

# MEASURING STAFF MEMBERS E-READINESS TOWARDS E-LEARNING AT EGYPTIAN FACULTIES OF TOURISM AND HOTELS

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## Abstract

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has made life much different than it was before especially in Education. This research measures the staff members' e readiness for e-learning at the faculties of tourism and hotels in Egypt which influenced by a number of factors and dimensions. These are technical and pedagogical competences, experience scale and attitude Scale but the research will concentrate on the first dimension. This may help Tourism faculties to promote the use of IT in teaching and learning and also apply e learning effectively in these faculties to make qualified students for market work. Data was collected through a questionnaire of 92 staff member (professor, assistant professor and lecturers) of tourism studies, hotel management and Tourism Guidance departments. Also this research is based on a basic hypothesis that there is a shortage and insufficient of staff members e readiness for e learning.

## Key Words

E-learning, e-readiness, IT, Quality, Measuring e-readiness, Higher education

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## Introduction

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has made life much different than it was before, the pace with which such technologies have evolved is becoming too fast that physical distances are to blur. During the past few years, ICT applications have been incorporated into almost all activities, including education, where the need for highly skilled workforce made it inevitable to capitalize on such technological advancements, Amit (2005).

In Egypt, there is growing interest in using modern technologies to deliver instruction and facilitate the process of teaching and learning. E-learning is being more rapidly adopted by many universities and is destined to become a larger part of the educational experience of the students in years to come. Some universities, for example, have made significant investments in their IT infrastructure over the last two years and are undergoing change to introduce and develop e-learning and using programs of faculty development to support this process through the E-learning Center in universities Superme council and E-learning center at the university (<http://www.Fayoum.edu.eg/>), ([http://www.astd.org/ASTD/Resources/dyor/article\\_archives](http://www.astd.org/ASTD/Resources/dyor/article_archives)) & Shephard, Haslam, Hutchings & Furneaux, (2004).

Tourism industry need better students to face the markets needs and the increasing in the international demand. One of the best ways to make the-learning process effective is e-learning Nermin (2007).

## Research Objective

The main objective of the research is measuring staff's e-readiness for e-learning at faculties of tourism and hotels in Fayoum, Alexandria, Helwan and Menia according to quality factors of e-learning in Higher education and to discover the influencing factors on their e-readiness, beside clarify the barriers and obstacles that hinder ineffectively of this system to benefit from this system to enhance-learning process in tourism educational sector. Lastly, encourage the faculties of tourism to work with up to date practices.

## Research Hypotheses

Research based on a main hypothesis that there is a shortage and insufficient e-readiness for e-learning of the staff member at the faculties of tourism and hotels in Egypt.

## Literature Review

Using the internet in tourism education creates some benefits for both students and the staff members such as, Communication facilitator that students, staff and administration can communicate directly with each other, beside Information source the revolution of the amount of information for academics and students alike who can access to internet to all locations at any one time. They can obtain the information from more sources than ever before, which provides new teaching and learning opportunities, furthermore Motivator that many students and lecturers feel stimulated, and improve their time on task, when using the internet, the internet and its world wide web (www) provide a variety range of study methods and contains many resources such as broadcast, video conferencing, virtual

classroom, recording ....etc Shendy (2009) , Deyaab (2008) , Nagar (2006).

Usoro and Abid (2008) made altogether nine factors for typical quality e-learning in higher education: see figure (1).

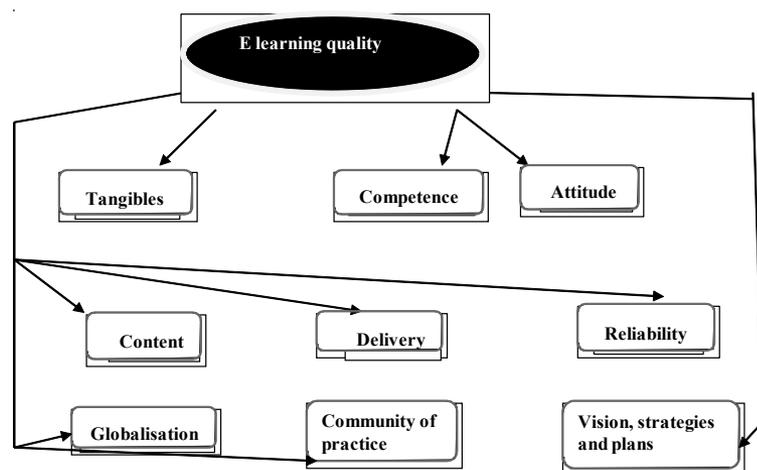


Figure 1 typical e-learning quality framework, source: Usoro and Abid (2008)

