

## The Impact of Distance Teaching during Coronavirus Pandemic Case of third year students at Chadli Bendjedid University - El Tarf

KHALDOUN Abdelkader \*

Department of English, Faculty of Letters and Languages, Chadli Bendjedid University El Tarf; Algeria

khaledoun@univ-eltarf.dz

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\*Corresponding Author

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### Abstract:

COVID-19 pandemic is acutely affecting life around the world, and higher education is no exception. Almost every country on the globe has gone into quarantine to prevent the virus from spreading. The current study attempts to investigate the impact of teaching during COVID-19. In order to achieve the research objectives and maintain reliable results, a descriptive approach is followed, adopting both qualitative and quantitative methods to data collecting and analysis. Therefore two questionnaires for both teachers and students are conducted as research tools. The results revealed that COVID-19 disease led to a huge increase in the use of e-learning to help facilitate the learning process during the difficult situation. However, it also revealed that this transformation brought many challenges, especially for students through affecting their perception and motivation.

**Keywords:** Online Teaching/Learning, Coronavirus, Perceptions, Attitudes, Pandemic.

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**Résumé :** La pandémie de COVID-19 affecte profondément la vie dans le monde entier, et l'enseignement supérieur ne fait pas exception. Presque tous les pays du monde sont en quarantaine pour empêcher la propagation du virus. L'étude actuelle tente d'étudier l'impact de l'enseignement pendant la COVID-19. Afin d'atteindre les objectifs de recherche et de maintenir des résultats fiables, une approche descriptive est suivie, en adoptant des méthodes qualitatives et quantitatives pour la collecte et l'analyse des données. Par conséquent, deux questionnaires pour les enseignants et les étudiants sont menés comme outils de recherche. Les résultats ont révélé que la maladie de COVID-19 a entraîné une augmentation considérable du recours à l'apprentissage en ligne pour faciliter le processus d'apprentissage pendant la situation difficile. Cependant, il a également révélé que cette transformation a apporté de nombreux défis, en particulier pour les étudiants en affectant leur perception et leur motivation.

**Mot clés :** Enseignement/apprentissage en ligne, Coronavirus, Perceptions, Attitudes, Pandémie

### أثر التدريس عن بعد خلال جائحة فيروس كورونا طلاب السنة الثالثة في جامعة الشاذلي بن جديد الطارف حاله

الملخص:

كان لظهور وانتشار وباء كورونا وقعا شديدا ومؤثرا على الحياة في جميع أنحاء العالم، والتّعليم العالي ليس استثناء حيث دخلت كل دول العالم تقريبا في الحجر الصحي لمنع انتشار الفيروس. تحاول الدّراسة الحالية التّحقيق في تأثير التدريس عن بعد خلال هذه الجائحة وبغية تحقيق أهداف البحث والحفاظ على نتائج موثقة، جري اتباع نهج وصفي، باعتماد أساليب نوعية وكمية لجمع البيانات وتحليلها. تم إجراء استبيانين لكل من الأساتذة والطلبة كأدوات بحث. كشفت النّتائج أن وباء كورونا أدى إلى زيادة هائلة في استخدام التّعلم الإلكتروني عن بعد الذي يؤدي الى المساعدة في تسهيل عملية التّعلم وقد كشف أيضا أن هذا التحول جلب العديد من التحديات، خاصة للطلبة من خلال التأثير على تصورهم ودوافعهم للتّعليم والتّعلم.

كلمات مفتاحية: التدريس/التعلم عبر الإنترنت؛ فيروس كورونا؛ التصورات؛ المواقف؛ الوباء.

