



## **Effectiveness of E-learning from Teachers’ Perspectives of the Private Universities in Kurdistan Region- Iraq**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Technology has a crucial role in different aspects of everyday life, and its importance for education is no different. Technology is swiftly changing the way students learn and teachers teach. There are reasons behind the growth of E-learning industry in higher education, both from the institutions’ and students’ perspectives. E-learning is an attractive alternative with the limited capacity of existing classrooms at academic institutions and the prohibitive cost of building new facilities. This study examines how effective the e-learning process is through the teachers' perspective at the private universities in Kurdistan. An online survey was utilized to collect data and information, involving 100 participants from the targeted universities. The study hypothesizes that teachers’ background has the least impact on the level of the barriers. This study stimulates further obstacles in implementing the E-learning process in higher education, such as the lack of student’s capacity to use ICT tools. In addition to the lack of engagement between the teachers and students during the implementation of E-learning process.

## **1. Introduction**

The World Health Organization (WHO) reported COVID-19, a global emergency on January 30th, 2020 and a worldwide pandemic on March 11th, 2020. As for now, COVID-19 is striking 213 countries and territories (WHO, 2020). Many countries have applied strict health measures such as; social distancing and a curfew policy in response to COVID-19. Certainly, this pandemic has had and still has a significant effect on the education system in general. As of March 12th, 2020, 46 countries in five different continents have declared school closures and 26 of these countries have fully closed schools nationwide (Huang, Liu, Tlili, Yang, & Wang, 2020). The WHO declared that The first four cases in Kurdistan were confirmed on Sunday, 1<sup>st</sup> of March 2020, the cases were from a family returned from Iran. The Data now has been raised to 40,558 cases with a total death of 1,495 cases. In Kurdistan, the Government has implemented mitigating measures in the educational instructions such as schools, colleges, and universities since late February 2020, and restricted community mobilization in an attempt to prevent the spread of the disease and keeps promoting an agenda of work from home, a study from home and worship at home.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO) COVID-19 has been declared a global public health emergency of international concern on 30th January 2020, and as a pandemic on 11th March 2020. COVID-19 is an infectious disease, and a recently found out coronavirus causes it. From the beginning, this disease was known as '2019 novel coronavirus' or '2019 ncov'.

The education process has been stopped since the announcement of CAOVID 19 in Kurdistan and all the educational institutes had been stopped by the authorities. (Kaur, 2020) stated that Coronavirus restricted the experts to re-take into account the former method of face to face learning and they began considering distance teaching as a feasible alternative to fill the classroom void for a period of three to four months, in this way diminishing the danger of spreading the virus among the students before the traditional activities are continued.

To deal with Education process in Kurdistan, teaching and learning have been maintained remotely by applying Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), using different resources and platforms to continually support teachers and



students. Electronic learning (e-learning) has been taken seriously ever since and considered the best possible alternative to continue the teaching and learning process during the pandemic of Coronavirus.

However, the consideration and implementation of e-learning are not always running smoothly and effectively. During the COVID-19 pandemic, schools and universities have quickly approached e-learning. Hence, schools or institutions that have limited or nil experience with e-learning and schools that have not prepared e-learning resources or platforms will face difficulties, especially when teachers are not quite familiar with the process of online applications (Zaharah & Kirilova, 2020).

### **1.1 Purpose of the study:**

The study aims:

- 1- To know the eligibility of online teaching during the COVID 19 pandemic among the private university facilitators in the ministry of Higher Education in the Kurdistan region.
- 2- To shed light on the challenges and struggles of online teaching confronted by Higher Education facilitators and possible ways of overcoming them.

### **1.2 Method**

The essential aim behind this research is to highlight the overall attitudes of facilitators of the private universities in the Kurdistan region towards the obligatory digital and distance teaching university curriculum in the time of Coronavirus (COVID-19). The sample of the study tackles 10 private Universities within the region: (100) the teachers; (49) female and (51) male participants. The participants included PhD holder (N= 26 %) as well as M.A. holders (N= 74, %) facilitators. All the participants in the survey were currently applied E-teaching with the usage of different digital tools recommended by the administration of their universities.

