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The mental image of educational institutions among the Iraqi public regarding e-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic: A field study of a sample of parents of students and educational staff

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Abstract---Emergency events are one of the most important factors that affect the formation of the mental image among the public towards the institutions due to the value they play in forming opinions and forming real impressions towards them. It is also considered an important factor in creating positive behavior of individuals toward the institution. The appearance of e-learning and the use of electronic applications is a qualitative leap in the method of education. The method of e-learning was adopted, especially in the Covid-19 crisis, when education stopped as a result of the epidemic, forcing to rely on the e-learning mechanism and making it an alternative to traditional education for the sustainability of education for generations by adopting the means and methods that were used in educational institutions (schools) in the application of e-learning mechanisms. This study aims to identify the nature of the mental image of educational institutions among the Iraqi public regarding e-learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, and to achieve the objectives of this study, the researcher used the (descriptive approach) in analyzing and interpreting it as the appropriate method for such a study using the research tool (the questionnaire) and the sample has been chosen _ (300) respondents from parents and (300) respondents from educational staff (teachers) to know (what is the mental image of educational institutions among Iraqi public regarding e-learning during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the study reached results that, there is a (negative) picture in total, according to the outcome of data analysis of the answers of the respondents from the educational staff

and parents towards educational institutions on the application of e-learning.

Keywords---mental image, educational institution, e-learning.

Introduction

The educational institution is one of the most important supports of society that has direct contact with the wider public with its various components. According to this importance, this institution must form a positive mental image and maintain it with its public, which is the mainstay of its work and success, and here comes the responsibility of the educational institution on how to put the methods of communication with its internal Public represented by the educational staff and external represented by the public of parents, and comes through the educational services that are provided to students who are an important part of the community, and these services would be the point of effective communication with the public of parents, which is reflected in giving a satisfactory picture towards the institution. During the period of the spread of the Coronavirus and its consequent great health risks to the whole of humanity, which led to the closure of schools and universities and the resort to e-learning and the use of the Internet, the government closed schools and suspended the attendance at schools in the year 2020, as in the rest of the world and followed the health procedures to limit the spread of the pandemic, which prompted the Iraqi Ministry of Education to urge teachers to communicate with their students via the Internet and its multiple applications, i.e. moving from traditional education to e-learning

The methodological framework of the study

The problem of the study

The subject of the mental image is one of the most important foundations of interest in the institutions in general and educational institutions in particular, as the perceptions of the public towards these institutions are what determine their work and the relationship between them according to the services provided. This is an experiment through which the mental image and impressions are made and the behaviors are determined according to experiences and direct contact with the public, which will form perceptions that may be positive or negative, and in the period of the appearance of the Coronavirus, which threatened human life and confused the vital strictures of work all over the world, and disrupted, as a result, the institutions, and among those institutions is the educational institution. These circumstances affected the education process and transformed its traditional system into a new path represented by e-learning, which has become an urgent need for the educational process to proceed according to its chronological and scientific path, to transform classes from traditional classes to virtual classes and a distance education as an alternative solution to those emergency conditions, that is, the process of education should be through modern methods, investing what science has reached in terms of technology represented in the media from the Internet, programs, technologies, and specialized websites.

From this point of view, we summarize the research problem with the following questions

- What is the mental image formed by the public of parents of students and educational staff about e-learning?
- What is the image formed by educational staff and parents as a result of using e-learning techniques in presenting curricula?

The importance of the study

The importance of the study comes from the importance of the subject of e-learning in general and its importance during crises in particular, and to identify the obstacles that obstacle the progress of the educational process and the causes of those obstacles in light of e-learning during the spread of Covid-19.

Objectives of the study

The study aims to:

- Identify the mental image formed by the public of students' parents and educational staff about e-learning during the Corona pandemic.
- Identify the image formed by the educational staff as a result of the use of e-learning techniques in presenting the curricula to the students.

The method and tool of the study

This study depends on the (descriptive approach) as a survey study of the mental image of educational institutions among the public. The descriptive approach is one of the methods used in media research and the most common. As for the tool: the questionnaire tool (the scale), the triple type, was adopted according to the (Likert) scale in collecting the information, where two scales were designed for each of the samples of educational staff and sample of parents of students as a public for educational institutions

The community and sample of the Study

The study community, represented by the public of educational staff (teachers), as well as parents of students for the intermediate and secondary stages, was adopted. As a community for the study, the (Babylon Governorate) district of Al-Musayyab was chosen as a model for the real community to ensure accurate scientific results for the study. Where a sample of parents was chosen by adopting a non-random sample (intentional) with (300) respondents, according to the nature of the research and its basic variables, which is studying the mental image among the public of students' parents and (300) respondents from the public of educational staff using a random sample (simple).

