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Option: Linguistics

**An Investigation of the Status of E-learning in the Algerian Context:
Perspectives of Learners at the University of Guelma**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Letters and English Language in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirement of the Degree of Master in Language and Culture**

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Dedication

Most importantly, all thanks and gratitude must be declared to Allah, the All-beneficent, the All-merciful. Without His help and will, none of this work was to be done.

An exceptional thank you to my wonderful family for showing me support in all of its kinds. My mother who has always reminded me that I can make it, my father who I know, even though not showing it, he has always believed in me, my sisters; Selma for playing the typical eldest sister role and being there when I needed her; a special thanks to Sarra. No matter how many pages it would take me to thank you, that wouldn't be enough to show you how grateful to you I am. So, thank you for helping and guiding me endlessly through making this dissertation, especially when I have faced any kind of technical issues; Aya and my brother Yahya whose duty was to remind me that I have a dissertation whenever I was distracted :))

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Rayane Madi

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To the tears, hard work, and the waste land that me and my relentless partner Rayene been through.

“Come in under the shadow of this red rock,
And I will show you something different from either
Your shadow at morning striding behind you
Or your shadow at evening rising to meet you;
I will show you fear in a handful of dust.”

To everyone who believed in Mika.

The office season 07, episode 19, minute14:45

Yasser Ouarti

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Abstract

This study aims at investigating the status of e-learning in the Algerian context through exploring the perspectives of learners from different departments at the University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma. The research uses a descriptive-quantitative method. The sample of this study is composed of 148 students from all levels in different departments at the University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma. It analyzes the perspectives of the participants towards e-learning using a questionnaire as the primary data collection tool. The results of this study show the inability of Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research to switch to e-learning as a supplement tool to conventional learning. Also, it shows the lack of technological infrastructure to sustain this change. Furthermore, students find critical technical issues and hardships when shifting to the e-learning approach and using the Moodle platform, in addition to the poor awareness about the importance of e-learning of both teachers and learners. The research ends with suggesting some recommendations to improve the status of e-learning in Algeria.

Keywords: E-learning, COVID-19, Moodle platform, Learners, University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma, Algeria.

List of Abbreviations

E-learning: Electronic Learning

COVID-19: Coronavirus Disease 2019

ICTs: Information and Communication Technologies

LMS: Learning Management System

BL: Blended Learning

ESL: English as a Second Language

Moodle: Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment

OLE: Online Learning Environment

QR: Quick Response

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 Blended Learning.....	7
Figure 1.2 Inability to Reach the Site due to Technical Problems.....	13
Figure 1.3 Key Factors for Implementing E-learning Successfully.....	15
Figure 2.1 The Algerian Version of Moodle Platform; University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma.....	20
Figure 2.2 Initiating the BigBlueBotton.....	21
Figure 2.3 Providing Feedback about the Learning Resources.....	21
Figure 2.4 Students' View of the Quiz Activity.....	22
Figure 2.5 Students' View of the Assignment Activity.....	23
Figure 2.6 Discussions on Moodle Platform.....	24
Figure 2.7 Google Classroom Classes.....	27
Figure 2.8 An Example of an Ongoing Meeting on Zoom.....	28
Figure 3.1 Student Distribution According to Gender.....	35
Figure 3.2 Students' Age Range.....	36
Figure 3.3 The Usage of the University E-learning Platform.....	37
Figure 3.4 Students' Distribution based on Students' Frequency of Checking the E-learning Platform.....	38
Figure 3.5 Measures of the Difficulty of Using the E-learning Platform.....	39
Figure 3.6 Demonstration to the Type of Problems that Learners have Faced.....	40
Figure 3.7 Exhibition of how Frequent Technical Problems Appear to Learners.....	41
Figure 3.8 The Usage of the Platform by Learners before COVID-19.....	42
Figure 3.9 The Ability to Use the Platform for the First Time.....	43
Figure 3.10 The Creation of Online Courses by Teachers.	44
Figure 3.11 The Involvement of the Administration in Organizing Online Sessions.	45

Figure 3.12 The Overlap of Online Sessions between Different Courses.....	46
Figure 3.13 Students' Ability to Join the Online Sessions each Time.....	47
Figure 3.14 The Problems that Faced Online Learners when Joining Online Courses.....	47
Figure 3.15 Creation of Regular Online Courses by Teachers... ..	48
Figure 3.16 Attitudes of Learners towards E-learning.....	49
Figure 3.17 The Creation of Online Lessons and Lectures.....	50
Figure 3.18 The Evaluation of Students of the Content Served on Online Courses.....	50
Figure 3.19 The Students' Opinions on the Adaptation of E-learning as an Alternative to Conventional Learning in Algeria.....	51

List of Tables

Table 1.1 Differences between Conventional Learning and E-learning.....8

Table 2.1 Various Activities that Different Users Can Do with Google Classroom.....28

Contents

Dedication	II
Acknowledgments.....	IV
Abstract.....	V
List of Abbreviations and Acronyms.....	VI
List of Figures.....	VII
List of Tables.....	IX
Contents.....	X
General Introduction.....	1
1. Statement of the Problem	1
2. Aim of the Study and Research Questions	2
3. Research Methodology and Design.....	2
3.1. Method.....	2
3.2. Population and Sampling.....	2
3.3. Tool of Data Collection.....	3
4. Structure of the Dissertation.....	3
Chapter One: E-learning	
Introduction.....	5
1.1. Definition of Learning.....	5
1.2. Definition of E-learning.....	5
1.3. Characteristics of E-learning.....	6
1.4. Types of E-learning.....	7
1.4.1. Blended Learning.....	7
1.4.2. Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning.....	8

1.5. Difference between E-learning and Conventional Learning.....	8
1.6. The World’s Perceptions of E-learning during COVID-19.....	9
1.7. Problems and Challenges of E-learning.....	11
1.8. Key Factors for Successful Implementation of E-learning.....	14
Conclusion.....	15

Chapter Two: Moodle as a Major Platform of E-learning in the Algerian Universities

Introduction.....	18
2.1. E-learning in Algeria.....	18
2.1.1. E-learning in Algeria before COVID-19.....	18
2.1.2. E-learning in Algeria during COVID-19.....	19
2.2. Moodle Platform.....	20
2.2.1. Activities on Moodle Platform.....	20
2.3. The Role of Online Teacher and Learner.....	24
2.3.1. The Role of Online Learner.....	24
2.3.2. The Role of Online Teacher.....	26
2.4. Possible Alternatives of Moodle.....	26
2.4.1. Google Classroom.....	27
2.4.2. Zoom.....	28
2.5. The Status of E-learning in Algeria.....	29
Conclusion.....	30

Chapter Three: Field Investigation

Introduction.....	33
3.1. Method.....	33
3.2. Population and Sampling.....	33

3.3. Description of the Questionnaire.....	34
3.4. Distribution of the Questionnaire.....	34
3.5. Analysis of the Results of the Questionnaire.....	35
3.6. Summary of the Findings from the Questionnaire.....	53
3.7. Contribution of the Study.....	54
3.8. Limitation of the Study.....	55
3.9. Pedagogical Implications.....	56
Conclusion.....	57
General Conclusion	58
References	61

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Participants' Questionnaire (English Version)

APPENDIX B: Participants' Questionnaire (Arabic Version)

الملخص

General Introduction

Technology seems to have changed people's lives, and from introducing Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) into many fields, including higher education sectors, learning has been easier for both teachers and learners. Numerous universities all over the world, particularly in the developed countries, have adopted electronic learning (e-learning), or distance learning as a parallel to conventional learning.

The swift spread of the COVID-19, however, has urged the world to find supplement ways of learning after the compulsory vacation that has been announced as a strategy for preventing the spread of the Coronavirus. On that account, the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has instructed universities to execute online teaching and learning through regular and established e-learning platforms. This latter has been planned to be performed as a step to protect students and teachers from getting contaminated by the Coronavirus and to finish the scheduled curriculum. Hence e-learning becomes an official mode of learning (Ministry of Higher Education, 2020).

1. Statement of the Problem

Even though learning online was already known practically in various universities across the world since the 1990's, it was not put into practice in most of the Algerian universities before the spread of COVID-19. Because of this latter, the Algerian government has found itself in an urge to apply a set of serious measurements. Among these decisions, distance learning was needed without a doubt. The Algerian government has adopted e-learning in its universities to minimize the contamination of the Coronavirus among teachers and students through establishing digital platforms. Hence, the research problem is to explore the gap between theory and practice after applying e-learning in the Algerian universities. Also, to see how the Algerian students perceived e-learning when they were actually practicing it.

2. The Aim of the Study and Research Questions

This study aims at revealing the real status of e-learning in the Algerian context as seen by students at the University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma. Furthermore, it attempts to reduce the gap between theory and practice regarding the issue of e-learning in Algeria, through analyzing how learners perceived e-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic and their attitudes towards the actual use of the e-learning platforms.

This study is guided by the following main questions:

1. What are the perspectives of learners towards the actual use of e-learning during COVID-19 at the University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma?
2. To what extent was the use of the e-learning platform at the University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma successful according to learners' perceptions?

3. Research Methodology and Design

3.1. Research Method

This study follows a descriptive quantitative method. It is the method that fits the aim of this study which is to describe the status of e-learning in the Algerian context as perceived by learners at the University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma. The quantitative approach is opted for as it is appropriate to deal with the large sample of this study.

3.2. Population and Sampling

This study is conducted on students from different levels in the University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma, which contains various departments that include Letters and Languages, Nature and Life and Earth Sciences and the Universes, Economy, Trade and Management Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Sciences and Material Sciences, and Humanities and Social Sciences. The sample is composed of 148 students who were selected randomly to take part in this study.

3.3. Tool of Data Collection

The data collection for this study was achieved by following a descriptive quantitative approach. A questionnaire was distributed to students to know about their experiences when using the e-learning, and the difficulties that they have faced while doing so.

4. Structure of the Dissertation

The current study is composed of three chapters, in addition to a general introduction and a general conclusion. The first two chapters provide a theoretical background for the research. Chapter one is entitled “E-learning.” It contains its definitions, characteristics, and types. Then it sheds light on the differences between both modes of learning (conventional and online), the world’s perceptions of e-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, the problems and challenges, and finally it presents some key factors for the successful implementation of e-learning.

Chapter two is entitled “Moodle as a Major Platform of E-learning in the Algerian Universities.” This chapter deals with e-learning in Algeria before and during COVID-19. Then it provides the Moodle platform’s definition and several possible activities which could be practiced on it. After that, it suggests possible alternatives to the Moodle platform. Also, it discusses the roles of both online teachers and learners. Finally, it sheds light on the status of e-learning in Algeria.

The second part contains chapter three, the practical part of this investigation. It is entitled “Field Investigation.” This chapter presents the analyses of the research’s findings from the distributed questionnaire, which was gathered from different levels and departments at the University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma.

Chapter One

E-learning

Outline

Introduction

1.1. Definition of Learning

1.2. Definition of E-learning

1.3. Characteristics of E-learning

1.4. Types of E-learning

1.4.1. Blended Learning

1.4.2. Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning

1.5. Difference between E-learning and Conventional Learning

1.6. The World's Perceptions of E-learning during COVID-19

1.7. Problems and Challenges of E-learning

1.8. Key Factors for Successful Implementation of E-learning

Conclusion

Introduction

Regarding the fact that technology has improved people's lives in every life aspect, it was hoped to be a valuable tool during this time of crisis. Although e-learning and distance learning are not new modes of education, the unexpected shift to online learning has left some universities struggling to create courses in a mode which they were not familiar with before (Rippy & Munoz, 2022, p. 13). Bedrooms and kitchens were transformed into classrooms. Students and their teachers all over the world had to adapt to e-learning. This latter has been planned to be performed as a step to protect students and teachers from getting contaminated by the Coronavirus and to finish the scheduled curriculum. Hence, e-learning has become an official mode of learning (Ministry of Higher Education, 2020, p. 338).

1.1. Definition of Learning

Webster's online dictionary defines learning as "knowledge or skill acquired by instruction or study" (Merriam-Webster, 2022). An act could be called learning when it is a process through which relatively permanent changes occur in behaviors as a result of an experience (Petersen, Schaffalitzky de Muckadell, & Hvidtfeldt, 2016, p. 34).

1.2. Definition of E-learning

As the Oxford dictionary defines it, "E-learning is learning conducted via electronic media, typically on the internet" (New Oxford American Dictionary (Second Edition), 2022).

Moreover, it is the process of obtaining knowledge and skills using numerous media (publications and educational media delivered through modern audio-visual communication technologies to deliver education). This process could be realized through all types of technology such as tablets, laptops, smartphones (Lessoued, Alhendawi, & Bashitialshaer, 2020, p. 4).

Distance learning is another term that is derived from e-learning, and in this research, e-learning and distance learning are used interchangeably in some contexts. Both definitions suggest that

learners could receive information anytime and anywhere suitable for them through the use of the internet (Salami, Dahmar, & Ski, 2016).

Distance learning was also defined as the delivery of educational programs to reach students who are unable to continue attending classes under some circumstances (Boukhedouni & Benachour, 2020, p. 62); which is in this case the COVID-19 pandemic.

Accordingly, e-learning or distance learning is a term that could be defined as a type of learning which does not necessarily take place in educational institutions. Rather, it is a self-governed mode of learning in which learners are not dependent on their teachers and they could be educated by benefiting from technologies such as laptops, smartphones and tablets, either synchronously or asynchronously.

1.3. Characteristics of E-learning

The distinction between e-learning and conventional learning is not in terms of content, but the concept of each type. Unlike conventional learning, e-learning has brought much ease for everyone. Learners and teachers are no longer obliged to be present in the classroom during courses. Also, learners could have access to lessons via the internet whenever and wherever suits them.