## **2. Data collection and Data resources**

An online google form questionnaire was used to collect data. The first reason for using an online questionnaire was the suitability of the teachers' timeline work during the pandemic. Furthermore, the data in the online questionnaire were easy to be

registered and collected and at the same time to be accessed through different

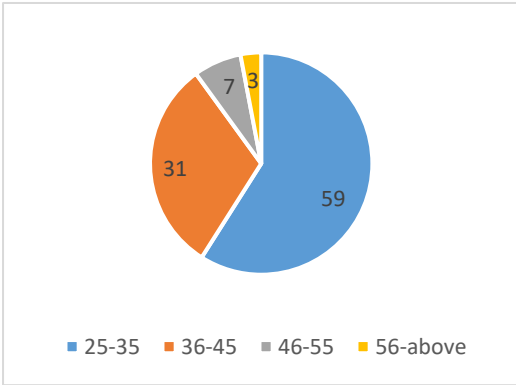


Figure 1: Age

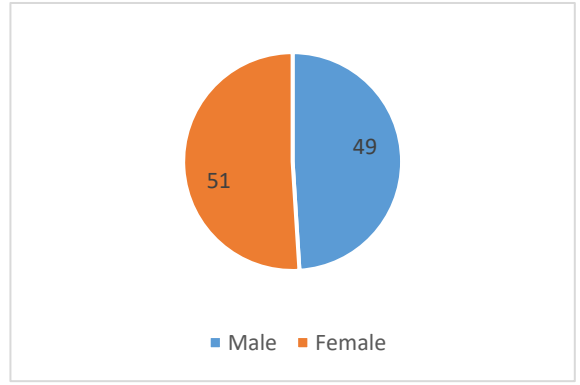


Figure 2: Gender

devices, including smartphones (Fraenkel et al., 2011). The questionnaires were distributed and sent to the lecturers after universities had been closed and they had been instructed to use online learning. The questionnaires were approached through Viber groups, Edmodo, the official Facebook group for Kurdistan University lecturers, and also official emails of the universities. Proper revisions and adjustments were made dependent on their remarks and suggestions.