Honesty and reliability for the study tool

The questionnaire was presented to experts in the field of media and public relations, for (5) & (2) experts in the field of educational sciences, and the

percentage of honesty of the questionnaire for the educational staff was 87%, and the percentage of honesty of the questionnaire of the sample of parents was (83.5%), according to the opinions of the arbitrators. As for the reliability, the researcher used (measurement and re-measurement), where the researcher redistributed the questionnaire to a random sample of stability, which amounted to (10%) of the selected sample from the study community, which was determined by (600) items, which means that (60) items were distributed Separate for each of the sample of educational staff and parents of students, (30) samples. Then the distributed questionnaires were redistributed to the study sample two weeks after completing the collection, the results showed a percentage (88.9%) for the educational staff form, and a percentage (87.1%) for the student's parents form, which is a high-reliability rate.

The Previous studies

Study - Suleiman and Al Jubouri -2020

(The role of e-learning in enhancing total quality management in educational institutions - an exploratory study) for the views of a sample of employees of the Directorate of Education in Nineveh Governorate - University of Mosul 2020. The objective of the study: The research aims to Identify the relationship between e-learning and total quality management in educational institutions in the Directorate of Education in Nineveh Governorate. The Study community and its Sample: Nineveh Governorate \ Directorate of Education employees (teachers and administrators) who represent the research sample community were selected and (30) questionnaires were distributed. The method and the tool of the research: The descriptive analytical method was adopted and the questionnaire tool was chosen for data collection. Conclusions: This research found that e-learning has many advantages, including shortening the time and the effort, providing a diverse learning environment with alternatives and options, encouraging self-education, and the possibility of education outside educational institutions without commitment to time and place.

The theoretical framework

The mental image, concept, and terminology

There have been many visions about the first beginnings of the appearance of the concept of the mental image, and according to the different disciplines, as some references discussed that the first beginning of the appearance of the concept of the mental image was with (Aristotle), who put the main stands from which this term developed and many subsequent theories about the concept of the image became the picture for Aristotle is what a thing speaks. And he defined it as everything by which a thing is determined and identified, where he indicated that (mental image) is: the attribute or the form, and it equals the matter, as there can be no matter without an image except in the mind (Hashemi, 2016, pg. 38). The appearance of the book "Developing the Image of the Establishment" by the American writer (Bristol Lee) in 1960 AD had a great impact on spreading the concept of the image of the Establishment among businessmen.

Many studies have been interested in researching the image of different personalities and institutions to get to know the public's view of these

personalities or institutions and to know the positive and negative elements in this image to emphasize the positive elements and treat the causes that led to the formation of negative trends if any. More of that the Experts were interested in studying the factors affecting the formation of the mental image and its development in light of the means of communication (Ferjani, 2018, p. 32). (Ajwa), defined the mental image as it is the final product of the subjective impressions that formed by individuals or groups about a particular person, a particular system, a particular people, a particular gender, a facility, an institution, a local or international organization, a particular profession, or anything else. (Ajwa, 2003, p. 10). A mental image can be defined as - the impressions formed based on the perceptions taken from information about the institution (LY, 2013, p. 7)

Sources of mental image formation

As for the sources of mental image formation, they are represented in the following points: (Al-Hammad, 2015, pages 41-42)

- Direct experience: It means the individual's daily contact with other individuals, systems, and laws, which leads him to have self-impressions about the institution or individuals and others, and this direct experience is stronger in its impact on the individual's mind and emotions if it is used well.
- Indirect experience: It means the personal messages that the individual hears from friends and media about the institution, events, or individuals, without seeing or hearing by himself to help form the impressions that form the final mental picture.

The Factors that affect the formation of the mental image

The most important factors influencing the mental image (Al-Shadidi, 2018, p. 23)

- The quantity and quality of the incoming messages, the more information is abundant and in a large, quantity, and at once, the resistance of the image to change is reduced, and the more information is little, and gradually, the resistance of the image to change
- If the mental image information is very well established and old, then it will be more capable of facing change, especially since the person tends to stick to it very quickly.
- The planned attempts to build an image or change an image to a positive one are always difficult, contrary to the attempts to destroy a positive image or create a negative image
- some messages have a conflicting effect, which means that the arrival of two messages about the same image creates two opposite directions, and the individual cannot determine which of the two messages is clear.

