The Impact of Distance Learning Platforms on Pedagogical Performance in the Algerian University

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ABSTRACT

This research paper addresses the impact of distance learning on students in the post-COVID-19 era, a pandemic that led to significant changes across various fields, particularly education. The lockdown measures prevented individuals from continuing their studies in traditional settings, making distance learning and educational platforms the most effective alternative to compensate for the disruption caused by the pandemic. This field study focuses on the role of educational platforms provided by the Algerian university for students, particularly those at the Institute of Physical Education and Sports, and their impact on academic achievement and information delivery through online lessons or lectures conducted by professors. Additionally, the study highlights the role of these platforms in shaping the pedagogical performance of university professors.

Keywords: Distance learning platforms, higher education, students of the Institute of Physical Education, pedagogical performance, COVID-19 pandemic.

Introduction

There are numerous continuous and successive changes occurring worldwide, including economic crises, wars, and natural disasters, among others. The most recent of these was the COVID-19 pandemic, which placed the world in a state of isolation and fear of the virus's spread. Consequently, various strategies emerged to break this isolation, meet the needs of populations, and ensure the safety of nations. One such strategy was the digitalization of various sectors, including the economic, healthcare, and educational fields, as well as the adoption of distance learning. (Abu Al-Riyash, Hussein Muhammad & Sherif, 2009, p. 67).

Although the digitalization of education and the emergence of distance learning date back more than two centuries, technological advancements have led to the integration of multimedia tools. Initially, distance learning was implemented through correspondence before evolving into its current independent form, particularly with the establishment of open universities worldwide. During the COVID-19 crisis, home confinement and the suspension of education in schools, universities, and institutes necessitated the adoption of digital learning, known as distance education, to address the situation.

Educational institutions, including schools, universities, and institutes, have sought to leverage technology and technological advancements to replace the traditional education system with a modern and open system accessible to all segments of society. This has been achieved through the adoption of educational platforms, virtual universities, and the provision of the necessary material, human, and technological resources. (Ahmed Douqa et al., 2001, p. 108).

Like other countries, Algeria has aimed to meet this challenge and play an active role through its educational institutions, particularly universities and institutes. This effort has included the creation of additional pedagogical positions and the training and qualification of professors in this modern teaching approach to keep pace with developments. Consequently, educators have become more engaged in digital learning, expanding their

knowledge and improving their professional competencies both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Higher education and scientific research reforms have led to the provision of a significant number of pedagogical seats while also focusing on the quality of educational services. Given the crucial role that professors play in enhancing the quality of education through distance learning, the study raises the following key research questions:

- To what extent do distance learning platforms impact the pedagogical performance of students at the Institute of Physical Education and Sports?

- Do pedagogical challenges associated with distance learning affect students at the Institute of Physical Education and Sports?

- What is the impact of educational platforms on the pedagogical performance of university professors?

The significance of this study lies in its exploration of a topic that has received limited attention from researchers within the local community.

The study examines the impact of distance learning platforms on the pedagogical performance of students at the Institute of Physical Education and Sports, aiming to understand how these platforms influenced students' pedagogical performance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pedagogical activity involves identifying a set of means, mechanisms, and pedagogical methods employed by the institution's director to achieve educational goals and enhance performance in ways that benefit students, who are at the center of all educational processes. Pedagogical facilitation, on the other hand, refers to all actions aimed at organizing educational activities, including scheduling programs, lesson planning, training, monitoring, evaluation, loss of instructional hours, assessment of academic results, and more. However, continuous changes can disrupt or alter the educational process, as seen with the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, which completely paralyzed the education sector.

COVID-19 is a strain of the coronavirus family, which can cause diseases in both animals and humans. In humans, it leads to respiratory illnesses

ranging from common colds to more severe conditions such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). Notably, COVID-19 is characterized by its rapid spread (World Health Organization, 2019).

COVID-19, also known as the 2019 Novel Coronavirus Respiratory Disease, is a zoonotic respiratory illness caused by the novel coronavirus (2019-COVID). It is closely related to the SARS virus and was first identified during the coronavirus outbreak in Wuhan between 2019 and 2020. The disease manifests through symptoms such as fever, cough, and shortness of breath. As a newly emerged and highly contagious virus affecting the human respiratory system, no definitive cure has yet been discovered. It is a large virus that can persist on surfaces for extended periods. Due to its size, it remains airborne for no more than three hours— long enough for transmission unless proper safety and preventive measures are followed.