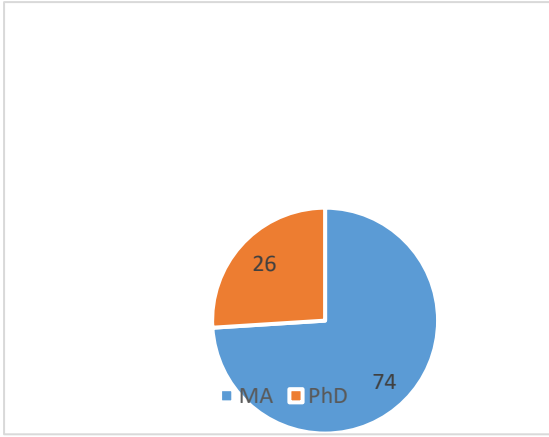


Figure 3: Certificate

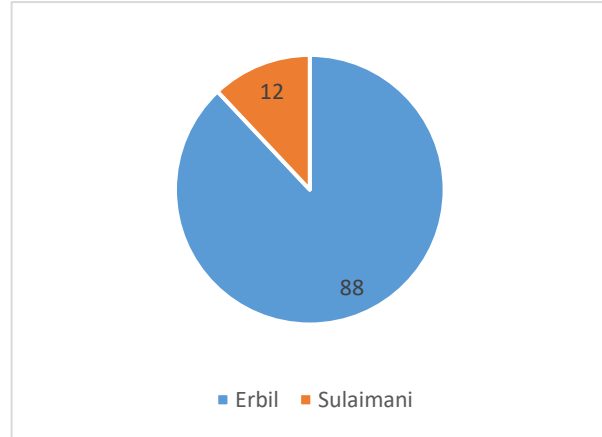


Figure 4: Governorate

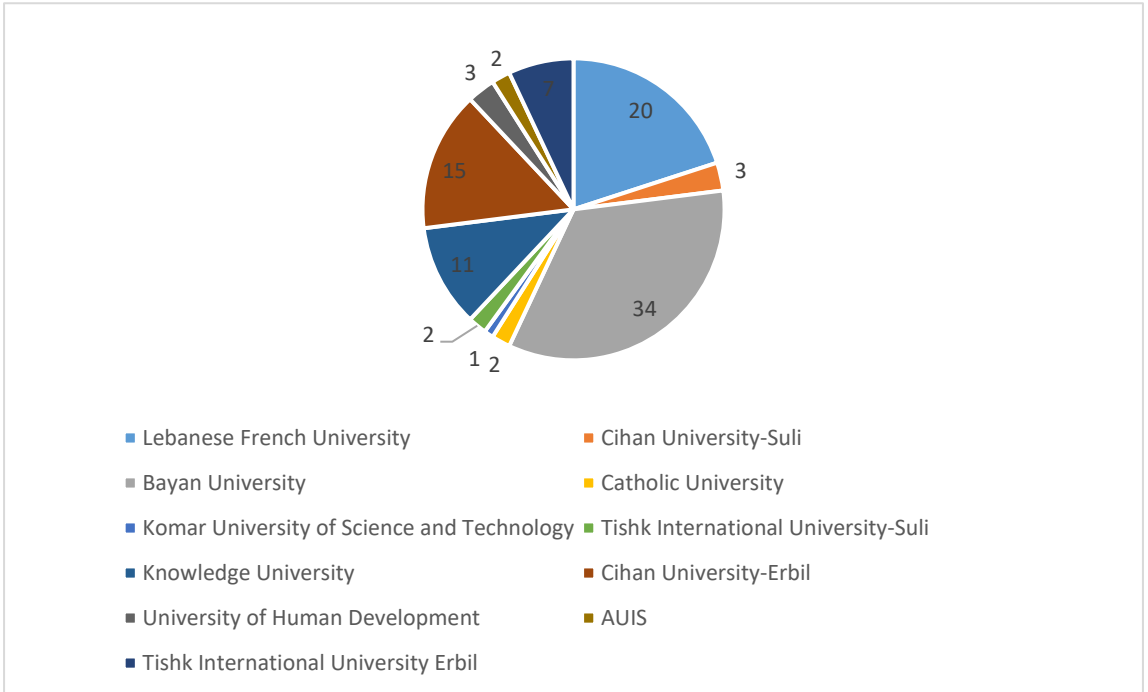


Figure 5: List of the targeted Universities

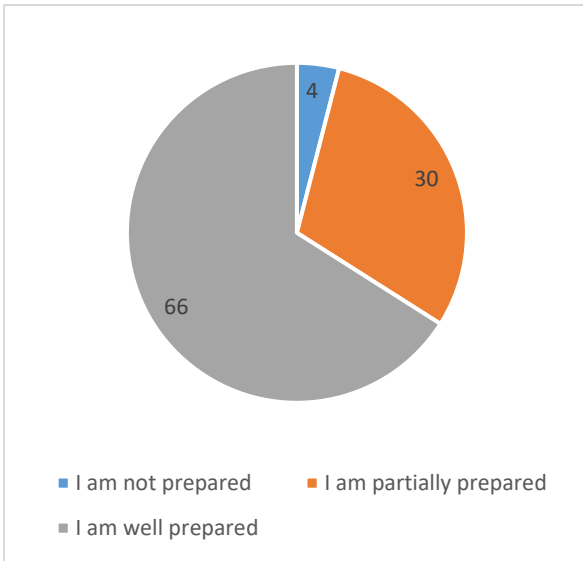


Figure 6: As a teacher, are you well prepared to conduct online lectures?

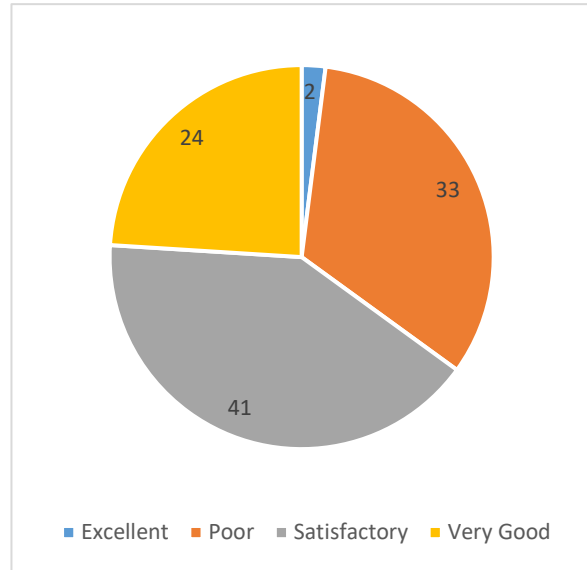


Figure 7: How do you rate the effectiveness of the E-learning process in general?

