DO STUDENTS AT JERASH UNIVERSITY USE NEW TECHNOLOGIES?

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Abstract
This study aimed to identify that whether students at Jerash University are using new technologies or no. To achieve this goal, qualitative analysis face to face interviews were conducted with s selected sample. The sample of the study consisted of (35) students who were randomly chosen from the faculty of educational science in the academic year 2010-2011. The semi structured interview was developed in order to obtain profound knowledge and more details. The results of the study showed that students at Jerash University use new technology moderately for educational research purposes. The results of the study also revealed data show, personal computer, laptops, interactive boards and internet were broadly used. Finally, the study recommended that the necessity to update technologies at Jerash University and holding some training courses could improve the using of new technologies by the students.

Keywords: Computer, Internet, Electronic aids

Introduction
Many of contemporary educational practices have been affected by new technologies like; information communication technology (ICT), e-learning and internet that have been developed rapidly in the last two decades (Tsai, 2001). Most of universities, schools and instructional institutions across the world are using internet for educational goals and for improving students’ learning outcomes because the information through internet are huge and renewable (Usun, 2003). According to the ideas that previously mentioned, the classroom has become more interesting, more effective and more flexible. In this environment, the role of teachers and students dramatically changed. The teachers’ role has been changed from being an information transferrrer into a guide for teaching and learning process, while the students’ role has been changed from passive learner into the center of the education process. As we
can see, in our modern schools and universities, students share teachers in searching, transferring and creating knowledge.

New technologies according to (Dawes, 2001) may provide a lot of opportunities that could support and improve education situation such as; they create new communication channels between teachers and students which are not existed in conventional education. They also create new strategies and techniques that fit with new teaching styles. Therefore, adopting new technologies in our universities will help us to prepare a new generation in order to meet the needs of the 21st century.

Most of previous studies indicated that students in various stages have positive attitudes toward using the internet either for educational purposes or for entertainment (Aydin, 2007 and Sam, Othman & Nordin, 2005). The related literature also confirmed that the internet and the computer could improve the performance of students in many subjects and courses like; biology, English and physical education (Yusuf & Afolabi, 2010; Huang, 2008 & Yaman, 2007). Cavas et al., (2009) in his study about the attitudes of Turkish science teachers toward ICT, the findings revealed that the teachers showed positive attitudes toward ICT as well as there are no significant differences in teachers’ attitudes in term of gender. But all of the previous studies concentrated that the teacher’s experience in computer or internet helps in integrating and using new technologies into the classroom.

Furthermore, new technologies have a great impact on students’ performance, interaction, abilities and attitudes toward that technology. Many studies were conducted to assess whether using new technologies (Internet, computers and electronics) positively correlated with certain factors such as achieving motivation and attitudes or they are negatively correlated. Most of those studies prove that using new technology help in improving students’ academic achievement and skills. As well as their negative attitudes toward technology were replaced with positive ones.

Computer and internet are real examples of current technologies that are extensively used in educational institutions like; schools, universities and libraries. The related literature review indicated that there are two common streams regarding the new technologies lately appeared. First stream is based on using new technologies by students for educational goals while the second stream is based on using new technologies for fun, enjoyment and entertainment. In general, the technologies which were presented by previous studies including internet, computers, education, video and computer games, CDs, softwares...etc..

Roblyer and Edwards (2000), reported there are five reasons for using technology in education:
1. Increasing student motivation;
2. Unique instructional capabilities- for example, students are able to access authentic learning resources through the Internet;
3. Increasing teacher efficiency- for example, teachers are now able to quickly produce effective materials that target the learner’s needs;
4. Enhancing student information and skills;
5. Supporting constructivist approaches- for example, an asynchronous discussion board could be used to facilitate the creation of shared understanding.

Currently, Jerash University equipped teaching rooms with new technologies. Data show, laptops, overhead projectors, digital cameras and the internet in order to improve and enhance the teaching and learning process. Moreover, Jerash University moves in significant steps toward applying those technologies in various institutions. So, we can see that students can register and withdrew courses online. As well as, many of the exams were applied online by using different software such as; electronic gate (blackboard) or quiz creator software.

**Research Problem**

Integrating and using instructional technology for educational purposes is considered one of the most important elements in the contemporary education. Educators completely agree that learning presented by new technologies is more effective and much better than conventional methods. This kind of learning could bridge the gap between theory and practice from one hand and between learning outcomes and the needs of work market from the other hand.

(Yusuf, 2010) reported that the performance of the students in experimental groups that was taught by using a computer was much better than learning in a conventional classroom. In the same context, Sujatha (2011) described the internet as a powerful tool because since you can access to information directly, he also added that the internet positively effected the academic activities of teachers and students in a fabulous way.