Other major characteristics were offered by (Maouche & Guemide, 2021, p. 495) and (Boukhedouni & Benachour, 2020, p. 63) as follows:

- The teaching and learning process is easier with technologies, with the majority of instruction taking place through a learning management system (LMS) such as the Moodle platform;
- The delivery of content both synchronously (teachers and learners in real-time meetings) or asynchronously which is generally via e-mail and chat rooms;
- E-learning could take both forms of fully online or Blended Learning (BL);

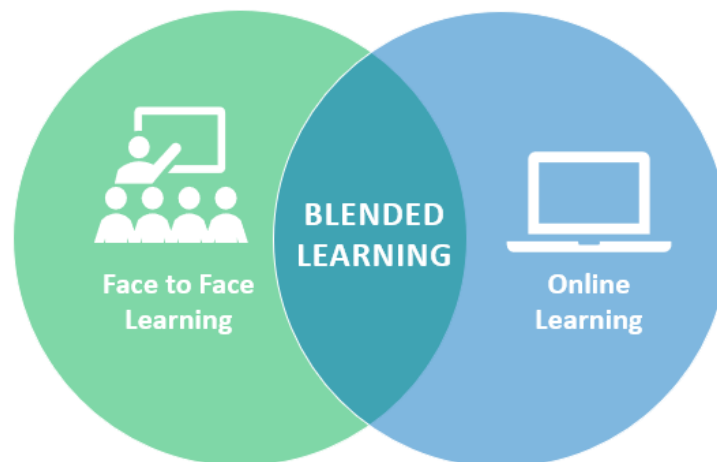
- Learners get all the information they want relying on themselves to understand it, and they can repeat lessons or exercises many times;
- Learners could attend online classes even when sick; which would be beneficial for them not getting excluded after frequent absences; and
- The availability of courses online permanently.

1.4. Types of Learning

1.4.1. Blended Learning

Blended learning (BL) is a pedagogical paradigm that originated with the advancement of educational technology and digital learning. BL occurs when integrating face-to-face learning and teaching with online learning and teaching (Anas, 2020, p. 262).

Figure 1.1. Blended Learning



(Retrieved from (Worthview, 2018))

Figure 1.1. demonstrates how is face-to-face learning mixed with online learning using laptops or any other kind of technology such as smartphones and tablets.

1.4.2. Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning

Synchronous learning means the real-time meeting of teachers and students in a videoconference using a webcam. This class, however, should be a learner-centered class in which the teacher offers instructions first and then the students have complete attention (Amiti, 2020, p. 62).

Asynchronous learning, on the other hand, is providing information such as audio-visual lectures, handouts, publications, and PowerPoint presentations readily available to students. This material is available for everyone at any time and from any location (Perveen, 2016, p. 22).

1.5. Differences between E-learning and Conventional Learning

Whether the method is conventional learning or e-learning it is the same. Because the goal after all is to achieve knowledge, keep up with the curriculum and keep the process of getting education ongoing. However, the two modes of learning demonstrate different characteristics and advantages, which means it is up to the learners to choose the mode of learning that suits them the most for a better learning experience. The following table summarizes some common differences between the two modes of learning.

Table 1.1.

Differences between Conventional Learning and E-learning

Conventional Learning	Online Learning
It takes place offline	It takes place online
Imposed pace	Flexible pace
Scheduled period and setting	Whenever and wherever learners want
Extensive interaction	Limited interaction
Learning with teachers and colleagues	Self-dependent learning style

Expensive	Cheap
-----------	-------

(Retrieved from (Salaa, Bibi, & Nechad, 2020, p. 69))

From the table 1.1. above, e-learning is easy to access and smooth to use whenever and wherever the learner needs it, which indicates the time and place flexibility features that online learning has. However, conventional learning needs a fixed special fully set up place and regular time for the learner to be able to attend a lecture.

Conventional learning, on the other hand, is full of vivid class interactions. These interactions are either between the learner and the teacher or between learners themselves, which allows learners to get direct feedback that helps them to improve their skills and compare findings and answers with their classmates; which is called the social comparison tendency. The latter suggests that it is a primary motive to learn and compare with others to define the self (Festinger, 1954, p. 120).

1.6.The World's Perceptions of E-learning during COVID-19

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, many countries around the world have announced the closure of their educational institutions, and have shifted to distance learning, using the e-learning platforms, through various means of technology. However, that was not simple, especially for countries that were not familiar with e-learning before COVID-19. It would, though, be somehow easier for the countries that were already used to this type of learning; because teachers and students are already accustomed to using technological tools for learning both inside and outside of the classrooms (Amra, 2020, p. 16).

It was claimed by (Young & Donovan, 2020) that even educational institutions that have fully online or mixed learning features (BL) in place will struggle to shift to a strategy that is exclusively based on technology. Institutions with little or no experience using the e-learning platforms are asking fundamental questions such as where to start from? and what is required?

Similarly, another research study hypothesized that there would be negative consequences for higher education, increasing gaps and inequities across learners, institutions, and nations that have or do not have access to the internet (Altbach & de Wit, 2020, p. 5).

In Romania, e-learning was not widely used before COVID-19, which reveals why many Romanian students did not enroll in the online courses. They could not have access to the platform either because they lacked technological resources or internet connection. However, it was not the case for all learners since the majority of them participated in all online courses on a regular basis. Despite this, the researchers found that the online learning system should not be regarded as a supplement to conventional learning (Ionescu, et al., 2020, p. 11).

In the United States, universities had no opportunity to acquire extra training on online courses before the end of the spring semester of 2020. Distance learning was used to finish the training, which included both asynchronous and synchronous approaches. On the first and third days, six hours of synchronous instruction were delivered, with the middle day reserved for asynchronous course adjustments and discussions with the Office of the Online Campus staff at California State University East Bay (Rippy & Munoz, 2022, p. 20).

A survey administered randomly to undergraduates in the US reported that their motivation has declined dramatically throughout the pandemic. After their courses moved online, half of the US students showed dissatisfaction with online learning. Because, many colleges and universities are not implementing concrete teaching approaches in the classroom that promote more accessible online learning environments (Chan, Bista, & Allen, 2022, p. 6).

In Saudi Arabia, King Abdulaziz University was familiar with the notion of distant or online learning prior to the COVID-19 shutdown. It has dependable and powerful LMS, digital libraries, and a variety of instructional resources in place. Nevertheless, the situation was different in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic because neither teachers nor students were prepared to shift to

this new format in a short period of time. As a result, the difficulty was figuring out how to deal with this new learning environment and provide a successful education and fair evaluations (Meccawy, Meccawy, & Alsobhi, 2021, p. 2).

As a third-world country, Algeria lacks a stable internet connection. In December 2017, it had the world's dramatic decline in download speed over fixed broadband speed, at 23.9% (McKetta, 2017). In 2022, Algeria was rated 145 out of 181 countries in Fixed Broadband speed, and 121 out of 142 countries in Mobile Internet speed (Speedtest Global Index, 2022). Hence, university students were not ready for a full switch to e-learning due to the poor internet services that Algerian Telecom provides. Yet, the Ministry of Higher Education announced e-learning as an official mode of learning (Ministry of Higher Education, 2020, p. 338).

On the bright side, many students and teachers around the world claimed that they remained connected during the COVID-19 pandemic thanks to Apple technology. Teachers overcame that issue by utilizing Apple technology to help their students learn creatively. From developing an online high school musical to investigating history with iMovie and GarageBand to organizing a virtual graduation ceremony. Educators in the US and globally developed unique teaching methods that will be passed down to future generations of students (Apple, 2021).

1.7. Problems and Challenges of E-learning

There have been accounts of both substantial success and utter failure. For some countries, the challenge was the access to proper technology and internet speed—or even access to the internet at all. Teachers and students still prefer conventional learning though lessons are being learned, learning platforms and online curricula are being improved (Altbach & de Wit, 2020, pp. 4-5).

In one study, (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020, p. 68) discovered that it is extremely difficult to develop the emotional connection between teachers and learners in online learning. It is because this type of learning lacks the physical interactions that conventional classes have.

The SERU COVID-19 survey was made at ten US public research universities. It suggested that many institutional officials sought for ways to resolve difficulties as quickly as possible. From renting or buying computers or other resources, or transferring academic assistance and library services online. The most significant barrier for undergraduate, graduate, and professional students during the COVID-19 pandemic, however, was the lack of motivation for distance learning. Other prevalent challenges were the lack of engagement with other students, the inability to learn well in an online format, and distracting home surroundings. The difficulties differ depending on the students' socioeconomic class and major/program (Soria, Chirikov, & Jones-White, 2020, pp. 1-2).

In Algeria, the Moodle platform at the University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma is in poor status. The website's design is substandard, and the instruction block lacks clear guidelines and helpful methodological instructions. As a result, it was difficult for students to obtain relevant material for their studies. When a server fails to serve a client, it implies a technical issue or an overload; users connected to that server are unable to access the site, and errors such as "404 Not Found" or "Server is not responding" are frequently seen. Every time students meet one of these technical issues, their motivation to engage in online courses, assignments, exams, individual work, or any other platform-related activity may be affected (Kara, 2021).

Figure 1.2. Inability to Reach the Site due to Technical Problems

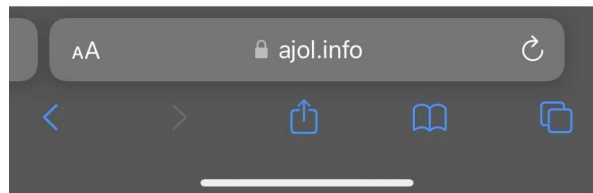


Figure 1.2. demonstrates one example of the technical issues that students faced while trying to access to a page on the university's Moodle platform.

Prior to the pandemic, universities depended heavily on face-to-face teaching and learning. Online courses and degrees have not been thought to be adequate alternatives for conventional classes. Students, particularly undergraduates, were unfamiliar with the fully online delivery. They

had chosen a physical experience but were obliged to take online classes, which were not always well-designed especially by teachers who had little background in online pedagogies (Mukherjee, Belousova, & Mann, 2022, p. 203).

Other problems arose as a result of the shift to e-learning during the second half of the semester when students had already been instructed in conventional classrooms during the first half of the semester. These problems are whether students have acquired the skills and information which were provided to them at the start of the spring semester (Kimmel, Carpinelli, Spak, & Rockland, 2020, p. 2).

Other discussions pointed out that in addition to the technical problems and psychological status of both teachers and learners while shifting to online learning, the nature of some modules themselves requires conventional learning over e-learning. Consequently, teaching and learning those modules online could raise some challenges and obstacles.

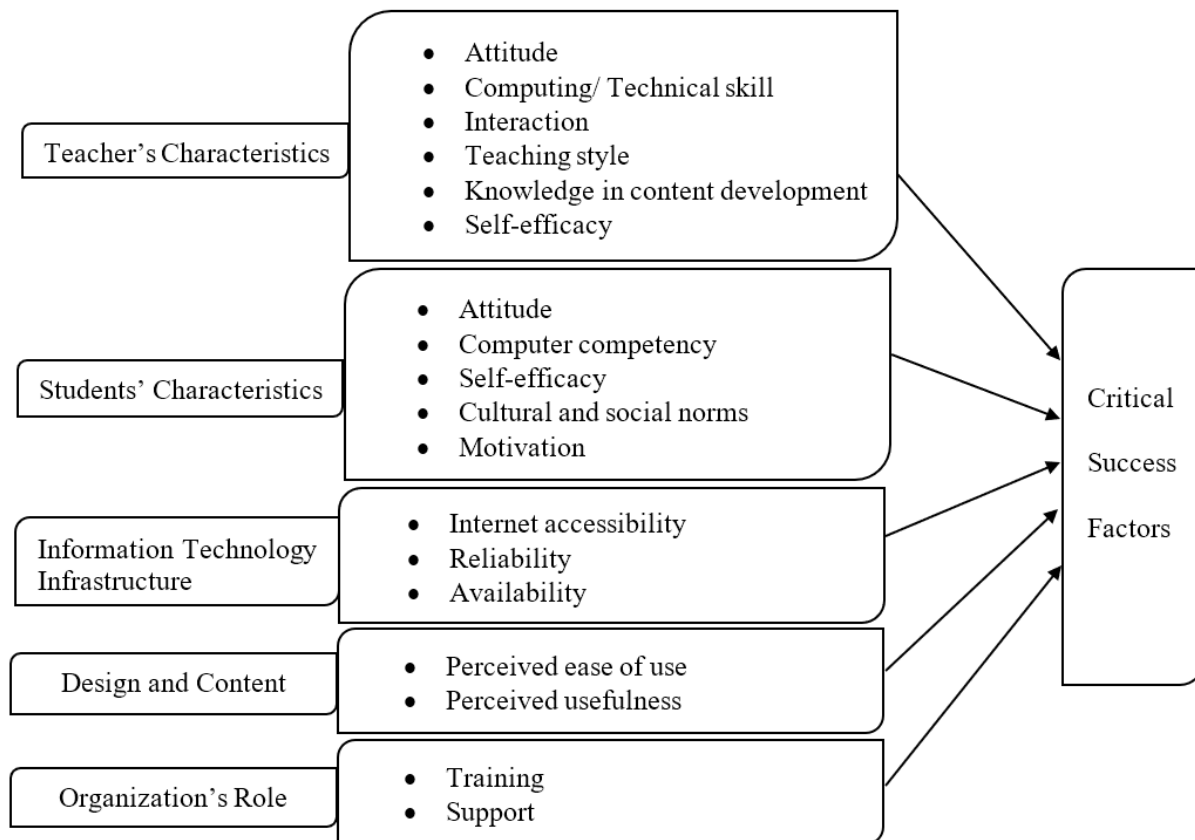
On that account, the distance learning experience was more serious for teachers and students of English as a Second Language (ESL). The non-verbal cues play a very significant role in the process of learning a language; mentioning the tone of the voice and pitch. Thus, ESL students are missing out on more than merely contact with their teachers, but the typical give and take they had with one another in conventional classes (Granados, 2020).