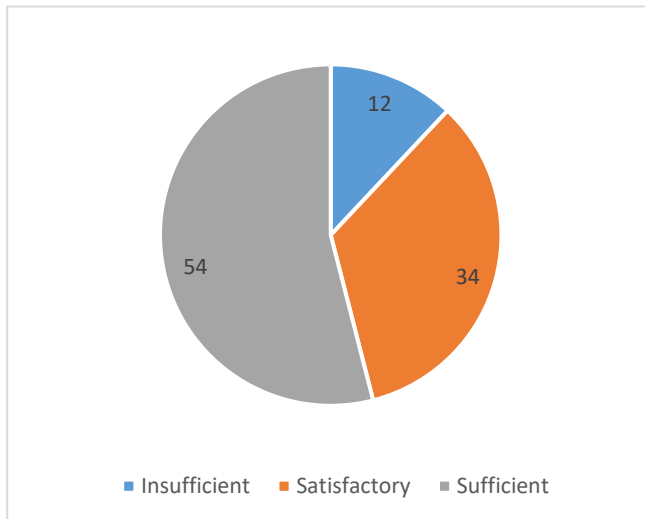


Figure 8: As a teacher, how would you rate your capacity to manage E-learning process in terms of your software skills?

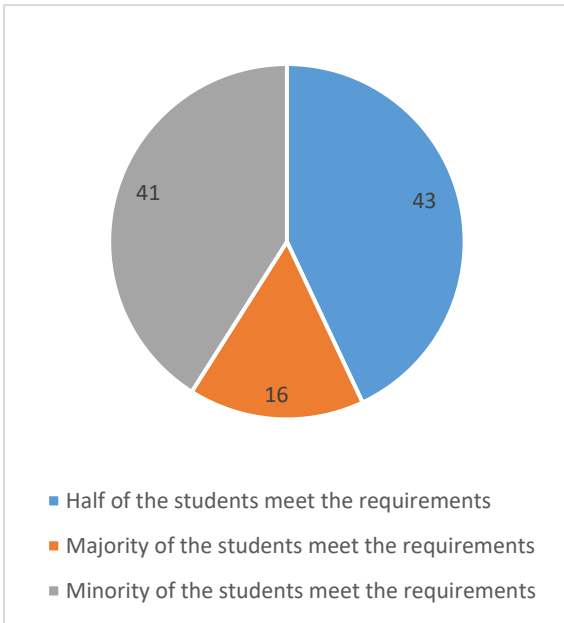


Figure 9: To your knowledge, do your students meet all the requirements to participate actively in the E-learning process?

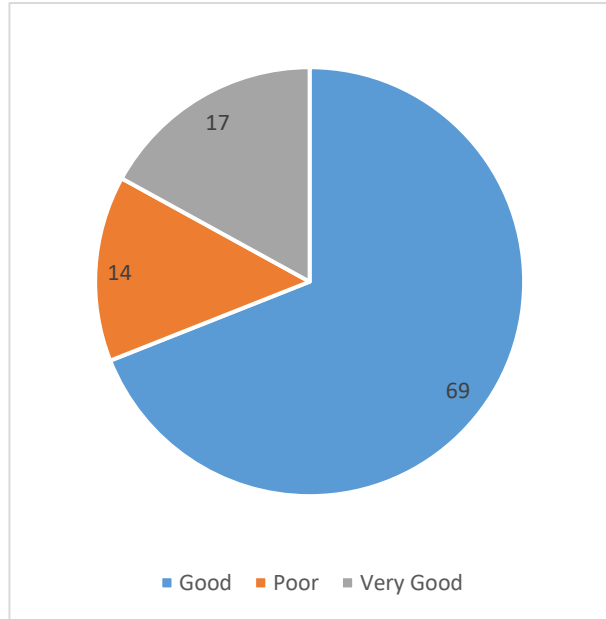


Figure 10: How would you rate/assess the general capacity of your university for the E-learning process?

