The Effectiveness of Online Education for Students with Learning Disabilities From the Point of View of Parents in Saudi Arabia

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This study aimed at exploring the effectiveness of online education for students with learning disabilities from the point of view of their parents in the city of Abha. The study used the descriptive approach and developed an instrument to reach the goal of the study according to several variables (gender, age, economic level, educational level) of the parents. The sample of the study consisted of (109) parents of students who received their online education in Abha. The data were collected and analyzed using the appropriate statistical tools. The results indicated that the average parents' responses on the questionnaire were (3.65) on Likert's five-point scale, which indicates that online education is highly effective from the parents' point of view. Around 80% of the sample found that online education is more interesting and makes online education for students with learning disabilities more effective alternatives to the resource room, with the availability of appropriate tools and infrastructure. The results also indicated that 20% of the study sample find that online education is not useful and has deficiencies in several aspects. The study recommends other studies and researchers to research these shortcomings and develop online education to keep aligned with the plans and the vision of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2030.

INTRODUCTION

Technology and the means of communication have spread and expanded in the current era, as they brought peoples closer and facilitated the difficulties related to different languages and barriers between the different ideas and objectives. Technology, the Internet, means of communication, and mobile devices have all become a necessity for the current period. The world has reached a point where social media and the Internet cannot be ignored or dispensed within the lives of teachers and students, as the current generation seems to be attached to everything related to the Internet, phones, or computers (Alelyani,2021; Demirbağ,2020; Karazgöz,2021; Mahfoud, 2021; Mitchell, 2020). The two processes of learning and teaching have occupied great attention from different stakeholders because these processes reflect the manifestation of any civilization and its development. Al-Dailami (2018) referred to learning as a process that occurs when the student receives information from the teacher or textbooks as the main sources. The student plays an active and effective role in acquiring information and experiences, while the teacher is limited to guiding, directing, and leading the teaching-learning process. Under different circumstances, the online learning process can be activated and students can stop attending schools, as part of precautionary measures, to achieve physical and social distancing, to prevent the spread of some epidemics and diseases. The case of the COVID-19 pandemic that swept the world early in the year (2020) was and still the best example. The first cases were recorded at the end of 2019, the virus was isolated, the genetic makeup was determined, the World Health Organization was informed about the disease by January 10, 2020, and it has spread to several cities in China and many countries in the continents of Asia, America, and Europe. This prompted the World Health Organization to announce a health emergency of global importance on January 31, 2020. Although the specifications for considering it a global pandemic were met, the organization did not declare it a global pandemic until March 11, 2020, and this delay may have played a role in the spread of the disease as it happened (UNESCO, 2020). Technology has worked in the world after the closure of schools with online education synchronously and asynchronously in what has been called "emergency remote teaching to continue teaching and just a response to the closure of educational institutions (Education and Training Evaluation Commission, 2020).

Despite the criticism of this educational process and the modern methods and its negative aspects, we did not get the full experience of the online education process. It requires preparations from the educational system, teachers, learners, and parents. Several educational experiences have occurred in the years preceding the pandemic of the new Coronavirus, which gave the first nucleus of the online education process and made it a possible solution to overcome many problems found in traditional education for students with learning disabilities. Therefore, this study aims to fill the gap by exploring the attitudes toward online learning and its effectiveness for students with learning disabilities from the point of view of parents in Abha, Saudi Arabia Students with LDs are one of the categories of special education that is defined as the group with hidden needs, which is not due to a clear and apparent reason, but to an underlying and hidden cause. The means of detection, diagnosis, and evaluation for students with LDs have differed, as well as its

demonstration may overlap with other groups (Muhammad, 2020). The researcher adopted in the study the definition of the Ministry of Education in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for students with LDs (2020), as mentioned above, which is adopted in the diagnosis and identification of those with learning disabilities in schools. Education is an organized process that aims to provide learners with the general foundations so that they can build knowledge, in an organized manner and with specific and clear goals. Online education is an organized transfer of information and knowledge to the recipient using electronic media in communication and interaction between teacher and student, and between the student and the school. This type of education does not require the presence of buildings or classrooms, but rather eliminates the physical components of traditional education, and is linked to electronic components (Bader, 2021). Online education has several objectives and purposes. It provides individuals with the skills and competencies that enable them to use the culture of information and communication. It contributes to the development of new generations of learners and teachers capable of dealing with the developments and requirements of the modern era. It provides solutions for filling the shortage of academic human resources in some educational sectors, by providing virtual classes. It provides educational networks to organize and evaluate the work and management of educational institutions (Al-Yameen, 2019).

