Students' Attitudes towards Blended Learning at Al-Quds Open University*

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Abstract:

This study aimed at investigating the effect of using a blended learning strategy on students' attitudes toward blended learning at Al-Quds Open University. To achieve this objective the two researchers designed a 42-item questionnaire to collect information about students' attitudes toward the blended learning. The questionnaire was administered on a purposeful sample consisted of forty-two English language students at Al-Quds Open University in Nablus Branch in the academic year 2013/2014. The data was collected, then, was analyzed using (SPSS) to answer the questions of the study. Means, frequencies, standard deviations, One-Way ANOVA and Two-Way ANOVA were used. The results showed that the total degree of students' responses towards blended learning scored a high level of attitudes. The results also revealed that there were no statistically significant differences at (α =0.05) on the attitudes of learners due to age and place of residence and to the interaction between them as well. In the light of the results, some recommendations were suggested.

Keywords: Blended Learning, Students' Attitudes, ELT Methodology 2. Quds Open University.

اتجاهات الطلبة نحو التعلم المدمج في جامعة القدس المفتوحة

ملخص:

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى تقصي أثر استخدام إستراتيجية التعلم المدمج على اتجاهات الطلبة نحو التعلم المدمج في جامعة القدس المفتوحة. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف، قام الباحثان بتصميم استبانه من اثنتين وأربعين فقرة لجمع المعلومات حول اتجاهات الطلبة نحو التعليم المدمج. ومن ثم تم توزيع الاستبانة على العينة المقصودة المكونة من اثنين وأربعين طالباً في تخصص اللغة انجليزية في جامعة القدس المفتوحة/ فرع نابلس للسنة الدراسية 2013–2014. ثم تم تحليل البيانات بعد جمعها باستخدام برنامج التحليل الإحصائي (SPSS) وذلك للإجابة عن أسئلة الدراسة، واستخدمت المتوسطات الحسابية والتكرارات وكذلك الانحرافات المعيارية إضافة إلى التحليل الإحصائي الثنائي . وقد أظهرت النتائج أن مجمل إجابات الطلبة بخصوص التعلم المدمج كانت إيجابية وحصلت على نسبة عالية من القبول، ولم يظهر فرق ذو دلالة إحصائية عند مستوى الدالة (α =0.05) على اتجاهات الطلبة تعزى للعمر ومكان السكن والتفاعل بينهما . وفي ضوء هذه النتائج قدمت بعض التوصيات.

كلمات مفتاحية: التعلم المدمج، اتجاهات الطلبة، مقرر طرائق تدريس اللغة الانجليزية (2)، جامعة القدس المفتوحة .

Introduction:

During the past three decades, education in general, and modes of learning in particular, are changing and developing dramatically leaving major impacts on the educational process as a whole. As the pace of change in technology is accelerating in today's information and communication world, people, in general and learners, in particular, can choose the time, the place, and the delivery system they find accessible and convenient. Schrum (2011) avers that technological advances have exceeded even the most optimistic expectations. She also states that technology has had a positive impact on education, even if it has not yet resulted in wholesale educational transformation. Hence, introducing Information & Communication Technologies (ICT) into education ,the way we exchange and interact with information, how information informs and shapes us , methods and trends we adopt to teach and learn and other educational issues are continuously being raised here and there. As a result of such heated issues , new modes and trends have emerged to cope with such ongoing changes in the field of (ICT). Examples of these trends and modes are Open Learning, Distance Education, E-learning and Blended Learning. These trends, on the other hand, have expanded and shifted their focus to the extent that a large number of academic institutions are now concerned with blended learning programs. One of these institutions is Al-Quds Open University (QOU) in Palestine which believes that the time has come to meet the needs and expectations of its learners who are working in the context of increased responsibilities and time pressures. The

number of the students at QOU in the academic year 2014/2015 amounts to 67,000 students attending 21 branches in all of Palestine including the Gaza strip. Under these conditions, there is an apparent, compelling demand and a dire need to shift from face-to-face meetings and lectures to ones that involve a more flexible blend of face-to-face and e-learning activities. One of these trends recently applied is blended learning which aims at skillfully combining e- learning with face to face instruction so as to create a positive experience for both of the instructors and the students.

As a result of the frequent use of blended learning with its well-known popularity, especially in the last two decades, some educators now claim that blended learning has the potential to go hand in hand with the philosophy of distance and open learning to the extent that blended learning can supplement the objectives of such distance and open learning in many fields. The question then is: what does blended learning mean and involve?