Additionally, teachers struggle to impose moral values on their students. Because teachers and learners are separated by a long distance, it is difficult for them to teach ethics to their students through online learning (Atmojo & Nugroho, 2020, p. 68).

1.8. Key Factors for Implementing E-learning Successfully

When it comes to practice, e-learning may not be very successful due to many factors; among which the previously mentioned one. To prevent that, there are five main critical success factors for implementing e-learning which would be presented in the following figure.

Figure 1.3. Key Factors for Implementing E-learning Successfully



(Retrieved from (Raman, Othman, & Danaraj, 2019))

There are five key factors for implementing e-learning successfully as mentioned in figure 1.3. They are factors that involve all of the teacher, the learner, information technology infrastructure, design and content, and organization. Each of these factors involves certain features that ensure successful e-learning. For example, the teacher should have positive attitudes towards e-learning, good technical skills, effective interaction with students, sufficient knowledge in content development and self-efficacy.

Conclusion

Chapter one provided many definitions of both learning and e-learning, characteristics and types of e-learning namely blended, synchronous and asynchronous learning. Then, it discussed

some differences between both modes of learning. Furthermore, this chapter revealed that the e-learning experience could not be said to be very successful. The decision of closing universities was so sudden, and everybody was not fully prepared to shift from conventional learning to online learning. Finally, it suggested key factors for implementing e-learning successfully.

Chapter Two

Moodle as a major platform of E-learning in the Algerian University

Outline

Introduction

2.1. E-learning in Algeria

2.1.1. E-learning in Algeria before COVID-19

2.1.2. E-learning in Algeria during COVID-19

2.2. Moodle platform

2.2.1. Activities on Moodle Platform

2.3. The Role of Online Teacher and Learner

2.3.1. The Role of Online Teacher

2.3.2. The Role of Online Learner

2.4. Possible Alternatives of Moodle

2.4.1. Google Classroom

2.4.2. Zoom

2.5. The Statues of E-learning in Algeria: A literature review.

Conclusion

Introduction

On February 29, 2020, Shams El-Din Chitour, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, issued an instruction to the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research. He urged university officials to ensure that teachers are notified to provide lessons—whether for tutorials or courses—through online supports such as the Moodle platform so that learners can reach them if universities are closed down. The minister set the deadline for submitting these courses on March 15th (Bouteldji, 2020).

2.1. E-learning in the Algeria Context

2.1.1. E-learning in Algeria before COVID-19 Pandemic

In the Algerian context, distance learning was common before the COVID-19 pandemic by the National Center for Generalized Education. It was established due to Order No. 67/69 on May 22, 1969. Its principal aim is to provide education through correspondence, audio-visual, and other technical means (CD-ROM courses) to learners who are either unable to continue their studies regularly by presence or are already enrolled in other areas of specialization and want to enrich their knowledge. On September 30, 2001, the Center was transferred to the National Office for Distance Education and Training to improve its methods via the use of current technology means (Maouche & Guemide, 2021, p. 500).

The University of Continuous Formation, which was formed in 1990, is another kind of distance learning in Algeria. From its establishment, it has embraced existing media—such as radio and television, as well as other resources such as emails, computers, phones, and digital audio players—to provide education to those who are unable to complete their studies for various reasons. The above-mentioned university has begun employing BL recently. However, in the case of higher education, the use of online learning has remained a choice (Maouche & Guemide, 2021, pp. 500-501).

2.1.2. E-learning during COVID-19 Pandemic in Algeria

After the sudden hit of the Coronavirus, learning as many other fields has been affected. This had led the world looking for quick solutions to deal with the situation. Many governments, including the Algerian, have ordered to close educational institutions temporarily to minimize the infection of the virus. Notwithstanding that e-learning has existed years ago (Guemide, Benachaiba, & Bouzar, 2012, p. 62), it was thought to be adopted as a supplement to conventional learning during the COVID-19 pandemic in Algeria.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shifted the balance, requiring the Algerian universities to incorporate e-learning paradigms in addition to ICTs (Benghalem, 2021, p. 168). Some universities were forced to suspend all in-person educational activities of teaching and supervision for the benefit of students. However, Algerian universities were not familiar with the use of online platforms under normal circumstances (Kerras & Salhi, 2021, p. 17).

Furthermore, Ain Temouchent University adopted e-learning at the beginning of the term, allowing professors and students to communicate via video chats in Google Classroom or Zoom to finish the curriculum. At the start of each new academic year, the administration employed a hybrid or BL strategy, which combines online education with conventional classrooms (Benghalem, 2021, p. 168).

Distance e-learning was difficult for Algerians since just 25% of the families possessed a personal computer or a tablet, and 30% had internet access at home. To help youngsters have access to a variety of learning resources, the Ministry of Education created e-platforms, YouTube channels, and TV and radio shows (UNICEF Algeria Country Office Annual Report, 2021).

In statements No. 288 on February 29, 2020; No. 416 on March 17, 2020; No. 440 on March 23, 2020; and No. 465 on April 1, 2020 addressed to the heads of universities, the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research emphasized the importance of taking all required

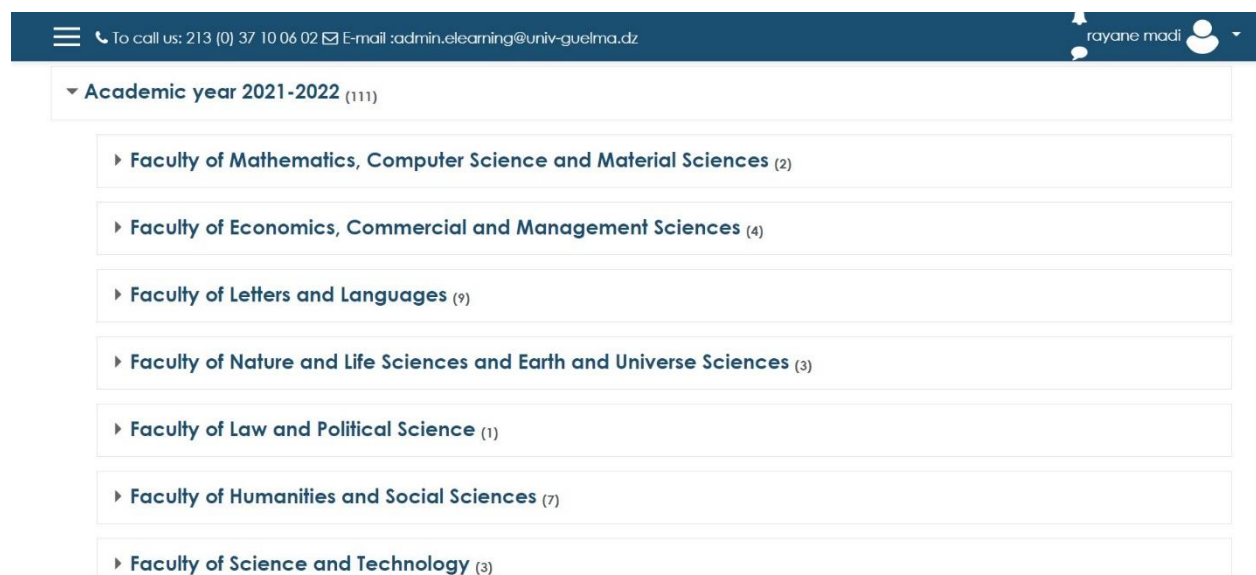
technological methods to sustain virtual connection among teachers and their students (Boukhedouni & Benachour, 2020, p. 69). Consequently, Algerian universities have developed Moodle platforms to launch online learning for the completion of courses (Maouche & Guemide, 2021, p. 501).

2.2. Moodle Platform

The focus is on the Moodle platform because it is the official platform used by the University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma.

Moodle is an acronym for Modular Object-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment. It is a learning platform that seeks to provide a consistent, safe, and connected system for creating individualized learning environments for teachers, administrators, and learners. This platform is the most widely used learning platform globally, with over 213 million members worldwide (Moodle, About Moodle, 2020).

Figure 2.1. The Algerian Version of Moodle Platform; University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma



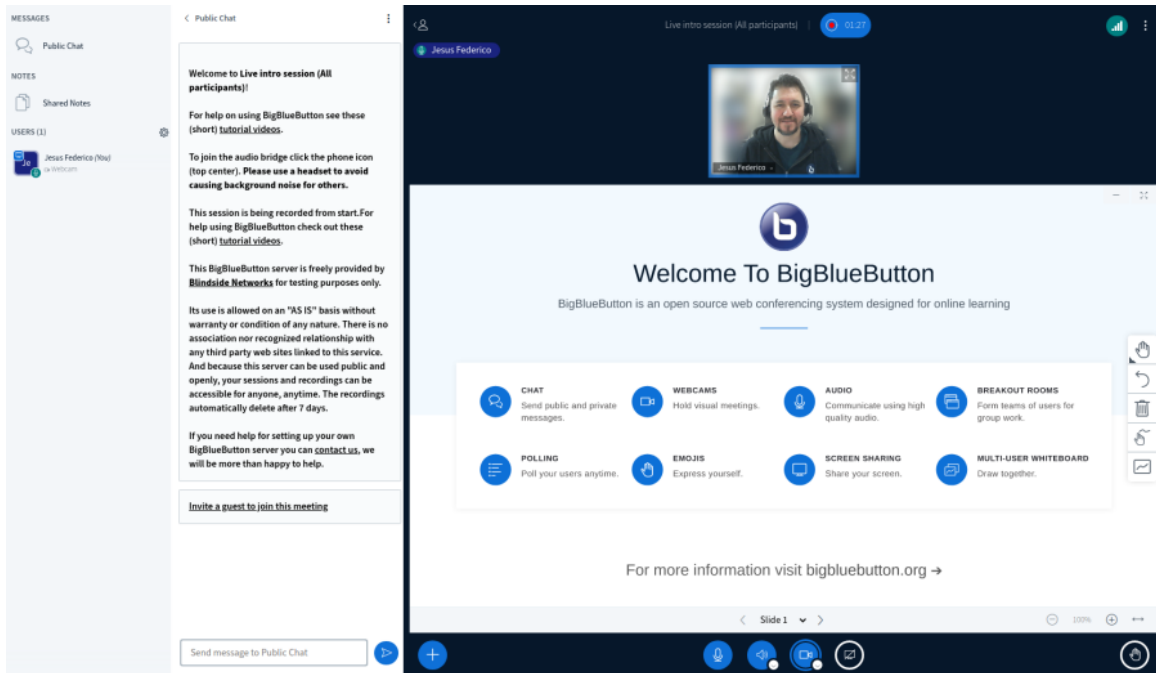
(Retrieved from (University 8 Mai 1945 - GUELMA, 2022))

2.2.1 Activities on Moodle Platform

There are around 15 distinct sorts of activities accessible on Moodle—for example bigbluebotton, feedback, assignments, quizzes, forum, and so on (Moodle, Activities, 2022);

1) BigBlueBotton

Figure 2.2. Initiating the BigBlueBotton

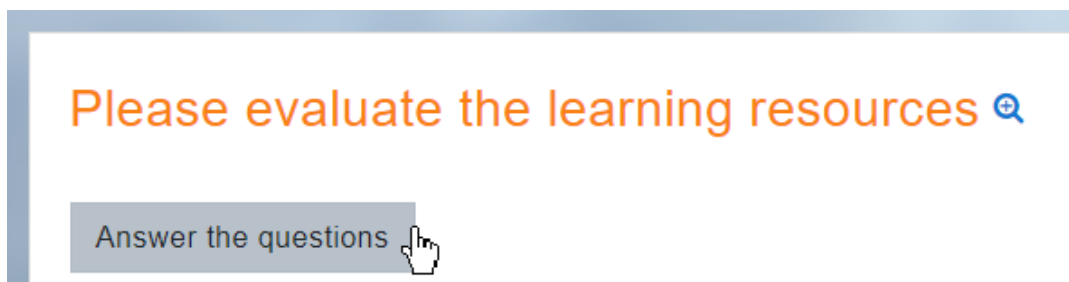


(Retrieved from (Moodle, Activities, 2022))

BigBlueButton is an activity within Moodle platform which allows users to make online classrooms similar to the face-to-face experience. Teachers and students may meet in real-time conferences. Users may set conference hours and the sessions can be saved for later viewing.

2) Feedback

Figure 2.3. Providing Feedback about the Learning Resources

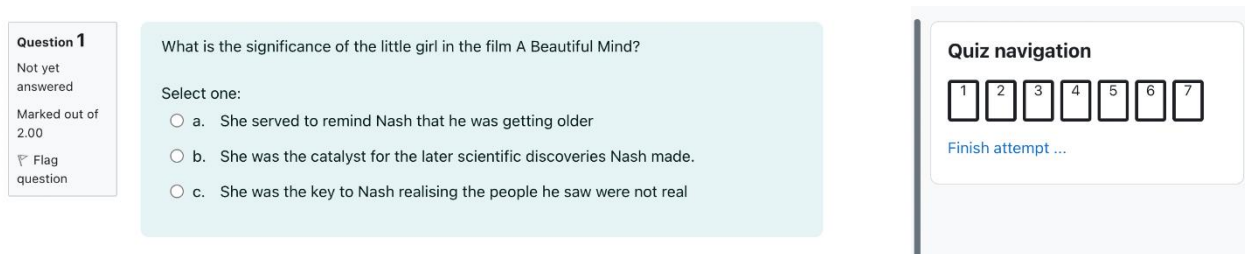


(Retrieved from (Moodle, Activities, 2022))

Feedback is a great activity for reviewing courses since it allows users to create and administer surveys to get feedback. Unlike the Survey tool, users may construct non-graded questions rather than picking from a collection of pre-written questions.