Recently, Jerash University has activated using the internet through updating and upgrading the internet network. This procedure increases the interaction between faculty members and their students; therefore, transferring and exchanging assignments and tasks has become more vital. In addition, staff can post any advertisement and knowledge to their students easily; they can also invest time when using the internet by checking absences and marking papers. As new technologies are used for educational purposes, this study will discuss whether students of Jerash university are using new technologies or not. Moreover, it will identify which of those technologies are commonly used among the students. Finally,
this study is considered as one of its kinds in dealing with the barriers of ICT in Jerash University as well as discussing and evaluating the students’ real usage of new technologies; thus, the real usage is still unknown yet.

**The purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study is to identify whether the students are using new technologies that are available in their university or not. As well as, to find out which of these technologies that are broadly used by them. This study will also try to obtain deep information about the real using of technologies and the students’ satisfaction toward the services presented by those technologies.

**Research Question**

This study aims to answer the following questions:

- Do students of Jerash university use new technologies, and for what reason?
- What kind of new technologies are broadly used by the students of Jerash University and why?

**The Sample**

The sample of the study consisted of 35 students who were randomly selected from the faculty of educational science at Jerash University. All of the sample’s members took the course of “computer in education” in the summer semester of the academic year 2010-2011.

**Interview procedure**

The researcher transcribed the data and gave it back to the respondents in order to verify their responses and avoid misrepresentation. Also the researcher gave the data to respondents and non respondents to get validity. The interviews were recorded on tapes in consideration that the researcher already has permission from the interviewees.

In order to prepare students for an interview, the researcher informed them about the purpose of the interview. The interview took place in the staff room. The researcher asked questions and the answers were recorded.

**Analysis of the interview**

The qualitative data analysis procedure for this study was based on the procedures suggested by Denscombe (2003). These procedures are:

**Descriptive accounts of situation**

The researcher obtains rich information through the interviews with selected interviewees. In order to obtain thick descriptive data, the researcher was keen on observing the body language and the reaction of the participants during the interviews. The researcher also used a tape in order to record all the details of the interview.
Coding and categorizing the data
After interviewing the participants, the researcher transcribed the speech and classified it into categories. The researcher focused on the most significant words, sentences or patterns that were clearly implicated a specific category. In this respect, Strauss and Corbin (1990) argue that “the aim of open coding is to discover, name and categorize a phenomena and to develop categories in terms of their properties and dimensions” (p. 181).

Reflections on the early coding and categories
In this stage, the researcher kept the memos and notices that were meticulously written down in the margins of the raw data. In this respect, Denscombe (2003) points out that these memos and notices serve two purposes “first, they act as a reminder about new thinking by the researcher on facets of the investigation. Second, they act as a log of the developing line of thinking, and this helps in the audit trail” (p. 272). Given that, keeping those kinds of memos and notices facilitated the process of categorizing the data and saved the researcher any kind of redundancy.

Identification of themes and relationships
After breaking the data into categories, the researcher meticulously gathered the most common categories and put them under an appropriate theme.

Return to the field to check out emerging explanations
In order to check the trustworthiness of the emerged themes, the researcher asked the participants again to check these emerged themes in order to avoid any misleading results.

Results
The results which are related to the first question; do students of Jerash university use new technology, and for what reason?

Three main themes were extracted from the interview data. Those themes as follows;

Using new technology for educational purposes, using technology for fun and enjoyment, not using technology at all

First theme: Using new technology for educational purposes. 21 students representing 67% of the sample reported that they use a new technology for presenting materials, gathering extra information and submitting assignments and home works.

Ahmad is a freshmen stated that” I use different kinds of new technologies like; personal computer, laptop, data show and internet frequently. For example, once the lecturer asked me to prepare a certain lesson, I go directly to computer laboratory in order to gather data from the internet. The next day I present that information by using my own laptop”
Ali who was smiling added that “in my break, I use my personal computer to type the class key notes on Microsoft word after that I send that note to my flash memory in order to revise and read them carefully. On the other hand, I enter daily to black board to send assignments and tasks as well as to check my absences and downloading important advertisements”

Second theme: using technology for fun and enjoyment. 9 students representing 67% of the sample reported that they use new technologies for entertaining, shopping and following news.

Lina after deep thinking said that” frankly speaking, I rarely use ICT in my study because I completely depend on the materials and books that are available in library and bookshop. But my actual use of new technologies is that following fashion news and chatting with my friends”

Anwar talked with quiet sound that “ once I finished my lectures I listened to the music through using my flash memory or through signing into music websites” Kamel added that “ we borrow a digital cam from an educational technology center to catch pictures during our trips. In contrary some of my classmates use that technology for photo real cases related to the course subject and present them before us in the lecture”

Third theme: not using technology at all. 4 students representing 67% of the sample size reported that they neither use technology for educational purposes nor for enjoyment and fun.