To begin with, Valiathan (2002) stated that blended learning combines online learning with face-to-face learning. The goal of blended learning is to provide the most efficient and effective instruction experience by combining delivery modalities. Therefore, the term blended learning is used to describe a solution that combines several different delivery methods, such as collaboration software, Web-based courses, the Educator Performance and Support System (EPSS), and knowledge management practices. Blended learning is also used to describe learning that mixes various event-based activities, including face-to-face classes/meetings, live e-learning, and self-paced instruction. Five years later , Allan (2007) defines blended learning as a mixture of face- to- face and e-learning' or 'the use of different internet based tools including chat rooms, discussion groups, podcasts and self-assessment tools to support a traditional course. .

In this respect, Sharpe et al. (2006) offered three distinct models for the purpose of thinking about blended learning from a historical perspective. The first model is blended learning as a supplement to traditional programs, e.g. the provision of additional materials and guidance through a virtual learning environment, e-mailing PowerPoint slides to delegates, use of online communication tools such as chat rooms or discussion boards, use of social software such as wiki or blogs, use of online quizzes, or additional resources provided via CD-ROMs or DVDs. In such a model we can notice that the face-to –face activities encompass e-activities or e-resources and vice versa. The second model is a transformative approach where new programs are designed or previously existing programs are redesigned to integrate a wide range of approaches to learning and teaching relevant to the learners and the context of learning. The third model is the learner-led one, which is holistic and typified by the use of a wide range of technologies, including mobile phones, iPods ,emails, social networking software such as MySpace or Facebook, weblogs and message systems.

These are tools that are commonly used on day-to-day basis, e.g. for social reasons, and they are often the preferred communication tools of different groups of learners. According to Moebs and Weibelzahl (2006), blended learning (BL) or hybrid learning describes a learning environment that either combines teaching methods, delivery methods, two media formats or a mixture of all these. It also refers to the integrated learning activities such as a mixture of online and face-to-face learning. Blended learning , however, is usually referred to as a hybrid model at university practices, which are courses in which a significant portion of the learning activities have been moved online, and time traditionally spent in the classroom is reduced but not eliminated. The main objective behind that is to merge the best features of in-class teaching practices with the best accessible features of online learning to promote active, Self-Directed Learning (SDL) opportunities for students with added flexibility (Garnham & Kaleta, 2002).

In a nutshell, blended learning is based on a wise and balanced rated combination of traditional learning with web-based online approaches, which in turn, involves a combination of media and tools deployed in an e-learning environment and the combination of a number of pedagogical approaches. Such combination necessitates mixing various event-based activities and tasks. To this extent, one might state that blended learning

can be applied to a very broad range of teaching and learning situations, particularly language teaching especially when the teaching situation involves a parallel self-study components such as chat rooms, discussion boards, PowerPoint slides, wiki, blogs, online quizzes, CD-ROMs or DVDs, iPods, emails, social networking software such as MySpace or Facebook, weblogs and message systems and even smart mobile phones. The key to blended learning is selecting the right combination of media that will drive the highest business impact for the lowest possible cost.

However, for the purpose of this study, "blended learning" will be used, for consistency objectives, to mean a supplement to traditional course that employs a combination of resources and involves the provision of additional materials and guidance to enable learners to optimize their learning experience. This combination includes the following : face-to-face lectures, traditional materials (textbook), self-paced instruction, e-mailing, PowerPoint slides, audio and video resources and YouTube materials.

Exploring the advantages and the experiences gained through blending learning in different contexts, in addition to exploring learners' attitudes ,necessitate an urgent need to review some relevant studies and experiments in different contexts.

Alseweed (2013) aimed to investigate the effects of the traditional learning, blended learning and virtual classes learning on university students' achievement and attitudes of 34 male students studying at the English Language Program, Qassim University. The results showed significant differences in students' attitudes in favor of blended learning.

Kavadella, et al (2011) aimed to develop and implement a blended course on undergraduate oral radiology and evaluate it by comparing its educational effectiveness to that of a conventional course. The course was attended by two groups of final-year students, who were taught by either the conventional face-to-face methodology or the blended learning methodology. Students answered a series of questionnaires, before and after following the course, regarding their perceptions, attitudes and evaluation of the course. Additionally, they completed knowledge assessment tests and their grades (before and after the course) were compared. Results showed that students in the blended group performed significantly better than their colleagues of the conventional group in the post-course knowledge test, and female students of the blended group performed better than male students. Students evaluated high the course content, organization, educational material, and the blended group students additionally appreciated the course design and clarity of instructions. Students' attitudes towards elements of blended learning (effectiveness, motivation and active engagement) were very positive. Most of the blended group students (91%) evaluated it as helpful for summarizing the subject and clarifying difficult issues.