## 1. Introduction:

On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic and showed a worldwide epidemic of infectious diseases (World Health Organization, 2020). At that time, there were 118,000 confirmed cases of coronavirus in 110 countries, and China was the first country to have widespread outbreaks). This contagious disease initially emerged in Wuhan city, Hubei Province, China on December 8, 2019, which caused pneumonia-like symptoms in a cluster of patients. (Muralidar, Ambi, Sikaran & Krishnan, 2020). Keni et al. (2020) reported that the virus was suspected to have begun to spread in the South China seafood wholesale market in the Wuhan region. Animals carrying the virus may have been brought to market or sold there, causing the virus to spread to crowded marketplaces. One of the first claims was in an article in the Journal of Medical Virology that identified snakes as potential hosts. The second possibility was that pangolin could be a wild host of SARSCoV2, but most likely, the virus was derived from bats. Increasing evidence and experts then collectively concluded that the virus had a natural origin in bats, like the previous respiratory viruses.

Researchers around the world claimed that Covid 19 is disseminated through droplets and virus particles released into the air when an infected person breathes, talks, laughs, sings, coughs, or sneezes. Large droplets can fall to the ground in seconds, but microscopic infectious particles can remain floating and accumulate in confined spaces, especially when many people are assembled and ventilation is poor. Prevention of Covid-19 requires the use of masks, clean hands, and physical separation. Hence, the aim was to bring forth answers to the following questions:

- a - What is the effect of COVID-19 on e-learning?
- b- What are the challenges that students face while using online learning?
- c- What is the impact of the switch to e-learning on students' perception and motivation?

## 2. E- Learning definition:

According to Boca (2021), e-learning, also referred to as online learning or electronic learning, it is the acquisition of knowledge which takes place through electronic technologies and media. In simple language, e-learning is defined as "learning that is enabled

electronically". E-learning is typically done over the internet, giving students access to learning materials online anytime, anywhere.

Akhter, Javed, Shah and Javaid, (2021), define e-Learning as the process of providing information through different channels such as E-books, CDs etc. They view that learning and teaching styles have been revolutionized as education discarded the traditional method of teaching and discouraged the use of chalk and board to impart to the learners during classrooms.

Sangrà, Vlachopoulos, and Cabrera (2012), e-learning delivers learning and training programs using technology as it serves the purpose of communication as in online learning and teaching process where students and teachers may interact with each other. They view that online learning enhances the learning Process for students, providing them access to informative and communicative technologies.

Njenga and Fourie (2010) report that e-learning is a powerful tool and it should be adopted by all educational institutes. They add that it may replace human interaction and reduce the economic costs of education. Nonetheless, it would make the learning process interesting as learners would not get bored using technologies.

This is a web-based learning that provides training and development to learners and teachers via electronic media such as the Internet, audio and video. (Akhter, Javed, Shah &Javaid, 2021)

## **2.1 E-learning Versus the Traditional learning**

The scholar Yuval Noah Harari explains how universities continue to concentrate on traditional academic skills and memorization, rather than skills such as critical thinking and adaptability which seemed to be more effective approaches in the future. He wonders if the transitions to online learning trigger the development of new and more successful ways to educate students. While some educators were worried that the rushing nature of the rise of e-learning may be hindering that goal, others planned to make e-learning part of the "new normal" after experiencing its benefits. (Lee & Lalani, 2020).

Akhter, Javed, Shah &Javaid, (2021) note that education procedure has become informative, effective and productive. Teachers are aware of the latest technology; they keep

students up to date with the latest knowledge. E-learning is defined as a course offered anywhere, especially via the internet. Thus, teaching and learning both become simpler, easier, and more effective. Aparicio, Bacao, and Oliveira (2016) are of the opinion that e-learning is not a new term but it focuses on the use of computerized systems to make the learning process easy and effective. Online learning depends on the need and purpose of education. (Berrocoso, Arroyo, Videla, & Cevallos, 2020).

