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INVESTIGATING TEACHER'S BELIEFS ABOUT ENTREPRENEURSHIP DISTANCE EDUCATION IN LIGHT OF THE DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES IN THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

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ABSTRACT

Distance education (henceforth, DE) involves technological, organizational, social, educational, and psychological dimensions, and its success depends on teachers' beliefs about it. So the teacher's beliefs about DE play a critical role in bringing about a change in the system of teaching and learning process.

The study concentrates on teachers in Dammam, Saudi Arabia, to scrutinize their beliefs about DE. This study included (107) teachers in different stages of education. It used an online questionnaire to assess teachers' beliefs about DE. Questionnaire was finalized in the form of (24) statements that address the following parameters: Beliefs about the importance of using DE, Beliefs about creating the teaching experience, beliefs about expected benefits of DE, and beliefs about learner strengthening. The study found that teachers' beliefs are generally geared toward adopting DE. Teacher's beliefs do not affect by gender or teaching experience, but there are differences in the arithmetic means between teachers belonging to scientific fields and humanities fields which were for teachers who belong to scientific fields. The study recommended that to encourage teachers, especially in humanities, to use training programs related to DE to strengthen their positive beliefs toward ED utilization, and to help them overcome the difficulties that may prevent them from using DE efficiently.

Keywords: Beliefs about Distance Education, Teachers, Demographic Variables.

INTRODUCTION

Distance education has emerged with the advent of technology, and the use of DE has increased dramatically with the development of technology and the spread of the Internet. It has become a necessity of the times, the most favourite system for people of all ages to receive an education without going to educational institutions, DE plays a fundamental role in facilitating education and learning; and it opens the gate for all to achieve equal opportunity in receiving educational services.

DE is defined as a planned education that includes modified teaching techniques and alternative modes of communication, and the DE system includes the education and learning subsystems, the design of curricula, programs, technological infrastructure, management and institutional policies, which all are an integral part of a larger educational system, an independent educational system that goes over the limits of time and place. Teachers and students often participate at different times and places in the teaching process, and it is a theoretical and systematic educational system in which students, teachers, and learning materials meet through different communication technologies (Kara, 2020; Moore & Kearsley, 1996).

Introducing of DE in educational institutions has required significant changes in teaching and other learning sources, DE forced educational policymakers to take into their account not only to consider how to provide DE but also how to use it to create proper educational environment and innovation. By increasing access to learning and training through providing an equal opportunity to all people, also improving the cost-effectiveness of educational resources, strengthening the educational system's capabilities, expanding the ability to teach on new subject areas, introducing a mix of education, work and life, and adding an international dimension to the educational experience, (Moore & Kearsley, 2012).

Research literature showed that DE becomes increasingly widespread, and plays a very important role in facilitating education for several factors: The benefit factor (effective teaching, discussion opportunities, easy access to the learning environment, access to a wide range of participants, use of technological support), the financial factor (utilizing fewer resources while there are more learners), the factor of opportunity for discussion and feedback (using of adaptive feedback system), furthermore, motivating and raising self-competence, and the enhancing learner's attention to carry out the task (Keskin and Yurdugül, 2019).

DE systems emerged as featured as being increasingly accessible and indispensable for education due to the development and spread of communication technologies and changing characteristics, needs and demands of the individuals. As the popularity of DE programs increased, it is vitally important to do a detailed analysis of DE actual success and the factors contributing to this success. Although DE has technological, organizational, social, educational, and psychological dimensions, its success depends on an acceptable arrangement for all these dimensions, and teachers play a crucial role and act as an agent of change (Yildiz & Erdem, 2018).

Despite that DE is a tool for the learner, especially for those who are passive, to shift them from being passive - a mere recipient of information to become active- a producer of knowledge, an active in constructing the meaning, to be an active participant in the learning situation and an experiencing of building hypotheses, inquiry, imagination and innovation, but the implementation of DE depends on the teacher's beliefs and personal convictions about using this type of education.

The belief that an individual holds is the best indicator of decisions that teacher makes throughout his/her life (Bandura, 1986), these beliefs determine the intention that teacher makes about those decisions, the beliefs also determine the effort that teacher will make to perform the tasks, and they explain his/her decisions and determines the proper way of doing the task, (Buehel & Alexander, 2005; Hofer, 2002), the energy is be determined by he or she to make that activity (Bandura 1986), teacher's acceptance or rejection of DE is important, which depend on his or her beliefs.

Sah & Shah (2020) emphasized on the importance of beliefs in guiding teaching practices, and Tatto (1998) emphasized on the importance of identifying teacher's beliefs related to his/her teaching; It is very necessary to verify teacher's beliefs and how these beliefs influence his/her teaching practices and his/her roles for developing their instructional behaviour. Studying teachers' beliefs helps them to build their classroom activities and practices and identify the strengths and weaknesses in teaching, and then develop their teaching performance (Sah and Shah, 2020; Kutálková, 2017; Aksoy, 2015).