Adas and Abu Shmais (2011) investigated An-Najah National University students' perceptions towards Blended Learning environment using traditional methods in addition to OCC (Online Course Container) to aid EFL learners improve their four language skills. The study included (92) students enrolled in a general English course (10103) offered at the language Center at the university. A questionnaire was designed to measure the students' attitudes towards BL (Blended Learning) using (OCC) in terms of: the process, ease of use, and content. The study concludes that in general the students' attitudes towards BL were positive in terms of the three domains. Moreover, it reflects the students' internet and IT skills and interests due to internet availability and accessibility.

Al-Saai, Al-Kaabi, and Al-Muftah (2011) examined forty -three Qatari university female students' achievement tests and their attitudes towards blended learning and traditional learning. Although results showed no significant difference in the students' achievement tests scores, there was significant difference in their attitudes towards the teaching approach in favor of blended learning.

Young et al (2010) developed a blended learning model for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) through exploring staff and student experiences .The blended learning model consisted of core modules and a series of further specialist learning options. The model

aimed to make full creative use of the interactive potential of on-line media and maximize learning opportunities. Findings indicated that staff views of blended learning in the beginning were more negative than positive. Concerns about blended learning included the loss of relationships with students and the time-consuming nature of providing on-line learning. Findings also revealed that over half the respondents agreed that they felt confident about on-line learning at the beginning of the course; this increased to 75% of respondents by the end of the course. Most students accessed materials from home and work, with home access the most popular. Regarding resources which were seen as most useful were: links to web materials; multiple choice quizzes, course information; the introductory exercise; PDFs; Power-points; 'drag and drop' self tests; image labeling exercises; images; 'fill the gap exercises: case- studies; and self test questions with answers. Finally, the majority of respondents agreed that studying on-line provided useful skills for continuing learning and was more convenient for part-time study.

Palacios and Gascón (2010) tested a model where the blended learning and the attitude towards this are antecedent factors to students Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) strategies. The study was carried out with freshmen and sophomores students in Computer Engineering, University Miguel Hernández, Spain. Students answered a three-page questionnaire. In general, the students viewed the flexible and self-management aspects of blended learning method positively, but with some attitudinal differences. So, the attitude towards blended learning is a construct with potential to facilitate learning within the SRL framework. Results showed that attitudes towards blended learning and the use of blended learning methodology are significantly related to the use of SRL strategies.

Wieling and Hofman (2010) investigated to what extent a blended learning configuration of face-to-face lectures, online on-demand video recordings of the face-to-face lectures and the offering of online quizzes with appropriate feedback has an additional positive impact on the performance of the students compared to the traditional face-to-face course approach. (474) students (161 men and 313 women) of a course on European Law participated in the experiment. Students who attended few lectures had more benefit from viewing online lectures than students who attended many lectures. It was found that the regression analysis did not show a significant effect of automated feedback on student performance. Offering recordings of face-to-face lectures was an easy extension of a traditional course and was of practical importance, because it enabled students who were often absent from the regular face-to-face lectures to be able to improve their course grade by viewing the lectures online.

Alshwiah(2009) investigated the effects of a proposed blended learning strategy in teaching medical vocabulary at Arabian Gulf University (AGU) on some outcomes of the learning process. The study attempted to assess the effects of the proposed strategy on pre-medical students' achievement, attitudes towards the English language, and their satisfaction with the unit. The study sample consisted of 50 students randomly divided into two groups; (22) students in the control group and 28 in the experimental group. The research instruments included: AGU English language unit exams in English (151), attitude towards English language and satisfaction with the unit scales that were developed by the researcher. Data analysis revealed that the experimental group members demonstrated high degree of satisfaction toward the online unit in three dimensions of the scale and medium satisfaction in one dimension.

Brooks (2009) examined faculty attitudes toward a blended learning environment which included traditional face to face interaction as well as an Internet component . A total of 107 university faculty members in various degree programs completed the Faculty Attitudes Towards Technology-based Distance Education survey on blended learning. Results showed that faculty with more positive perceptions of educational technology, and women tended to have positive attitudes toward a blended learning environment. The qualitative results confirmed the quantitative results in that faculty with more positive attitudes toward a blended learning environment also tended to have a positive perception of educational technology, School administrators and teachers should find the results of this study useful in recruiting and training teachers for blended

courses because the relationships between educational technology, personal incentives, and attitudes have been clarified.