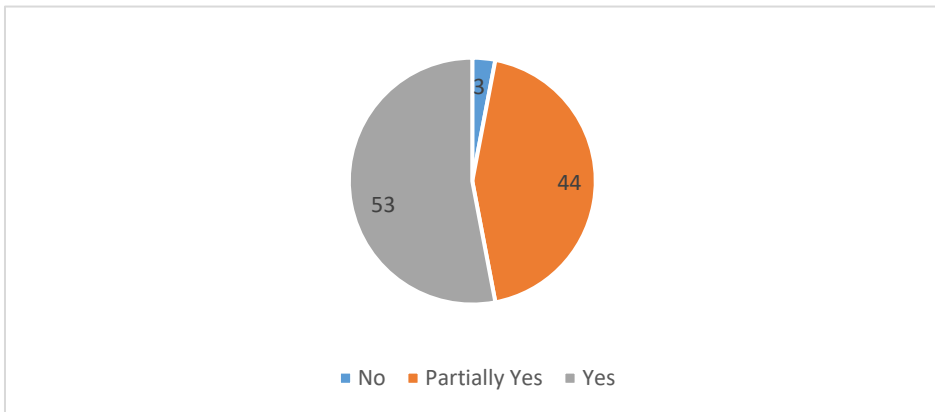


Figure 11- Has your university provided you with the required guidance and training for the E-learning process?

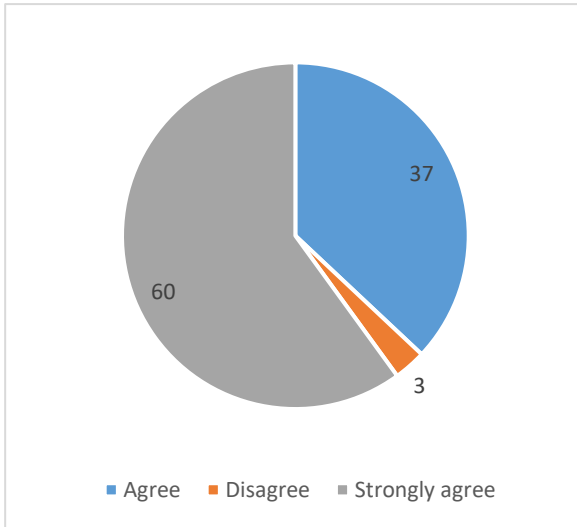


Figure 12- Teaching on campus is much more effective and productive than E-learning?

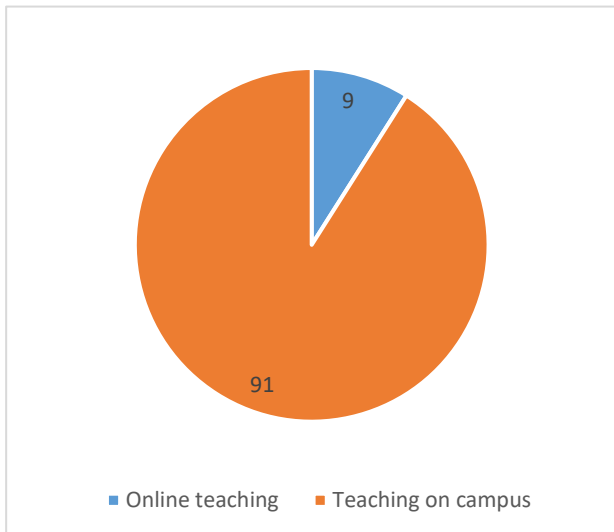


Figure 13- If you are given the choice of teaching on campus or teaching online, which one you will choose?