The literature provides different studies that tackled the attitudes toward the effectiveness of online education in the field of special education and other fields. Shehata (2020) identified the attitudes of special education teachers towards online education and the challenges they face in its application. The study used the descriptive approach to achieve its objectives. However, special education teachers have negative attitudes towards using online education with students with special needs. The reasons were the lack of adequate training on this type of education, and that there is an increase in the cost of the Internet and the presence of material burdens, and the inadequacy of the online education system with the disabled and dealing with each student separately. The teachers expressed the lack of technicians who are highly specialized in modern technologies. Mitchell (2020) explored the methods to improve e-learning for students with special needs. To achieve the goal of the study, the descriptive and analytical method was used, by conducting interviews and collecting data, on a sample of families of students with special needs and teachers of special education. The study concluded that there is a need for governments to focus on integrating students with special needs in e-learning, and the need to pay attention to their English language in parallel with the development of e-learning methods. Cheng & Lai (2020) discussed the obstacles facing e-learning for people with special needs taking into account the extent of mental and physical disability and its differences. The study used the descriptive analytical approach to achieve the goal of the study, as it reviewed previous studies and analyzed trends and the interactive environment in special education on a group of Chinese students with autism and their teachers. The results indicated that attitudes in the application of computer-assisted tools have changed significantly in the past decade from traditional desktop computer systems to mobile learning systems in special education and that there is a positive interaction for people with special needs with e-learning. Villano (2020) explored the technical and electronic education for students with special needs and how to develop the progress of the technical educational process remotely (virtually) and to discuss the plans developed for it and the differences between it and the usual academic education. The study used the statistical descriptive-analytical approach through an analysis of several case studies of a sample of a group of students with special needs. The study found that the student's educational performance after the crisis declined, and the students need improvement in the means and techniques used. Khalifa (2020) identified the obstacles that prevent the use of educational technologies with people with special needs by the special education teachers. To achieve the goal of the study, the researcher used the descriptive and analytical approach. The results of the study revealed several obstacles facing the use of modern technologies with students with special needs, such as the scarcity of financial capabilities, lack of familiarity with the rules for the use of educational technologies, and the weak qualification and preparation for the use of those technologies. Al-Otaibi (2020) explored the challenges that Saudi families faced in educating their children and extract proposals in light of the challenges that Saudi families faced in light of the new Corona pandemic. To achieve the goal of the study, the researcher used the descriptive survey approach, where the researcher applied the questionnaire to a sample of 412 individuals, who were chosen randomly. The study found that families face several obstacles, including the lack of the required technologies, the lack of efficiency of the Internet speed, and the inadequate qualification of the scientific staff for the e-learning process. Al-Azmi and Al-Khatib (2021) identified the challenges facing seventh-grade students with LDs in studying mathematics online from the point of view of their parents in

the State of Kuwait. The study also aimed to investigate these challenges in light of the variables of gender and educational level. The researcher used the descriptive survey approach by applying a questionnaire to a sample of 150 participants from parents of students with learning difficulties in mathematics, of whom 90 are males and 60 females. The study concluded that there is a full awareness of parents of the size of the difficulties facing their children in learning mathematics and that these difficulties related to the educational practices carried out by the teacher, and the efforts of students and attitudes towards them. The results indicated the existence of differences in all sub-dimensions according to the variable of gender (females face more difficulties than males).

It is noticeable that most of the previous studies dealt with the challenges facing people with LDs in online learning. There are no studies, according to the researcher's knowledge, that dealt with the effectiveness of online education for students with LDs in Abha Governorate from the parents' point of view. This indicates the necessity and importance of conducting this study. Within the limits of the researcher's knowledge of previous studies, he found that these studies are a base in formulating the study problem and formulating its concepts appropriately, defining its objectives, formulating the study's questions, identifying its most important indicators, and determining the methodological strategy for the study. The researcher used the information available in their theoretical frameworks, as well as building the appropriate scale.

The problem of the study emerged from the researcher's personal experience, where he found that there are several ways to increase the effectiveness of online teaching for students with LDs, including the use of modern technologies. Online education for students with LDs is a new idea that is based on enabling them to overcome many problems they face in learning. It also aims to absorb the largest possible number of such categories of students outside the scope of the resource room (Hebah, 2020). However, such an idea did not find a full application on the ground in the past. The world has gone through the experience of distance education, especially in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where the Ministry of Education decided to start distance education procedures for each of the educational stages since the first moments of quarantine, as explained by the Evaluation and Training Commission (2020). Therefore, the researcher found that the road has become ready for measuring the effectiveness of online education and for identifying the parents' point of view toward online education based on its application on the ground recently.