Wan Ahmad et al (2009) aimed to determine the influence of blended learning approach on students' perceptions towards learning application of integration. A total of 30 engineering students were involved in the study. A set of questionnaire was given to evaluate the students' attitudes and learning perceptions. The results showed that students demonstrated positive perceptions using the blended learning approach and the use of BL in teaching this topic has positive feedback on students' learning. This result showed that the adoption of a Blended Learning approach resulted in an improved students' performance. In addition, majority of the students (87.5%) indicated that the teaching methods helped them to learn the topic better.

Budka et al (2008) developed strategies to include selected online learning tools, methods, and technologies into the teaching and learning practices of undergraduate social anthropology students at the Faculty of Social Sciences of the University of Vienna. To achieve this objective, a learning environment has been created, which has been tested and evaluated in the scope of several blended learning scenarios. The results showed that it is necessary to develop flexible and individual blended learning scenarios by using e-learning tools, which can be combined and integrated into didactical concepts and models. Processes of identifying strategies, implementing tools and methods and evaluating scenarios and models for e-learning in the social sciences need to be planned and conducted openly and holistically by integrating also t he critical voices.

Polding (2007) examined the effect of integrating e-learning resources into existing law courses at the Oxford Institute of Legal Practice. Resources used included open source options, such as Moodle, webcams, podcasts, interactive noticeboards, chat rooms and e-portfolios. The findings concluded that keeping staff engaged with the process of integration is the most important aspect of e-learning, and that the staff felt confident and supported throughout the entire cycle. This did more to keep them engaged and motivated than having someone outside their course who might not necessarily understand the way the subject fits together. Finally, it was concluded that if tutors are motivated and engaged, then the process of change can run more smoothly and will ultimately produce a better result.

Schober et al (2006) introduced a survey of a blended learning approach called Vienna E-Lecturing (VEL), implemented in the course Research Methods and Evaluation at the University of Vienna, Austria.The Internet-based course lasted two semesters and was composed of 10 online learning modules and (11) face-to-face meetings (including tutorials). In the 2004/2005 academic year, (50) students taking part in the VEL administration of Research Methods and Evaluation were divided into (10) groups of 5 students each. **The evaluation of VEL was organized in a treatment control- group design and has three levels**:

1. data collection integrated into the modules, which is to deliver the foundation for the optimization of the modules as well as their individual building blocks;
2. an effectiveness analysis through comprehensive collection of subject-related and motivational personality characteristics.
3. qualitative interviews with all group members. It was concluded that VEL should be developed to a well-documented concept that helps to improve teaching on the basis of central principles of instructional and motivational psychology.

Kupetz & Ziegenmeyer (2005) proposed a blended learning concept for a university teacher training course for teachers of English. The concept aimed at purposeful learning using different methods and activities, various traditional and electronic media, learning spaces covering contact and distance learning, and task-based learning modules that begin with multimedia-based case stories.The activities included classroom recordings and multimedia-based case stories, an electronic interview with an expert who is an experienced grammar school teacher, and mini-practices, which implement micro teaching in a classroom setting. This combination was highly

appreciated by learners and represented the concept of integrated interactive e-learning and contact learning.

Grandzol (2004) investigated students' responses to blended learning and traditional delivery methods The results found that students' perceptions in terms of enthusiasm, preparation, grading, and clarity of instruction were similar for the two sections. The results revealed no significant differences between the students .

Purpose of the Study

The overall objective of this study was to investigate how traditional teaching methods, based on face-to-face lectures, and a supplement environment that employs a combination of resources are blended in an English major course entitled "English Language Teaching Methodology (2)" that is being taught at Al-Quds Open University in Palestine since 1992.

The study, in particular, aimed to investigate the effect of using the proposed blended learning strategy on students' attitudes toward blended learning at Al-Quds Open University in the second semester of the academic year 2013/2014 in addition to investigating the effect of age and place of residence on these attitudes.

Questions of the study

1. **What are the attitudes of ELT Methodology (2) students towards blended learning?**
2. **Are there any statistical significant differences between the students' attitudes due to age and place of residence?**

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are hoped to be useful for the instructors who teach this course in the 21 branches of QOU in particular and other instructors who teach similar courses in other universities. Furthermore, the findings might be helpful to the decision makers at QOU who can benefit from the results to adapt and improve the quality of delivering the instructional materials that suit the students of the open education with their own unique characteristics and conditions. The findings are also hoped to bridge the gap between theory and practice with regard to teaching methodologies and add to the growing body of literature in this promising area especially in the fields of using non-traditional methodologies, programs and syllabus design.

Materials and Instrument

The main objective of this study was to investigate the effect of using a blended learning strategy in teaching ELT Methodology (2) on students attitudes toward blended learning at Al-Quds Open University in the second semester of the academic year 2013/2014. To achieve this objective, the researchers designed a (42)-item questionnaire to collect information about the two possible predictors (age and place of residence) and the predicted or dependent variable (students attitudes towards the blended learning).