In this regard, Pajares (1992) pointed out that teachers' beliefs should become an important focus of educational research because teachers' beliefs can influence educational practices; it is very important to improve their professional preparation and teaching practices. That effect can be attributed to the fact that the belief systems rely more on emotional and evaluative components than on knowledge systems (Nespor, 1987), so understanding the structures of teachers' beliefs is very essential to improve their teaching practices and achieve the quality of the learning process.

Teaching practice is one of the most important aspects that are always related to teaching beliefs, so teachers' views will affect decision-making and instructional practices in their classrooms (Sah & Shah, 2020). It is of great importance to distinguish teachers' views about DE.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

There is a close link between technology and learning activities. Through this interrelated relationship, teachers and students look for digital resources, seek for, and read more about knowledge and constructing the meaning (Gilakjani et al., 2013). Benefits of technology use are very important to overcome deficiencies in traditional teaching, to remove constraints of time and place, to provide the learner with a creative learning experience, to provide a rich, student-centered learning environment in which students can communicate effectively, practice self-directed learning, research and problem-solving skills. DE helps students to engage, think, and contribute to learning. DE allows teachers to integrate multimedia and share information and ideas quickly and easily (Mason & Rennie, 2008; SEOK, 2008),

Technology spreads knowledge and experience by using available resources remotely (Gail & Terry, 2011), it strengthens the relationship between teacher, students and teaching materials (Hsieh & Dwyer, 2009), it also builds a cooperative learning community and culture (Granger et al., 2002). DE is largely seen as a technology-driven education service with social, educational, and psychological aspects (Yildiz & Erdem, 2018).

Several types of research on DE have focused on many aspects, including what has focused heavily on technology and how it is used in education to provide high-quality education, facilitate learning and expand educational opportunities, enhance knowledge, investment different strategies to make the learner actively engaged in the process of education and Identity

of using it in teaching and learning as an important component of teaching science (Petsuwan et al., 2019; Haddad et al., 2014; Rahman, 2014; Chang, 2012; Rashid & Elahi, 2012; Turoff et al., 2008).

Others focused on problems related to DE, such as problems that distance learners face during their study, problems related to the "organizational and technical" of DE systems, these problems can be identified as the nature of the subjects, lack of multimedia education, insecurity of learning/teaching, lack of feedback or communication with the teacher, Lack of support and services, lack of social interaction among learners, lack of student training, absence of the teacher, low status of DE institutions, lack of systematic high-quality support, lack of a unified standard (coordination) for retrieving training information resources, poor communication between teachers and students, lack of effective planning of the educational process (curricula); and lack of secure remote access to information resources.(Lenar et al., 2014; Attri, 2012; Rovai & Downey, 2010).

Others researchers dealt with the value and effectiveness of implementing DE and its effects on learner performance and behaviour and his interaction with peers and teacher. It also urges learners to actively participate in the learning situation, enhance motivation, willingness to learn and self-efficacy online (Rajabalee et al., 2020; Alachiotis et al., 2019; Sadeghi, 2019; Singywah, 2018; Amah, 2018; Attah-Mensah et al., 2016; Wei, & Chou, 2015; Ulmer et al., 2007).

Currently, researchers turn their attention to the beliefs DE, because the effective use of technology, the desire to challenge problems related to DE, and its efficient implementation depend on the beliefs of the teacher, especially Singh et al., (2018) who found that there is resistance among teachers to the use of technology and DE.

This alteration came due to the impact of teachers' educational beliefs on teaching practices on student competence (Singh, et al., 2018; Farrell & Ives, 2014), the results of studies of beliefs have shown that learning process becomes easier as cognitive beliefs developed or improved. In addition, future research should seek to enhance the understanding of relationships between teacher beliefs and educational process reform; because teacher beliefs are a critical ingredient in the factors that determine what happens in classrooms (Tobin et al., 1994).

Beliefs are considered as the main reason that determines a person's success or failure in the educational arena. From this respect, teachers' beliefs play a critical role in providing meaningful and profound insights into many aspects of his or her professional career, because beliefs affect his or her educational practices; in addition to including demographics and many other factors that influence the use of technology in education (Meneses et al., 2012), and although beliefs affect educational practices, this influence is not independent of the effects of other factors such as demographical factors (Yildiz & Erdemm, 2018), Current research has therefore sought to examine teachers' beliefs about distance education in the light of demographic changes.

Research Questions

1. What are the teachers' beliefs about distance education in Saudi Arabia?
2. To what extent do teachers' beliefs about distance education differ by gender?
3. To what extent do teachers' beliefs about distance education vary with specialization?
4. To what extent do teachers' beliefs about distance education vary with years of teaching experience?

