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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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**The Perception of College Students in Saudi Arabia Towards
Distance Web-based Instruction (WBI)**

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The purpose of this study is to examine the perception of Saudi college students towards distance WBI. Specifically, the perception of the students, male and female enrolling in King Faisal University (KFU) is examined. The instrument used was the Students' Perception Towards Distance WBI (SPTDWBI) questionnaire, developed by the researcher. A descriptive analysis was used to measure the students' perception. A two-way analysis of variance (2-Way ANOVA) design was implemented to examine the difference between the students' perception based on their gender and college of study. Also, a two-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was also implemented (the effect of students' computer experience is controlled). A qualitative analysis was also used to perceive the expected advantages and disadvantages of distance WBI.

The findings of this study indicate that the students' perception towards distance WBI is positive. Using both ANCOVA and ANOVA designs, a small but statistically significant difference is found between the perception of male and female students in favor of female students. No significant difference is found among the perceptions of the students based on their college when 2-way ANCOVA is used. But, when 2-way ANOVA is used, a small but statistically significant difference is detected in favor of the College of Management over the College of Agriculture. The majority of the students believe that distance WBI is efficient, is effective, is convenient, expands learning opportunities, includes huge information with high quality, increases isolation, and contains many technical problems. Few of them think that it is not efficient, is not applicable for all courses, allows for building new relationship, harms the health, allows for bad use of the Internet, and is based on English language. Slightly more than half of them believe that it is cost effective, but the other half believes that it is not cost effective. Several students feel that before taking a distance WBI course, many conditions must be met, such as a high level of self-motivation and discipline, and good computer and Internet skills for both instructors and students.

Owning and using a computer, as well as accessing the Internet from home, are found to positively influence the perception towards distance WBI. The female students who agreed to enroll in distance WBI believe that it would not be in conflict with their family responsibilities; and they would feel more private. The male students who agreed to enroll in distance WBI think that it would be cost effective for them by minimizing the

expenses of their traveling, housing, daily transportation, etc. However, the male students who said they would not enroll in distance WBI think that it would not be cost effective for them because they would be responsible for purchasing a computer and the Internet connection and telephone fees.