

## **The Main Obstacles to Employing Online Learning for Arabic Language Teachers at the Secondary Level in Kuwait**

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### **Abstract**

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic spread around the globe, and all educational institutions shifted their teaching methods online. This movement represented a traumatic situation accompanied by barriers. The first objective of this descriptive study is to identify the major barriers that secondary Arabic language teachers (SALT) in government schools in Kuwait face during online teaching. Another objective is to indicate the impact of some independent demographic variables on the classification of barriers. The theoretical framework of the study is based on a review of the existing body of knowledge while considering the local environment in Kuwait as a developing country. The questionnaire included two main sections: (1) demographic characteristics and (2) factors categorized into three main categories, personal, legislative, and contextual barriers. A questionnaire was distributed to 1581 SALT, and the response rate was 35% with a total of 557 respondents. SPSS (version 27) was used to analyze the data. The results indicated that there were 25 significant factors involving SALT who taught online. The top two major barriers were e-cheating and weak financial incentives for online teaching. The results also indicated that nationality and governorate states play a significant role when teaching online. Specifically, Kuwaiti SALT were more anxious about online teaching than non-Kuwaiti SALT. Furthermore, the Farwaniyah governorate had the worst online infrastructure and faced more technical problems than other governorates. One implication of the

**The Main Obstacles to Employing Online Learning for Arabic Language Teachers  
at the Secondary Level in Kuwait**

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current study is that cyber-crime laws and regulations must be changed to be more liberal and less conservative, especially with regard to freedom of speech and research when teaching online. A longitudinal study with multiple data collection points might be a robust option for identifying online teaching obstacles.

**Keywords**

*COVID-19 pandemic, barriers, obstacles, secondary Arabic language teachers, online teaching*

## المعوقات الرئيسية لتوظيف التعلم عبر الإنترنت لمعلمي اللغة العربية في المرحلة الثانوية بالكويت

### الملخص

انتشرت جائحة فايروس كورونا (COVID-19) في جميع أنحاء العالم، وغيرت جميع المؤسسات التعليمية أساليب التدريس الخاصة بها إلى التدريس عبر الإنترنت، فكان هذا الأمر حالة مؤلمة مصحوبة بعواقب. فجاءت هذه الدراسة بعنوان (المعوقات الرئيسية لتوظيف التعلم عبر الإنترنت لمعلمي اللغة العربية في المرحلة الثانوية في الكويت) لدراسة جانب لهذه الحالة في دولة الكويت دراسة وصفية تحليلية، فكان من أهدافها تحديد العوائق الرئيسية التي يواجهها مدرسو اللغة العربية بالمرحلة الثانوية الحكومية في الكويت أثناء التدريس عبر الإنترنت. وتهدف من جانب آخر إلى بيان تأثير بعض المتغيرات الديموغرافية المستقلة في تصنيف العوائق، وهي المؤشرات الشخصية والتشريعية والسياقية. وقد استند الإطار النظري للدراسة إلى مراجعة مجموعة المعارف الحالية مع الأخذ في الاعتبار للبيئة المحلية في الكويت بوصفها دولة نامية. وقد طُورت استبانة تسأل عن تصنيف العوائق، متضمنة قسمين رئيسيين: (١) الخصائص الديموغرافية، (٢) عوامل مقسمة إلى ثلاث فئات رئيسية: عوائق شخصية وتشريعية وسياقية. وقد وُزعت الاستبانة على ١٥٨١ معلماً من معلمي اللغة العربية بالمرحلة الثانوية، وبلغ معدل الاستجابة ٣٥٪ بإجمالي ٥٥٧ مستجيباً. واستُخدم SPSS (الإصدار ٢٧) لتحليل البيانات. وقد أشارت النتائج إلى وجود ٢٥ عاملاً مهماً يتعلق بمعلمي اللغة العربية بالمرحلة الثانوية الذين قاموا بالتدريس عبر الإنترنت. وتبيّن أنّ العائقين الرئيسيين هما الغش الإلكتروني والحوافز المالية الضعيفة للتدريس عبر الإنترنت. كما أشارت النتائج إلى أنّ الجنسية والمحافظات تلعب دوراً مهماً في التدريس عبر الإنترنت. فعلى وجه التحديد، كان المعلم الكويتي أكثر قلقاً بشأن التدريس عبر الإنترنت من غير الكويتي. وظهر أنّ محافظة الفروانية لديها أسوأ بنية تحتية للإنترنت، وواجهت مشاكل تقنية أكثر من المحافظات الأخرى. ومما انتهت إليه الدراسة وجوب تغيير قوانين الجرائم الإلكترونية وأنظمتها؛ لتكون أكثر موضوعية وأقل تحفظاً، لا سيما فيما يتعلق بحرية الكلام والبحث عند التدريس عبر الإنترنت. وقد تكون الدراسة المطولة باستخدام نقاط جمع بيانات متعددة خياراً قوياً لتحديد عقبات التدريس عبر الإنترنت.

