

E-Immediacy in Saudi Higher Education Context: Female Students' Perspectives

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Abstract : The literature on educational technology in Saudi Arabia reveals female learners' unwillingness to study fully online courses in higher education despite the fact that Saudi universities have offered a variety of online degree programmes to undergraduate students in many regions of the country. The root causes keeping female students from successfully learning in online environments are limited social interaction, lack of motivation and difficulty with the use of e-learning platforms. E-immediacy remains an important method of online teaching to enhance students' interaction and support their online learning. This study explored Saudi female students' perceptions, as well as the experiences of lecturers' immediacy behaviours in online environments, who participate in fully online courses using Blackboard at a Saudi university. Data were collected through interviews with focus groups. The three focus groups included five to seven students each. The female participants were asked about lecturers' e-immediacy behaviours and which e-immediacy behaviours were important for an effective learning environment. A thematic analysis of the data revealed three main themes: the encouragement of student interaction, the incorporation of social media and addressing the needs of students. These findings provide lecturers with insights into instructional designs and strategies that can be adopted in using e-immediacy in effective ways, thus improving female learners' interactions as well as their online learning experiences.

Keywords : e-learning, female students, higher education, immediacy

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