Section one of the questionnaire gathered information regarding age and students' place of residence. Section two was built to measure students' attitudes towards blended learning.ELT Methodology (2) learners were asked to rate their agreement with the items on a (5)-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to (5) (strongly disagree).

Validity and Reliability of the Questionnaire

To ensure both the validity and content validity of the questionnaire, it was revised and validated by a jury of four EFL instructors from QOU and An-Najah University and e-learning specialists from the Palestinian Ministry of Education to rate each item for clarity and appropriateness in measuring the students' attitudes. The questionnaire, then, was piloted on (10) students with similar level of learning . The purpose of the pilot study was to determine whether the questions were comprehensible and can be interpreted by the students as they are intended to measure. The students who were involved in the pilot study were excluded from the actual research. The respondents' comments and the jury's suggestions were taken into consideration to modify and improve the questionnaire's content and wordings by omitting, adding or rephrasing items bringing

the number of items into (42).

The reliability of the questionnaire, calculated using Cronbach Alpha formula, was (0.83) which is acceptable for the purpose of the study.

ELT Methodology 2

English Language Teaching Methodology (2) is a practical course, based on ELT Methodology (I) and following it. While, ELT(1)emphasizes the notion of competence, ELT (2) emphasizes the notion of performance. Both of them are studied by senior students who major in TEFL at QOU branches and centers. The course aims at providing the learners with the knowledge and skills necessary for teaching the various classroom teaching learning activities. This includes preparing supplementary materials, A/V. aids, short -term plans, long-term plans and classroom tests. According to the course objectives, learners learn how to share experiences, teach each other, evaluate each other, and criticize each other . They also learn how to be competent observers, how to use technology equipments including different types of visual aids, software, hardware ,LCD, PowerPoint presentations, music, games and role playing.

Additionally, the learners are given good opportunities to practice lesson planning, to prepare exams and worksheets, to design visual aids, to observe recorded classroom lessons and carry out actual classroom lessons . Moreover, the learners of this course are given the chance to practice the so-called "micro-teaching" through teaching micro lessons for about (10-15) minutes in front of their peers or classmates. Such microteaching is conducted in a simulated environment where the students receive prompt feedback "critique" from the teacher and their peer-students. This means that all students are given equal opportunities to practice and observe different styles of teaching that cover the four skills on the one hand, and the sub-skills, on the other hand, for the aim of furnishing these would-be teachers with meaningful content for reflection on their microteaching. With regard to the roles of the academic supervisors who teach this course, they try their best to give learners good models of teaching practices, they harness the trainees power of analysis. Furthermore, the supervisors are accustomed to using skill-specific observation schedules to provide an agenda for discussion and they harness the use of "critique ",mainly focusing on several points including correction of errors, clarity of exposition, nature and effect of questioning techniques, students' participation and the level of their motivation, feedback management, class management and using visual aids, handouts and technology.

Procedures

To achieve the objectives of the study, the researchers used a number of techniques, methods, procedures and different types of materials. For example:-

- Students were asked to watch a video entitled "Make a Difference" to participate in a class discussion that followed it.
- Students were sent a number of excellent YouTubes that cover the teaching of the four skills and the sub-skills to watch and to give their own feedback and comments.
- Students were given the opportunity to watch two videotaped model classes given by two student-teachers who took the practicum followed by one-hour discussion.
- The instructors sent the students PowerPoint slides via the university academic portal that summarize the seven units of the course to be prepared and presented by the students with the help of the instructors and discussed in the classroom.
- Students prepared PowerPoint presentations, cartoons, taped materials , visual aids and other resources to be used in the classroom during their microteaching experiences.
- A native speaker of English from Project Hope Organization /Nablus was invited by two students and interviewed in the class so as to give the students the opportunity to practice the listening and the speaking skills.
- Activating the Academic Portal of QOU mainly emailing and e-course to communicate with the instructor .
- Students were sent links to browse,watch, listen and read materials talking about this or that topic

- Providing learners with a CD which includes some dialogues and conversations
- class announcements via email and sending and receiving assignments.
- At the end of the course, students were given the modified questionnaire answer its statement and provide the required information.

Sampling

The sample consisted of forty-two English language students at Al-Quds Open University in Nablus Branch in the academic year 2013/2014. The respondents were varied in terms of age and place of residence as shown in Table (1) below.