### الكلمات المفتاحية

جائحة كوفيد-١٩، عوائق، عقبات، مدرسو اللغة العربية بالمرحلة الثانوية، التدريس عبر الإنترنت

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## **Introduction**

Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic that spread around the globe, almost all educational institutions moved from face-to-face to online learning. Kuwait is one of the countries that decided that private schools could optionally complete the second semester (2019-2020) through online learning. However, the Ministry of Education in Kuwait did not approve the same approach for government schools until seven months later. Although the Ministry of Education in Kuwait spent approximately \$213 million in 2019-2020 on e-learning, the Ministry of Education was not ready to move online immediately during COVID-19 (Al-turki, 2021). Al-turki (2021) stressed that only 5% of 426,000 teachers and enrolled students had taken advantage of e-learning. The decision to move from a traditional system to a completely online system was inevitable. Adopting the Western online education system and applying it to developing countries such as Kuwait would not work. For example, most online research in Western countries has revealed that financial issues are a major obstacle to adopting successful online learning; however, in Kuwait, financial issues are not considered an obstacle. In contrast, in Kuwait, the English language is considered a main obstacle, whereas in Western countries, this is not considered a problem. Because online obstacles are a very broad issue, the researchers of the current study focus on Arabic language teachers at the secondary level in Kuwait.

During for the past three decades, research has proven that the strategies of teaching and learning from distance when it is better used and employed in various academic educational institutions, such as schools, institutes, colleges, and universities, can contribute to developing and facilitating work in mentioned educational system, whether in their traditional or virtual environments (Boettcher & Conrad, 2016; Clark & Mayer, 2016; Simonson, Zvacek & Smaldino, 2019).

Teaching students online in a normal situation is different than teaching them through remote teaching in an epidemic situation such as the COVID-19 pandemic. In Kuwait, all teachers, regardless of their background or what they teach, are required to teach remotely, including SALT. The main goal of the current research is to determine the major barriers and influential factors that SALT face while teaching in government schools in Kuwait. Another goal is to determine whether there are any significant differences between some independent demographic variables, such as the experience of teaching, gender, nationality, and governorate of the State of Kuwait, with regard to the major barriers.

### **Research Problem**

Ministry of education in Kuwait had decided not to move to online teaching and learning until seven months later. In contrast, private schools in Kuwait had decided to move to online learning within two months. The current study would focus on this gap and it is important to analyze and explain this gap in an objective and scientific manner. Teaching students online in a well-suited environment is different than teaching them in a traumatic situation such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Accordingly, the online barriers to teaching are different. The reviewed literature reveals that studies focusing on SALT's barriers to engagement in online teaching in developing countries such as Kuwait are rare and limited. Most of the existing literature has focused on success factors in online education instead of obstacles (Cong, 2020; Lastariwati et al., 2021; Sulaiman & Dashti, 2018; Yudiawan & Sunarso, 2021). In addition,

most of the existing literature in this field has used different methodologies to identify the problem, such as qualitative and interview methods, and the sample sizes of these methods were too small to compare them with quantitative methods. Furthermore, the findings of qualitative methods are not generalizable. Finally, the English literature on SALT is very limited. Moving from traditional teaching to completely online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic is inevitable. This movement is accompanied by obstacles such as personal, legislative and contextual barriers. In the next section, the researchers address the objectives and significances of the study.

### **Research Objectives**

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

- (1) Identify the personal, legislative and contextual barriers that discourage successful online teaching among SALT.
- (2) Measure the major factors in the classification of barriers that SALT can expect to encounter during online teaching.
- (3) Investigate and examine the factors related to independent demographic variables.

### **Significances of the Study**

The significance of the study can be summarized as follows:

- The findings of the current study can help educators and policy-makers in public education schools effectively incorporate online teaching into the educational system.
- The Ministry of Education in Kuwait has spent millions on e-education in the last decade. The present study identifies and discusses the main causes and obstacles that discourage educators from being

successful in online teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The outcomes of this study contribute to correcting the deviation between the current situation of online teaching and the desired situation.
- Demographic independent variables such as nationality and governorate play a significant role when designing and implementing online teaching.

### **Research Questions**

The researchers address the following research questions:

1. What are the major factors that prevent SALT from participating in successful online teaching, and to what extent do each of these factors discourage SALT from participating in successful online teaching?
2. Are there differences between different groups of SALT regarding the inhibition effect of these factors based on demographic variables such as gender, nationality, teaching experience and governorate?

### **Framework of the Study**

The framework of the current study is the classification of barriers, originally developed by Pajo and Wallace (2007) and subsequently modified by Zamani et al. (2016). The researchers of the present study made some minor modifications to the framework of the study to be suitable to the local environment. The classification of barriers involves three main categories: personal, legislative, and contextual barriers. The definitions of these barriers will be defined in relation to their categories later. The existing literature reveals many different barriers that discourage teachers from being successful in online teaching. For example, additional workload, lack of technical support, concern about intellectual property, a lack of professional development training programs and a lack of financial support are the main factors that prevent teachers from engaging with online teaching (Reed, 2012, 2014; Seaton & Schwier, 2014; Shannon et

al., 2012). The literature also reveals that online teaching requires different competencies, and skilled face-to-face teachers do not necessarily make quality online teachers (Barbour, 2012). Online teaching skills are important factors for any educational institution that wants to incorporate quality in online teaching. Adopting innovation in an education system involving online teaching is a challenging issue because of the nature of the system itself. For example, the evaluation of students in online teaching is an extremely complicated issue. Teachers need to learn new methods for assessing online students instead of merely applying face-to-face evaluation methods. The classification of barriers will be discussed in the next section.