3) Quizzes

Figure 2.4. Students' View of the Quiz Activity

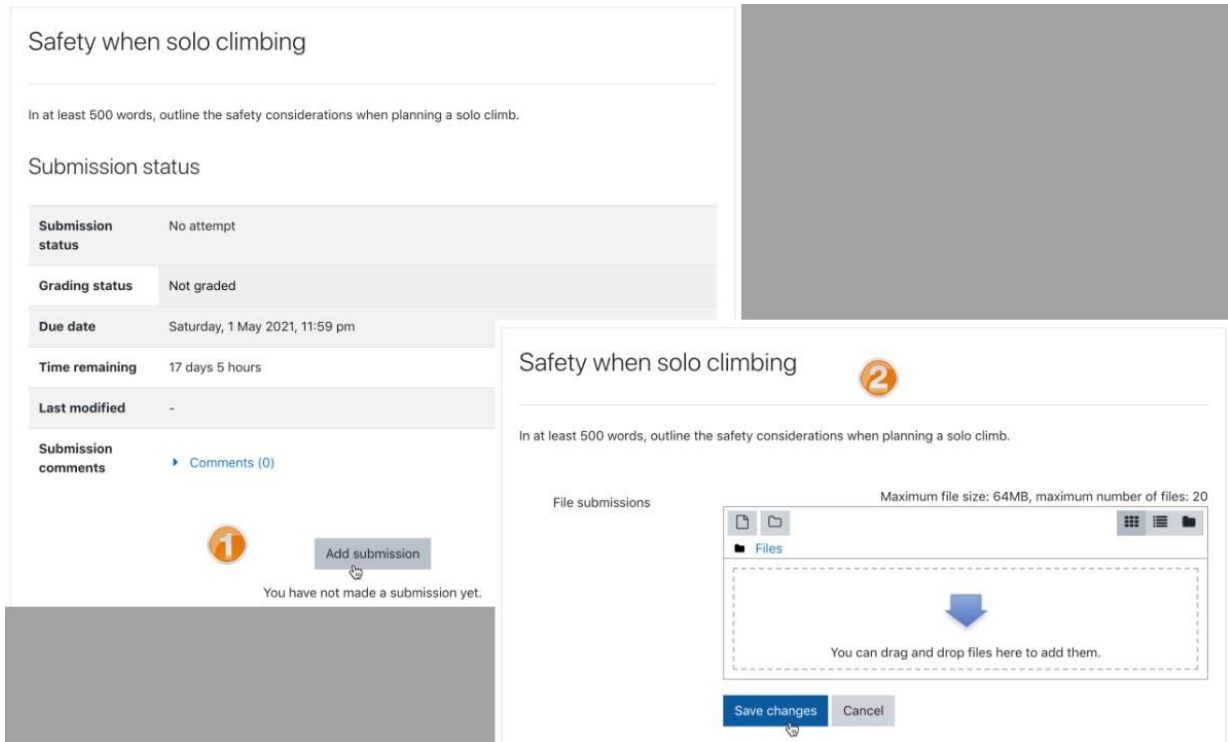


(Retrieved from (Moodle, Activities, 2022))

The Quiz is another significant activity that can fulfill a wide range of teaching objectives, from basic multiple-choice knowledge exams to complicated self-assessment assignments with thorough feedback.

4) Assignments

Figure 2.5. Students' View of the Assignment Activity

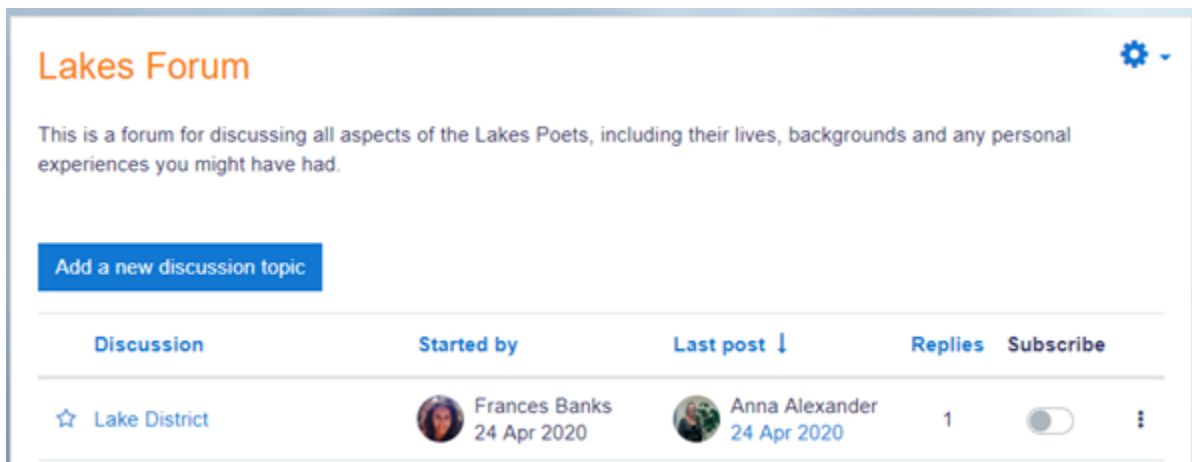


(Retrieved from (Moodle, Activities, 2022))

This activity allows students to turn in their work either individually or in groups to their teachers for assessment. The work can be a written text or an uploaded file. Scoring may be done using basic percentages or custom scales, or even more complicated rubrics.

5) Forum

Figure 2.6. Discussions in Moodle Platform



(Retrieved from (Moodle, Activities, 2022))

Students and instructors can discuss ideas by making comments and incorporate pictures and videos in the Forum activity. Teachers have the option of grading or rating forum postings, and students may also score each other's contributions.

2.3. The Role of the Online Teacher and Learner

4.1.1. The Role of the Online Learner

The difference between conventional learning and e-learning creates a different set of roles that has to be played by the online learner. These roles were structured into a number of competencies which are: operational, cognitive, collaborative, self-directing and course-specific competence. Each competence is briefly discussed as follows (Borges, 2008, p. 3):

a. Operational Competence

This competence inquires learners to use ICT tools for learning and communicating purposes. These skills include (Borges, 2008, p. 3):

- The sufficient expertise in the use of ICTs for communication, cooperation as well as searching, retrieving, analyzing and sharing information; and
- The capacity to use and navigate through ICTs during the Online Learning Environment (OLE).

b. Cognitive Competence

The major skills for applying knowledge in learning course content are (Borges, 2008, p. 3):

- Understand how to get course information such as the course plan, curriculum, or lesson plan;
- Have knowledge about how to get course materials and where some other resources are available as well as how to retrieve and apply them;
- Provide and ask for guidance from both classmates and teachers when necessary;
- Learn thoughtfully and think critically; and
- Connect to OLE frequently.

c. Collaborative Competence

This competence emphasizes efficient interaction with classmates and teachers in OLE. The basic qualities are (Borges, 2008, pp. 3-4):

- Be open to interacting and sharing opinions, thoughts and feelings;
- Take a part in class discussions and engage in group activities; and
- Give and receive feedback to enhance performance.

d. Self-directing Competence

When studying online, effective self-regulation, self-consciousness, and self-appraisal are required. Among the fundamental personality traits and strategies are (Borges, 2008, p. 4):

- Readiness to learn from both teachers and classmates and accept their ideas and criticism;
- Observe classmates' as well as one's mistakes and learn from them;
- Establish own learning objectives, strategies, or schedule; and

- Consistency to the established objectives and schedules.

-

e. Course-specific Competence

The last competence expects online learners to assimilate and use learned terminology in an OLE. It includes (Borges, 2008, p. 4):

- Take notes of new or interesting terms used by classmates and teachers;
- Interact with classmates and teachers using the learned language; and
- Plan for the synchronous sessions in advance.

4.1.2. The Role of Online Teacher

Online teachers, too, are expected to take a number of roles into consideration in online classrooms. Some of the fundamental roles include (Baran, 2011, pp. 26-28):

- Developing, organizing, and structuring course components;
- Managing and organizing learning, as well as ensuring that learning objectives are met;
- Implementing scheduled activities, handling channels of communication, and monitoring the online learning process;
- Establishing and enhancing student-teacher interactions in an OLE; and
- Sharing roles with other professionals such as instructional designers, program directors, and graphic designers.

2.4. Possible Alternatives of Moodle

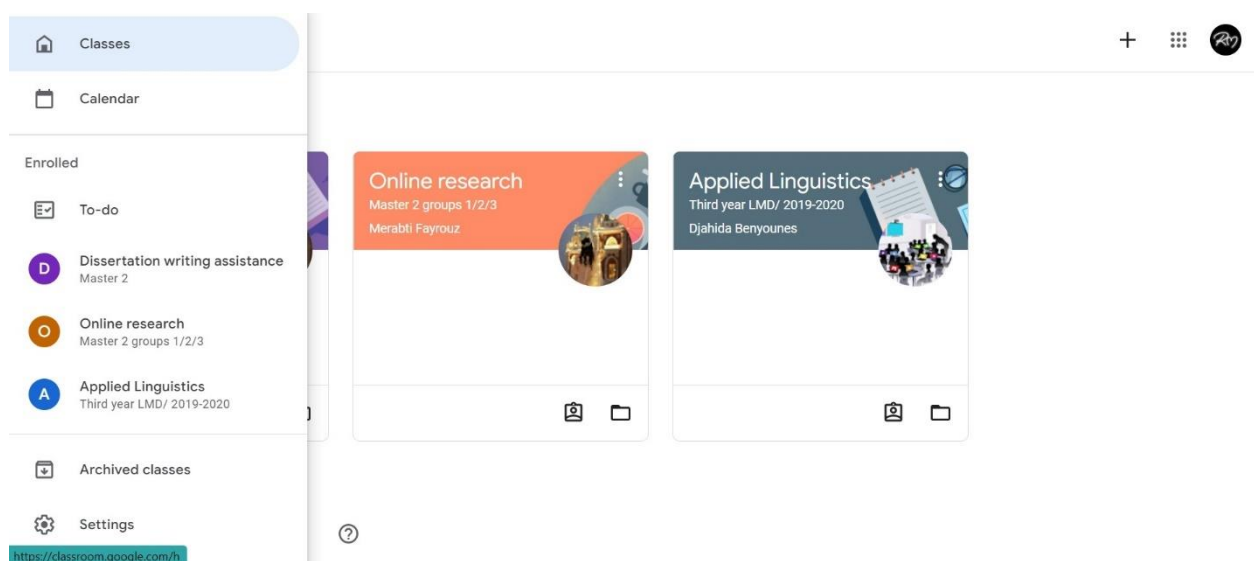
Schools throughout the world used various online meeting tools and e-learning platforms to continue the teaching and learning process. In Malaysia, for example, Google Classroom, Zoom, Remind and Seesaw were utilized to transition to technology-based homeschooling. Because of the shutdown, Beijing Normal University moved all of its classes online. Discussion groups on

Wechat, the school website, Zoom, Classin, and TronClass were all used. Teleskola, a television school in Georgia, was established to help in the learning process. Moodle was widely utilized for BL in Oman, and Microsoft Teams was widely used for synchronous teaching (Naqvi & Insiya, 2020, pp. 20-21).

2.4.1. Google Classroom

Google Classroom is a platform built primarily for educational reasons by Google. Users may use it in schools (i.e., BL) to manage tasks, increase collaboration, and promote communication. This platform may be accessed through the web or a mobile application. Google Classroom may be integrated with a variety of current technologies, including Gmail, Google Docs, and Google Calendar (Google Classroom, About Classroom, 2022).

Figure 2.7. Google Classroom Classes



(Retrieved from (Google Classroom, Classes, 2022))

The table below would summarize the different activities that can be done by different Google Classroom users including teachers, students, guardians and administrators.

Table 2.1.

Various Activities that Different Users Can Do with Google Classroom.