Research Objectives

This research aims to

1. Identify teachers' beliefs about distance education in Saudi Arabia.
2. Explore the impact of gender, specialization, and years of teaching experience on teachers' beliefs about distance education.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Distance Education

Distance education, e-learning, virtual schools, and web-based instruction are all terms used interchangeably to describe this vast and constantly changing field of non-traditional education, using a range of tools to accomplish DE such as video conferences, voice conferences, web-based communications, or any set of communication and electronic management tools, with a variety of connection types either synchronous communication "real-time connection" or asynchronous "communicate at different times".

Schlosser & Simonson (2002) defined DE as formal, institution-based education, in which the learning groups are separated, and the use of interactive telecommunication systems to connect learners, resources, and teachers. It is also defined as a learning style in which learning resources are provided to distance learners; it includes both distance teaching (teacher's role in the process) and distance learning (student's role), and specific elements of distance learning include separating teachers and students at the place and sometimes at the time by using educational media to connect the teacher and the students to deliver curriculum content, it provides two-way communication between the teacher and the students. The volitional control of learning is performed by students rather than by the teacher (Zhang & Cui, 2010), DE is also defined as an educational process that has no limitations by place and time, and conducted by using technology and media to support the learning process. It provides two-way communication, a methodology characterized by an interaction that is created specifically for this purpose - two-way communication, and it provides equal chances for those who cannot take advantage of face-to-face learning opportunities (Yildiz & Erdemm, 2018).

From the above-mentioned definitions, one can elicit that there are four main components of DE:

1. To distinguish DE from self-study, DE must be based on an institutional (school or college) basis.
2. There should be a separation between teacher and student in terms of the geography of the place, time, and knowledge of concepts to be taught, the teacher is somewhere, the student is elsewhere, and the separation is one of the goals of the DE system.
3. Some form of synchronous and asynchronous interactive communication must be provided for learners to interact with one another, with teaching resources, and with the teacher. Communication is defined as "distance communication," interaction must be the basic feature of education, it must be available, common, and appropriate,
4. To connect learners, resources, and teachers together, i.e., teachers interact with learners, and the available resources allow learning. Resources should be subject to instructional design procedures that are organized into educational experiences that enhance learning, and include resources that can be observed, listened to, or supplemented, (Schlosser & Simonson, 2002).

In this respect, DE can be considered as an independent form of many educational types, because it possesses essential differences which can't be implemented in a traditional form (Lenar, et al., 2014).

DE system has many advantages, including The easy access to flexible education that is not restricted to time and place; Education according to individual differences, using of communication techniques effectively, enabling the learner to learn by him/herself according to his/her ability of learning. DE is enriched with multimedia that allows for more efficient and effective learning and gives the learner the ability to learn from experts, provide lifelong learning, and reaches a new unreachable audience, The student's time is employed due to the independence of the place, providing flexibility for students, and granting equal educational opportunities to all students (Kara et al., 2020). According to Rice (2006),

Second-order Barriers (for example lack of instructional design capabilities, lack of motivation, incompatibility with managing distance education systems, concerns about student discipline, negative beliefs about the value of technology, and concerns about a lack of informational culture) are usually They are rooted in teachers' core beliefs about teaching and learning, are common, and cause much greater difficulty than first-class barriers because they are less realistic than first-class barriers and are more personal and deeper (Yang & Huang, 2008; Ertmer, 1999).

Ertmer et al., (2012) indicated that exterior barriers", including access to resources and technical support, do not restrict teacher to utilize technology and they do not affect his/her educational beliefs. Mueller & Wood (2012) described the excellent technology-using teachers as risk-taking, flexible learners; they have a time and strong personality to overcome any barriers to integrating technology into education that might stand in the way of their positive beliefs about DE.

Teachers' Beliefs about DE

Brown and Cooney (1982) explained that beliefs are the tendency to act and the main determinants of behaviour; belief is defined as mental structures of experience that guide human behaviour (Sigel, 1985). It is the set of opinions that have been formed to an individual by getting experience during the learning process, (Ford,1994), it means an individual's representation of reality who has enough background about the truth and credibility to guide his behaviour, and it is predicted for outgoing behaviour (Harvey, 1986), it is a set of psychological structures that include an understanding, perceptions, and suggestions that represent the fact as the individual sees it (Bryan, 2003), it is driving forces that shapes teaching and learning processes (Alghamdi & Presridge, 2015).

Pintrich (1990) considers that beliefs are the most valuable psychological structure in teachers' education. The beliefs that teachers have, they will affect their perceptions and judgments, which in turn affect their behaviours in the classroom, understanding the structures of teachers' belief are necessary to improve their professional preparation and teaching practices (Pajares 1992). In addition, understanding the teacher's pedagogical behaviour is necessary to continue any educational reform and to improve the quality of learning, so it is a strong rationale for maintaining the types of classroom practices that reformists want to change (Tobin & McCrobbie, 1996; Yildiz & Erdem, 2018; Hermans et al., 2008).