### **Personal Barriers**

These barriers involve internal factors related to the personal characteristics and behavioral habits of teachers (Zamani et al., 2016). Preventing e-cheating is a major barrier that teachers face in online teaching (Khan & Balasubramanian, 2012). Researchers believe that some barriers in this category, such as a lack of computer skills and knowledge, are more dominant in the developing world than in Western countries (Bhuasiri et al., 2012). Scholars suggest that teachers' physical presence plays a dynamic role in engaging students in the learning process and is a direct source of knowledge when teachers use gestures to convey information (Uma et al., 2016). Thus, teaching from a distance eliminates these benefits. Teaching Arabic grammar "nahoo" and following students' oral reading from a distance are considered barriers in this category (Aprilia et al., 2021). Evaluating students' work at a distance is a complicated job for educators (Churiyah et al., 2020). Language is also a barrier to the widespread adoption of innovation, particularly in the case of technology-driven solutions. In Kuwait, the main spoken language is Arabic, whereas English is the dominant language of software and IT-supported tools. The language issue was one of the key drivers behind the Sabaq

Foundation, which aimed to create access to online materials for a market that is not able to benefit from content in English (Osama & Latif, 2016).

### **Legislative Obstacles**

This category of barriers is relevant to the laws and regulations of online teaching and learning. Each country has its own rules and regulations for the cyber-world, and in general, developing countries have stricter rules than the Western world. For example, in Kuwait, cyber-crime laws, which were recently established in 2015 in clause No. 3 of Article 4, stipulate punishment by imprisonment or a financial fine for anyone who “eavesdropped, picked up, or deliberately intercepted, unlawfully, what was sent through the information network or an information technology device. If the user discloses what he has reached, he shall be punished by imprisonment for a period not exceeding three years and by a fine of no less than three thousand dinars (\$10,000) and not exceeding ten thousand dinars (\$30,000), or by either of these two penalties (Ministry of Interior, 2015).” The strictness of the press and publications law, especially Article No. 21 (prejudice the dignity of people, their lives, or their religious beliefs and inciting hatred or contempt for any class of society..., etc.). These rules and regulations of cyber-crime laws play a major role in discouraging teachers from participating successfully in online teaching.

### **Contextual Barriers**

This category of barriers is relevant to a lack of infrastructure and technical and institutional support for educators. One of the main factors in this category that discourages educators from participating in successful online teaching is the lack of recognition of educators, especially financial and moral incentives (Farooq et al., 2020; Pajo & Wallace, 2007; Palvia et al., 2018). A lack of high-speed internet, high-quality professional training programs, and web security are considered the major contextual barriers (Farooq et al., 2020). One of the most critical barriers to the adoption of technology-based

learning innovations is the lack of quality resource content. Creating quality content is time-consuming and resource intensive but critically important. Without quality content, innovative solutions involving more effective learning delivery methods cannot achieve scale (Osama & Latif, 2016). In the next section, the researchers address the methodology of the study.

### **Research Methodology**

For the current study, the researchers followed an analytical descriptive and inferential approach. A questionnaire was the main instrument to gather information about factors that affect SALT in government schools in Kuwait. The research instrument was initially constructed based on the literature and then modified, revised, and extended according to the local environment in Kuwait. The questionnaire included two main sections: (1) demographic characteristics of SALT (e.g., gender, teaching experience in years, nationality (Kuwaiti, non-Kuwaiti), and governorate in the State of Kuwait (Al-Al-Asimah, Al-Al-Jahra, Hawalli, Al-Farwaniyah, Mubarak Al-Kabeer, Al-Al-Ahmadi) (see Table 1) and (2) the list of factors extracted from the literature after modifications. These factors were categorized into three main categories: personal barriers (eight indicators), legislative barriers (five indicators), and contextual barriers (fourteen indicators). The respondents were asked to express the degree to which they perceived each barrier using a 5-point Likert scale (very low = 1 to very high = 5). Because all teachers in Kuwait have smartphones, the researchers decided to send the electronic survey via smartphones and through each governorate. Because the researchers did not have direct access to the subjects of the current study, they sent the electronic survey through an Arabic language general mentor who was available in each governorate and had access to all Arabic teachers. To measure the validity of the instrument, the researchers sent it to eight arbitrators who were faculty members from Kuwait University, Gulf University for Science and Technology and Southern Oregon

University (Oregon, USA). The arbitrators included five full professors and three associate professors who determined and examined the extent of the instrument's power in achieving the objectives of the research study. Most of the arbitrators' comments involved language errors, whereas the rest involved redundant items. All redundant items were removed from the survey. The researchers conducted a pilot study to test the reliability of the instrument in a small portion of the population of SALT before collecting the actual data. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient test for the current study was  $\alpha = 0.85$ , which is considered suitable. The analysis was performed using SPSS version 27 for Windows. One-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and independent-samples t tests were conducted to measure inferential statistics between the dependent and independent variables. The independent variables included all the demographic variables, whereas the dependent variables were controlled. The p value was tested at the level of  $< .05$ . Regarding the normality of the distribution in each group, the Shapiro–Wilk test was conducted, and the results showed a normal distribution. To examine the homogeneity of the population variance in different groups, applications of Levene's test on the data were conducted. The Tukey HSD test was implemented to conduct couple comparisons among different groups of SALT (post hoc tests).