User	Activities Done with Google Classroom
Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiate video meetings • Design and manage online courses, activities, and scores • Insert YouTube videos, polls, and other documents • Provide immediate feedback
Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow classwork and do assignments • Review feedback and grades • Share materials and communicate via the class stream or email
Guardians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive an email with a summary of students' performance • Examine the announcements and tasks
Administrators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set data protection and permissions for users • Create courses and registrations • Add or delete teachers and students from classes

(Retrieved from (Google Classroom, About Classroom, 2022))

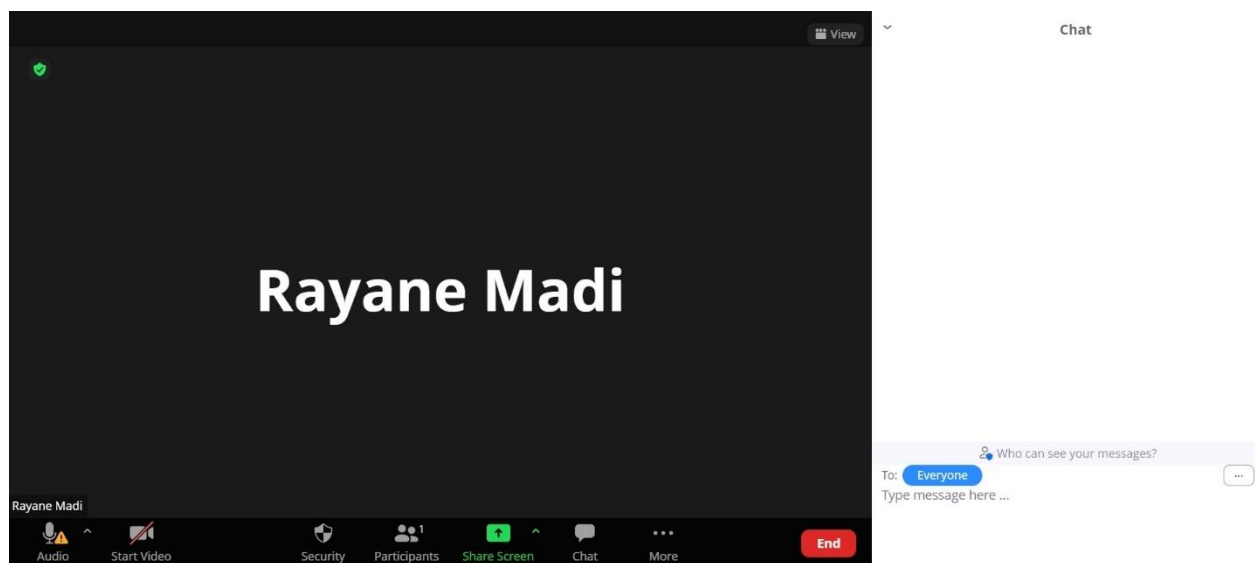
The table 2.1. represents a set of activities that could be done in Google Classroom by students, teachers, administrators and guardians. Teachers, for instance, can initiate a video meeting, create and manage online courses, insert audio-visual media or other documents, provide real-time feedback and even invite students' parents to sign up for email summaries.

2.4.2. Zoom

Zoom was created in San Jose, California in 2011. Users may express themselves, exchange information, and communicate with others on the site. This platform has the highest number of positive customer reviews. However, one disadvantage would be the time limit of Free Meetings

to 40 minutes. For meetings to run on time, users must upgrade to premium (Zoom, About Zoom, 2022). Many professors from various colleges across the world have utilized this tool to construct virtual classrooms and engaged with their students, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 2.8. An Example of an Ongoing Meeting on Zoom



(Retrieved from (Zoom, Meetings, 2022))

2.5. The Status of E-learning in Algeria: A literature Review

During the COVID-19 Pandemic, researchers investigated the barriers to establishing good-quality content in online learning. The researchers employed an exploratory descriptive technique with instructors and students using a questionnaire. The findings revealed that both teachers and students encountered self-imposed as well as pedagogical, technological, financial, or organizational barriers (Lessoued, Alhendawi, & Bashitialshaer, 2020).

Similarly, English students at Ain Temouchent Belhadj Bouchaib University in Algeria had negative opinions regarding e-learning. It was found that the primary reasons for their negative views were as a result of the shortage of resources and difficulties accessing the university's Moodle platform. Several factors led to this negative attitude, as Belhadj Bouchaib's third-year

English students highlighted that a lack of materials, the quality of the internet, issues within the platform itself, and students who did not own a laptop or even a smartphone, were among the primary issues impeding e-learning progress. Despite the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education's efforts to integrate e-learning during the pandemic, BL in Algerian institutions remains undeveloped, with students preferring conventional learning (Benghalem, 2021).

Moreover, (Maouche & Guemide, 2021) explored the use of e-learning and assessed online learning in the Algerian universities by analyzing student and instructor surveys. The study's findings revealed that 100% dependence on online learning was based on techniques and structured learning objectives. However, online learning in the Algerian universities requires a stable platform and expertise in using technology tools to ensure that the aspects of the teaching and learning process work.

Another research by (Kerras & Salhi, 2021) investigated Algerian students' difficulties and evaluated the interactive techniques for learning languages and reducing laptop screen problems. The findings indicate that face-to-face classes are preferable since teachers are not experienced at teaching virtually and students are not ready to absorb it. Also, comprehending information would be much more difficult without live discussions, and they assumed that teachers would be much more engaged in this regard.

Conclusion

The second chapter was concerned with e-learning in Algeria, including its emergence both before and during the COVID-19 outbreak. Following that, it provided the types of e-learning platforms used by the Algerian universities. The manuscript, then, listed certain essential roles that online students and teachers should carry out. Also, it included examples of e-learning platforms such as Moodle, as well as the numerous activities that teachers and students can perform on it. Along with Zoom and Google Classroom which is a key e-learning application that provides a

variety of activities and facilitates the process of e-learning. Finally, it discussed the status of e-learning in the Algerian context.

Chapter Three

Field Investigation

Outline

Introduction

3.1. Method

3.2. Population and Sampling

3.3. Description of the Questionnaire

3.4. Distribution of the Questionnaire

3.5. Analysis of the Results from the Questionnaire

3.6. Summary of the Findings from the Questionnaire

3.7. Contribution of the Study

3.8. Limitations of the Study

3.9. Pedagogical Implications

Conclusion

Introduction

The current chapter is dedicated to presenting the analyses of data obtained from a study that aims at investigating the attitudes of Algerian learners at the University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma towards the e-learning platform. It proceeds with an overview of the case study, followed by an analysis of the questionnaire.

3.1. Method

The current study is conducted following a descriptive quantitative method. The descriptive method is opted for to describe a naturally-occurring phenomenon which is the status of e-learning in the Algerian context as observed by students at the University 8 Mai 1945- Guelma. The quantitative approach is followed because it fits the large size of the sample of this study as opposed to the qualitative approach. Therefore, a descriptive qualitative method of research would be appropriate to collect data and analyze it for the sake of answering the research questions.

3.2. Population and Sampling

The study targeted students from different departments at the University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma. A sample composed of 148 students who were selected randomly took part in this study. 74.3% of the participants are females, whereas the males make merely 25.7%. All of them were enrolled in various departments at the University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma for the academic year 2021/2022. Students from all levels participated in answering the questionnaire. There are several reasons behind not limiting the participants to a certain level. The first-year students have never seen what conventional learning looks like; they were directly exposed to the extreme regulations and protocols due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Second, there is a type of student who has been exposed to both conventional learning and e-learning such as the third and fourth level student. Third, there are students who have been in university for more than five years. The majority of these students

experience hardships in shifting between both learning approaches because they were used to only conventional learning for a very long time.

3.3. Description of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire is used as a tool of data collection in the current study. It consists of 20 questions that are arranged from general to specific questions and divided into two main sections. The first section asks for background information, whereas the second one is devoted to finding out learners' perspectives towards e-learning. The questionnaire contains different types of questions, such as short-answer questions, paragraph questions, multiple-choice questions, checkbox questions and linear scale questions. Participants are asked to select the appropriate answer (s) based on their knowledge of the subject, provide an explanation or justify their answers if necessary. Finally, they are allowed to add any further recommendations or suggestions related to the topic. The questionnaire was originally written in the English language and translated to the Arabic language (Appendices A and B) for those participants who are from different departments in order to have a better understanding of the questions asked, thus, accurate data is collected.

3.4. Distribution of the Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire was posted online on Google Forms for all departments at the University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma from May 10th, 2022 to May 16th, 2022 (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfaROZ5ffvp2r7KgPLcjQVQtpGaic52Il0zfW6LRQce1GEGw/viewform?usp=sf_link). It should be mentioned that most students were cooperative because they were interested in participating in the survey and they were sure that their answers will remain anonymous and will be used in academic purposes only. As a result, attracting 148 participants was not challenging.

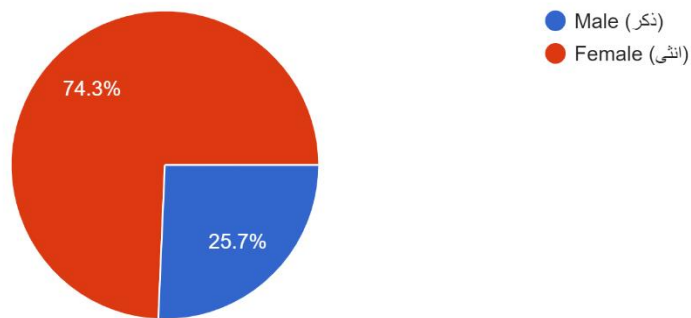
3.5. Analysis of the Results from the Questionnaire

Section One: Background Information

Question One: Gender

Figure 3.1. Student Distribution According to Gender

1. Gender 1. (حدد جنسك)
148 responses

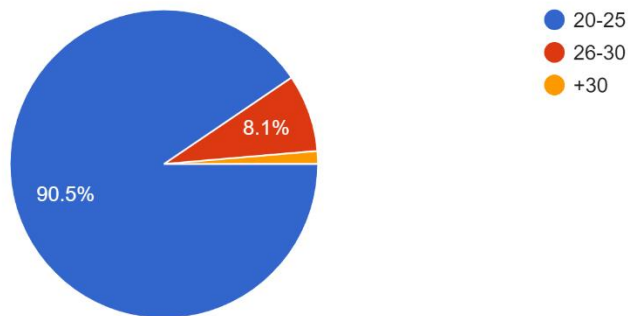


The figure 3.1. above shows that most of the participants were females with a 74.3%, whereas the males make merely 25.7 of the percentage. This was an expected finding as a result of the huge presence of females over males at the University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma. Thus, female participants made up the vast majority, which influenced the sample's gender distribution.

Question Two: How old are you?

Figure 3.2. Students' Age Range

2. How old are you? (كم عمرك)
148 responses



The figure 3.2. shows that all age categories exist in the sample. However, the vast majority of the participants are the ones with an age which ranges between 20 and 25 years old, reaching 90.5%. The age range between 26 and 30 years old is the second most common one, accounting for 8.1%. The last age range present in the questionnaire are the ones with 30 or plus years, with a percentage of 1.4%.

Question Three: How long have you been studying at the university?

This question aims to prove the complete randomization in choosing the questionnaire sample, mixing new learners with the old ones to make sure that all opinions matter. The students' answers were so different, which helped proving the credibility of the questionnaire. The first thing to notice is the variety of the participants' experiences and years in the university, ranging from 2 years to 11 years.

Question Four: What is your area of specialization?

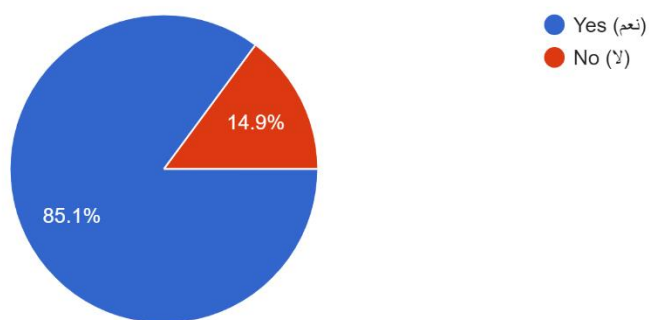
This question was designed to see the different departments that the questionnaire has reached, in order to observe their different attitudes, which enables the researchers to have reliable data. These are some of the departments that the questionnaire has reached: English Language and Culture, Informatics, Sociology, Management, Biology, Philosophy, Chemistry, Entrepreneurship, Mathematics and Economics.

Section Two: Students' Perspectives Towards E-learning

Question One: Do you use the university e-learning platform?

Figure 3.3. The Use of the University E-learning Platform

1. Do you use the university e-learning platform? (هل تستعمل منصة الجامعة للتعليم الالكتروني؟)
148 responses



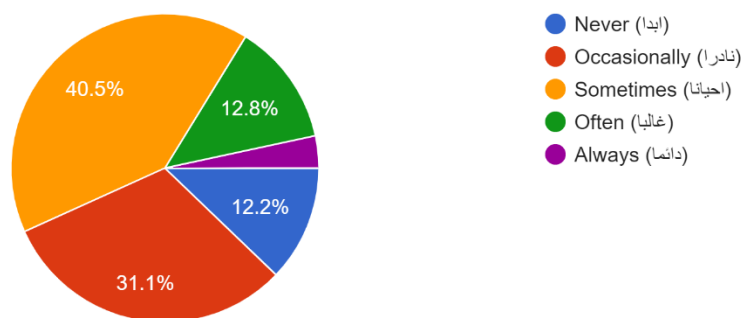
This was a yes-no question to value the participants' use of the university e-learning platform. The figure 3.3. shows that the vast majority 85.1% answered yes, while 14.9% answered no. This means that not all students use the platform, which can be considered as a step back in the process of converting to e-learning.

Question Two: How often do you check the e-learning platform?

Figure 3.4. Students' Distribution based on the Frequency of Checking the E-learning Platform

2. If yes, how often do you check the e-learning platform? (إذا كانت اجابتك نعم، كم مرة يتم دخولك للمنصة الإلكترونية؟)

148 responses



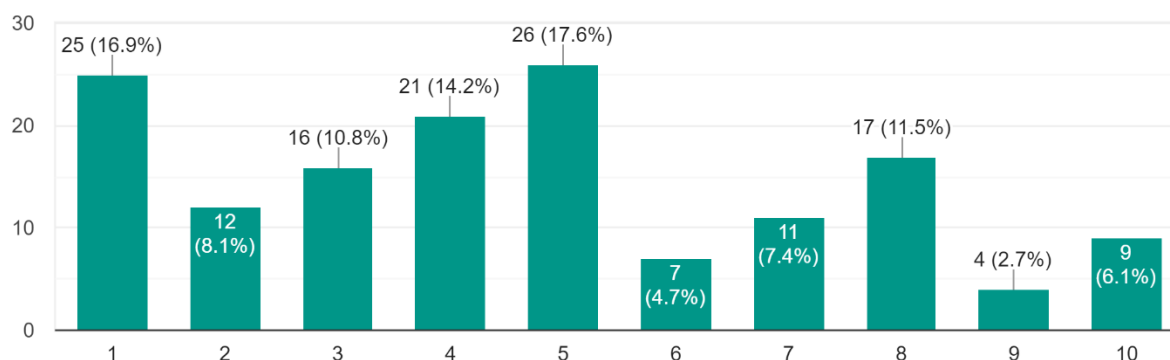
The figure 3.4. shows that the participants' frequency of checking the e-learning platform ranges between sometimes (40.5%), occasionally (31.1%), often (12.8%), and never (12.2%), whereas always (3.4%) is the least checked box, implying that the majority of students do not check their e-learning platform daily.