Table (1)

Distribution of Sample According to Study Independent Variables

Variable	Class	Frequency	Percentage %
Age	21-25	37	88.1
	26-30	2	4.8
	31 or over	3	7.1
Place of residence	City	13	31.0
	Village	26	61.9
	Camp	3	7.1
Total		42	100%

Data Collection, Procedures and Analysis

Nearly at the end of the second semester of the year 2013-2014 and after the students practiced different types of activities, the final draft of the questionnaire was distributed to the sample during the last week of the semester to be filled out in one face-to-face lecture after giving them instructions on how to respond to the items . The data collected, then, analyzed using (SPSS) to provide answers to the questions of the study. Means, frequencies, standard deviations, and One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were used.

Results and Discussion

This study aimed at investigating the learners' attitudes towards the use of blended learning for teaching ELT methodology (2) at Al-Quds Open University in addition to identifying the effect of age and place of residence on theses attitudes. To achieve the study objectives, the researcher analyzed the data in accordance with the study **questions and the results were as follows:**

1. Results related to the First Question.

» What are the attitudes of ELT Methodology?

» students towards blended learning?

To answer this question, means and standard deviations were used as shown in Table (2) based on the following scale to represent the estimation level of students' responses.

4.5 - and more:Very High 4 – 4.49 :High
3-50–3.99:Medium

3- 3.49 : Low less than 3: Very Low

Table (2)

Means, Standard Deviations and Estimation Value of Learners Attitudes Towards Blended Learning

No.	No.in the tool	Item	Means	standard deviations	Estimation level
1.	13	BL helped me to gain a continuous learning experience.	4.33	0.47	High
2.	31	BL helped teachers add variety and interest to the teaching process.	4.26	0.79	High
3.	24	BL promoted instructors› ability to handle individual differences affectively.	4.21	0.68	High
4.	11	BL helped me manage instructional complexity by using supplementary materials and links.	4.19	0.77	High
5.	12	BL helped me learn how to manage my roles& responsibilities.	4.16	0.79	High

No.	No.in the tool	Item	Means	standard deviations	Estimation level
6.	17	The instructor was not the only source of information since learners working in groups could cooperate and manage their learning experience.	4.14	0.64	High
7.	16	The BL experience made me adapt my time , roles and resources to benefit from this approach	4.14	0.75	High
8.	4	BL helped me improve self-paced instruction.	4.14	0.47	High
9.	1	Blended learning (BL) helped me combine online with face to face learning.	4.11	0.77	High
10.	10	BL helped me know and use online resource links.	4.11	0.63	High
11.	27	BL developed my ability to exploit different teaching supports (blackboard, audio, video , etc.).	4.11	0.80	High
12.	25	BL provided me with an opportunity for time management.	4.11	0.63	High
13.	19	BL offered the instructor great flexibility and great effectiveness as it could choose the best medium for every objective.	4.11	0.80	High
14.	28	BL built my capacity to use simulations to make the classroom activity more relevant and real.	4.09	0.61	High
15.	20	In BL , the classroom was better for discussion , practicing, exercises and feedback activities.	4.09	0.90	High
16.	9	BL allowed me to use the classroom for effective learning.	4.07	0.63	High
17.	32	I would prefer to study with a blended approach to learning again.	4.04	0.73	High
18.	30	BL helped me reduce the level of fear and anxiety.	4.04	0.96	High
19.	26	BL provided me with ample opportunities to experiment with a variety of teaching strategies.	4.04	0.73	High
20.	8	BL allowed for using online learning in addition to live instruction.	4.04	0.66	High
21.	5	BL improved my satisfaction with self-study content.	4.04	0.73	High
22.	22	BL was good for online interaction and online feedback.	4.02	0.74	High
23.	23	BL gave room for improving online discussion.	4.02	0.74	High
24.	18	The BL environment provided for good communications between the instructor and the learner.	4.00	0.76	High
25.	2	BL provided me with an effective instruction experience.	4.00	0.76	High
26.	3	The Blended course combined several delivery methods , such as collaboration software, You Tubes and Web-based materials.	3.97	0.74	Medium
27.	6	BL provided several options for using relevant links.	3.95	0.62	Medium
28.	7	BL provided me with different ways to study the content.	3.95	0.82	Medium
29.	40	BL helped practice microteaching successfully.	3.92	0.92	Medium