### **Research Sample**

One strength of the present study is the sample size. The sample of the current study was 557 SALT, which represented 35% of the entire population of the study. According to the latest statistics by the Ministry of Education in Kuwait, the total number of SALT in all governorate public schools is 1581 (Ammer, 2016). The total number is distributed as follows: 721 males (Kuwaiti = 61, non-Kuwaiti = 660) and 860 females (Kuwaiti = 277, non-Kuwaiti = 583). The researchers reached the sample via general mentors in each governorate separately. The state of Kuwait includes six governorates in total: Al-Al-Asimah, Hawalli, Al-Al-Jahra, Al-

**The Main Obstacles to Employing Online Learning for Arabic Language Teachers  
at the Secondary Level in Kuwait**

Farwaniyah, Al-Al-Ahmadi, and Mubarak Al-Kabeer (see Table 1). The number of non-Kuwaiti SALT surpassed that of Kuwaiti SALT. This numerical superiority is normal because the origin population of non-Kuwaiti SALT was 1243 vs. 338 for Kuwaiti SALT. Male participants represented 35% of the sample. The respondents were asked to identify factors related to online teaching. The sample of this study represented all government secondary schools in Kuwait.

**Table 1.** The demographic characteristics of the respondents.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Male 35%		196
Female 65%		361
<b>Nationality</b>		
Kuwaiti 26%		147
Non-Kuwaiti 74%		410
<b>Teaching Experience</b>		
1-5 years	71	13%
6-10 years	57	10%
11 > years	429	77%
<b>Governorate</b>		
Al-Al-Asimah	32	6%
Hawalli	197	35%
Al-Al-Jahra	77	14%
Al-Farwaniyah	28	5%
Al-Al-Ahmadi	197	35%
Mubarak Al-Kabeer	26	5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Results**

To answer the first research question, (1) what are the major factors that prevent SALT from participating in successful online teaching and to what extent do each of these factors prevent SALT from participating in online teaching, the researchers ranked the questionnaire items using a descriptive and inferential analysis test. Table 2 indicates the means and standard deviations and variances and impact degrees for the three main classifications of barriers of the study in descending order. Overall, the impact of the classification of barriers for SALT was large when teaching online ( $M = 3.34$ ,  $SD = .874$ ). Among the classification of barriers, contextual obstacles ranked first ( $M = 3.60$ ,  $SD = .860$ ), followed by legislative obstacles ( $M = 3.30$ ,  $SD = .883$ ) and personal obstacles ( $M = 2.90$ ,  $SD = .830$ ). Table 3 presents a detailed comparison between the ranks of each index and other indicators in descending order. Each category was ranked relative to other categories (personal, legislative, contextual barriers). Among the personal obstacles, index 1, “The difficulty of preventing cheating among students in online teaching” ( $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = .98$ ), was perceived as a significant barrier to online teaching across the entire study, whereas the least important source was index 8, “I find it difficult to simulate reciting poems and poetic texts through online teaching” ( $M = 2.35$ ,  $SD = 1.19$ ). Among the legislative obstacles, index 9, “Current laws do not protect teachers in the event of unintentional mistakes,” was the most critical source of SALT anxiety toward online teaching ( $M = 3.82$ ,  $SD = 1$ ), whereas the least important source was index 13, “Strict cybercrime laws prevent me from participating in online teaching” ( $M = 2.69$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ). As Table 3 shows, across the contextual obstacles, index 14, “Weak financial incentives for online teaching” ( $M = 4.12$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ) was perceived as a significant barrier. The second and third most critical sources of SALT anxiety about online teaching were indices 15 and 16, “Weak moral incentives for online teaching” and “Difficulty getting high speed internet” ( $M = 3.97$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ;  $M = 3.90$ ,  $SD = 1.19$ , respectively). As shown in Table 3, all the indicators of contextual

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**The Main Obstacles to Employing Online Learning for Arabic Language Teachers  
at the Secondary Level in Kuwait**

obstacles are significant and large barriers and ranked by descending mean values.

**Table 2.** Average means and standard deviations and variances and impact degrees for the classification of barriers in descending order.

