



Quality assurance of e-learning in developing countries

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ABSTRACT

In this paper some of the aspects of implementing measures for quality assurance of e-learning in developing countries are discussed. Also the main problems of establishing quality assurance of e-learning are illustrated. The advantages of adopting international measures of quality assurance in those countries together with several recommendations for the future and our conclusion are then given.

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1. Introduction

We discuss the main aspects of implementing measures for quality assurance of e-learning in developing countries. Quality assurance should involve several issues such as quality of institution, teaching body, curricula, administration, students and alumni. Then we give various advantages of adopting international measures of quality assurance of e-learning in developing countries together with some recommendations for the future.

In Section 2 we briefly illustrate the current situation of education in general and especially of e-learning in some developing countries.

The main problems of establishing e-learning with quality assurance in developing countries are studied in Section 3.

Section 4 states some advantages of implementing internationally acknowledged measures of quality assurance of education and e-learning in developing countries.

Some recommendations are given in Section 5.

Finally our conclusion is then stated in Section 6.

2. Current situation of education in developing countries

2.1. General aspects

The current situation of education in general and especially of e-learning in several developing countries is quite poor due to many factors. Some of the most essential factors are as follows:

- Dependence on memorization instead of critically thinking, logically analyzing, objectively criticizing and creatively proposing by the students at universities and especially at schools (see [1–4]).
- Neglecting interactive teaching and teamwork in class rooms.
- Giving higher priority to quantity against quality of material taught.
- Little effort to update existing curricula.

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- (e) Poor usage of modern technologies in and outside classrooms due to lack of financial and technological resources.
- (f) Lack of accreditation by internationally acknowledged organizations.
- (g) Lack of measures for quality assurance of education and e-learning.
- (h) Increasing number of commercialized schools and universities.

2.2. *Sociological and political aspects*

Since several developing countries suffer dramatically under sociological and political pressures, we state some of the factors influencing education and e-learning in some of those countries (see [5]):

- (a) Governing politics varying between dictatorship and partial democracy with different interests in implementing progressive education and e-learning.
- (b) Total population ranging between over 70 million in Egypt and 600 thousand in Bahrain.
- (c) Financial facilities differing dramatically between very rich countries such as Kuwait and very poor countries like Sudan.
- (d) Technical and financial support from developed countries being very generous to some developing countries such as Israel and very poor to others such as North Korea.
- (e) Total area of the country ranging from huge area such as for Nigeria and very small such as for Bahrain.
- (f) Number of universities offering e-learning and their standards compared to international measures.

2.3. *Accreditation*

Public schools and universities in almost all developing countries have no accreditation by internationally acknowledged organizations such as the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) and the International Accreditation for Universities (IUAA) (see [6]).

Still some of the expensive private universities do have some periodical accreditation by acknowledged organizations such as the American University of Beirut (AUB) in Lebanon.

2.4. *Quality assurance*

There exist some efforts in various developing countries to adopt international measures for quality assurance of education at some private universities but much less for quality assurance of e-learning.

One of the rare good examples is the case of the cooperation of Bahrain ministry of education with the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) in Australia (see [7]).

Another example is the project of “The regional UNESCO office for higher education in the Arabic Countries” to assure high quality education in the Arabic World (see [8]).

3. **Main problems of establishing e-learning with quality assurance in developing countries**

Establishing e-learning with quality assurance is rather problematic both in developing and in developed countries [7]. In this paper the main concern is the situation in developing countries.

3.1. *Establishing e-learning*

The main problems of establishing e-learning in developing countries are as follows:

- (a) In many developing countries the public universities are administrated in a very conservative out-of-date fashion.
- (b) In several developing countries many private universities are completely commercialized with very little attention to high quality of education.
- (c) The curricula are seldom updated and even if they are, then this is not necessarily done following internationally acknowledged standards.
- (d) Lack of financial support from the governments and the private sector.
- (e) Lack of qualified instructors who are capable of running e-learning environments.
- (f) Emigration of talented educated people to developed countries.
- (g) Lack of educational technological facilities.
- (h) Poor integration in the new world system under globalization.

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