Firstly, tangibles according to ISO (2007) refer to ICT related to aspects of e-learning such as access and other technical issues which play an important role in successful of e-learning process that the main obstacle to the growth of e-learning is the lack of access to the necessary technology infrastructure and also poor or insufficient technology infrastructure can lead to little experience that can cause more damage than good to staff , students and learning experience and Zhao (2003) & Lagrosen and Hashemi (2004) concluded and cleared that tangibles are

enough of infrastructure and interactive nature of computers and network. Secondly, Competence refers to the quality of lecturers and learners and technical support which they receive, but according to Elshemy (2008) it refers to the-readiness of human capital to apply e-learning and these aspects affect their satisfaction such as interaction and feedback. Thirdly, Attitude is defined from a psychological point of view is feelings and this attitude is affected by some factors and can be positive if the e-learning fits the students and lecturers s needs and characteristics or negative if they could not adapt this form of education Berteau (2009) & Dahshory (2007) so the researcher see that attitude towards e-learning is influenced by its perceived pros and cons Fourthly, Content which consider also a major input that determines what the quality of output will be (student) according to Mustafa (2008) and there are many standards for typical e content as SCORM. Fifthly, Delivery that content needs present to students with high quality and attractive design, also it must have reliability, security, Globalization which made all the world as a small village that BSc in tourism and hotels online course offered by the faculties of tourism and hotels in Egypt is only available to learners resident in Egypt, in most cases other cases, learners can be distributed across the world. Also, local content and format may not be most suitable for a global audience. Thus, there may be need to adjust it from traditional to online format for online delivery Ali (2007). Sixthly, creating communities of practice which are increasingly using advanced tools of technology in e-learning for knowledge sharing Usoro (2007) chatting and discussion enabling and e-learning platform as Moodle provides for discussions groups. An innovative approach is to use Web 2.0 and web 3.0 technologies into e-learning technologies which may be called e-learning 2.0 Craig (2007). Finally, developing e-learning vision, strategies and plans that the lack of vision and strategy has been identified

by Newton (2003) as a main reason of e-learning project failure so it is therefore important that e-learning project should begin with setting the vision and must be flexible in course delivery to cater for learners who cannot afford the time because of work or family commitment to attend full the time study Mohsen (2006). The research will concentrate on the second dimension of typical quality of e-learning (Competences) which refer to human resources e-readiness (staff members, students and administration).

### **Measuring Academic Staff e-readiness**

The dynamic nature of the industry of the information technology (IT) in integration with developed e-learning technologies has created a tension for lecturers in higher education Colis and Moonen (2003) that in the Implication of e-learning programs, institutions are demanding a change in the role of university lecturers. Traditional teaching and learning skills need to change in order to get maximum benefit from online-learning McFadzean (2003) hence, lecturers are posed with the task of developing a new model of effective teaching that the lecturers have the major role and students are the main players. Many researchers attempted to lay down criteria or domains for successful online teaching, these critical success domains in e-learning environment are different to those in traditional learning environment Volery&Lord ( 2005).

Many studies identified that, there are many domains and variables that influencing university academic staff s current and future implementation of e-learning. According to Boshra (2007) the staff member's e-readiness can be measured and assessed within three dimensions and factors:

1. Competences (Technical and pedagogical) dimension
2. Experiences dimension

### 3. Attitude dimension

The research will concentrate only on the first dimension.

### **The first dimension, competencies.**

This dimension refers to knowledge and skills that enable the academics to effectively develop and implement e-learning approaches. It includes instructional strategies (e.g.; constructivist, individualized, interactive, and self directed learning) and computer technology (e.g.; multimedia software, authoring tools, and networking) used to develop and deliver e-learning approaches. Competency items in this dimension are divided into two sections: pedagogical competencies and technical competencies. Items regarding teaching and technology standards that define proficiency in using e-learning are included in these two groups. Mahdey (2009) stated that adapting the positive aspects of the internet in education requires great efforts from staff members that current teaching practices have to be reevaluated and some changes may need to be made, staff members have to be trained in the use of new technological tools and their skills require continuous updating that large numbers of staff member have lacking experience to use ICT and this represent a major hindrance to e-learning applicability.