Barriers of the study	Mean	Std. Deviation	Variance	Impact degree
Contextual barriers	3.6024	.86032	.740	Large
Legislative barriers	3.3020	.88306	.780	Large
Personal barriers	2.8986	.82907	.687	Medium
Overall average	3.3434	.874403	.765	Large

**Table 3.** Ranking the inhibitor indicators of SALT with regard to online teaching in descending order.

Personal obstacles	Mean	Std.	Impact
Deviation Degree			
1. The difficulty of preventing cheating Very Large among students in online teaching.	4.33	.98	
2. Teaching from home is not convenient, Large especially if it is necessary to appear directly with students.	3.18	1.36	
3. Lack of efficient online teaching programs. Medium	2.98	1.23	
4. I find it difficult to explain grammar rules Medium to students in online teaching.	2.76	1.31	
5. I find it difficult to follow the oral reading Medium of students in online teaching.	2.68	1.27	
6. My weakness in English is the reason it is Medium	2.58	1.18	

difficult to deal with most online teaching programs.			
7.	I find it difficult to deal with modern Low electronic software platforms.	2.39	1.15
8.	I find it difficult to simulate reciting poems and poetic texts through online teaching.	2.35	1.19

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 Legislative obstacles
 

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9.	Current laws do not protect teachers Large in the event of unintentional mistakes.	3.82	1.00
10.	Fear of hacking into smart devices and Large computers.	3.62	1.15
11.	The lack of legislation and laws regulating Large the online teaching process.	3.58	1.16
12.	The strictness of the Press and Publications Law prevents me from participating in online teaching, especially Article No. 21, which refers to harming the dignity of people, their lives, or their religious beliefs and inciting hatred or contempt for any group of society.	2.79	1.36
13.	Strict cybercrime laws prevent me from Medium online teaching.	2.69	1.15

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 Contextual obstacles
 

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14.	Weak financial incentives for online	4.12	1.02	Very Large
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**The Main Obstacles to Employing Online Learning for Arabic Language Teachers at the Secondary Level in Kuwait**

teaching.			
15. Weak moral incentives for online teaching.	3.97	1.07	Large
16. Difficulty getting high speed internet.	3.90	1.19	Large
17. The difficulty of providing modern devices and accessories for online teaching.	3.83	1.21	Large and
18. Weak web security protection.	3.62	1.14	Large
19. The large number of students in the classroom hinders the quality of online teaching.	3.60	1.21	Large
20. Lack of technical human support.	3.57	1.14	Large
21. Lack of workshops and courses for training online teaching programs and techniques by the Ministry of Education.	3.48	1.27	Large
22. The difficulty of providing appropriate quality programs for online teaching.	3.44	1.23	Large
23. Weak capabilities of most online teaching programs (for example, by capacity, features and time).	3.43	1.17	Large
24. Poor-quality teacher training for online teaching.	3.41	1.21	Large
25. Difficulty providing quality content sources for learners.	3.40	1.26	Large
26. Lack of teacher training on how to evaluate student projects remotely.	3.37	1.25	Large
27. Lack of teacher training on how to conduct online exams properly.	3.31	1.29	Large
Overall average	3.34	1.18	Large

**Differences among SALT According to Their Demographic Information**

To answer the second research question (Q2), are there any differences between different groups of SALT regarding the inhibitory effect of these factors based on demographic variables such as gender, nationality, teaching experience, and governorate, the researchers used inferential statistics such as t tests and ANOVA to analyze the data. An independent-sample t test was conducted to compare male and female anxiety toward online teaching based on

personal, legislative, and contextual obstacles. No significant differences were found between males and females based on the classification of barriers. In terms of nationality, even though the results showed no difference between Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti SALT based on personal barriers, there were significant differences between Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti SALT based on legislative and contextual barriers. Table 4 shows an independent-sample t test used to compare Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti SALT's anxiety toward online teaching based on legislative and contextual barriers. There was a significant difference in the scores for legislative barriers (Kuwaiti (M = 3.49, SD = .91) and non-Kuwaiti (M = 3.23, SD = .863) teachers,  $t(555) = 3.162, p = .002$ ) and for contextual barriers (Kuwaiti (M = 3.74, SD = .838) and non-Kuwaiti (M = 3.55, SD = .864),  $t(555) = 2.28, p = .02$ ). These results suggest that nationality has an effect on anxiety toward online teaching and that the effect is more prominent for Kuwaiti SALT. Specifically, the results suggest that Kuwaiti SALT appear more anxious than non-Kuwaiti SALT when teaching online.

**Table 4.** The comparison of the inhibitory effect of legislative and contextual barriers among Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti SALT.

Variable	Nationality	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	t
Sig (2-tailed)						
Legislative barriers	Kuwaiti	147	3.50	.911	555	3.162
	Non-Kuwaiti	410	3.23	.863		
Contextual barriers	Kuwaiti	147	3.74	.838	555	2.276
	Non-Kuwaiti	410	3.55	.864		

\*\*P < .01, \*P < .05

In terms of teaching experience, the results showed no significant difference for the three classifications of barriers. ANOVA was conducted to investigate the impact of the classification of barriers on governorates (see Table 5). The results indicated a significant effect of the classification of barriers on governorates at the  $p < .01$  level for the three conditions,  $F(5, 551) = 7.470, p = .000$ ;  $F(5, 551) = 7.458, p = .000$ ; and  $F(5, 551) = 8.292,$