Research Objectives

This study aims to achieve the following objectives:
1. To identify the effectiveness of online education for students with LDs from the parents' point of view.
2. To identify the effect of gender and age of the parent on their attitudes toward the effectiveness of online education for students with LDs.
3. To identify the effect of the educational and economic level of the parent on the attitudes toward the effectiveness of online education for students with LDs.

Research Questions

The present study seeks to give answers to the following main research question:
"What is the effectiveness of online education for students with LDs from their parents' point of view?"
From this main question, the following sub-questions were formulated:
1- What is the impact of the parent's gender on the attitudes toward the effectiveness of online education for students with LDs?
2- What is the impact of the parent's level of education on the attitudes toward the effectiveness of online education for students with LDs?
3- What is the impact of the parent's economic level on the attitudes toward the effectiveness of online education for students with LDs?
4- What is the impact of the parent's age on the attitudes toward the effectiveness of online education for students with LDs?

Significance of the Study

The study tackles a very important field of research in special education, which is online education for students with LDs. This is wide and diverse in utilizing technologies and modern methods to reach educational efficiency. Identifying the parents' point of view of students with LDs contributes to the effectiveness of online education and in the enrichment of the literature with information on the topic of research. The results of this study might benefit researchers to pursue the topic and other related topics to discover obstacles, challenges,

difficulties and to propose solutions for development and empowerment in the field of online education for students with LDs. This study is important at the present in light of the progress in the educational fields. It would help future research to reach more generalizations in other samples and geographical areas.

The practical significance of this study stems from its objectives to survey and determine the parents' point of view after experiencing online education. The purpose is to identify the extent to which the online education goals are achieved for students with learning disabilities from their point of view, to measure the experience and present it to decision-makers, and to present proposed solutions to develop the online education process.

METHOD

The study population consisted of all the parents of the students registered in the learning difficulties rooms. The students' number was (300), and who received their online education in the schools of Abha. The sample included all the parents of the students. The questionnaire was sent to the entire sample and (109) parents responded to the questionnaire. The following table presents the demographic information of the sample of the study.

Table 1. Distribution of the sample according to demographic variables

variable	category	no.	percentage	total%
gender	male	70	%65	%100
	female	39	%35	
age	less than 30	26	%23	%100
	from 30-40	51	%48	
	more than 40	32	%29	
educational level	educated (can read and write)	21	%19	%100
	general education	24	%22	
	graduate	64	%58	
economic level	less than 8000 riyals	46	%43	%100
	from 8,000 riyals to 16,000 riyals	42	%38	
	more than 16,000 riyals	21	%19	
total		109	%100	

Research Instrument

The researcher developed an instrument to measure the effectiveness of online education by referring to several previous studies such as one (Al-Mutairi, 2021; Al-Qahtani, and Al-Sheikha, 2019; Mikuskova & Veresova, 2020), in addition to surveying the methods of online education used to teach students with LDs.

The validity of the instrument:

To verify the validity of the instrument, the researcher presented the questionnaire in its initial form to a panel of qualified judges in the field of education. In light of the observations made by the judges, the necessary modifications were made and the instrument was designed in its final form.

Reliability of the instrument:

The reliability of the instrument means the possibility of obtaining the same data when the study is repeated using the same study instrument on the same individuals under similar circumstances (Sekaran, & Bougie, 2016). The researcher measured the reliability of the instrument by applying it to a sample from

outside the study population consisting of (20 parents for students with learning difficulties from Mahayil Asir Governorate. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient for the answers of the study sample was obtained to measure the stability of the instrument. The statistically acceptable value for this measure was (60%) or more (Malhotra, 2003). Table (2) presents the results.

Table 2. Cronbach Alpha Coefficient for the instrument

Items	Number of items	Alpha value
positive items about the effectiveness of online education	14	0.915
Negative items about the effectiveness of online education	6	0.942
the total instrument	20	0.835

It is evident from the data in Table (2) that the values of the internal consistency coefficient of Cronbach alpha for positive and negative items are high. The negative items had a value of (0.915), and for positive items (0.942). The total alpha value for the instrument as a whole reached (0.835). All values are greater than the accepted measure of stability (60%), and this indicates the high stability of the instrument.