No.	No.in the tool	Item	Means	standard deviations	Estimation level
30.	38	I felt confident about on- line learning by the end of the course.	3.88	0.94	Medium
31.	14	BL helped me meet instructor›s expectations carefully/easily.	3.85	0.84	Medium
32.	42	There were too many tasks and I could not do them all.	3.85	1.02	Medium
33.	21	BL offered the instructor more opportunities for simulations, interactive learning modules, e-mail, bulletin boards interactions.	3.76	0.69	Medium
34.	29	BL was a threatening experience .	3.76	1.10	Medium
35.	36	With BL , I was able to access the on-line materials without difficulty.	3.71	0.96	Medium
36.	37	I felt confident about on- line learning from the beginning of the course.	3.64	0.95	Medium
37.	33	Using BL enabled me to accomplish tasks more quickly.	3.64	0.98	Medium
38.	15	The instructor combined a wider number of delivery mediums by using the blended options.	3.61	0.76	Medium
39.	39	I had insufficient time to access the on-line materials. There was not enough time	3.54	1.08	Medium
40.	41	I responded to all on-line tasks because they were all relevant and interesting.	3.52	1.04	Medium
41.	34	By using BL , I could follow and study the course material easily.	3.47	0.96	Low
42.	35	I found BL unnecessary and not useful.	3.28	1.15	Low
		Total	3.95	0.28	High

Table (2) shows that the total degree of students› responses towards blended learning was (3.95) which suggests a high level of attitudes. This result agrees with Kavadella.A.et al (2011) and Adas and Abu Shmais (2011) who found that students performance and attitudes concerning BL in the blended group performed significantly better than their colleagues of the conventional group in the post-course knowledge test, in addition to their appreciation of the course design, materials, clarity and effectiveness. The highest means given to the item " BL helped me have a continuous learning experience " which scored (4.33) and this means that the students believe that blended learning provides them with more opportunities to learn at university and at home using the available technologies and resources . Such result might be due to the fact that technology has positive impact on education , according to Schrum (2011) and also with Valiathan (2002) who maintained that blended learning has the potential to provide the most efficient and effective instruction experience by combining delivery modalities within online learning and face-to-face learning. Moreover , the result might be explained by referring to Moebs and Weibelzahl (2006) and (Garnham & Kaleta, (2002) who stated that blended learning integrates learning activities through a mixture of online and face-to-face learning in addition to merging the best features of in-class teaching practices with the best accessible features of online learning. The result, however, seems to disagree with Grandzol (2004) who found no significant differences between the students' perceptions in terms of enthusiasm, preparation, grading, and clarity of instruction.

On the other hand , the lowest means was given to the item " I found BL unnecessary and not useful " which scored (3.28). Such low means indicates that Blended leaning is seen to be useful and necessary since it incorporates different methods and techniques for delivering information and educational materials including ICT. This result seems to be consistent with Young et al (2010) who found that studying online provides useful skills for continuing learning and was more convenient for part-time study. It also agrees with Palacios and Gascios (2010) who found that BL is seen nearly flexible and positive, and can be a construct with a potential to facilitate learning with the SRL framework .The result also agrees with Wieling and Hofman (2010) study which showed that students who attended few lectures had more benefit from viewing online lectures than students who attended many lectures as it enables them to improve their course grade by viewing the lectures online. Furthermore, such result agrees with Alshwiah (2009) study which revealed that the experimental group demonstrated high degree of satisfaction toward the online unit in three dimensions of the scale and medium satisfaction and also with Wan Ahemed et al (2009) who revealed that 87.5% of the students in their study indicated that the teaching methods had helped them to learn the topic better and that the different delivery methods used had assisted them in understanding the important concepts regarding the topics, had helped them to visualize, learn at their own pace and time, and motivate them in solving the exercises from the textbook.

2. Results related to the Second Question. "Are there any statistical significant differences between the attitudes of students of ELT Methodology 2 due to age and place of residence?".

To answer this question, frequencies, means, standard deviations in addition to Two-Way ANOVA were used as shown in Tables (3, 4 ,5) respectively.

Table (3)

Frequencies , Means and Standard Deviations of Learners' Attitudes Due to Age

Age	Level	N	Mean	S.D
Attitudes of learners of ELT Methodology2	21-25	37	3.95	0.28
	26-30	2	3.72	0.42
	31 or over	3	4.11	0.22
	Total	42	3.95	0.28

Table(4)

Frequencies , Means and Standards Deviations of Learners' Attitudes Due to Place of Residence.