Generally speaking Ertmer (1999); Yang & Huang (2008) reported that teachers' beliefs about DE require a radical change in both teaching style and teacher vision of what classroom

life revolves around, increased sensitivity to individual student problems, learning how to change classroom position, and how to do the evaluation. Even if all first-class barriers were removed, additional resources were provided, and technological skills training delivered, but the second-class barriers of their belief systems will remain. In this case, it is important to overcome potential barriers in DE processes to create effective learning environments using technological tools; In addition to the "knowledge, skills and attitudes" of the teacher who needs to implement DE efficiently, redressing teachers' misconceptions and misperceptions regarding their roles and competencies in DE (Kara et al., 2020).

Related Work

Several studies have been conducted to scrutinize beliefs about DE, the researcher can survey some of them, Yang & Huang (2008) studied the behaviour, interests, and beliefs of high school English teachers in integrating information technology into English language teaching. The results found that despite schools were pressured to use the application of technology, but the adoption of using new technologies in teaching and learning practices by teachers was limited. The teachers' concerns were generally directed toward personal and informational issues, and that their teaching behaviours through using technology were modest. Their study also pointed out that teachers' beliefs influence the integration of technology into education so that constructive use of technology is difficult even with sufficient technical and administrative support and resources.

Galvis (2012) reviewed several studies that examined teachers' beliefs and technology and concluded that addressing teachers' beliefs about technology use was useful in building teacher education programs and that even if teachers had positive beliefs about technology use in the classroom, But first-class barriers such as Budgetary allocations, training, and infrastructure are some of the current challenges that teachers face in public schools are hindering their ability to use technology and affecting their beliefs and pedagogical behaviour.

Al-Abdullatif (2012) conducted a study that addresses perceptions of teachers and students about the value and effectiveness of online learning implementation in higher education, indicating a high level of satisfaction and positive trends toward online education. The students show a high appreciation of the online education system. The results emphasized that examining students' experiences and perceptions of online teaching and learning, helped to gain the clear vision to the general effectiveness of the online learning model, also to identify teaching methods and related learning design, and identify several components related to building an effective online learning environment. Saleem & Al-Suqri (2015); Alghhamdi & Prestridge (2015)

Yükselir (2016) addressed the perceptions and perspectives of English Foreign Language (EFL) teachers by integrating the Internet into language learning and teaching, they found that there were positive perceptions of Internet use in the teaching and learning English as a foreign language. They found that the teachers are keen to incorporate the internet into their language classes. It also showed positive trends toward using the Internet as an educational tool. They have confidence in applying online learning activities to language instruction.

Singh et al., (2018) aimed to recognize teachers' beliefs about technology and incorporate it into English as a second language (ESL) teaching and learning. The results indicated that despite positive beliefs about the integration of technology and its role in language teaching and learning, not all teachers adopt technology in their classrooms because schools, especially in

rural areas, lack facilities to use technology. They also noted that experienced teachers have strong beliefs about using technology to teach and learn English as a second language.

Yildiz & Erdem (2018) aimed to identify the learning practices of teachers assigned to provide courses in DE programs and the impact of their knowledge and beliefs on these practices. The results indicated that the majority of teachers have a greater understanding of the facilities offered by the DE system, such as time and location flexibility, dimensions of technology management and virtual classroom management, and teachers have low self-efficacy beliefs about managing the learning process. They also have high-value beliefs about the economic nature of DE, while they have lower benefit beliefs about the effectiveness of the learning products and the variety of learning experiences. Fidalgo et al., (2020) addressed students' perceptions of DE and their attitudes and preparations for distance learning, and their perceptions were centered on the importance of DE programs in terms of time management, motivation, and language skills learning. They had more inclinations to take distance courses because DE allowed them to save time by selecting study location and working at their own pace, they do not have to go to school.

Hol (2020) investigated the beliefs of EFL teachers about implementing digital technology in the classroom and the underlying factors which affect their beliefs the results indicated that teachers have positive views on the use of digital technology in EFL classrooms as a foreign language in terms of importance, use and experience. He found that gender, age, and educational experience did not make any significant changes in teachers' beliefs. It was noted that teachers who had received technology training on the use of digital technology had more positive beliefs than teachers who had not received training. The teachers with a bachelor degree considered the use of digital technology in the classroom as more important than teachers with a Master's degree. There is also no significant influence of age and gender on teachers' trends in technology use, while teachers' teaching experience has shown a strong positive correlation with the trend toward utilization of the technology.

METHODOLOGY

This study focuses mainly on the teachers because the teacher is considered as the most important component of DE systems. The study used the quantitative approach, and the questionnaire was used as a data-collection tool.

The questionnaire was based on some studies related to the beliefs about DE such as (Yildiz & Erdem, 2018; Attah-Mensah et al., 2016; Salem & Al-Suqri, 2015; Alghhamdi & Presridge, 2015; Alkahtani, 2011). It conducted to identify teachers' beliefs about DE in Saudi Arabia.