RESULTS

To answer the research questions, the mean scores and the standard deviations were calculated for each of the questionnaire items and then were arranged in descending order according to the mean score. The range of responses was calculated through the following equation:

Eq 1: Range = (Highest Value - Lowest Value) ÷ Number of Tool Substitutions = (5 - 1) ÷ 5 = 0.80

In light of the range, the sample responses are distributed as shown in Table (3).

Table 3. The range of the responses on the questionnaire

response	range
strongly agree	5.00–4.21
agree	4.20–3.41
neutral	3.40–2.61
disagree	2.60–1.81
strongly disagree	1.80–1.00

From the above table, the mean scores less than (2.61) indicate a decrease in the sample's approval of the item. The mean scores from (2.61-3.40) are an indication that the response is moderate in terms of the sample's approval of the statement. The mean scores higher than (3.41) are indicative of a higher degree in the sample's approval of the statement.

To answer the question, "What is the impact of the parent's gender on the attitudes toward the effectiveness of online education for students with LDs?" the mean scores for the responses of the sample were calculated as shown in Table (4).

Table 4. The effect of gender on the parent's attitude toward the effectiveness of online education

	effectiveness	low	medium	high
gender variable	male	%4.28	%21.42	%74.28
		(3)	(15)	(52)
	female	%10.25	%17.94	%74.79
		(4)	(7)	(28)

Table (4) illustrates the responses of parents regarding the variable of the parent's gender. It is evident from the mean scores of the responses for the male sample members that (74.28%) of them believe online education for students with LDS is highly effective and achieves education goals. (21.42%) of the male sample respondents find that online education for students with LDS is of medium effectiveness, and there was a percentage (4.28%) of the male sample members finding it to be of low effectiveness. As for the female sample members, the rate was (74.79%). They found that online education achieves educational goals, and the female sample (17.94%) finds that it is of moderate effectiveness. The table also shows that a percentage of (10.25%) of female parents see online education for students with LDS to have low effectiveness.

The effect of the gender variable on the effectiveness of online education for students with learning disabilities from the point of view of parents is not high. The responses of male and female members of the sample are close and there are no statistically significant differences in the gender variable. This result is consistent with other previous studies (Al-Sharqawi, 2020). To answer the question: "What is the impact of the parent's age on the attitudes toward the effectiveness of online education for students with LDs?" The mean scores were calculated as shown in Table (5).

Table 5. The impact of age on the effectiveness of online education from parents' point of view

		low	medium	high
the parent's age	less than 30	%3.84	%11.53	%84.61
		(1)	(3)	(22)
	from 30-45	%3.92	%19.60	%76.47
		(2)	(10)	(39)
	more than 45	%12.5	%28.12	%59.37
		(4)	(9)	(19)

Table (5) illustrates the responses of parents regarding the variable of age. It is clear from the average responses on the questionnaire's items from the group less than 30 that 3.84% of them see online education for students with special needs of low effectiveness, and 11.53% of the same the group thinks that it has of medium effectiveness. On the other hand, 84.61% of respondents of the sample less than 30 think that it is highly effective and achieves the objectives of education. In the age group from 30 to 45, 3.92% of them find it to be of low effectiveness, and 19.60% of them see it as moderately effective, while 76.47% of the same group find it highly effective and achieve the goals of education. For the age group over 45, 12.5% of them see online education as having low effectiveness, 28.12% see it as moderately effective, while 59.37% see it as highly effective and achieves educational goals.

From the above, we find that the effect of the age variable on the effectiveness of online education for students with learning disabilities from the parents' point of view is clear and that the responses of different age groups vary. The findings show statistically significant differences in the age variable. The majority of parents with older ages believe that online education is highly effective more than the youngest parents are.

The researcher attributes this result to the similarity between generations in keeping up with the developments and modern means of knowledge, which have witnessed massive and rapid transformations. Shu-Chen Cheng & Chiu-Lin Lai (2020) indicated that from the past decade until now the trends of applying computer-assisted tools have changed and that the small age difference helps reduce the knowledge gap between the student and the parent, thus increasing the effectiveness of e-learning.

To answer the question, "What is the impact of the parent's economic level on the attitudes toward the effectiveness of online education for students with LDs?" the mean scores were calculated as shown in Table (6).