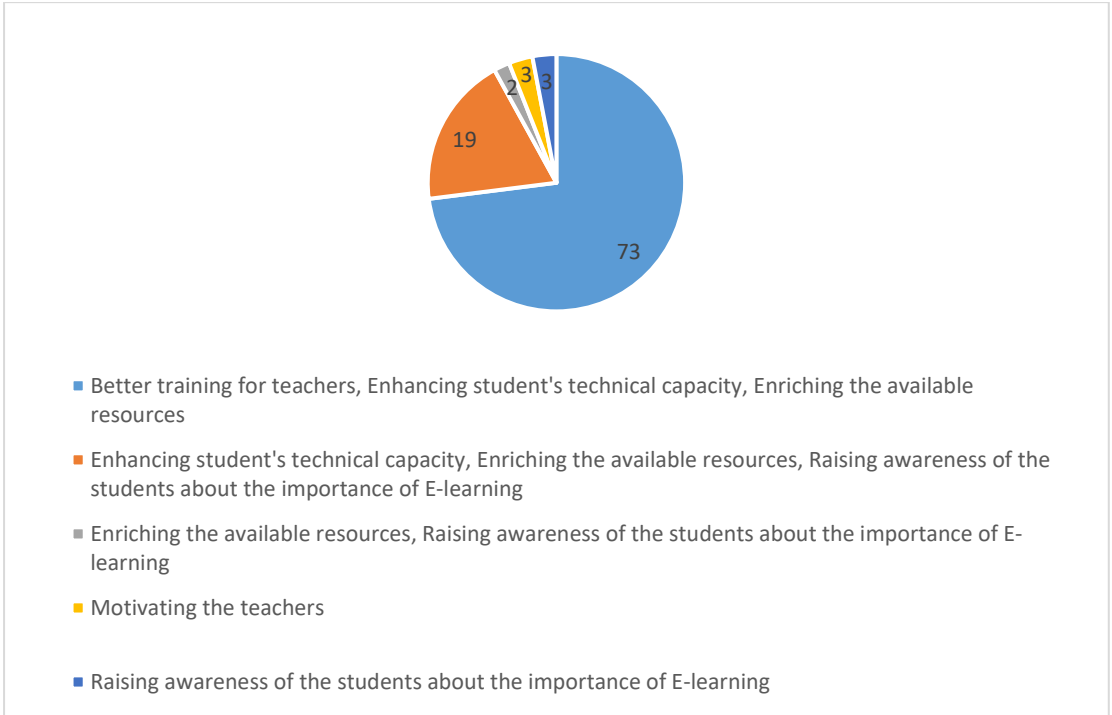


Figure 14- In your opinion, how can we improve e-learning process and make it more effective? Mention at least three ways

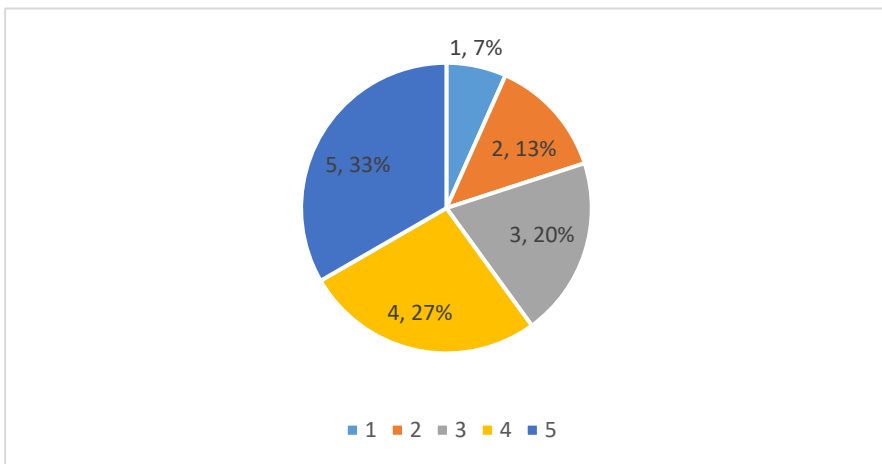


Figure 15- How would you rate the accountability level of the university towards E-learning process? 1 for worst and 5 for best

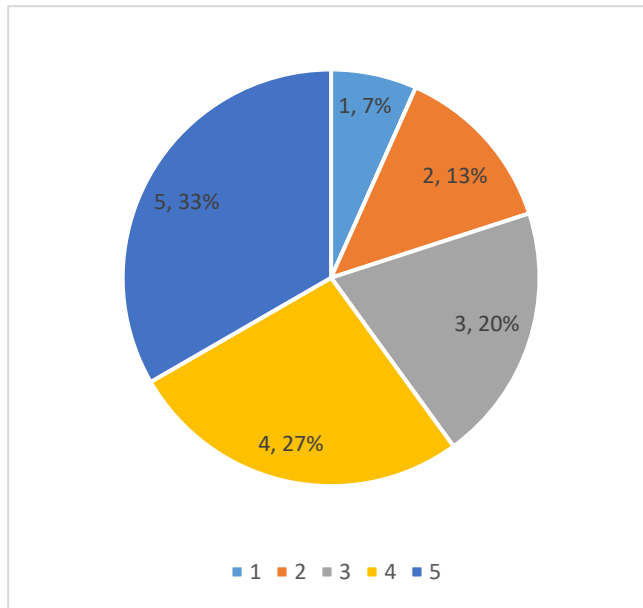


Figure 16- How would you rate the level accountability of yourself as a teacher towards E-learning process? 1 for worst and 5 for best