Teachers' Beliefs about DE Questionnaire

The questionnaire (in its final form) consisted of two main sections: Teacher demographical information: gender, specialization, years of teaching experience, and the teachers' beliefs, which included the following dimensions:

1. Beliefs about the importance of using consisted of (6) statements; It addresses the teacher's beliefs about the ability of DE to produce positive learning outcomes, build a positive interactive environment, facilitate learning,

2. Beliefs about creating the teaching experience (6) statements; It addresses the teacher's beliefs about the ability of DE to change the way teachers perform, improve the quality of teaching and learning, meet the evolving needs of the learner, embrace the learner with learning difficulties,
3. Beliefs about the expected benefit (6) statements; It addresses the teacher's beliefs about the ability of distance learning to provide multiple ways to deliver content, improve the quality of pedagogical output, provide students with tasks of a research nature, promote dialogue and discussion,
4. Beliefs about student strengthening (6) statements; It addresses teacher' beliefs about the ability of DE to increase participation, arrange learning activities, practice student investigations, and maintain high expectations for students. Beliefs profile's aimed to be ascertained about teachers' views on these dimensions. The researcher used a 4-point Likert scale (1 indicates to "strongly disagree" to 4 indicates to "strongly agree"). The questionnaire (in its final form) was composed of 24 statements.

The researcher validated the validity and the reliability of the Questionnaire by using the Cronbach's Alpha method on (40) teachers randomly selected from the teachers in Dammam city schools in Saudi Arabia; Cronbach's Alpha was found to be (0.823), furthermore the validity of the questionnaire was also verified by calculating correlation degrees between each dimension of the questionnaire by using the Pearson correlation coefficient, and Table (1) shows this:

Dimension	Correlations
Beliefs about the importance of the use	0.70*
Beliefs about creating the teaching experience	0.73*
Beliefs about the expected benefit	0.86*
Beliefs about learner strengthening	0.80*
<i>*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).</i>	

Study Sample

The study sample was 107 teachers from Dammam City schools in Saudi Arabia, as shown a Table 2.

Variable		Value	
		F	%
Gender	Male	54	50.5
	Female	53	49.5
Specialization	Scientific	61	57
	Human	46	43
Years of Teaching Experience	5 years or less	10	9.3
	More than 5 years to 9	13	12.1
	10 years and more	84	78.5

In light of Table 2, for gender distribution, the female population was 49.5%, compared to 50.5% for male teachers. Regarding specialization, teachers from scientific disciplines were 57%, compared to 43% of the literary disciplines. Regarding the years of teaching experience; 9.3% had less than 5 years of experience, and 12.1% of teachers whose experience more than 5 years and less than 10 years of experience and 78.5% of teachers with more than years.

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Teachers' Beliefs about Distance Learning

The following are the data analysis of the statements

What are teachers' beliefs about DE in Saudi Arabia?" the researcher used the mean and standard deviation (SD), as shown in Table 3.

The dimension of Teachers' beliefs about distance education "TBDE"	Mean	Std. Deviation	Rank
Beliefs about the importance of the use	3.07	0.45	1
Beliefs about creating the teaching experience	2.95	0.35	3
Beliefs about the expected benefit	3.02	0.43	2
Beliefs about learner strengthening	3.07	0.69	1
TBDE Total	3.03	0.37	

It is clear from the Table 3 that teachers' beliefs are generally oriented toward the adoption of DE. The mean score of the responses in beliefs about DE as a whole was ($m=3.03$, $SD=0.37$). Beliefs about the importance of using DE in which the mean was ($m=3.07$, $SD=0.45$), beliefs about learner strengthening of was ($m=3.07$, $SD=0.69$), beliefs about the expected benefits was ($m=3.02$, $SD=0.43$), beliefs about the composition of the teaching experience was ($M=2.95$, $SD=0.35$).

The standard for measuring was used to calculate the means of the responses of the individuals at (0.75) which was based on the median. The mean of the responses of the sample was as follows: if the mean is between 1.75-1, it is for strongly disagree if the mean is between 1.76 - 2.5, it is for "disagree category"; if the mean is between 2.51-3.25, it is for "agree" category if the mean is between 3.26-4 it is for "strongly agree" category. In this respect, it is clear that teachers' responses were in the "agree" category which with the beliefs of adoption the DE.

This result of this study indicated that teachers have a belief about the importance of DE in creating the teaching experience, recognizing the benefit expected from using DE, and DE strengthens the learner as it grants them the opportunities for discussion, DE provides feedback and makes easy access to the learning environment, DE enables the access large number of students. DE enhances motivation and self-competence. It raises student interest to participate actively, it supports learning activities, it helps to enable the learner to extend their knowledge and experience beyond the classroom (Keskin & Yurdugül, 2019; Gail & Terry, 2011). It also indicates that teachers already have positive views on using digital technology in their classrooms (Hol, 2020).