## Methodology

This part of the research is also based on a Descriptive evaluative approach with quantitative and qualitative methods through questionnaire to 92 staff members, male and female in different disciplines (Tourism studies, Hotel management, and Tourism guidance) from four faculties of tourism and hotels in Egypt who were working in the period of the research and it investigated their e-readiness and technical support according to the quality of e-learning in higher education. There are a number of indicators and dimensions that clearly demonstrate where staffs are relation to e-learning system and their readiness.

## Data Collection

The research used two sources to collect data; they are divided into two sources, first, primary data which collected via qualitative and quantitative methods .Due to the wide geographic area involved in the study, and the impracticability of carrying out. A questionnaire was considered to the most appropriate to reach the required population (92questionnaire) across faculties of tourism and hotels, male and female have participated. This questionnaire was pilot tested with a random sample of 10 faculty staff at different faculties at Fayoum University only to assess the importance, clarity, and wording of questions and items. Second, secondary data which gathered from journals, publication books, internet websites...others. This secondary data identified the knowledge already known which called literature review.

## Data Analysis and Findings

The researcher began his analysis of the second section related to staff members who providing data to the researcher

via prepared questionnaire using simple statistical and mathematical techniques as SPSS program version 17. In addition to researcher s comments that have resulted from analysis of the questionnaires answers. The level of staff member's e-readiness was analyzed using four Likert scale (4 = proficient, 3 = good, 2 = not good, 1 = none). Beside, correlation, standard deviation (Std) , means and frequencies. The analysis provided the faculties of tourism and hotels in Egypt with an insight into the participant's performance towards critical information needed by the staff members to their e-readiness and implementing e-learning effectively.

The critical analysis of the staff members skills whether technological or pedagogical was deemed extremely important in the evaluation of the current statue of e-learning at faculties of tourism and hotels in Egypt as it helped the instructors in strengthening or adjusting themselves to apply e-learning system effectively to meet industry needs.

The pedagogical competencies are Analyse e learner s needs, Predict e learner s problems, Support student s different learning styles, Define the objectives of an e-learning course, Enhance learner s motivations, Design group work assignments for e learners, Use active-learning methods in an e-learning course, Make use of rich experience of e learners, Support self-directed learning, Support e learners through collective problem solving, Use nontraditional assessment methods to assess e learners, Deal with culturally diverse learners. beside, while technical Competencies as Design Web pages for e-learning, Moderate online discussions, Design an online course for learning environments, Provide guidance to e learners, Write good study guides for e-learning students. Design e-learning resources. Deal with legal issues related to e-learning (e.g., copyright, Privacy).

Scale/Subscale	Freq. (%) proficient & good	Mean	Std. Deviation
Overall score	35.4	1.92	0.63
Technical Competencies	22.6	0.96	0.54
Pedagogical Competencies	85.0	2.88	0.51
<b>Paired t tests for the means (Technical &amp; Pedagogical)</b>	<b>Mean differences</b>	<b>Std.</b>	<b>T</b>
	-1.76	0.49	-43.30

**Table 1 statistical results conclusion**

The results have indicated that most of staff members have good pedagogical competences, on the other hand, there is a shortage in technical skills and this agreed with research hypotheses.

### Return Rate

92 questionnaires were sent. 53 Of them were valid. The return rate is 58 %. This was because a lot of staffs have no time and have a lot of things to do better than completing the questionnaires.

### Validity and Reliability

To ensure validity, Researchers have listed the items found in literature review which many researchers have agreed it and it has been send to the experts in e-learning with adequate experience in pedagogical and technical issues and asked them to add or delete items to these current items based on their understanding of the conceptual definition of this dimension. The revised items were used to develop the dimension competence and the initial questionnaire was piloted on 10 staff member. And to ensure Reliability a Cronbach alpha test was made according to Frank (2007) and Peter (2008) it is found its loading 0.849 which means that the study results are reliable. Beside, Using T test to test the significance of the items included

in the study .it appears that P less than 0.01 which means that results are significant.

### Conclusion

The main purpose of this research was to measure the staff member's e-readiness for e-learning at faculties of tourism and hotels in Fayoum, Menia, Alex. and Helwan. one dimensions we included in our analysis: competence scale, Male and female have Results have showed that there is a shortage and insufficient e-readiness for staff member in technical skills at these faculties so the study recommends that for effective e-learning the staff member have to improve their technical skills to meet the requirements of e-learning system .

### Future Research

Future research should extend to the entire faculties and institutions of tourism and hotels at higher education in Egypt to get better representation of the whole population.

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