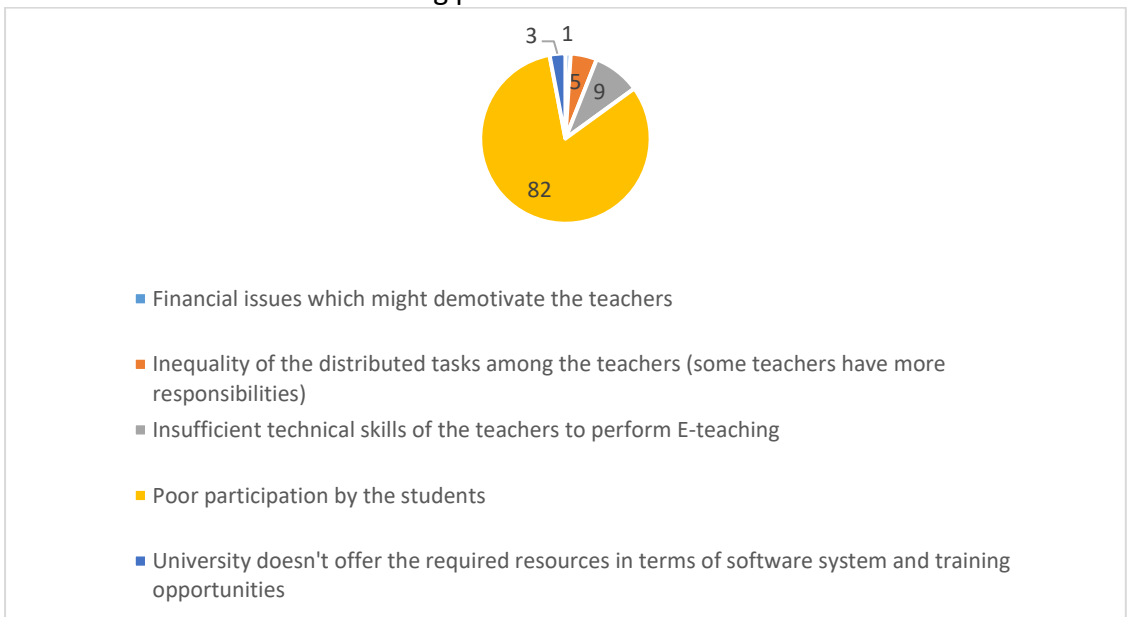


Figure 17- What might be some of the challenges faced by the teachers in the E-learning process?

### **2.1 Discussion and result:**

The participants were asked to identify at least the top three advantages of the e-learning process. To them, the top advantages include safety education during the COVID period because people can keep social distance and even get education remotely. Also, students can have access to education anywhere and get information from different sources/countries. In addition to these, e-learning can be cost-effective and time-saving as well as enhance teachers' and students' ICT skills due to the continuous practice of the electronic education process.

Furthermore, Teachers were requested to mention top disadvantages of the E-Learning process. Their responses included concerns such as lack of students' participation, facing technical problems by both teachers and students, and poor internet connection in the country, which has a negative impact process. Other disadvantages include lack of controlling the classroom by the teachers, lack of engagement and interaction between the teacher and the students. In addition to the fact that the e-learning process is a more theoretical method rather than practical.

Finally, participants were asked to suggest possible ways for making the e-learning process more effective. They shared different recommendations such as raising students' awareness through training courses about the importance of the E-learning, providing technical support for students and making the E-Learning process compulsory. Moreover, they suggested creating a strong connection and using suitable online applications, training the teachers and the students in addition to the use of a unified system to monitor the process

### **3. Conclusion:**

Overall, this research concludes that the university lecturers at the private universities in KRG face problems with the implementation of E-learning as a tool of instruction in higher education. Their most significant challenges at the student level are students' engagement in the process and their lack of knowledge and awareness. It also sheds light on the correlation between the teachers and the students regarding the technical level of the e-learning platforms and the interaction between the two parties. These reasons and aforementioned points all make barriers and difficulties



for the teachers and the students to maintain a healthy and academic electronic study environment.