The benefits of the mental image of educational institutions

The educational institution can be defined as those environments that help the person to comprehensively develop the various aspects of his personality and

interact with those around him and adapt to them as components, they bear the responsibility of raising the individual as they develop the person mentally, intellectually and behaviorally through a set of values that he receives through the family, the media and the school. (Osman, 2012, p. 305). A portion of the benefits of the mental image provides to the institution can be presented: (Hajar, 2017, p. 8)

- Helping the institution to attract the best elements to work
- Strengthening the relationship of the institution with its internal and external public
- Convincing the government, authorities, and the public of the importance of the educational role of the institution in serving the community
- Develop the public's willingness to wait before passing judgment on the institution in times of crisis

The appearance and historical development of e-learning

E-learning appeared a long time ago, and many educators traced it back to the year 1930 AD when the US Army was producing programmed books and they were used without any teacher playing the role of teaching. The learning began to create means of communication to obtain information, store that information, and connect it the American (Vannevar Bush-BUSH V) pub was listed in 1945 AD Since this date, information and communication technology was established, and actual e-learning was used in the early sixties of the last century, specifically in 1959 by (Roth-Rwanderson and Leoni), where actual education was used using a computer, in addition to programming several educational materials (dogs, 2016, p. 16). (William. Horton) presented a definition of learning as the use of electronic technologies and software in transferring educational curricula to the learner, communicating with him through that technology, and creating experiences for him to gain from that technology (Horton, 2006, p. 1)

The benefits of e-learning

- Education is provided at any time and in any place according to the learner's ability to acquire and comprehend.
- Theoretically, e-learning provides a new culture that can be called (digital culture).
- Focusing on information processing, which enables the learner to control his learning by building his own world when he interacts with other electronically available environments.
- E-learning helps provide educational opportunities for different groups of society, including women, workers, and employees, regardless of gender or color.
- It helps the student to be self-dependent. The ease of updating educational programs and websites, modifying information and topics, and the speed of transferring information to students enhances the interaction between students themselves and between students and trainers. (Al-Ayasra, 2017, p. 161)

The advantages of e-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic

The multiplicity of advantages of e-learning is one of the strongest justifications for employment in education, and they are many as it is difficult to enumerate. It has made it the best and optimal choice for future students, and perhaps the most important of them is what benefits the learners: (Thrashi, 2018, page 3)

- A huge increase in the level of achievement of learners regardless of their age, abilities, and curricula, but this increase is better for young people than for adults.
- Communication between learners in one school and other schools in an electronic format or by other applications, motivates learners to participate and interact with the topics presented and to offer different opinions and discussions about the lessons.
- Students' implementation of programs in the electronic class does not require a great effort from the teacher, which gives an opportunity through this to follow up on the performance of the students.
- To help the learner in logical thinking because of the logic of the lesson tools. E-learning helps him to teach students many school topics systematically and logically this scientific content can also be installed by many educational means through pictures and other explanatory videos for the lessons.

The results of the field study

The first axis – is the data analysis questionnaire of the educational staff Social type

The table below shows the distribution of the sample according to (the social type):

The type	The Number	%
Male	152	51
Female	148	49
Total	300	100

The mental image of the educational staff about e-learning

The table below shows the statistical results of the answers to the educational staff's impressions of e-learning

The Statement	A	agreed	neutral	Don't agree	The total	Average	Arrange	standard deviation		Moral
E-learning facilitates the presentation of lessons in a simplified	A	114	36	150	300	1.88	4	0.931		Moral
	%	38	12	50	100					

manner for the student										
E-learning helped the teacher to be creative by providing lessons to students	A	103	75	122	300	1.93	3	0.865	11,18	Moral
	%	34.3	25	40.7	100					
The school, through e-learning, contributed to increasing the electronic knowledge of educational staff	A	170	47	83	300	2.29	2	0.872	79.9	Moral
	%	56.7	15.7	27.7	100					
4- E-learning has contributed to reducing cases of infection among educational staff with Covid-19	A	237	39	24	300	2.71	1	0.605	282.6	moral
	%	79	13	8	100					

We note in the first statement the table above - (E-learning facilitates the presentation of lessons in a simplified manner for the student, the answers of the respondents were with an option that agreed with a frequency of (114) and at a rate of (38%), a neutral option, came with a frequency of (36) and at a rate of (12%), and as for the option that did not agree, it came with a frequency of (150) and at a rate of (50%), so it becomes clear to us through the said answers Respondents that a high percentage of the answers were with an option that does not agree, and this is due scientific lessons formed confusion for the student in understanding the curriculum according to the electronic lessons.