The result of this study is consistent with the studies that have focused largely on technology and how it is used in education to provide high-quality education, the potential benefits of using DE in teaching and learning as an important component of teaching, facilitating learning and expanding educational opportunities, enhancing knowledge, and employing different strategies to make the learner actively engaged (Petsuwan, et al., 2019; Hadad et al., 2014; Rahman, 2014; Chang, 2012; Rashid & Elahi, 2012).

The result can be perceived that there is a high level of satisfaction and positive trends toward DE, as well as by examining teachers' perceptions of online teaching and learning that helped them gain insights into the overall effectiveness of the use of DE (Al-Abdullatif, 2012).

The finding is consistent with the finding of the study of Yildiz & Erdem (2018) who reported that the majority of teachers have a greater understanding of facilities such as the flexibility of time and space provided by the DE system, knowledge of the dimensions of technology management and virtual classroom management, and strong beliefs about self-competence. But they differ in beliefs about the effectiveness of learning outcomes, the diversity of learning experiences, and the advancement to increase the quality of teaching. It is also going in the same line with the study of Çiğdem & Topcu (2015), which considered that belief in usefulness is important for the adoption and utilization of DE management systems.

The finding of the study also differs with the findings of Singh et al., 2018, which indicated that teachers resisting the use of technology and DE, and differs with the study of Yang & Huang (2008), which considers that teachers' beliefs about integrating information technology into education have been limited which affected their teaching and learning practices by using the new technologies. They generally have such concerns regarding personal and informational issues, and also differ with the Singh et al., 2018, which pointed out that despite positive beliefs about integrating technology and its role in language teaching and learning, but not all the teachers adopt technology in their classrooms.

This can be ascribed to the trend of most of the educational system's constructions and inputs that support the close relationship between technologies and the learning process. This strong relationship encouraged the teacher to look for digital resources and read more about knowledge and constructing the meaning (Gilakjani et al., 2013; Hsieh & Dwyer, 2009). It also supports the importance and benefits of using technology to overcome deficiencies in teaching in traditional classroom systems, to provide the learner with the productive learning experience, to provide a rich learning environment focused on for self-directed learning, and to improve learner's various thinking skills, and to allow the teacher to integrate multimedia into the teaching process (Mason & Rennie, 2008; SEOK, 2008; Schlosser & Simonson, 2002), extending knowledge and experience using available resources remotely (Gail & Terry, 2011), and building effective Learning communities (Granger et al., 2002).

Teachers' Beliefs about Distance Education and Gender

To answer the second question of this study, "*How do teachers' beliefs about DE differ regarding the gender?*" The independent sample t-test was used to detect whether there are statistically significant differences in teachers' beliefs about DE that are gender-based, the result is shown in Table 4.

Variable	Group	M	SD	n	t (df)	P
Beliefs about the importance of use	Male	3.07	0.45	54	0.056 (105)	0.955
	Female	3.07	0.46	53		
Beliefs about creating the teaching experience	Male	2.94	0.39	54	0.538 (105)	0.592
	Female	2.97	0.3	53		
Beliefs about the expected benefit	Male	3.01	0.38	54	0.267 (105)	0.79
	Female	3.03	0.48	53		
Beliefs about learner strengthening	Male	3.08	0.61	54	0.06 (105)	0.952
	Female	3.07	0.76	53		
TBDE Total	Male	3.02	0.32	54	0.16 (105)	0.873
	Female	3.04	0.42	53		

The Table 4 shows that there is no statistical difference at P level <0.05) between males and females in the average degrees of beliefs about DE, the mean for male responses ($M=3.02$, $SD=0.32$) and the mean for female responses ($M=3.04$; $SD=0.42$, no difference between them in the dimension of beliefs about the importance of using DE as the mean of the male response is ($M=3.07$). While the mean of female responses ($m=3.07$; $SD=0.46$), which shows that there is no difference between them in the dimension of beliefs about creating of the teaching experience where the mean for male responses is ($m=2.94$, $SD=0.39$) while the mean of female responses is ($m=2.97$; $SD=0.30$, there is no difference in beliefs about the expected benefit as the mean for male responses is ($M=3.01$, $SD=0.38$) while the mean for the female responses is ($m=3.03$; $SD=0.48$). finally, there is no difference in beliefs about student support where the mean for male responses is ($m=3.08$, $SD=0.61$) while the mean for female responses is ($m=3.07$; $SD=0.76$).

The result of this study is consistent with the study of Hall (2020) which pointed out that gender had no important effect on the teachers' beliefs, and it does not make a change in their attitudes toward technology utilization. The result of this study is in opposite direction with the result of the study conducted by Salim & Al-Saqri (2015), which indicated that there are some differences in the beliefs of faculty members about DE concerning gender and that females have positive beliefs and perceptions about the use of DE in learning and teaching compared to males, The results of this study also differ from that of Guven (2009), who believed that teachers' cognitive beliefs vary by gender.