Question Three: How difficult is the use of the e-learning platform for you?

Figure 3.5. Difficulty of Using the E-learning Platform

3. How difficult is the use of the e-learning platform for you? (كيف تقيم استخدامك للمنصة الإلكترونية؟)

148 responses



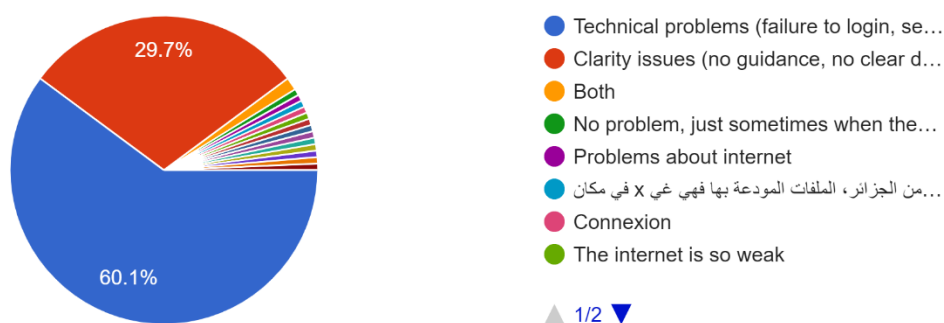
The answers were from 1 (easy) to 10 (difficult) to see how the students have found the use of the e-learning platform. The figure 3.5. above shows only 9 participants (6.9%) out of 148 that found the use of the e-learning platform very difficult and rated it 10/10, while 25 participants (16.9%) found the platform very easy to use and rated it 1 out of 10. The participants who rated the e-learning platform 2/10 were 12 (8.1%), the ones who rated it 3/10 were 16 (16.8%), and the ones who rated it 4/10 were 21 (14.2%). The participants who found the use of the e-learning platform relatively medium were 26 participants (17.6%), whereas the ones who found it relatively hard and rated the platform 6/10 and 7/10 were 18 participants (12.1%), while others who found it hard to use were 21 participants, with a rating of 8/10 and 9/10 (14.2%). The overall analysis of the figure shows that 74 participants (50%) found the platform relatively hard while the other 50% found it relatively easy to use.

Question Four: What type of problems have you faced when using the platform?

Figure 3.6. Demonstration to the Type of Problems that Learners Faced

4. What type of problems have you faced when using the platform? (ما نوع المشاكل التي واجهتها عند استخدامك للمنصة الإلكترونية؟)

148 responses



The figure 3.6. shows the multiple problems that the learners faced during the use of the e-learning platform. The first thing to notice is the variety of these problems. This question was given with three options which are technical problems, clarity issues or others. This variation of answers is offered under 'others.' These are some of the answers: internet connection problems, the platform looks like something from the 90's, consuming a lot of time when looking for a specific module. These answers can be classified under one of the two options provided.

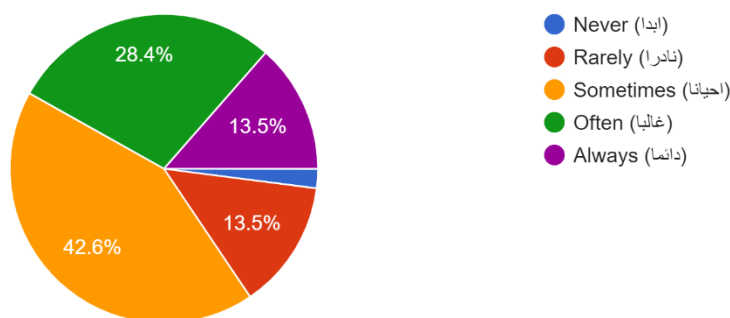
But 60.1% of the sample have faced technical problems, which is considered to be the major issue that learners suffer from—mentioning the site doesn't respond, error 404 page not found, login issues, and server timed out—due to the heavy load of online learners over the poor-quality server. The second issue that the learners have faced, which has reached 29.7%, is the clarity issues.

Far from the technical problems, not all students can actually use the e-learning platform without proper guidance.

Question Five: How often have you faced technical problems while using the e-learning platform?

Figure 3.7. The Frequent of Technical Problems

5. How often have you faced technical problems while using the e-learning platform? (كم مرة واجهت مشاكل تقنية أثناء استخدام المنصة الإلكترونية؟)
148 responses

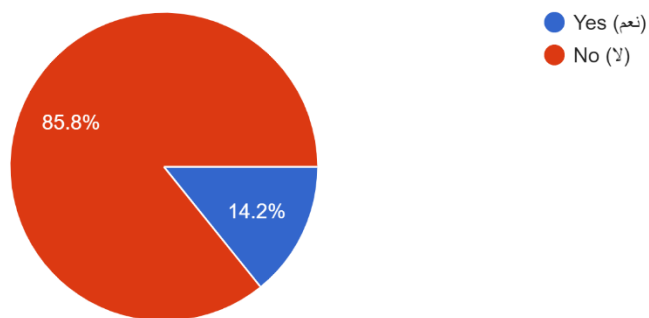


The figure 3.7. above shows a considerable number of the participants (42.6%) that sometimes face technical problems, while 28.4% of them face these problems more often. Some of the participants (13.5%) always have technical problems, 13.5% have occasional problems, only (2%) of the participants selected never. The figure reflects the frequency of the technical problems that ultimately generates hardships in using the e-learning platform.

Question Six: Have you been using the e-learning platform before the COVID-19?

Figure 3.8. The Usage of the Platform by Learners before COVID-19

6. Have you been using the e-learning platform before the COVID-19? (هل سبق لك استخدام المنصة الإلكترونية؟
(قبل جائحة كورونا؟)
148 responses

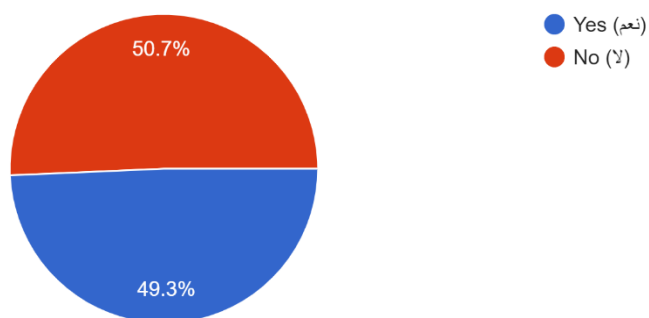


The figure 3.8. above shows that 85.8% of the students never used the platform before the COVID-19 pandemic, and only 14.2% of the sample knew about the existence of the platform and actually used it before the pandemic.

Question Seven: Were you and your teachers able to use the e-learning platform for the very first time?

Figure 3.9. The Ability to Use the Platform for the First Time

7. Were you and your teachers able to use the e-learning platform for the very first time? (هل تمكنت
انت واساتذتك من استخدام المنصة الالكترونية اول مرة؟)
148 responses



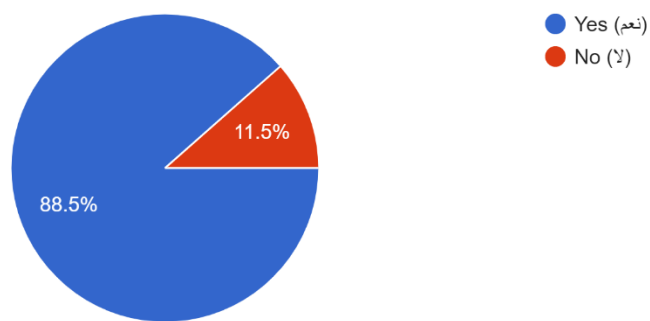
The figure 3.9 shows the capability of learners and teachers to use the e-learning platform for the very first time. It can be notice in figure 3.9. that (49.3%) almost half of the participants did succeed in using it, whereas the other half (50.7%) unfortunately were not able to use it. For the first-time use, the figure percentages make sense.

Question Eight: Did your teachers create online courses during the COVID-19?

Figure 3.10. The Creation of Online Courses by Teachers

8. Did your teachers create online courses during the COVID-19? (هل قام اساتذتكم بإنشاء دورات/ دروس عبر الانترنت خلال جائحة كورونا؟)

148 responses



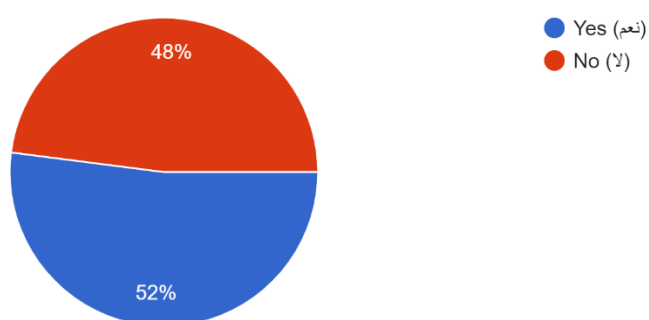
The figure 3.10. shows that 88.5% of students answered yes, while only 11.5% of the students answered no. This means that the majority of teachers have created online courses in order to resume with the syllabus and continue to teach.

Question Nine: Was the administration involved in organizing the e-learning sessions?

Figure 3.11. The Involvement of the Administration in Organizing Online Sessions

9. Was the administration involved in organizing the online courses schedule? (هل قامت الإدارة بتنظيم جدول استعمال الزمن للدراسة عبر الانترنت؟)

148 responses



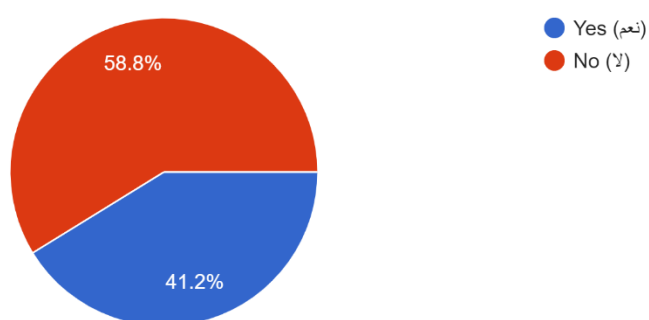
The figure 3.11. shows that 52% of the participants answered yes, while 48% of them answered no. Departments such as Letters and Languages, Nature and Life and Earth Sciences and the Universes, and Material Sciences witnessed the involvement of the administration in organizing a schedule for online courses that were respected by both teachers and learners. Also based on the figure, some departments such as Economic, Trade and Management Sciences, Mathematics and Computer Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences, and Law and Political Sciences did not use a certain schedule or planning, which automatically placed the responsibility on the teachers' hands to organize online courses to complete their syllabus. These non-organized online sessions may have caused an overlap of online sessions between different courses at the same time (figure 3.12).

Question Ten: Was there an overlap of online sessions between different courses at the same time?

Figure 3.12. The Overlap of Online Sessions between Different Courses

10. If no, was there a conflict of online sessions between different courses at the same time? (إذا كان)
(الجواب لا، هل كان هنالك تعارض زمني بين مقاييس مختلفة عبر الانترنت (وجود دروس لمقاييس مختلفة في نفس الوقت)؟)

148 responses

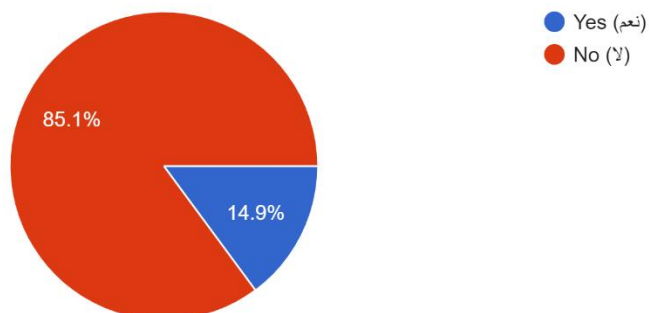


The figure 3.12. above shows the overlap of online sessions between different courses. 58.8% of the students answered with “no,” and the remaining 41.2% of the participants answered with “yes.” The overall analysis of this graph states the obvious, which is that the absence of some administration involvement in organizing the online sessions has made some teachers choose to create an online session at the same time as others, which made the online learners confused to choose a course over the other. This lack of organization might be considered as one of the weaknesses of e-learning in the Algerian context.

Question Eleven: Were you able to join the online session each time?

Figure 3.13. Students' Ability to Join the Online Sessions each Time

11. Were you able to join the online session each time? (هل تمكنت من الانضمام الى الدروس في كل مرة؟)
148 responses



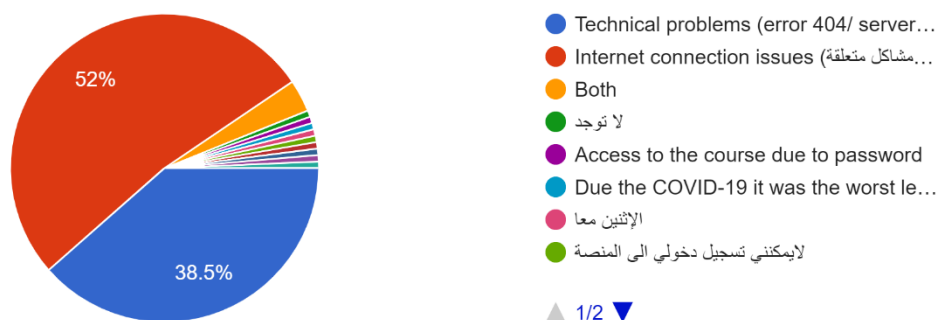
This figure 3.13. shows that the majority of students who answered with “no” reached 85.1% while 14.9% of them answered with “yes”. 85.1% is a huge majority of students who were not able to join online sessions. It is safe to say that the first launch of e-learning platform was not successful, due to the low rate of students who were actually able to join online courses.