The traditional, classroom-based mode of learning is referred to as face-to-face learning. This method of learning entails face-to-face sessions with a teacher. The instructor sets the pace of learning, and students in this context are passive learners. However, due to the advantages of live interaction between the teacher and the learner, face-to-face learning was also an effective approach. According to American Institute of Leadership Innovation and Technology (AILIT), on-campus learning is still the most dominant form of pursuing higher education, as students prefer face-to-face interaction with their peers and teachers. This method, on the other hand, does not suit other students who are bothered by the lack of flexibility of time and place. Fortunately, educational technology was on their side, with the availability of e-learning as an alternative (AILIT). Below is a table that outlines the key differences between online education and offline education:

Particulars	Online Education	Offline Education
<b>Method of Teaching</b>	Digitized tools and methods of teaching	Traditional tools and methods of teaching
<b>Cost and Time</b>	Cost-effective and time-saving	More expensive than online education and consumes more time
<b>Location</b>	Virtual classrooms	Physical classrooms
<b>Flexibility</b>	Online classes have a flexible schedule	Offline classes have a fixed and strict schedule
<b>Communication</b>	Facilitation and asynchronous approach	Instructional and synchronous approach

<b>Type of Approach</b>	Facilitation and asynchronous approach	Instructional and synchronous approach
<b>Pace of Learning</b>	Students largely determine the pace of learning	Teachers largely determine the pace of learning
<b>Level of Commitment</b>	Students are less likely to remain serious and committed to their studies	Students remain more serious and committed to their studies

**Table 1: The Differences between Online Education and Offline Education.**

## 2.2 Pros and Cons of E-learning

Adopting e-learning in education has several benefits, especially for higher educational institutions. E-learning is environmentally flexible and allows each student to choose the location and time that suits them best. Smedley (2010), states that the adoption of e-learning gives both institutions and their students or learners great flexibility concerning when and where to provide or receive relevant learning information. It can also improve the effectiveness of students' knowledge and skills by providing easy access to large amounts of information with e-learning, discussion forums that can be used to provide opportunities for relationships between learners. In this way, e-learning helps break down barriers that can hinder participation, such as fear of talking to other learners.

E-learning motivates students to interact with others, share and respect different perspectives as it facilitates communication and improves relationships that support learning. Wagner et al. (2008), argue that e-learning provides an additional perspective on interactivity between students and teachers during content delivery. They also add that e-learning is cost effective in the sense that students and learners do not have to travel to learn. Therefore, it is cost-effective because it provides learning opportunities to the maximum number of learners without the need for many buildings.

E-learning always considers the difference between each learner. For example, some learners prefer to focus on certain parts of a course, while others are more willing to review the entire course. The use of e-learning allows self-study. For example, the asynchronous

method permits each student to learn at their own pace (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2015). Consequently it seems to increase satisfaction and reduce stress.

Despite its pros, e-learning has some cons too. Arkorful & Abaidoo, (2015) describe e-learning as an educational method that makes learners reflective, estranged, and lacks interaction or connection. In their perspective, it requires strong motivation and time management skills to alleviate such influences. It is noticed that when clarification, explanation and interpretation are required, e-learning methods may be less effective than traditional learning methods. For some students, the learning process would be much easier when facing the instructor or the teacher.

When it comes to improving learners' communication skills, e-learning can have a negative impact. Although learners may have excellent academic knowledge, they may lack some needed skills to pass on their acquired knowledge to others.

Learning is also subject to plagiarism, fraud, poor selection skills, and copying abuse... It can adversely affect socialization skills and limit the role of teachers as leaders in the educational process. It must be generalized that not all areas can effectively use e-learning in education.

As an example, disciplines that demand hands-on experience can be more challenging to learn through e-learning. Researchers argue that e-learning is more appropriate in the social sciences and humanities than in areas where practical skills need to be developed. (Arkorful & Abaidoo, 2015).

### **2.3 Challenges of E-learning**

Coronavirus pandemic caused many changes in all sectors of life, especially in the field of education. These changes are intended to make the learning process more effective in a pandemic environment. However, it can be difficult, especially in remote areas, as some students do not respond positively to these changes. (Harefa & Sihombing, 2022).