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## کارایی فیبروونی ئەلیکترۆنی لە تێروانیی مامۆستایانی زانکۆ تایبەتەکانی هەریمی کوردستانی عێراق.

### پوختە:

تەکنەلۆژیایا رۆلی کاریگەری هەیه لە لایەنە جیاوازهکانی ژبانی رۆژانەمان و گرنگییەکەشی بۆ پەروەردە جیاواز نیە. تەکنەلۆژیایا بەخێرای فیبروونی خوێندکاران و فێرکردنی مامۆستایان دەگۆرێت. زۆر هۆکار هەن لەپشت گەشەئەم بوارە فیبروونی ئەلیکترۆنی لە خوێندنی بالا، لە روانگە دامەزراوە ئەکادیمی و لەروانگە خوێندکاریش. بەهۆی سنورداری توانای پۆلهکانی ئیستا لە دامەزراو ئەکادیمیەکان و تێچووی بەرزى دابین کردنی ئامرازە نوێیەکان، فیبروونی ئەلیکترۆنی جێگەرەوہیەکی سەرنجراکێشە. ئامانجی ئەم توێژینەوہیە هەلسەنگاندنی کاریگەری فیبروونی ئەلیکترۆنییە لە گۆشەنیگای مامۆستایانی زانکۆکانی کەرتی تایبەت لە کوردستان. شیوازی پرسیاری ئۇنلاین بەکارهاتووہ بۆ کۆکردنەوہی داتا و زانیارییەکان. ۱۰۰ بەشداربوو لەخۆدەگرێت لە زانکۆ بەئامانج گیراوہکان. ئەم توێژینەوہی دای دادەنێت کە پێشبینی مامۆستاگان کەمتەری کاریگەری هەیه لەسەر ئاستی ئاستەنگەکان. ئەم توێژینەوہی تەگەرە زیاتریش دەوروزینیت لەپرووی شیوازی جێبەجێکردنی پرۆسە فیبروونی ئەلیکترۆنییە لە خوێندنی بالا وەکو بیتوانایی خوێندکار لە بەکارهێنانی ئامرازە ئەلیکترۆنییەکانی ئالوگۆپی زانیاریی. سەرەپای ئاویتەنەبوونی نیوان مامۆستا و خوێندکار لەماوہی جێبەجێکردنی پرۆسە فیبروونی ئەلیکترۆنی.

### کلیله وشە:

فیبروونی ئەلیکترۆنی، تەکنەلۆژیایا، ئاستەنگەکان، ئامرازە ئەلیکترۆنییەکانی ئالوگۆپی زانیاری

## فاعلية التعلم الإلكتروني من وجهة نظر الأساتيد في الجامعات الخاصة في إقليم كردستان العراق

### الملخص:

تلعب التكنولوجيا دورًا حاسمًا في جوانب مختلفة من الحياة اليومية ، ولا تختلف أهميتها في التعليم. تعمل التكنولوجيا على تغيير طريقة تعلم الطلاب والطريقة التي يدرس بها المعلمون. هناك العديد من الأسباب وراء نمو صناعة التعلم الإلكتروني في التعليم العالي ، سواء من وجهة نظر المؤسسات أو الطلاب. مع القدرة المحدودة للفصول الدراسية الموجودة في المؤسسات الأكاديمية والتكلفة الباهظة لبناء مرافق جديدة ، يعد التعلم الإلكتروني بديلاً جذاباً. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى فحص مدى فعالية عملية التعلم الإلكتروني من منظور المعلمين في الجامعات الخاصة في كردستان. تم استخدام طريقة استطلاع عبر الإنترنت لجمع البيانات والمعلومات ، بمشاركة 100 مشارك من الجامعات المستهدفة. تفترض الدراسة أن خلفية المعلمين لها أقل تأثير على مستوى الحواجز. تشير هذه الدراسة المزيد من العقبات فيما يتعلق بطريقة تنفيذ عملية التعلم الإلكتروني في التعليم العالي مثل عدم قدرة الطالب على استخدام أدوات تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات. بالإضافة إلى عدم المشاركة بين المعلمين والطلاب أثناء تنفيذ عملية التعلم الإلكتروني.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** لتعلم الإلكتروني ، التكنولوجيا ، الحواجز ، أدوات تكنولوجيا المعلومات والاتصالات.