Question Twelve: What problems have made joining the online session impossible?

Figure 3.14. The Problems that Faced Online Learners when Joining Online Courses

12. If no, what problems have made joining the online session impossible? (إذا كانت اجابتك لا، ما هي المشاكل التي جعلت الانضمام الى الدروس مستحيلا؟)

148 responses



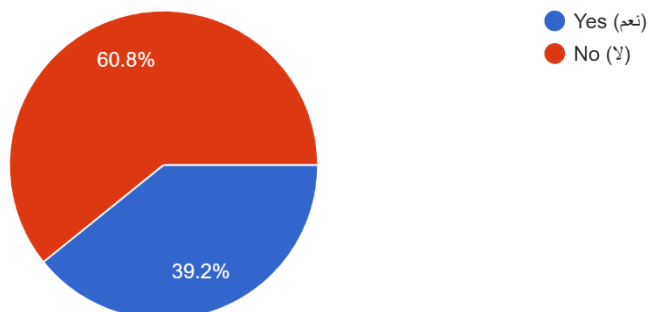
The figure 3.14. shows multiple issues that learners suffered from since the beginning that made joining online sessions impossible. These are some of the issues: technical problems and internet connection issues. However, the internet connection was the students' biggest issue, in which 52% of them were struggling with it, disabling them from resuming their studies. Therefore, it may have influenced their grades and their motivation to learn. Coming in second place with a percentage of 38.5% is the technical problems. The issue occurred due to the poor design of the site that costs a lot of learners their grades because they did not have the capacity to login and be updated, causing damage as much as the internet connection issues, besides a considerable number of online learners 9.5% suffered from the implications of both problems.

Question Thirteen: Did the teachers create online courses regularly (for example, one module on Tuesday from 08-10)?

Figure 3.15. Creation of Regular Online Courses by Teachers.

13. Did the teachers create online courses regularly (for example, one module on Tuesday from 08-10)? (هل كان اساتذتكم يقومون بإنشاء دورات/ دروس عبر الانترنت بانتظام؟)

148 responses



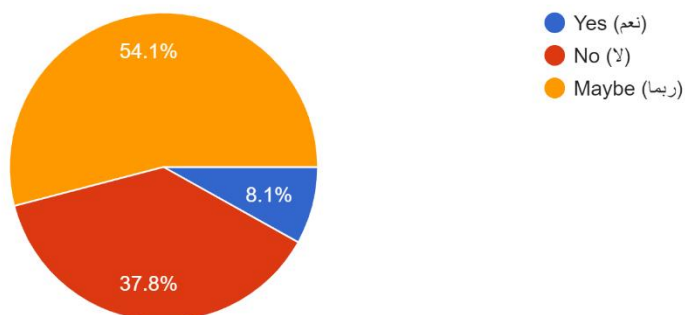
60.8% of learners answered “no,” as it is shown in the figure 3.15. which means that did not have the advantage of being ready or preparing themselves to take a certain course. The planning of weekly online sessions was totally unclear to them because their teachers were sending late course notices; which disables them from preparing to join these courses and waste their time in dealing with technical issues. Furthermore, it would be too late for them to have the chance to prepare their home-learning environment. However, 39.2% of those who answered “yes” claimed that their teachers have created regular online courses. These regular courses helped the online learners to have the possibility to somehow provide or create the correct conditions such as the indoors learning environment, checking the availability of the internet connection in order to be able to join courses. Also, to login into the e-learning platform half an hour earlier to avoid delay due to the technical issues.

Question Fourteen: Did students take these courses seriously?

Figure 3.16. Attitudes of Learners towards E-learning

14. Did the students take these online courses seriously? (هل اخذ الطلاب هذه الدورات على محمل الجد؟)

148 responses



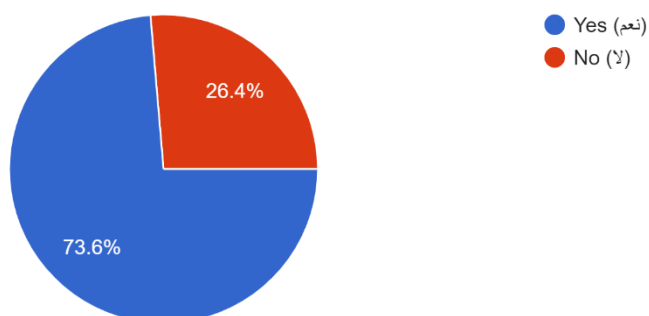
The figure 3.16. shows that the majority of students (54.1%) answered “maybe,” while 37.8% answered “no.” The remaining 8.1% of learners answered with “yes.” Based on this data, we can determine that there was only a small group of online learners who took the e-learning approach seriously. This means that that e-learning in Algeria has not reached an acceptable degree of success.

Question Fifteen: Did your teachers provide online lessons and lectures?

Figure 3.17. The Creation of Online Lessons and Lectures

15. Did your teachers provide online lessons and lectures? (هل قام اساتذتكم بإنشاء دورات/ دروس عبر الانترنت)

148 responses



73.6% of the students answered “yes,” as it is shown in the figure 3.17. above, while those who answered “no” were 29.4%. It indicates that the majority of teachers have created online lessons for the students. Only 26.4% of students did not have online courses and lessons.

Question Sixteen: How can you evaluate the online courses that you have attended?

Figure 3.18. The Evaluation of Students to the Content Served on Online Courses

16. How can you evaluate the online courses that you have attended? (كيف تقيّم الدروس التي حضرتها عبر الإنترنت؟)
148 responses

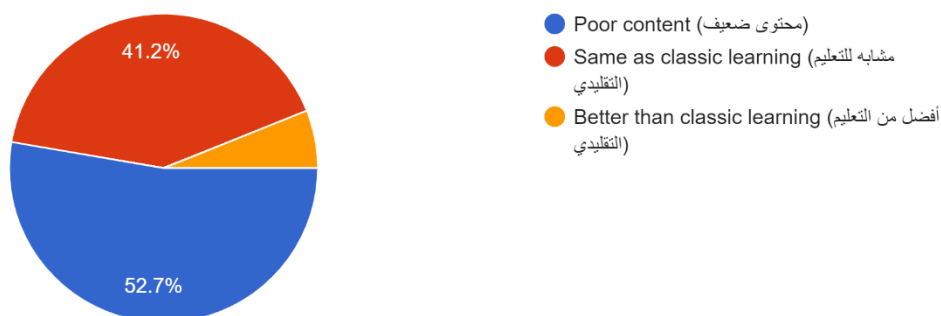


Figure 3.18. shows that 52.7% of the participants considered online courses and lessons provided on the e-learning platform to have “poor content” and they did not see it fit the level of conventional learning due to the multiple problems they have faced in their experience with the platform that led them to miss out number of courses. Moreover, 41.2% of the participants perceived those online lessons as similar to conventional learning, which implies that these students did not find any differences between both educational approaches. While 6.1% of them considered these courses as better than conventional learning probably due to the fact that lessons are easily accessed and also, they are less consuming in terms of time and efforts.

Question Seventeen: Do you think that e-learning could be adopted as an alternative to conventional learning in Algeria?

Figure 3.19. The Students' Opinions on the Adaptation of E-learning as an alternative to Conventional Learning in Algeria

17. Do you think that e-learning could be adopted as an alternative to classic learning in Algeria? (هل تعتقد انه يمكن اعتماد التعليم الالكتروني كبديل للتعليم التقليدي في الجزائر؟)

148 responses

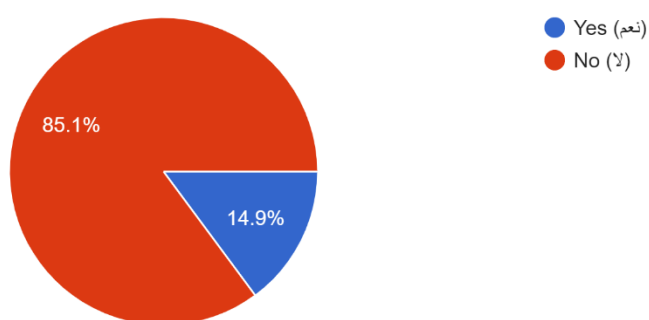


Figure 3.19. shows that 85.1% of the participants answered “no,” which is considered a huge majority of students that refuse the idea of replacing conventional learning with e-learning. However, 14.9% of the participants answered “yes,” and they see potential in the e-learning platform as a replacement for conventional learning. The variation of thoughts is expected; some might perceive the situation optimistically and hope for the best that the e-learning in the Algerian context will improve. While others may see it pessimistically and directly assume that Algeria cannot convert to e-learning obviously due to the absence of a decent infrastructure.

Question Eighteen: Justify your answer, please

When asked to justify their answers, participants who said “no” justified their answers by mentioning some reasons and problems which prevented Algeria from switching to e-learning. Moreover, some of them think that the technical problems of the Moodle platform and the internet

connection are the biggest reasons that are holding us back from switching to e-learning. Furthermore, some think that the problem is within the platform itself. Even with a high-speed internet connection, the poor servers of the Moodle platform take hours to respond, showing login errors, and for some it looks like a maze in which students find themselves searching for the online lessons for a relatively long time; some mentioned that downloading a PDF, which is less than 2 megabytes, takes longer than 15 minutes.

Question Nineteen: In your opinion, what could be done to make the online courses better?

148 people shared their thoughts on how to improve online courses. The majority of students agreed that the Moodle platform's technical issues should be addressed, and that all students should have access to the internet. Furthermore, several participants stated that the platform should be simple to use and completely functioning, that both teachers and students should be aware of what e-learning is, and that they should take online courses as seriously as they would in the classroom. As a result, raise student understanding of the necessity of employing technology in the learning process.

3.6. Summary of the Findings from the Questionnaire

The first section of the questionnaire "General information" is devoted to enquiring about the participants' general information. It can be noticed that the majority of respondents who took part in the questionnaire are students aged between 20 and 25. Section two, "Students' Attitudes towards E-learning," helped to answer the research first question about the learners' use and attitudes toward the e-learning platform. The findings showed the multiple problems in which students have faced during their experience with the platform, these problems namely the lack of solid internet infrastructure and the poor design of the platform led the participants to refuse the idea of converting to e-learning. Based on the previous result, it is now safe to say that the use of e-learning platform at the University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma was not successful according to the

learners' perceptions. Hence, this answers the second question of this research. At the end, learners were asked to give their opinions about the ability to replace conventional learning with e-learning and what could be done to enhance the e-learning experience in Algeria.

The findings shows that students tend to use the e-learning platform but the problems they face stand as a roadblock between them and their education. They sometimes use the platform, but they face various problems such as clarity issues and technical problems. The respondents' frequency of logins into the platform is restricted for some basic reasons. According to most respondents, the main reason for logging into the e-learning platform is to check out the new lessons, because joining an online face-to-face course is nearly impossible, due to the constant internet loss. While others claim that they cannot even login. Besides, students lost their motivation to study for some reasons that differ from one individual to another, which explains why the majority of respondents do not take online courses seriously. Additionally, the questionnaire revealed that most participants do not see e-learning as a replacement to the conventional learning, mainly because the technological infrastructure to maintain such a change simply does not exist in Algeria, yet.

In the questionnaire's previous section, participants were also asked about their opinions on enhancing the e-learning platform in Algeria. Students provided their opinions about the improvement of the internet connection as a first step in enhancing the connectivity infrastructure, and then create an easy-to-use platform with a clear design and fast servers with a group of technical support that is capable of solving any issue in a short time.

Consequently, it is appropriate to conclude that e-learning in Algeria might have a chance in the near future if all its problems are fixed. But as for now, it is not considered as effective as conventional learning in covering all aspects of education for both teachers and learners because it is a time-consuming approach and takes huge efforts and experiences in which students are not

familiar with. It is safe to say that there is still a huge gap between e-learning in theory and e-learning in practice.

3.7. Contribution of the Study

The current research investigates the attitudes of students toward e-learning at the University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma. As it is known, e-learning has emerged rapidly in recent years, especially after the outbreak of COVID-19. Hence, the objectives of this study are first to shed light on how learners perceive e-learning and second, to explore their attitudes toward it. After that, to view to what extent the use of e-learning was successful. A questionnaire was put in place to gather first-hand data directly from the learners.

The majority of existing studies in Algeria only looked at e-learning from a theoretical standpoint. In the current research, the aim is to show how successful the actual use of the platform was and how students perceived it. The findings of this study go in line with the findings of (Benghalem, 2021) who found that there were several factors led to this negative attitude, as Belhadj Bouchaib's third-year English students highlighted that a lack of materials, the quality of the internet, issues within the platform itself, and students who did not own a laptop or even a smartphone, were among the primary issues impeding e-learning progress. Also, (Kerras & Salhi, 2021) found out that comprehending information would be much more difficult without live discussions. After accomplishing that, it will automatically expose the gap between theory and practice concerning e-learning.