**The Main Obstacles to Employing Online Learning for Arabic Language Teachers  
at the Secondary Level in Kuwait**

$p = .000$ . The average level for the three conditions was  $F(5, 551) = 9.071$ ,  $p = .000$ . Post hoc comparisons using Tukey's HSD test for all classifications of barriers revealed that the mean scores for the Al-Al-Ahmadi governorate ( $M = 3.10$ ,  $SD = .761$ ) and the Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorate ( $M = 3.14$ ,  $SD = .966$ ) were significantly different than those for the Al-Farwaniyah governorate ( $M = 3.82$ ,  $SD = .535$ ). A post hoc test also revealed that the mean score for the Hawalli governorate ( $M = 3.51$ ,  $SD = .720$ ) was significantly different than the mean score of the Al-Al-Ahmadi governorate ( $M = 3.10$ ,  $SD = .761$ ). These results suggest that governorates do have an effect on the classification of barriers. In other words, the current results suggest that the Al-Al-Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorates are less conservative than the Al-Farwaniyah governorate when teaching online (see Table 6). The results also suggest that the Al-Al-Ahmadi governorate is more liberal and less anxious than the Hawalli governorate when teaching online (see Figure 1). Taking all of the results together, we conclude that the Al-Al-Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorates have better infrastructure and face fewer technical barriers than the Al-Farwaniyah governorate when teaching online. In addition, the Hawalli governorate faces more obstacles and difficulties when teaching online than the Al-Ahmadi governorate.

**Table 5.** ANOVA for the classifications of barriers among SALT based on their governorate.

		Sum Squares	of df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Personal barriers	Between Groups	24.261	5	4.852	7.470	.000**
	Within Groups	357.914	551	.650		
	Total	382.175	556			
Legislative barriers	Between Groups	27.482	5	5.496	7.458	.000**
	Within Groups	406.086	551	.737		

		Total	433.568	556		
Contextual barriers	Between Groups	28.797	5	5.759	8.292	.000**
	Within Groups	382.730	551	.695		
	Total	411.527	556			
Overall barriers	Between Groups	25.052	5	5.010	9.071	.000**
	Within Groups	304.336	551	.552		
	Total	329.388	556			

\*\*p < .01

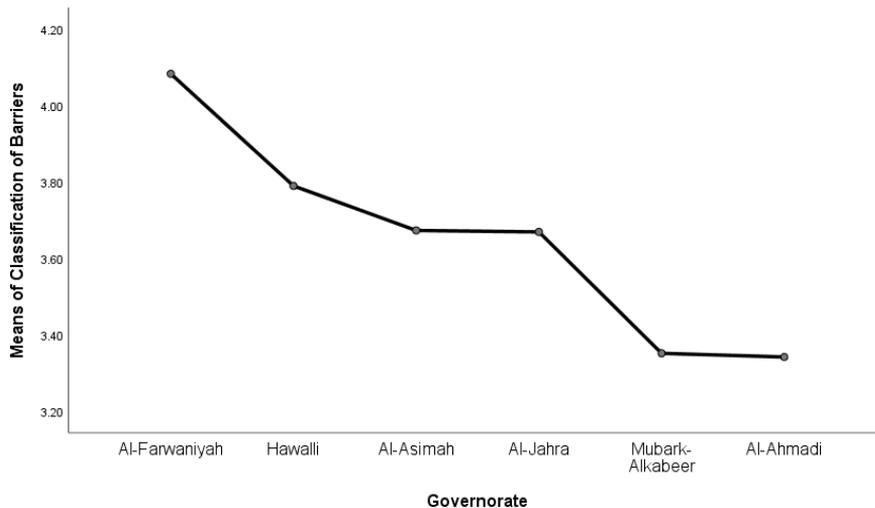
**Table 6.** Multiple comparisons among SALT based on all classifications of barriers (post hoc tests).

(I) Governorate	(J) Governorate	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Al-Al-Asimah	Hawalli	-.10967	.14165	.972	-.5147	.2954
	Al-Al-Jahra	.03665	.15631	1.000	-.4104	.4837
	Al-Farwaniyah	-.41237	.19232	.266	-.9624	.1376
	Al-Ahmadi	.30545	.14165	.260	-.0996	.7105
	Mubark-Alkabeer	.26834	.19622	.747	-.2928	.8295
Hawalli	Al-Asimah	.10967	.14165	.972	-.2954	.5147
	Al-Jahra	.14631	.09988	.687	-.1393	.4320
	Al-Farwaniyah	-.30270	.15010	.334	-.7320	.1266
	Al-Ahmadi	.41512*	.07488	.000**	.2010	.6293
	Mubark-Alkabeer	.37801	.15507	.145	-.0655	.8215
Al-Jahra	Al-Asimah	-.03665	.15631	1.000	-.4837	.4104
	Hawalli	-.14631	.09988	.687	-.4320	.1393

