



UNIVERSITY OF  
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**Exploring the impact of Online Distance Learning on the Continuing Professional  
Development of MBA Distance Learners at University of Leicester.**

Emad Ali A. Al-Bustami

Student number: 149056851

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Supervisor: Dr. Vincent Pieterse

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education over most of the historical human eras is often considered the key driver for any socioeconomic development in any great civilization (Anderson 2011). The traditional education was the sole study method nearly until the nineteenth century. At the mail correspondence, the mass media and afterward the Internet ages, new learning approaches become available thanks to the advanced technology and various learning theories that balance theory and practice.

Recently, the radical reduction in the cost of portable electronic devices, together with increasing access to mobile connectivity, allows online learning to spread widely (Hutchison *et al.* 2008). Students are now using mobile devices for personal communication and study related purposes. Hence, Distance Learning is frequently considered essential for those who want to develop their knowledge and competencies, in highly competent workplaces, without leaving their jobs.

This dissertation aims at exploring the impact of Online Distance Learning on the Continuing Professional Development of MBA Distance Learners, particularly at UoL, by adopting a quantitative method.

Different educational schools, theories and online educational methods and models have been considered to initially propose the best fit model to the Online Distance Learning and its major outcome, the Continuing Professional Development. ‘Leicester Model’ is initially used then a new Model for Instructional Interaction (BOCMII) is suggested based on the associated literature and according to the data collected from an online survey.

The e-survey questionnaire, completed by 91 MBA distance learners at UoL, identifies, measures and analyzes distance learners’ demographic data, and certain indicators of Online Distance Learning (ODL) and Continuing Professional Development (CPD).

The findings indicate that, from MBA distance learners’ view, there are three vital constructs of ODL, namely Learning Environment, Learning Resources and Integrated Modules while CPD constructs are: New Competencies and Transformation. ODL is also proven to have a relatively high and positive impact on CPD of distance learners at UoL.

Briefly, this research contributes original material to MBA ODL and CPD literature because very little empirical research exists in this regard. The critical implication is that DLRs can gain high level of CPD from well-founded MBA ODL programs. Frequently, DLRs can achieve that goal by focusing on building New Competencies and Transformation effectiveness which help them strengthen their competitive advantage and improve their business performance.