In the second paragraph - (e-learning helped the teacher or teacher to be creative by providing lessons to the students), where the answers of the respondents were in agreement with a frequency of (103) and at a rate of (34.3%), while the neutral option came with a frequency of (75) and at a rate of (25%) As for the "I do not agree" option, it came with a frequency of (122) and at a rate of (40.7%). It was clarified to us through the respondents' answers that a high percentage of the answers were with the "I do not agree" option. This is due to the fact some

scientific lessons need a practical application or mathematical transactions that the student must understand steps directly.

As for the third paragraph - (the school contributed through e-learning to increasing the electronic knowledge of the educational staff), the respondents' answers were with a choice that agreed with a frequency of (170) and at a rate of (56.7%), while the neutral choice came with a frequency of (47) and at a rate of (15.7%) As for the "I don't agree" option, it came with a frequency of (83) and at a rate of (27.7%). It was clarified to us through the respondents' answers that a high percentage of the answers were with an option that agreed, and this is because most teachers are informed about modern teaching through modern electronic means and the method of delivering the curriculum according to these data.

As for the fourth statement - (e-learning contributed to reducing the cases of infection among educational staff with Covid-19), where the answers of the respondents were with a choice that agreed with a frequency (237) and at a rate of (79%), while the neutral option came with a frequency of (39) and at a rate of (13%). The "I do not agree" option came with a frequency of (24) and of (8%), so it is clear that a high percentage of the answers were with the "Agree" option. Which is a positive factor.

The second axis- is the axis of the sample of parents of students According to social type

The table below shows the distribution of the sample by (social type)

The type	Frequency	%
Male	107	35.7
Female	193	64.3
Total	300	100

Parents' impression of the use of e-learning technologies

The table below shows the statistical results on the impression of students' parents toward the use of e-learning techniques

The Statement	A	agreed	neutral	Don't agree	The total	Average	Arrange	standard deviation		Moral
the parents' knowledge of modern technologies obstructing work and the use of e-learning),	A	143	97	60	300	2.27	2	0.775	34.58	Moral
	%	47.7	32.3	20	100					
electronic technologies have	A	115	68	117	300	1.99	3	0.880	15.38	Moral
	%	38.3	22.7	39	100					

contributed to education to reach all students within the school stage,										
E-learning resulted in students' parents not communicating with the school	A	168	59	73	300	2.32	1	0.839	70.34	Moral
	%	56	19.7	24.3	100					

We note from the above table - the parents' impression of the use of e-learning technologies came as follows:

In the first phrase - (the parents' knowledge of modern technologies obstructing work and the use of e-learning), the respondents' answers were with an agreed option with a frequency of (143) and at a rate of (47.7%), while the neutral choice came with a frequency of (97) and at a rate of (32.3%). As for the "I don't agree" option, it came with a frequency of (60) and at a rate of (20%), and it became clear to us through the respondents' answers that a high percentage of the answers were towards the "Agree" option. This is attributed to the fact that ignorance of using modern technologies may cause confusion to their children, especially in the stages of intermediate school.

As for the second phrase - (electronic technologies have contributed to education to reach all students within the school stage), the respondents' answers were with an agreed option with a frequency of (115) and at a rate of (38.3%), and a neutral option came with a frequency of (68) and at a rate of (22.7) % As for the "I do not agree" option, it was repeated by (117) and at a rate of (39%), and it became clear to us through the respondents' answers that a high percentage of the answers were towards the "I do not agree" option, and this is attributed to that most students did not receive modern electronic technologies because of poverty or ignorance by using Modern devices according to the answers of the respondents.

As for the third statement - (e-learning resulted in parents not communicating with the school), the respondents' answers were with an agreed option with a frequency of (168) and at a rate of (56%), and a neutral option came with a frequency of (59) and at a rate of (22.7%), and for an option that did not agree It came with a frequency of (73) and at a rate of (24.3%), and it became clear to us through the respondents' answers that a high percentage of the answers towards the "agree" option is attributed to this during the e-learning period. There is no communication between the school and parents.

Conclusions

- The overall mental image is (negative) toward the educational institution (the school) as a result of shortcomings and negligence in the various aspects and mechanisms of e-learning.

- There is a negative view held by the public about the teaching staff in the educational institution, especially about the teaching methods, and dealing with students during electronic class.
- The school did not take into account the financial conditions of the educational staff, and in some cases, it caused clear embarrassment, especially to the female component of the teachers, of their social status.
- There are shortcomings in the field of preparing educational staff in terms of qualification and training in the use of e-learning systems, which caused obstacles in the implementation of tasks

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