**The Main Obstacles to Employing Online Learning for Arabic Language Teachers at the Secondary Level in Kuwait**

	Al-Farwaniyah	-.44901	.16401	.070	-.9180	.0200
	Al-Ahmadi	.26880	.09988	.079	-.0168	.5545
	Mubark-Alkabeer	.23169	.16857	.742	-.2504	.7138
Al-Farwaniyah	Al-Asimah	.41237	.19232	.266	-.1376	.9624
	Hawalli	.30270	.15010	.334	-.1266	.7320
	Al-Jahra	.44901	.16401	.070	-.0200	.9180
	Al-Ahmadi	.71782*	.15010	.000**	.2886	1.1471
	Mubark-Alkabeer	.68071*	.20241	.011*	.1019	1.2596
Al-Ahmadi	Al-Asimah	-.30545	.14165	.260	-.7105	.0996
	Hawalli	-.41512*	.07488	.000**	-.6293	-.2010
	Al-Jahra	-.26880	.09988	.079	-.5545	.0168
	Al-Farwaniyah	-.71782*	.15010	.000**	-1.1471	-.2886
	Mubark-Alkabeer	-.03711	.15507	1.000	-.4806	.4064
Mubark-Alkabeer	Al-Asimah	-.26834	.19622	.747	-.8295	.2928
	Hawalli	-.37801	.15507	.145	-.8215	.0655
	Al-Jahra	-.23169	.16857	.742	-.7138	.2504
	Al-Farwaniyah	-.68071*	.20241	.011*	-1.2596	-.1019
	Al-Ahmadi	.03711	.15507	1.000	-.4064	.4806

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .001$ .



**Figure 1.** The Relationship Between Governorate Demographic Variables and the Means of the Classification of Barriers

## Discussion

The main objective of the current research was to determine the major factors that prevent SALT from participating in successful online teaching. The findings of this study show that contextual barriers (lack of infrastructure and technical support) were the main obstacles that discouraged SALT from participating in successful online teaching. Among these factors, anxiety about “weak financial incentives for online teaching” ( $M = 4.12$ ,  $SD = 1.02$ ), “weak moral incentives for online teaching” ( $M = 3.97$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ), and “difficulty getting high speed internet” ( $M = 3.90$ ,  $SD = 1.19$ ) were perceived as the most prominent barriers to SALT becoming involved in successful online teaching. As Table 3 indicates, all factors of the contextual barriers were significant and large. These findings are consistent with previous similar studies that found that external contextual inhibitors were the main obstacles that discouraged faculty members in developing countries from participating in remote teaching (Pounds & Bostock, 2019; Zamani

et al., 2016). These findings are also congruent with Safar (2020) study, which found that infrastructural and technical barriers were the main obstacles for faculty members at Kuwait University when teaching online.

The cheating factor is one of the largest impact factors of the present study, which involves personal barriers (“the difficulty of preventing cheating among students in online teaching,  $M = 4.33$ ,  $SD = .98$ ). This barrier is relevant to students’ conduct. Therefore, providing more laws and regulations will not minimize students’ conduct toward online cheating because the new technology has considerable power and plays a huge role in online cheating, and it is not easy to control it. This finding is in line with a previous study conducted by Khan and Balasubramanian (2012), who found that e-cheating among students is a common behavior. Another finding of the current study indicates that SALT are not comfortable teaching from home, “especially if it is necessary to appear directly with students” ( $M = 3.18$ ,  $SD = 1.36$ ). This barrier is relevant to the teaching environment. If teachers do not feel that their environment is convenient, they will not be creative in their teaching style. Teaching from home is not convenient for SALT because it involves many distractions, including children crying, children’s simultaneous participation in online learning, teachers’ lack of a private place at home for online teaching, and teachers’ lack of high-speed internet access. The least important inhibiting factors for SALT were dealing with sophisticated electronic software technology ( $M = 2.39$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ) and difficulty simulating reciting poems and poetic texts through online teaching ( $M = 2.35$ ,  $SD = 1.19$ ).

Among the legislative barriers, SALT are anxious about cyber-crime laws and regulations when teaching online and making unintentional mistakes ( $M = 3.82$ ,  $SD = 1.00$ ). SALT also perceive a lack of security with regard to hacking of their devices and computers ( $M = 3.62$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ ). The analysis of these outcomes related to barriers that discourage educators from teaching online

confirms previous studies on barriers and obstacles to the adoption of these methods (Brown, 2012; Gao et al., 2012; Manca & Ranieri, 2013; Rogers-Estable, 2014; Safar, 2020; Scott, 2013; Veletsianos & Kimmons, 2013).

No gender differences were found between male and female SALT regarding the classification of barriers to online teaching. This finding is in line with previous studies that have found that gender has no significant effect on virtual teaching and learning (Al-Basheer, 2019; Aljaraideh, 2019; Harvey et al., 2017). In contrast, this result disagrees with previous studies that found that female educators are more anxious about online teaching than male educators (Safar, 2020; Zamani et al., 2016). A study conducted by McSporrán and Young (2001) titled “Does Gender Matter in Online Learning?” found that gender does have an effect on anxiety toward online teaching and that the effect is more prominent for females. The distinction between the gender differences in the literature may be because both male and female teachers realize the importance of online teaching. In addition, the online teaching environment is neutral and takes into account gender differences.