Ala’a who was very shy, she expressed that” I never used any kind of technologies at the university because I have no self efficacy and confidence. Seriously I am an anti technology as well as I don’t use new technologies since I was a child. Moreover nobody encourages me to overcome that phobia toward technologies”

Noor who was hesitant to express her opinion said” because I have many of lectures every day, I have no time for using technologies. In my humble point of view I noticed that conventional technology and instruction is simpler than new one. Lastly I feel that all technologies are complicated and difficult to use”

The results matched with previous studies (Aydin, 2007 and Sam, Othman & Nordin, 2005) which reported that students have positive attitudes toward using the internet either for educational purposes or for entertainment.

The results related to the second question; What kind of new technologies is broadly used by the students of Jerash university and why?
31 out of 35 students reported that they usually use new technologies at the university. Three main themes were extracted from the interview data. Those themes as follows;

Computers (personal computer and laptop), internet and flash memory.

**The first theme:** 17 students representing 60% reported that they use a computer (personal or laptop) as essential tools in their university life. Most of opinions concentrate on that computers considered as powerful tools in the education domain.

Shehab said that “I used to present my assignments and projects throughout using personal computer which is in the teaching room. I believe that the personal computer is simple and easy to use in comparing with the laptop. Few times I presented my works relying on laptop. Unfortunately, it was unhappy experience because I am not good to deliver my presentation by using the laptop furthermore it needs certain skills and competences which I lack”.

Another point of view reported by Yaqoub who stated that “most of the lecturers at the faculty of educational science are using laptops when they deliver their lessons. So my negative attitudes toward new technologies were changed to positive. Furthermore, I have become familiar with this kind of technologies and later on I used it many times in my presentation”. As we know that using a computer is not only inside the teaching room but also extends to all parts of the university. So you can see computers in the library, registration department as well as all of the faculties are completely provided with the internet wireless services.

In this context, Huda said that “I go to the library twice a week for searching about books relevant to my specialization. In addition, I register and withdraw my courses by assisting computer.

**Second theme:** internet obtains on second rank. 10 students representing 30% reported that they were using the internet for collecting data, contacting with their lecturers and chatting with their friends.

Ishaq stressed that “no body can ignore the significant role of the internet in modern education. In our faculty the lecturers integrate internet in their instruction, they also ask us to enrich our final projects and assignments by extra materials from the internet”

Isra mentioned that “the internet is full of audio, visual and audiovisual resources. Those resources may help us in preparing our projects easily. For example, if the lecturer asks you to make a reportage about an effective classroom management in primary schools, to achieve this task, you have to follow steps. Firstly, you must bring a digital camera and prepare a questionnaire or a checklist, and then you have to observe the teacher (case study)
in the real classroom. Secondly, once you finish observing the teacher, you have to follow tuff procedure such as; editing the pictures and analyzing the data in order to get valid results. But now with using the internet, there is no need to follow useless procedures and waste your time. You just have to go to the YouTube and download a lecture or a real case study, it will take five minutes of your time, as we can see using the internet in education invest time and make the teaching process more vital.

**Third theme:** four students reported that they are using electronic aids including flash memory and digital camera for educational and enjoyable purposes. Those students represent 10 percent of the sample.

Jasmen expressed that we have borrowed the digital camera many times to conduct interviews with students and lecturers. As well as, to document the activities organized by the university”

Another point of view came from Nezar who stated that “honestly, I always leave my laptop at home because all my works are already saved in my flash memory. At university most of our lessons were presented electronically so it is so easy to save them on my flash memory”.

**Conclusion and Discussion**

The results related to the first question revealed that the majority of Jaresh university students use new technologies and most of them reported that they are using new technologies in their education and for educational purposes. On the other side, some said they rarely use technologies and some don’t at all. In addition, a small chunk reported that they are using new technologies for non educational purposes such as; playing, chatting and shopping as we notice the findings of this study is inconsistent with previous studies ().

We may refer to the findings for many reasons. Firstly, Jerash is a private university so that students pay higher fees than in public universities. Therefore, they are more serious and responsible of their education. Secondly, the technology infrastructure may attract students to use them effectively. Lastly, most of lectures stressed on that students should document their essays and projects with relevant references from the internet.

The results related to the second question showed that the technologies which are frequently used by Jaresh students are; computer, internet and flash memory respectively. The findings of this study are aligning with previous studies. We can refer to those findings for many reasons such as; day by day we notice that many of tools like computers and laptops with distinctive features are produced rapidly. In our case (Jeresh university) most of technologies are new which could contribute in enhancing the level of using those
technologies by students. Another reason may refer to that Jerash University contracted with well-known periodicals, journals and e-books. ERIC and EBSCO are obvious examples of the databases that are available in the university, so both of students and teachers can get benefits and information in any times. This procedure could encourage students to use those data bases in maximum level because of that services are not available out of the university. So, once students finish their researching among a huge number of articles, they will be able to save the relevant one to their electronic devices.

**Recommendations**

1. Policymakers inside university should activate the process of integrating and using new technologies as well as encourage students to use those technologies frequently
2. Improving the ability of both students and lecturers in using new innovations through training courses, workshops and conferences.
3. Bringing new innovations to help students to meet twenty first challenges

**References:**


