). Results indicated that teacher nonverbal immediacy mitigated the negative effect of teacher burnout on students. Students reported the lowest motivation and affective learning with high burnout and low immediacy teachers (Zhang & Sapp, 2008). Thus, this study found a statistically significant positive relationship between instructor immediacy and presence. It also found that the linear combination of instructor immediacy and presence is a statistically significant predictor of student affective learning, cognition, and motivation. To recap, the studies were varied in terms of results that tested the impact of immediacy.

HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

This study formulates these hypotheses as follows:

- 1. There is a positive relation between instructors' immediacy and students' satisfaction.**
- 2. There is a positive relation between instructors' immediacy and students' achievement.**
- 3. There is a positive relationship between students' satisfaction and students' achievement.**

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study used a cross-sectional survey methodology, which is defined as a survey that collects data about a population of interest at a single point in time. In order to analyze the link between the study's variables, Structural Equation Modeling was employed for statistical analysis. Immediacy (verbal – nonverbal), student satisfaction, and student performance are all models that are used in this study. The data for this study were gathered via an e-survey questionnaire, which was distributed to female instructors and students from November 2020 to January 2021.

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS AND DATA COLLECTION

The study's participants were Arab Open University (AOU) undergraduate students in the academic session 2020-2021 who represented several English disciplines in the (AOU), Intensive English Language Course. Females were the only ones who responded to the e-questionnaire. Finally, the online surveys were completed in less than four weeks for each participant, with the majority of the e-questionnaires being finished in less than seven weeks.

MODEL FIT DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY

Analysis of Moment Structure was utilized in this study to determine model fit using Maximum Likelihood (ML). Furthermore, the fit indices for parsimonious models are Normed chi-square/degree of freedom, and the current study result revealed a satisfactory model fit based on previous fit indices. 1st Table

Table 1:
Illustrates model fit indices.

Fit indices criteria	Values	Model fit indices
<3	1. 641	CMIN/DF
>. 90	. 978	CFI
>. 90	. 957	GFI
>. 90	. 958	TLI
<0. 05	0. 073	RMSEA

INSTRUMENTATION

In the academic term 2020–2021, a pilot test for E-questionnaires was undertaken, and three components in the current study exhibited overall reliability >0.892 . Immediacy (verbal – nonverbal), which was adapted from (Park, et al, 2009) and consists of fifteen items: student satisfaction > 0.795 , student performance, and students' motivation. The students' satisfaction questionnaire, which has five items, was adapted from (Park et al., 2009). Both questionnaires were translated into Arabic. The overall dependability of the instrument items was $> 0. 875$. Furthermore, each item in this study was graded on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 indicating strong agreement and 5 indicating extreme disagreement.

DISCUSSIONS

The present study evaluated the model involving the influence of immediacy (verbal and non-verbal), and student satisfaction on students' performance at Arab Open University (AOU) was tested. The present study contributes to a deeper understanding of students' English levels in terms of writing, reading, vocabulary, and grammar programs offers at (AOU). Table (1) illustrates the result of the path coefficient and final structural model in order to verify the support of three hypotheses so the result showed that the strongest significant relationship found between teachers' immediacy and students' performance was P-value $>0. 05 - 0. 290$ reject this hypothesis. In addition, there was a significant relationship between students' satisfaction and students' performance with was P-value $<0. 05$. Whereas, there was a significant relationship between students' satisfaction P-value $<0.05 - 0.016$. Thus, there was a strong relationship between teachers' immediacy for students at (AOU) in the English language which indicated that students were satisfied with acquired knowledge in terms of writing, reading, vocabulary, and grammar that course provided by online delivery, interaction. The resulting relationship between instructors' immediacy, students' satisfaction, and student's performance in the English course program at (AOU) 2020-2021 academic session. Further immediacy factors such as showed empathy, openness, kindness, reward, praise, feelings of inclusiveness, personal knowledge, and the motivation to engage students in communication, among others motivation, the reward for students learning takes place if there is a change in behavior can be expected unless one or more of these learning objectives have been accomplished. Besides that, satisfaction reflects the motivation to step forward within the learning process. The result reaffirms in different disciplines, which has been found in other studies for instance (Bozkaya, 2008; Zhang & Sapp, 2008; Park et al., 2009; Asakereh & Deghannezhad 2015; Kalat et al., 2018; Schutt, et al. 2009). The study measured instructors' immediacy and students' satisfaction specifically in the e-learning environment. Also, it provides quantitative information in terms of students' performance in the intensive English program offers at (AOU) in the 2020-2021 academic session. Therefore, if a student has high satisfaction with vocabulary, grammar, writing, and mastery it will have high satisfaction and high academic performance. Whereas, students

who have low instructor immediacy in this course have shown low academic performance as has been stated above. So, if students show positive and high satisfaction with an online intensive English program definitely these reactions indicate that learning takes place and the course achieved its objectives. Whereby low instructors' immediacy showed that students are not responding to online gestures and did not motivate them enough in this intensive English course. In summary, the relationship between learners' satisfaction and learners' performance in an online intensive English course at Arab Open University (AOU) showed students' high satisfaction and acquired knowledge offered, delivered, and designed in the course, whereas instructors' immediacy did not relate to students' performance, but related to students' satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The impact of instructors' immediacy (verbal & nonverbal) on students' satisfaction and performance in English courses (writing, comprehension, vocabulary, and grammar) was tested using empirical evidence in this study, whereas instructors' immediacy (verbal & nonverbal) influenced students' performance negatively. Additionally, direct instructor immediacy (verbal and nonverbal) has a good effect on student satisfaction. Students' pleasure with an online English course offered by Arab Open University - Saudi Arabia branch had a beneficial impact on their performance. As a result, the study adds to the body of evidence supporting the validity of students' outcomes, particularly in an intense English language course at a university (AOU).

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The current study's limitation was that it was conducted only among undergraduate students at Arab Open University's Saudi Arabia branch. The second constraint is the sample size, which was primarily comprised of females. A total of 109 people were included in the study's sample. In terms of qualitative methodology, similar investigations might be carried out. Males should also be considered, and future researchers should be employed in face-to-face interactions.

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BIODATA and CONTACT ADDRESSES of the AUTHORS



Elhadi Nasr Elhadi Mustafa obtained his Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics from Sudan University of Science and Technology, College of Languages in the year 2019. Currently, he works as an English language lecturer at Arab Open University, Saudi Arabia branch. He has written a lot of articles in teaching and learning English as a Foreign Language. He also published a book in the year 2017 entitled: *Psychological Factors Affecting Sudanese EFL Learners' Oral Performance*.

Mobile Phone: +966509427526

Email: dr.elhadi@aou.edu.sa



Elnour Mubarak M. A. Omar received his Ph.D. degree from Islamic University Malaysia in E-learning 2009 and was a lecturer at Open University of Sudan, Albayan College for Science and Technology, Peace College for languages and Translation. Currently is an advisor at ARN Institute for Training, Madinah, Saudi Arabia. He was an academic writer for educational issues at Sudan vision newspaper. He translated several academic books from English into Arabic. He has written the Pace series of English books for ARN Institute for Training. Also participated in 21 international conferences in

Educational disciplines in Canada, Italy, Spain, France, Thailand, Bahrain, South Africa, China, etc.

Mobile Phone: +966578223542

Email: dr.elnourm@arn.edu.sa