Nationality has an effect on anxiety toward online teaching in favor of Kuwaiti SALT. The distinction between nationalities was set according to  $p < .05$ . The researchers attribute this result to the small sample size of Kuwaiti (26%) vs. non-Kuwaiti (74%) participants. In addition, Kuwaiti SALT might be more aware of local cyber-crime laws and regulations than non-Kuwaiti SALT; therefore, Kuwaiti teachers take more precautions in online teaching. Furthermore, non-Kuwaiti SALT might be more proficient in problem-solving technical issues in online teaching than Kuwaiti teachers. In addition, non-Kuwaiti SALT are brought in for their expertise and therefore are more experienced and more confident than local Kuwaiti teachers. This finding supports a previous study titled “Obstacles to Distance Teaching and Learning in the State of Kuwait’s Public Education during the Outbreak of the Coronavirus ‘Covid-19’ Pandemic,” which found that Kuwaiti educators were more anxious than non-Kuwaiti educators when teaching online

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(Safar, 2020). In contrast, this finding disagrees with a previous study that found that Kuwaiti educators were more satisfied with smartphone teaching than non-Kuwaiti educators (Sulaiman & Dashti, 2018). No significant result was found for online teaching regarding the teaching experience demographic variable. This outcome could be because all SALT, regardless of their teaching experience, are aware of online teaching obstacles. This finding conflicts with a previous study that found that the more experience teachers have with teaching, the more conservative they are toward online teaching (Sulaiman & Dashti, 2018).

Governorate demographic variables have an effect on the classification of barriers to online teaching. Although the Al-Asimah governorate is the capital state of Kuwait and the oldest governorate in Kuwait, infrastructure and technical support are not different from other governorates. The findings of the current study reveal that the Al-Ahmadi governorate and the Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorate have better infrastructure and face fewer technical problems for online teaching than the Al-Farwaniyah governorate. Furthermore, the Al-Ahmadi governorate has better infrastructure and faces fewer technical problems than the Hawalli governorate for online teaching. These results may be because the Al-Ahmadi and Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorates spend more money on infrastructure than the Al-Farwaniyah and Hawalli governorates and may have better professional training courses than the Al-Farwaniyah and Hawalli governorates. Furthermore, decision-makers in the Al-Ahmadi governorate and the Mubarak Al-Kabeer governorate may have solid backgrounds in online teaching and believe in educational technology more than other decision-makers. No previous studies have been conducted in regard to these findings.

### **Practical Implications**

One implication of the current study is that the teaching environment, specifically teaching from home, is a critical factor for

educators. Providing all hardware and software will not lead to successful online teaching. If decision-makers want teachers to be creative when teaching online, they should provide an environment similar to the school environment. Another implication of this study is that e-cheating is a problem that exists even outside of the classroom. Traditional exam methods, for example, will not work in remote teaching. Policy-makers should find different methods for evaluating students beyond traditional exam methods. Furthermore, the lack of financial and moral incentives for online teaching are another implication of the present study. Policy-makers should pay attention to solving or even minimizing these barriers. Another critical implication of the current study is that cyber-crime laws and regulations must be changed to be more liberal and less conservative, especially with regard to freedom of speech and freedom of research when teaching online.

### **Conclusion, Limitations, and Future Recommendations**

The study identified 25 critical factors with medium to large impacts that play a significant role in online teaching. E-cheating and weak financial motivations are among the top obstacles identified in the present study. As Table 3 shows, all indicators of the contextual barriers are significant with a large impact degree. SALT are concerned about current cyber-crime laws and regulations. Educators need more space, especially freedom of speech, when teaching online. SALT seek a web security protection environment from e-attacks and e-hackers. Regarding independent demographic variables, the results reveal that nationality and governorate play a significant role when teaching online.

There are several limitations of the current study. First, this study is limited to public secondary schools in Kuwait and excludes private schools. Second, while quantitative outcomes cannot be generalized beyond this population, the transferability of these outcomes may be possible to other secondary institutions in similar circumstances to Kuwait secondary (high) schools and to secondary schools in other developing countries. Even though this study focused on Kuwait, many other countries are facing similar

**The Main Obstacles to Employing Online Learning for Arabic Language Teachers  
at the Secondary Level in Kuwait**

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circumstances of online teaching due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Third, conducting research during the COVID-19 pandemic should not be compared with doing so in a normal situation. For future research, the researchers of the present study anticipate that this descriptive study will set the stage for successful virtual teaching. Conducting a longitudinal study with multiple data collection points might be a robust option for tracing online teaching obstacles for the same participants after a specific period of time. Rapidly finding the right solutions for the obstacles identified in this study is a critical issue. Taking advantage of human expertise and scientists specializing in educational technology to develop a safe and encouraging environment for online teaching is another option to minimize the indicated barriers. Adopting successful experiences in developing countries in the field of using and employing instructional tools and educational applications in educational institutions are important. Ministry of education should change legislation, laws, regulations, and educational policies related to online teaching and learning in order to develop and improve its output in accordance with international standards and requirements.

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**The Main Obstacles to Employing Online Learning for Arabic Language Teachers  
at the Secondary Level in Kuwait**

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