



Required E-learning Competencies among Supervisors in the State of Kuwait

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Abstract

The aim of this study was to measure the readiness of supervisors to utilize technology and online learning platforms for teachers' plans and professional development during the COVID-19 crisis. To achieve this aim, the researchers developed a questionnaire comprising of 55 items based on the instruments used in pertinent studies. A mixed-methods research design was employed, whereby a quantitative online survey was supplemented by focus group discussions with selected supervisors. Survey data was subjected to One-way Analysis of Variance and t-test, while information obtained via focus groups was coded to identify common themes related to the obstacles and challenges supervisors face. When completing the survey, supervisors approached proficiency using technology; however, focus group discussions revealed misconceptions related to e-learning and limitations in their ability to use technology in schools, as well as obstacles imposed by the structure and management of the educational system. These findings indicate that supervisors need support in acquiring the competencies required for integrating technology in education, and that their support to teacher community needs to be grounded in clear and systematic approaches and best educational practices.

Keywords: *e-learning, Professional Development*

1. Introduction

In swift response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Kuwait suspended all public schools on March 12th with an extended school closure until August 4th, while private schools ended on time. Grade 12 students were exempted and continued their studies. Students passing more than four subjects based on first semester grades were automatically promoted. For the 2020-2021 school year, the Ministry of Education (MOE) is preparing for remote service delivery of education beginning on October 4th. In a strong response, the MOE has issued technical guidance on the safe return to school and remote service delivery. The MOE has planned for asynchronous learning for KG-3 and synchronous learning for Grades 4 onwards. MOE is in the process of completing video recordings from the elementary to secondary levels for basic and specialized subjects. They are also in the process of printing and distributing textbooks for the primary and intermediate levels, and have completed printing and distribution textbooks at the secondary level. There has also been teacher training at the elementary and intermediate level for remote service delivery and training on communications with the school, teachers, and parents via social media and other modalities. Much progress has been made, yet there is also much that can be done.

1.2 Technical Supervisors

In Kuwait, the supervisor plays a vital role in the process of achieving the national educational goals. The Supervisors' role is to monitor the quality of the educational system. Supervisors closely monitor the performance of the educational career in the field, and the effectiveness of the curriculum including contents, teaching methods teaching, and techniques. Further, the supervisors provide the vision and development plan for employees in the school-level.

The technical role the senior supervisor is: to develop plans for the implementation and supervision and work on curriculum development field of study and update the style of teachers' performance, and to mentor teachers in the academic field of academic area of education, and the follow-up with teachers and guiding them, and study reports made by them and study their recommendations. Lastly, the Head of Supervisors in districts cover more cohesive duties: to participate in the proposed general policy of the field of study and planning in order to improve the educational process, provide expertise to the department heads in each academic educational field at schools, do a follow-up for and professional development for teachers and training needs, provide development for the curriculum, and analyze the results of exams (for student promotion) and to prepare the reports about them.



since the education system in Kuwait is highly centralized and teachers get trained by their supervisors (NIE, 2013), it is essential that the focus of this research is on the source provider, and therefore, the aim of this research is to answer the following questions:

- Were supervisors prepared in terms of technology when the COVID-19 pandemic happened?
- What do supervisors say about the barriers and obstacles associated with the use of technology in the education system of Kuwait from their perspectives?

2. Method

A mix method approach was used to answer the research questions. Once the data collection phase was done, we started data analysis in order to answer the questions. The first question focused on the new design of learning environment and how was it providing teachers with opportunities to acquire 21st century skills, and understand ICT skills.

For the quantitative part the survey was organized into eight categories related to ICT competencies that are needed for any educator to practice online learning these factors are listed below:

- Factor 1: Computer Literacy Competencies
- Factor 2: Computer Skills
- Factor 3: Adequacy of planning an educational situation
- Factor 4: Educational program design competencies
- Factor 5: Competencies related to the teaching and learning process
- Factor 6: Assessment and evaluation competencies
- Factor 7: Competencies related to professional development
- Factor 8: Competencies related to social, ethical, legal, and humanitarian issues

For the second part of the research it was a mini focus groups with 24 supervisors using open response questions.

3. Data Analysis

For the first factor there were significant differences in terms of gender, educational stage, major, nationality, and level of technology expertise. First, the Independent Sample T-test t-value (-5.737), Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.00 (Less than 0.05) there was significance difference between males and females in the level of positivity in the factor and shows that males (mean = 4.06) are more positive than females (mean = 3.38). the Educational stage: “One-way Analyses of Variance” f-value: 10.616, Sig.: 0.00 (Less than 0.05) there is a significance difference between education stages, and by Scheffe test it showed that primary stage was in average while intermediate and secondary stage were more positive toward the factor. In terms of the Major the “Independent Sample T-test” t-value (-2.948), Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.0004 (less than 0.05). There was significance difference between Math and science. The science mean = (3.75) was more positive than Math, mean = 3.42. For the Nationality, an “Independent Sample T-test” t-value (-2.342), Sig. (2-tailed) = 0.02 (less than 0.05). There was a significance difference between Kuwaitis (mean = 3.51) and non-Kuwaitis (mean = 3.91) also the non-Kuwaitis were more positive toward this factor. Lastly, level of technology expertise the “One-way Analyses of Variance” f-value (23.693), Sig. = 0.000 (less than 0.05). There was a significance difference in between the level of technology expertise, Weak mean = 2.20, average mean = 3.46 and advanced mean = 4.17.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

There is no doubt that vital efforts to develop the role of supervisors have been made. The Ministry has formed several committees that have conducted studies and field research, but great improvement and development is still needed.

We recommend to develop models in the field of supervision in education, concerning the future of supervision and development and to study to compare and analyze the obstacles facing supervision in Kuwait. The outcomes of this comparison is that the Kuwaiti supervision system has many overlaps, and too many responsibilities for supervisors. More research needs to be done in the area of the conceptual approach to management. If we can state that the current system is described as an inspection-based model, then we can safely state that this model has achieved its goals of building the educational infrastructure in Kuwait. Perhaps now it is time to probe using a different model in order to more effectively reach Kuwait’s national goals for education.



The reality of educational supervision and development of Kuwait in existence to date are: the large number of load the responsibility of supervisors and number of teachers they mentor. The supervisors may need more professionalism and specializing in leadership and mentoring skills.

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