According to the Weforum organization, some students who do not have reliable internet access or technology have a hard time in digital learning. This gap can be observed between national and domestic income groups. For example, according to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) data, 95% of Swiss, Norwegian and Austrian students have computers, while in Indonesia only 34% do. In the United States, there

is a big gap between people with privileged and disadvantaged backgrounds. Almost all 15-year-olds with privileged backgrounds reported having computers, but almost 25% of students from disadvantaged backgrounds did not.

Unlike some governments which make digital devices available including New South Wales and Australia, others are still concerned about the consequences of this pandemic like in Algeria. (Lalani & Lee, 2020).

## **2.4 Barriers Implementing E-Learning**

E-learning provides an alternative way for higher educational institutes to deliver knowledge to learners at a distance, rather than the traditional way. But with the rapid development of information technology, along with the development of e-learning technology, a tension of courses has been created. Integrating e-learning into a traditional classroom is a rather difficult task that can face different types of complexity and difficulties. These issues are called e-learning barriers or obstacles to integrating e-learning into traditional classrooms.

Naveed, Muhammed, Sanober, Qureshi, Shah, (2017) identified 16 major barriers to e-learning and grouped them into four dimensions on the same theme. Students' dimensions, instructors' dimensions, infrastructure and technology dimensions, and institutional management.

## **3. The Method**

### **Participant:**

The intended population was thirteen students, and the exact number was reached. The respondents were five males and 25 females of third-year EFL students at the level of the department and seven teachers.

### **Procedure**

#### **3.1 Students' Questionnaire**

Students' questionnaire consists of thirteen (13) questions divided into three main sections. The questions are either closed questions, requiring teachers to choose "yes" or "no" answers, pick up the appropriate answer from several choices, or open questions where they

are requested to explain or suggest other alternatives. The first section is devoted to students' experience with the new learning method, section two is concerned with students' perception towards the shift from class based learning to e-learning, and the third section is devoted to students' preferences.

### **3.2 Teachers' Questionnaire**

Teachers' questionnaire is conducted to investigate their opinion about the impact of the pandemic on e-learning. The questionnaire is a series of questions that contains open-ended, close-ended questions and checklists. The primary declared population of the teachers was 12 teachers, but we could only reach (7) of them. Teachers' questionnaire aims at exploring teachers' attitudes toward the impact of COVID-19 on e-learning.

This questionnaire is similar to the students', in which the questions are either closed questions, requiring teachers to choose "yes" or "no" answers, to pick up the appropriate answer from several choices, or open questions where they are requested to give an explanation or suggest other alternatives.

## **4. Results**

The results obtained from the analysis of the student's questionnaire proved that e-learning increased widely during the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic. After analyzing and interpreting the findings, we deduce that thanks to this new learning/teaching technique, students were able to continue their studies throughout the difficult situation of the disease by exploiting the availability of online platforms like email, Facebook and zoom application.

We infer that those various means were intended to connect teachers and students from far distances and reduce the damages caused by the lockdown of universities and educational institutions. However, the findings of both questionnaires, especially the one conducted for students, revealed that the switch from Class-based learning to e-learning had negative sides and it does not only represent a perfect solution as assumed by some people from inside and outside the educational system. The analysis of the data gathered from questionnaires showed that students suffer from multiple complications when adopting e-learning during COVID-19 pandemic. Students proclaimed the harsh challenges that confronted them, in addition to the impact of the whole transformation on their perception and motivation.

#### 4.1 Discussion

The findings obtained from this study are in line with the work of Lalani and Lee (2020), which indicates that the learning/ teaching process changed dramatically with the outbreak of COVID-19 and led to a remarkable increase in the integration of e-learning programs in educational institutions. Therefore, the first hypothesis, "COVID-19 resulted in an increase in using e-learning platforms in the learning process," is correct.