The result of this study is traced to that the current educational systems in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia are keen to provide all teachers, regardless of their gender with equal experiences in the field of employing technology in education, directing training programs, whether for male or female teachers, and supporting the importance of using DE in their educational process, and integrating the Internet in teaching and learning, as well as supporting in constructing of positive attitudes towards the use of the Internet as an educational tool, it also recommends on frequent examinations of their attitudes regarding the use of technology in the educational process, and instill confidence for implementation of learning activities via the Internet; In addition, it reinforces that beliefs about the use of technology is useful in creating education programs, all these factors contributed to strengthening beliefs about DE (beliefs about

the importance of use - beliefs about the formation of teaching experience - beliefs about the expected benefit - beliefs about learner support) of Male and female teachers.

Teachers' Beliefs about Distance Education and Specialization

For answering the third question of the research questions, "To what extent do teachers' beliefs about DE differ according to the specialization?" The independent sample t-test was used to discover whether there are statistically significant differences in teachers' beliefs about DE due to the difference in specialization (scientific - humanity) or no: the results are shown in the Table 5.

Variable	Group	M	SD	n	t (df)	p
Beliefs about the importance of use	Scientific	3.2	0.41	61	3.71 (105)	0
	Human	2.89	0.46	46		
Beliefs about creating the teaching experience	Scientific	3.02	0.32	61	2.29 (105)	0.024
	Human	2.87	0.38	46		
Beliefs about the expected benefit	Scientific	3.16	0.35	61	3.01 (105)	0
	Human	2.85	0.46	46		
Beliefs about learner strengthening	Scientific	3.19	0.57	61	2.08 (105)	0.04
	Human	2.92	0.8	46		
TBDE Total	Scientific	3.14	0.29	61	3.86 (105)	0
	Human	2.88	0.41	46		

Concerning specialization, the table shows that there is a significant difference at the level of $p < 0.05$) between teachers with scientific specializations and teachers with literary specializations in the average scores for the dimensions of beliefs about DE (beliefs about the importance of use - beliefs about the formation of teaching experience - beliefs about Expected Benefit - beliefs about learner empowerment) was for teachers of scientific disciplines. The results showed that there is a statistically significant difference between teachers with scientific and humanity specializations in the beliefs dimension about the importance of using DE ($t = 3.71(105)$, $p = 0.000$), and in the beliefs dimension about the formation of teaching experience ($t = 2.29(105)$, $p = 0.024$), and in the belief dimension about expected benefit ($t = 3.01(105)$, $p = 0.000$), and in the belief dimension about learner support ($t = 2.08(105)$, $p = 0.04$), and in beliefs about distance education as a whole ($t = 3.86(105)$, $p = 0.000$).

This study is consistent with Guven's study (2009), which indicated that their cognitive beliefs differ according to the specialization, and also is consistent with the study of Saleem and Al-Suqri (2015) which indicated that there are differences in the beliefs of faculty members about DE to the specialization and that the members of Faculty of Science and Nursing have more positive beliefs about DE compared to other colleges.

This result approves the findings of Yildiz & Erdem (2018) on that the teacher's background, perception, and experiences affect his approaches to dealing with the new cases or situations. Teachers with scientific specializations have previous experience and knowledge

about the technical aspects related to the educational process and how to integrate them into the educational process, and then affected their technological and teaching practices. This result can also be traced back to the fact that teachers with scientific specializations are eager to know many new things about the technology and a problem-solving mindset that enables them to use DE (Ertmer et al., 2012). Furthermore, teachers with scientific specializations understand and use digital processes and digital devices, teachers with scientific specializations are familiar with knowledge related to ICT in which it has a clear effect on their teaching practices and on the type of ICT activities they devote to students to engage in various learning activities, and on developing lifelong learning skills (Hsu, 2011; Mueller & Wood, 2012; Yang & Huang, 2008).

This result can be explained in the light that teachers with scientific specialization have more constructivist beliefs about DE, and a clear vision of how to implement the educational requirements of technological change in teaching and learning curricula, which enabled them to better use technology, and to form positive beliefs about the formation of teaching experience, it also enables them to have recognized the value and the benefit of DE, and learner support. This may be due to the objectives and nature of the science courses that the teachers studied, which have a technological dimension that enhances the value and application of technology in all fields, and their ability to confront the problems associated with the educational process and work to solve them.

Teachers' Beliefs about Distance Education and Years of Teaching Experience

To the answer of The fourth question from the study questions, "To what extent do teachers' beliefs about distance education differ according to the different educational stage?, The researcher used "ANOVA test to analyze the variance of independent samples, One Way Analysis Of Variance, to discover whether there are statistically significant differences in teachers' beliefs about DE to the difference in the years of teaching experience (5 years or less - more than 5 years and less than 10 years - 10 years and more Table 6 shows the results.