Table 6. The impact of economic level on the effectiveness of online education from parents' point of view

	effectiveness	low	medium	high
	Less than 8000 riyals	%4.34 (2)	%21.73 (10)	%73.91 (34)
economic level	From 8,000 to 16,000 riyals	%4.76 (2)	%19.04 (8)	%76.19 (32)
	More than 16,000	%4.76 (1)	%19.04 (4)	%76.19 (16)

Table (6) shows the responses of parents regarding the variable of the parent's economic level. It is clear from the average responses on the questionnaire of the category with income less than 8000 riyals that 4.34% of them find the effectiveness of online education low, and 21.73% of them see it as of medium effectiveness, while 73.91% of them see it as highly effective and achieving the goals of education. For the middle-income group (from 8000 to 16000 riyals), 4.76% of them think that the effectiveness of online education is low, while 19.04% of them see its effectiveness as a medium, and 76.19% of them see it as highly effective and achieves education goals. As for the high-income group (more than 16,000 riyals), 4.76% of them see online education as low-effectiveness, 19.04% of them see it as moderately effective, while 76.19% of that group see great effectiveness of online education. From the above, we find that the effect of the economic level variable on the effectiveness of online education for students with learning difficulties from the parents' point of view is not clear between the middle and high-income groups. There is a difference in the statistical significance between both groups and the low-income group. The low-income group was the least agreed on the effectiveness of online education for students with LDs.

The researcher attributes this to the high purchasing power with the high income and thus the ability to provide the means of modern technologies needed for online education (virtually), which increases the effectiveness and success of the process. The online education system is a challenge for students with special needs, and this is exactly what was supported by Al-Otaibi (2020), which relieved the suffering of families of people with special needs due to the lack of the required technological needs and the lack of efficiency of the Internet speed.

To answer the question, "What is the impact of the parent's age on the attitudes toward the effectiveness of online education for students with LDs?" the mean scores were calculated as shown in the following table.

Table 7. The impact of educational level on the effectiveness of online education from parents' point of view

	effectiveness	low	medium	high
educational level	educated (can read and write)	%4.76	%23.80	71.42
		(1)	(5)	(15)
	general education	%8.33	%20.83	%70.83
		(2)	(5)	(17)
	graduate	%6.25	%18.75	%75
		(4)	(12)	(48)

Table (7) shows parents' responses to the parent's educational level variable. It is clear from the average responses on the questionnaire by the educated group (can read and write) that 4.76% of them see the effectiveness of online education as low, and 23.80% of them see its moderate effectiveness while 71.42% of them see great effectiveness of online education and that it achieves the learning objectives. On the other hand, 8.33% of the group with general education see low effectiveness of online education, 20.83% of them see its medium effectiveness, and 70.83% of them see its great effectiveness. For the graduate group, 6.25% of them see its effectiveness as low, and 18.75% of them find it moderately effective, while 75% of them see its effectiveness as great, and achieving the goals of education.

The effect of the educational level variable on the effectiveness of online education for people with learning difficulties from the point of view of parents is very simple between the two groups with educated (can read and write) and the general education group. There were no statistically significant differences between them. However, there is a difference between these two groups and the group of graduates, where the latter came with the average percentage of responses most agreeing to the effectiveness of online education from the total sample of the category. This result is in agreement with the results of Al-Azmi and Al-Khatib (2021) and Villano (2020), which concluded a decline in students' educational performance after the Corona pandemic for several reasons, including not receiving adequate help at home.

Conclusion

The main question of this study was to identify the attitudes of parents toward the effectiveness of online education for students with LDs. From the questionnaire's results, the average of the responses for the sample as a whole was (3.65), which indicates that parents see online education as effective High. The results showed that male and female parents of different groups (age, economic, educational) find online education and the strategies used to give motivation to their children and make education interesting for them far from the resource room. This makes education achieve its goals with the follow-up from the parent and helps the parent's participation in the individual educational plan, which is effective from the parents' point of view. However, 20% of the sample see online education as not useful and has deficiencies in several aspects. Therefore, there is a space to investigate these shortcomings in future research. Finding the reasons will help in understanding the process of online education for students with LDs under the vision of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia 2030.

In light of the results of this study, the researcher recommends conducting training programs to prepare teachers to deal with online education applications. Media publications on the importance of online education, and emphasizing the degree of benefit that will accrue to the educational process if it is implemented, especially in light of the country experiencing the spread of the Corona pandemic. Allocating part of the educational process budget to create adequate infrastructure for online education, including equipping schools with high-quality Internet services and computers commensurate with their needs in the distance

learning process. Creating digital and electronic curricula compatible with the nature of online education, and communicating information to students as effectively as traditional curricula. Conducting more studies related to the effectiveness of online education, the degree of quality of its outputs around the world, and the accuracy of its implementation.

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