These research findings and solutions benefit students, teachers, and the Algerian educational system as a whole. The solutions offered gradually make e-learning easy to use and smooth to access, eliminating all the roadblocks that students currently suffer from. The teachers will no longer have difficulties uploading lessons or conducting face-to-face lectures due to the high internet speed. The Algerian educational system will be able to switch between both learning

approaches (conventional learning and e-learning) as easily as it gets; the academic calendar will be immune to any future natural disasters.

3.8. Limitations of the Study

Given the fact that this study was thoroughly prepared, it was constrained by a number of external obstacles. The researchers were unable to control some difficulties. The following are the two primary roadblocks that the researchers experienced while conducting this work. For the theoretical part, there was not that much relevant primary and authentic data, maybe due to the newness of the subject. Most research papers that tackled e-learning in Algeria were old and outdated, and the majority were irrelevant to the time frame we needed in our research (COVID-19 pandemic period). This barrier affected mostly the data collection, because e-learning in Algeria is a relatively new subject to be discussed, and little work has been done on it, including the current research.

For the practical part, a questionnaire was supposed to be distributed to a number of teachers to give the research more reliability and validity and also to gain insights from their perspectives on the subject. Yet, the researchers did not find the response that they hoped for, so the teachers' data collection procedure was so far-reaching, mainly because the lack of cooperation from the part of teachers. This is unfortunate for the study, but encouraging at the same time for further studies to be carried on.

3.9. Pedagogical Implications

To begin with, Algeria as a country lacks an advanced technological infrastructure that would offer online students unrestricted internet connection speed whenever it is required to keep them updated on a regular basis. Second, the platform's design is riddled with problems. It frequently crashes as a result of an unexpectedly large number of online learners' logins. It is not easy to use, and even join, create, and download courses. Because the platform takes too long to reply, students

believe that the e-learning process is too difficult for them, and they prefer conventional learning instead. Furthermore, due to the chaotic circumstances and many concerns, the majority of students could not take e-learning as seriously as they took conventional learning. They restricted their platform logins to a minimum. Having that said, it is not too late for the Algerian minister of higher education to intervene and save the future of e-learning.

Numerous efficient methods and procedures can be used. First, a solid technological infrastructure must be built, one that covers the entire country with enough internet connection to allow online learners to smoothly join online courses and classes whenever they are needed. Furthermore, all students must have access to electronic devices that allow them to stay connected and informed. Furthermore, not everyone comes from the same financial background, so we cannot assume that they all have the means to pay for internet on a monthly basis, and that they all have smart devices. The government can look into the backgrounds of these students' parents to see if they are unable to purchase and pay for smart devices and internet access. Second, every university must design a smooth, user-friendly platform that is easy to access with better servers that can handle a large number of online learners at the same time in order to avoid common issues such as 404 Not Found, site does not respond, server timed out, or crashed for a better e-learning experience. The site itself must be straightforward to use, with clear directions and a simple design, so that students may not be confused and spend less time looking for a module or joining in any online class they desire.

Finally, the administration must be involved in both: the organization of online courses as well as the supervision of all online activities; and the obligation to educate both teachers and students on how to use the online platform and raise their awareness about its importance. To elaborate, the organizing might be accomplished by creating an online timetable for online sessions, similar to how conventional learning courses are planned. It is also simple to keep track

of both teachers' and students' presences by scanning Quick Response (QR) codes, which immediately record everyone's presence. Directly, the database detects who is absent. Absenteeism and skipping online courses must be treated seriously, just as they are in conventional learning, so that students consider e-learning to be as important as conventional learning.

Conclusion

The results of the questionnaire showed that students at the University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma are aware of the e-learning platform's beneficial role and potential, as well as how it may be useful and simple to use and work with. However, they do not believe that the Algerian educational system is ready for it yet due to significant obstacles to its development. The internet infrastructure is still far from providing the services that e-learning requires. Many students believe that even the Moodle platform requires significant improvements in order to be more user-friendly, with fewer technical issues and better smoothness and efficacy.

General Conclusion

The current study investigates the attitudes of learners toward the e-learning platform during the COVID-19 pandemic. E-learning is a new way of education via ICTs, which has started to be widely used and relied upon by learners since the outbreak of COVID-19. Nowadays, e-learning has a great deal of importance due to its extreme flexibility and availability in the lives of learners and teachers; academics might even compare it with conventional learning. However, in Algeria, there is an obvious gap between online learning in theory and in practice, in theory it is meant to be smooth, easy and successful approach to finish the curriculum. But in practice students faced great deal of problems that made their experience with e-learning far from smoothness and easiness. In order to investigate the status of e-learning in Algeria, a questionnaire is put in place to examine the students' thoughts on the e-learning platform and its evaluation based on their experiences during their usage of the platform. The perspectives of learners are highly important to understand the extent to which they are ready to accept it over conventional learning. Furthermore, this study sheds some light on the hardships that students encounter, from the technical problems to clarity issues that many students have faced during their usage of the platform. Therefore, the questionnaire's findings answer the questions asked and confirm the hypothesis that Algeria was not ready to shift to e-learning. Most participants who took part in the questionnaire admitted the hardships which they faced at different levels.

First, as a country, Algeria lacks an advanced technological infrastructure that allows online students unlimited internet access speed whenever it is needed to keep them updated on a regular basis at least. Second, the platform itself has so many design flaws. It frequently crashes due to the unexpected heavy load of online learners' logins. It is not smooth while using it, and it is very challenging even to join, create, and download courses from it. The platform takes too much time to respond, which makes students think that the e-learning process is extremely hard beyond their

reach and they prefer conventional learning instead. Additionally, the majority of students could not take e-learning as seriously as taking conventional learning, mainly because of its chaotic situation and multiple issues. They kept their logins to the platform to a minimum.

With all that being said, it is not too late for the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education to step in and save the future of e-learning. Many effective solutions and measures can be taken. First, it is necessary to build a solid infrastructure in the technological field, an infrastructure that contains a whole country's coverage with decent internet speed that allows online learners to join online courses and lessons easily whenever needed. Further, all students need to have electronic devices that enable them to be connected and to stay updated.

Furthermore, not all individuals have the same background, financially speaking, so we cannot assume that all of them have the luxury to pay monthly for the internet and not necessarily all of them have smart devices. The government can investigate the parents' backgrounds for this type of students to confirm their inability to purchase and pay for both smart devices and internet access.

Second, for a better e-learning experience, every university must design a smooth, user-friendly platform that is easy to access with better servers that can handle a massive number of online learners at the same time in order to overcome some common issues such as 404 Not Found, the site does not respond, server timed out, or crashed. Then, the site itself must be easy to use with clear instructions and a simple design, so students would not feel confused and spend less time searching for a module or joining any online class they want.

In the end, the administration must be involved in both; the organization of online courses plus supervising all the online activities that happen; and the obligation to educate both teachers and students on how to use the online platform and raise their awareness about the importance of the platform and e-learning as a whole. As further explanation, the organization could be done by

making an online schedule for online sessions similar to the course planning in conventional learning. It is also easy to monitor the presence of both teachers and learners by using QR code scans that automatically record everyone's presence. The database detects who is absent directly. Absentees and skipping online courses must be dealt with seriously as in conventional learning, so students will perceive e-learning as a serious as they do with conventional learning.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Participants' Questionnaire (English version)

Dear students,

This questionnaire is a part of a Master's dissertation research entitled "An investigation of e-learning in the Algerian context" which is conducted at the Department of English, University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma. You are kindly requested to fill in this questionnaire based on your experience. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. Your responses will be used only for research purposes and will remain completely anonymous.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Rayane Madi and Yasser Ouarti, master two students of English language and culture

Department of English

University 8 Mai 1945-Guelma

Academic year: 2021-2022

SECTION ONE: General Information

1. Gender

- Male
- Female

2. How old are you?

- 20-25
- 26-30
- +30

3. How long have you been studying at the university?

.....

4. What is your area of specialization?

.....

SECTION TWO: Attitudes towards E-learning

1. Do you use the university e-learning platform?

- Yes
- No

2. If yes, how often do you check the e-learning platform?

Never

Occasionally

Sometimes

Often

Always

3. How difficult is the use of the e-learning platform for you?

Easy 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 Difficult

4. What type of problems have you faced when using the platform?

- Technical problems (failure to login, server timed out, errors)
- Clarity issues (no guidance, no clear directions)
- Other

5. How often have you faced technical problems while using the e-learning platform?

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

6. Have you been using the e-learning platform before the COVID-19?

- Yes
- No

7. Were you and your teachers able to use the e-learning platform for the very first time?

- Yes
- No

8. Did your teachers create online courses during the COVID-19?

- Yes
- No

9. Was the administration involved in organizing the e-learning sessions?

- Yes
- No

10. If no, was there an overlap of online sessions between different courses at the same time?

- Yes

No

11. Were you able to join the online session each time?

Yes

No

12. If no, what problems have made joining the online session impossible?

Technical problems (error 404/ server timed out)

Internet connection issues

Other

13. Did the teachers create online courses regularly (for example, one module on Tuesday from 08-10)?

Yes

No

14. Did students take these courses seriously?

Yes

No

Maybe

15. Did your teachers provide online lessons and lectures?

Yes

No

16. How can you evaluate the online courses that you have attended?

Poor content

Same as classic learning

Better than classic learning

17. Do you think that e-learning could be adopted as an alternative to classic learning in Algeria?

- Yes
- No

18. Justify your answer, please.

.....

19. In your opinion, what could be done to make the online courses better?

.....

20. If you have any further comments, please provide them.

.....

APPENDIX B: Participants' Questionnaire (Arabic version)

الجزء الأول: معلومات عامة

1. حدد جنسك

أنثى

ذكر

2. كم عمرك؟

20-25

26-30

+30

3. منذ متى تترتاد الجامعة؟

.....

4. ما هو اختصاصك؟

.....

الجزء الثاني: الآراء تجاه التعليم الإلكتروني

1. هل تستعمل منصة الجامعة للتعليم الإلكتروني؟

نعم

لا

2. إذا كانت اجابتك نعم، كم مرة يتم دخولك للمنصة الإلكترونية؟

أبدا

نادرا

أحيانا

غالبا

دائما

3. كيف تقيم استخدامك للمنصة الإلكترونية؟

سهل 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10 صعب

4. ما نوع المشاكل التي واجهتها عند استخدامك للمنصة الالكترونية؟

- مشاكل تقنية
- مشاكل تتعلق بالوضوح (عدم وجود توجيه كاف، او توجيهات غير واضحة)
- أخرى

5. كم مرة واجهت مشاكل تقنية اثناء استخدام المنصة الالكترونية؟

- أبدا
- نادرا
- أحيانا
- غالبا
- دائما

6. هل سبق لك استخدام المنصة الالكترونية قبل جائحة كورونا؟

- نعم
- لا

7. هل تمكنت انت واساتذتك من استخدام المنصة الالكترونية اول مرة؟

- نعم
- لا

8. هل قام اساتذتك بإنشاء دورات/ دروس عبر الانترنت خلال جائحة كورونا؟

- نعم
- لا

9. هل قامت الإدارة بتنظيم جدول استعمال الزمن للدراسة عبر الانترنت؟

- نعم
- لا

10. إذا كان الجواب لا، هل كان هنالك تعارض زمني بين مقاييس مختلفة عبر الانترنت (وجود دروس لمقاييس مختلفة في

نفس الوقت)؟

○ نعم

○ لا

11. هل تمكنت من الانضمام الى الدروس في كل مرة؟

○ نعم

○ لا

12. إذا كانت اجابتك لا، ما هي المشاكل التي جعلت الانضمام الى الدروس مستحيلا؟

○ مشاكل تقنية

○ مشاكل متعلقة بالإنترنت

○ اخرى

13. هل كان اساتذتك يقومون بإنشاء دورات/ دروس عبر الانترنت بانتظام؟

○ نعم

○ لا

14. هل اخذ الطلاب هذه الدورات على محمل الجد؟

○ نعم

○ لا

15. هل قام اساتذتك بإنشاء دورات/ دروس عبر الانترنت؟

○ نعم

○ لا

16. كيف تقيّم الدروس التي حضرتها عبر الانترنت؟

○ محتوى ضعيف

○ مشابه للتعليم التقليدي

○ أفضل من التعليم التقليدي

17. هل تعتقد انه يمكن اعتماد التعليم الالكتروني كبديل للتعليم التقليدي في الجزائر؟

○ نعم

○ لا

18. علل اجابتك من فضلك.

.....

19. في رأيك ما الذي يمكن فعله لتحسين التعلم عبر الانترنت؟

.....

20. إذا كان لديك أي تعليق حول الموضوع، الرجاء اضافته هنا.

.....

المخلص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق في حالة التعليم الإلكتروني خلال فترة جائحة كورونا في الجزائر من خلال استكشاف وجهات نظر الطلاب من مختلف الأقسام في جامعة 8 ماي 1945-قائمة. يستخدم البحث طريقة وصفية وكمية. تتكون عينة هذه الدراسة من 148 طالبا من جميع المستويات والأقسام المختلفة في جامعة 8 ماي 1945-قائمة. تم استخدام الاستبيان كأداة رئيسية لجمع البيانات. أظهرت نتائج هذه الدراسة أن وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي الجزائرية غير قادرة على اعتماد التعلم الإلكتروني كنهج بديل للتعلم التقليدي. كما تظهر هذه الدراسة افتقار الجزائر إلى بنية تحتية تكنولوجية للحفاظ على هذا التغيير. إضافة الى ذلك، يجد الطلاب مشاكل ومصاعب تقنية حرجة عند التحول إلى نهج التعلم الإلكتروني واستخدام منصة مودل؛ كما أن الطلاب واساتذتهم لا يدركون أهمية التعليم الإلكتروني.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعليم الإلكتروني، جائحة كورونا، منصة مودل، الطلاب، جامعة 8 ماي 1945-قائمة.