Place of residence	Level	N	Mean	S.D
Attitudes of learners of ELT Methodology2	City	13	4.02	0.39
	Village	26	3.92	0.23
	Camp	3	3.97	0.04
	Total	42	3.95	0.28

Table (5)

Results of Two –Way ANOVA of Learners' Attitudes Due to the Interaction Between Age and Place of Residence

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Age	0.233	2	0.116	1.400	0.260
Place	0.047	2	0.024	0.285	0.754
Age * Place	2.281	1			
Error	2.991	36	2.281 0.083	0.000	0.987
Total	660.352	42			

Table (5) above shows that there were no statistically significant differences at (α =0.05) in the attitudes of students due to the interaction between age and place of residence. This result indicates that students regardless of their age and place of residence believed in the potentials of Blended Learning in the educational processes in general and distance and open learning in particular. This result seems to be in consistent with Wan Ahmad et al (2009)who found that students demonstrated positive perceptions using BL and their feedback was also positive seeing that BL helped and motivated them to learn the topic better. The result seems to agree with that of Al-Saai, Al-Kaabi, and Al-Muftah (2011) whose study showed no significant difference in

the students' achievement tests scores, although there was significant difference in their attitudes towards the teaching approach in favor of blended learning which indicates that using blended learning has positive impact.

The result might be also interpreted as that nearly all students , regardless of their age and place of residence whether it is in the city, the village or the camp, think that blended learning is a good educational choice that suits their conditions and ambitions as well, and this agrees with Young et al (2010) where students by the end of the course showed increased confidence in the potential of BL that confirms studying online provided useful skills for continuing learning and was more convenient for part-time study. It also agrees with Palacios and Gascon (2010) study which revealed that BL methodology is seen nearly flexible and positive and facilitates learning with the SRL framework. The result also agrees with that of Kupetz & Ziegenmeyer (2005) who found that a combination of different methods and activities, various traditional and electronic media, learning spaces covering contact and distance learning, and task-based learning modules was highly appreciated by learners and represented the concept of integrated interactive e-learning and contact learning.

On the other hand, the results seem to disagree with that of Alseweed (2013) and Al-Saai, Al-Kaabi, and Al-Muftah (2011) who found significant difference in students' attitudes towards blended learning .

Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to investigate the attitudes of ELT Methodology (2) students towards the proposed model of blended learning at QOU and the effect of age and place of residence on these attitudes. The findings revealed that age and place of residence had no significant effect on the students› attitudes while the overall attitudes were high and positive since the blended learning strategy was highly appreciated by learners and represented the concept of integrated interactive e-learning and contact learning which helped learners to learn the teaching materials much better. The high positive attitudes revealed in this study could be seen as a natural consequence of using different methods, approaches , tools and activities such as videos followed by class discussions, YouTubes that cover the teaching of the four skills and the sub-skills, videotaped model classes, PowerPoint slides , university academic portal, PowerPoint presentations, cartoons, taped materials , visual aids, native speakers of English from Project Hope Organization emailing links to browse, CD which includes some dialogues and conversations and class announcements via email. This variety helps students to be more engaged and motivated to participate in the given tasks and activities especially the in-class activities.

The merits of using this blended learning might be based on the fact that such strategy has the potential to offer more learning opportunities added to the face-to-face lectures so as to enable students who are often absent from the regular face-to-face lectures to be able to improve their course grade by viewing the lectures online or to use recorded supplementary materials at home.

Depending on the previously mentioned findings, some important implications and recommendations can be given in this regard. First ,since students have positive attitudes towards the proposed model of blended learning, teachers and instructors should try their best efforts to create a more flexible environment that employs a combination of resources and involves the provision of additional materials and guidance to enable learners to optimize their learning experience. Second , and based on the researchers' personal observation , students showed an obvious interest and involvement in this course to the extent that some of them expressed frankly that the course is one of the most useful and enjoyable courses in their specialization since it combined theory and practice and enabled them benefit from the preceding courses. Such feelings and views necessitate a wise employment of a variety of modern technologies and traditional audio-visual aids.

Another implication is that if the instructors at QOU and other universities are the persons to be responsible for improving methods of delivery of the instructional materials, they must be trained and motivated to improve their skills and potentials in this regard. Moreover, ELT Methodology (2) textbook and other English Language courses should be supplemented with more practical sides and a variety of possible YouTube and website links that help both the instructors and the learners to invest the best of their capacities and skills for the benefit of creating competent and expert (experienced skillful qualified) teachers in Palestine, this is clearly revealed in Brooks (2009) study which finds that faculty members with more positive perceptions of educational technology have positive attitudes toward a BL environment. Thus administrators and teachers should find the results of this study useful in recruiting and training teachers of BL courses. It is also suggested by Polding (2007) study which suggests that keeping staff engaged with the process of integration is the most important aspect of e-learning as it leads them to feel confident and supported throughout the entire cycle causing the process of change run more smoothly and yield to better results. Taking into consideration the advantages of blended learning should not be the objective as the human element will always be the most dominant factor in running the process of learning. Blended learning can be used to support and supplement the human teacher and learner when enriching the educational setting and make it very relevant and appealing. So the human element and technology should be integrated together to yield successful and permanent leaning.

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