

Distance Learning in Vocational Mass Communication Courses during COVID-19 in Kuwait: A Media Richness Perspective of Students' Perceptions

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Abstract : The outbreak of Coronavirus during the Spring semester of 2020 brought new challenges for the teaching of vocational mass communication courses at universities in Kuwait. Using the Media Richness Theory (MRT), this study examines the response of 252 university students on mass communication programs. A questionnaire regarding their perceptions and preferences concerning modes of instruction on vocational courses online, focusing on the four factors of MRT: immediacy of feedback, capacity to include personal focus, conveyance of multiple cues, and variety of language. The outcomes show that immediacy of feedback predicted all criterion variables: suitability of distance learning (DL) for teaching vocational courses, sentiments of students toward DL, perceptions of easiness of evaluation of DL coursework, and the possibility of retaking DL courses. Capacity to include personal focus was another positive predictor of the criterion variables. It predicted students' sentiments toward DL and the possibility of retaking DL courses. The outcomes are discussed in relation to implications for using DL, as well as constructing an agenda for DL research.

Keywords : distance learning, media richness theory, traditional learning, vocational media courses

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