The result of the questions asked to test the second hypothesis: "there are many difficulties which confronted students while using e-learning", show a good agreement with the findings of Harefa & Sihombing, (2022) which confirms that the integration of e-learning during COVID-19 pandemic brought by many difficulties to students. As explained in the previous chapter, the data obtained from question (4) in students questionnaire proved that students face many challenges including misunderstanding of the online courses, demotivation, bad internet connection, in addition to the inappropriate time of sending courses. Taking into account the obtained results, we can confirm that the second hypothesis is valid.

The last hypothesis assumed that the sudden change to e-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic affected students' perception and motivation. The collected data concerning this matter, particularly in question (8): were you motivated to use e-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic? The results indicate that the lockdown of the educational institutions due to the COVID-19 pandemic did not damage students' mental health. On the other hand, the majority of students admitted that they were not motivated to use e-learning mediums, and they were negatively affected by the changes brought by this virus. Therefore, the last hypothesis is valid and correct.

Based on the results obtained and the previous findings mentioned in the study, it is important to highlight some practical implications:

This research contributes to raising students' awareness of the importance of e-learning. Despite its challenges, e-learning kept the learning/ teaching process going and prevented the educational system from collapsing.

Our research proved that e-learning could present a temporary solution to the problematic situation of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reading this research work will encourage students and teachers to not give up on their studies/ occupation and make them appreciate the new learning/ teaching method as it agrees on the challenges they both face and provides an understanding of their situation, and provides them with some recommendations at the same time.

#### **4.2 Recommendations for Teachers**

- Teachers need to be flexible and adjust to the worldwide transformation. They should try to involve e-learning materials in traditional learning. The COVID-19 pandemic shows how unready the educational system was, and changes need to be done in anticipation of what might happen in the future.

- Teachers should know when to send courses and when students can be available, but it is better to inform them before or set a delay so they can be ready.

- When choosing a platform to study, students' needs and wants must be taken into consideration by teachers, and decide what is best for the majority.

- Teachers should provide students the freedom to create their own goals and gradually include them within online learning activities.

- Teachers should know more about e-learning (ICT, computers, the internet, social media, trends)

- Teachers should assist students in developing learning techniques that are tailored to their own needs and interests.

- Teachers should instruct their students about e-learning and how they might profit from it in terms of improving their sense of self-reliance.

#### **4.2 Recommendations for Students**

- In online learning, students need to pay attention to their teachers and focus on the lessons that are being broadcast rather than wasting time on social media.

- Students need to inform teachers or the administration in case of any distraction or any condition they face.

- Students need to take advantage of e-learning techniques to develop fundamental skills such as decision-making, critical thinking, self-management, communication, and so on.
- Students should learn properly outside and within the classroom by utilizing technology tools themselves.
- Students should pursue their own projects and inquiries in order to broaden their knowledge autonomously.

#### **4.3 Recommendations for Stakeholders**

- E- learning method needs to be supported financially, and major changes need to be taken into consideration.
- Taking into consideration these study limitations, the internet issue should be solved, where the internet connection should be provided free to students.
- It is better to create an online learning platform at the university level, where students can have access to their lessons in many formats: online documents, PDF, videos mp4, tapes or recordings Mp3...).

#### **4.4 Recommendations for Further Research**

- Recommendations are primarily related to creating and integrating online learning more into education to enhance learners' abilities at the university level. And finally, we suggest making some convenient ways to apply online learning within the education system.
- More participants should be included in the research to obtain valid results that are more reliable and significant.

#### **Conclusion**

The Algerian universities are no longer an exception from the progress and development worldwide, curriculum designers and educational decision makers should collaborate to suggest modern models in teaching/learning on line or in distance. Coronavirus changed the traditional teaching model from students-teachers' face-to-face learning to on-line teaching/learning. Teachers need to adapt the technology for the successful execution of online teaching and assessments. The use of technology to support teaching and learning has become pertinent skill in today's world. Therefore, all educational institutions, educators, and

learners must adopt new technology, and improve their digital skills, in order to mitigate the impacts of coronavirus on education.

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