Variable		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Beliefs about the importance of the use	Between Groups	0.803	2	0.402	1.981	0.143
	Within Groups	21.083	104	0.203		
	Total	21.886	106			
Beliefs about creating the teaching experience	Between Groups	0.213	2	0.106	0.867	0.423
	Within Groups	12.776	104	0.123		
	Total	12.989	106			
Beliefs about the expected benefit	Between Groups	0.064	2	0.032	0.171	0.843
	Within Groups	19.516	104	0.188		
	Total	19.58	106			
Beliefs about learner strengthening	Between Groups	0.154	2	0.077	0.161	0.851
	Within Groups	49.744	104	0.478		
	Total	49.899	106			

TBDE Total	Between Groups	0.15	2	0.075	0.547	0.58
	Within Groups	14.298	104	0.137		
	Total	14.448	106			

Regarding the years of teaching experience, as shown in Table 6, teachers, regardless of years of teaching experience, generally the teachers have positive beliefs about DE (beliefs about the importance of use - beliefs about the creating of the teaching experience - beliefs about the expected benefit - beliefs about learner strengthening). The results showed that there is no statistically significant difference at the $p < 0.05$ level between the scores of the three groups in the beliefs about the importance of use dimension ($F=1.981$, $p=0.143$), and in the belief dimension about the formation of teaching experience ($F=0.867$, $p=0.423$), in the belief dimension about expected benefit ($F=0.171$, $p=0.843$), in the belief dimension about learner support ($F=0.161$, $p=0.851$), and in beliefs about DE as a whole ($F=0.547$, $p=0.850$).

The results of this study differ with what Şeker & Alisinanoğlu (2015) which indicated that beliefs have a positive relationship with age and the professional development of the teacher. These results can be attributed to the availability of a level of self-efficacy for the teacher, regardless of years of teaching experience in the use of technology and its integration into education, and generating of personal conviction about the importance of using DE in strengthening the learner, and striving to shape technological pedagogical expertise, the teachers are convinced about the expected benefits from the use of DE. It also differs from the study of Singh et al., (2018) which indicated that teachers with teaching experience have strong beliefs about the use of technology in teaching and learning English as a foreign language. It also differs with the study of Saleem & Al-Suqri (2015), which indicated that there are differences in the beliefs of faculty members about DE regarding teaching experience, and it differs with the study of Zhang & Cui (2010), which indicated that there are differences in beliefs for those who have more experience in DE, which makes them believe more strongly in its importance.

This result can be traced back to what Yildiz & Erdem (2018) pointed out that teachers have a greater understanding regarding the facilities provided by the DE system such as flexibility of time and place. They consider DE as an educational service that is conducted through technology and has its social, educational and psychological effects, (Yildiz & Erdem, 2018). Alghamdi & Prestridge (2015) pointed out that teachers have positive constructive beliefs about using technology in teaching and learning, improving research skills, transforming the learning process and implementing the teaching curriculum to become student-centred. It is also consistent with what was indicated by Yükselir (2016) that teachers have positive perceptions and attitudes about integrating the Internet in language learning and teaching and having confidence in applying online learning activities in language teaching.

The current result indicates that despite the existence of first-class barriers such as budget allocations, training, and infrastructure facing teachers with several years of experience, but these barriers did not affect their beliefs and teaching behaviour, but rather had positive beliefs regarding the use of technology in teaching, Galvis (2012). This can be attributed to the availability of sufficient awareness among teachers, regardless of years of educational experience towards DE, they are aware of its importance and the expected benefit in the teaching process, the formation of teaching experiences, and the support of the learner in the learning situation. This result can also be traced back to the diversity and quality of the courses that are offered on DE programs and to provide them with all kinds of teachers in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,

which provides them with the skills they need to teach, achieved effective contact with students, and provide them with more time, thus forming their positive beliefs about DE.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The study of beliefs about DE in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is important because it is related to the formation of the teacher's teaching and learning processes, as it affects their perceptions about their behaviour in the classroom. It is also considered as a gateway to their professional development. The educational reform and improving the quality of learning is related to understanding the teaching behaviour of the teachers that he depends on in his beliefs about DE. generally, the results indicated that teachers' beliefs are nurture to adopt DE and that they have convictions about its importance in creating teaching experience, realizing the expected benefit from its use, and strengthening the learner. teachers' beliefs about DE do not differ according to gender and years of teaching experience, which indicates the efficiency of the capabilities of the educational system in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in encouraging and enhancing the teacher's abilities to develop himself/herself professionally and to use DE as well, DE supports to build a strong relationship between technologies and the learning process, despite the various beliefs of teachers' of different the specializations. The teachers of scientific specialization have more positive beliefs about DE compared to humanity specialized teachers. The study recommends that although teachers have positive beliefs about DE, but teachers in general and teach of humanities specialization, in particular, must be encouraged to adopting and use it in the teaching process, In addition to the necessity of providing them with training programs related to DE that strengthen their positive beliefs towards it, and help them to overcome the difficulties that may prevent them from using DE efficiently.

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