It has become essential to find an alternative to compensate for the educational gap by adopting distance learning. Distance learning is the process of transferring knowledge to the learner at their place of residence or work instead of requiring them to attend an educational institution. It is based on delivering knowledge, skills, and educational materials to learners through various technological methods, where the learner is physically separated from the teacher. (Mahmoud Ibrahim Wagih, 2018, p. 77).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly as the virus began to spread and mandatory lockdowns were imposed, Algeria experienced a complete shutdown of its education sector at all levels. Faced with this crisis, the government had no choice but to implement distance learning through online educational platforms. These platforms, also known as e-learning platforms, are a type of Learning Management System (LMS) that allow users to access virtual classrooms. They provide students with an engaging learning experience through videos, audio recordings, images, text, presentations, and PDF files. (Hassina Ahmeid, 2018, p. 124).

Efforts to implement educational platforms resulted in the activation of interactive e-learning systems. According to Al-Randi (2019, p. 65), these platforms are comprehensive, multi-source, interactive educational systems available on the internet. They offer courses, educational programs, pedagogical activities, and electronic learning resources to learners at any time and from any place, synchronously and asynchronously. These platforms utilize educational technology, information, and interactive communication tools, enabling teachers to assess students effectively. (Ahmed Douqa et al., 2011, p. 90).

To conduct this study, a series of methodological procedures were followed. The researchers utilized a questionnaire distributed to **120 students** at Hassiba Ben Bouali University, specifically at the Institute of Physical Education and Sports. The **descriptive method** was employed, as it is considered the most effective approach for such topics. The researchers then analyzed the collected data using various statistical laws and methods.

After distributing, organizing, and processing the results, the following key findings were reached:

The study recorded that approximately **96%** of students at the Institute of Physical Education and Sports, across all specializations and levels, used digital platforms. These platforms became essential for student-teacher communication, reviewing lessons, and listening to lectures. However, there were differences in platform preferences.

For instance, the **institute's platform**, provided by the Ministry of Higher Education, was more widely used than the **Moodle platform**. The institute's platform was favored due to its ease of downloading lessons, comprehensive availability of lectures, and accessibility. In contrast, Moodle was less popular due to **slow download speeds, incomplete lecture availability, and technical challenges** such as requiring multiple downloads for a single lecture and its **complex interface for distance learning applications**.

From these findings, it can be concluded that **educational platforms significantly enhanced the pedagogical performance of students at the**

Institute of Physical Education and Sports, allowing them to compensate for gaps, make up for absences, and continue learning despite being away from the classroom. However, **the role of the professor remains essential**, as the educational process is complex and sometimes unsuitable for full digitalization—particularly in areas like **student evaluation and remote examinations**. Nonetheless, digital platforms were instrumental in **ensuring the continuity of education** during the pandemic, demonstrating the impact of distance learning programs on the pedagogical performance of students.

Key Findings and Recommendations:

The study confirms that distance learning platforms positively influence students' pedagogical performance by offering several advantages. To maximize their benefits, greater attention should be given to this mode of education by the government, education officials, and the Ministry of Higher Education. This includes:

- **Encouraging blended learning (combining in-person and online education)** to enhance flexibility and effectiveness.

- **Reducing barriers** that hinder both students and professors from effectively using digital technology.

- **Continuously developing the distance learning system** to keep pace with technological advancements (Abdellatif Mohamed Khalifa, 2000, p. 602).

- **Learning from international experiences** to improve Algeria's digital education infrastructure.

- **Organizing training sessions** for educators and students to enhance their digital teaching and learning skills.

- **Providing internet services and computer labs at the municipal level** to ensure all students have access to interactive learning.

By implementing these recommendations, distance learning can become more efficient and sustainable, reinforcing its role in Algeria's higher education system.

Conclusion

Distance learning is an educational system based on spatial and temporal separation between key participants in the Algerian university. The Algerian university found itself compelled to adopt this virtual mode of education, leading to the emergence of the hybrid learning model.

Hybrid learning is currently one of the most effective educational approaches, as it allows students to receive in-person lessons through lectures, directed work, and practical sessions, while also incorporating remote learning for certain subjects. This model reduces the academic burden on students and helps minimize the teaching workload by optimizing contact hours.

Following the end of the COVID-19 pandemic, the educational system recognized the benefits and effectiveness of hybrid learning, making it a viable option for continued use. Therefore, it is essential to mobilize human resources, develop strategies, and implement necessary tools to ensure the success of this educational model.

However, for hybrid learning to be fully effective, adequate infrastructure, modern technologies, and a comprehensive strategy must be established. This includes enhancing collaboration and coordination between universities and institutions to provide efficient and reliable technical support, ultimately fostering the development and improvement of the university experience.

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