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Evaluation of Distance Education at the Algerian University from the Students' Perspective: Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Oran 2 as a Model

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ABSTRACT: *Distance education spread at the Algerian university with the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, that is, in the year 2020, and it was then accompanied by hybrid education, meaning a combination of distance education and in-person education. Moreover, Distance education was the most important means of practising the learning process, not only in the university environment, but even in the field of primary, middle, and secondary education, and this is in all countries of the world, but the means and methods were different and were numerous. This process, i.e. distance education, has faced many difficulties, including material and moral, on the part of teachers and students, especially with the beginning of its spread in Algerian universities. Therefore, This study aims to measure the extent of university students' satisfaction with distance education at the Algerian University through a field study at the level of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Oran 2, Mohammed bin Ahmed, using a paper form. The sample included 150 students of both genders.*

KEYWORDS: Distance education - digitization - satisfaction - Moodle platform - university student.

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Introduction

The emergence of technology has led to changes and developments in various areas and fields, and among the features of the latter, we can talk about digitization. The Algerian University is considered among the sectors that sought to develop and modernize its educational system by adopting the latest technology to improve the quality of education by involving all parties in the educational and learning process, because of its positive impact on the university institution. The Ministry of Higher Education has been keen to introduce the digitization system at the level of universities, and more particularly in various departments by developing a set of services, applications, and electronic platforms such as Progress, Model, ASJP, Sija In this context, this research paper presents a picture of students' attitudes about distance learning via the Moodle platform and their evaluation of the uses of this platform through a field study in the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Oran 2. This faculty is considered to be one of the most important faculties of the University of Oran 2 in terms of number of the students, teachers, as well as scientific disciplines. The study targeted first-year students in a common social sciences discipline because they are primarily concerned with distance learning.

The problem of the study

The University of Oran 02 has adopted all the electronic systems and services provided by the higher education and scientific research sector by providing the physical infrastructure, technology, and qualified human executives to train administrators and teachers to use these platforms and technology.

To know the extent of progress and development, we decided to implement the digitization system, especially distance education, as a field study to measure the extent of satisfaction of first-year students (common core in social sciences at the University of Oran 2 with the distance education system via the Moodle platform). Therefore, the problem of this research revolves around evaluating the satisfaction of students with all aspects surrounding the structure of education via the Moodle platform through its various systems, represented by the entry system, the learning system, and the exit system.

Thus, measuring and evaluating satisfaction is a real scientific process that figures out the progress that must be made in order to further improve education. It aims mainly to search for improvement, which necessarily involves observation and evaluation of the current situation and the significance given to the most essential elements of the distance education system and, calculating the satisfaction index is part of the logic of continuous development.

Throughout this study, the indicator Satisfaction of students of the faculty of Social sciences about the distance education system via the Moodle platform has a major role in realizing the gap between the current situation of distance education and the level of its improvement according to expectations or opinions of the students.

Satisfaction with distance education is measured through variables that have a direct relationship with the nationally approved Moodle platform. It establishes a first-entry system, which includes the general plan for training, focusing on the lesson leader and the target audience. Secondly, it evaluated the learning system, Which constitutes the stage in which the teacher builds the lesson by selecting the content and dividing the lesson into axes, which in turn are distributed over a group of lectures and supported by explanatory resources, as well as identifying learning activities. Finally, the exit system, which is related to evaluation, represents the field of judging the level of students' learning and their achievement of the outcomes of the set goals, in addition to evaluating the educational process through all its elements.

The three systems are evaluated according to what they are and according to the importance or priority given to them by the first-year students of social sciences, to end with obtaining the overall satisfaction index[1].

Applied procedures:

-The Study Approach

This study relied on the descriptive analytical approach of the field study data that singled out first-year students as a common trunk of social sciences at the University of Oran 2, Mohamed bin Ahmed, of both sexes, male and female, were singled out. On the way to achieve the objectives of the study, a questionnaire was used, which included a set of variables directly related to the objectives of the study.

-Study tool and sample:

A direct questionnaire was arranged to collect data from first-year social sciences students. The study sample included 150 male and female students who use the Moodle platform for distance education, noting that the number of students enrolled in the first year of social sciences was within the year 2022-2023 estimated at 1179 students. The study sample was chosen Intentionally.

The form included 14 questions, distributed on three axes according to the three systems of the Moodle platform. These questions aim to evaluate satisfaction criteria (rating from 1 to 10) for some elements of distance education via Moodle platform (expected goals, activities that help learning, judging the extent of students' learning). The student evaluates these activities or elements by giving them points from 1 to 10 according to priority and importance, aiming to shed light on the degree of faculty students' satisfaction and the role that the Moodle platform plays in evaluating the educational process with all its elements. In addition to 6 how-to questions that include students' attitudes about education. Remotely via the Moodle platform, use the *program Excel and Sphinx to analyze data and calculate the satisfaction index.*

Definition of study terms

- ***Distance Learning (E-learning)***

Distance education is a method of teaching students online. Where lectures and assignments are sent online, and students attend their lectures from home, instead of the classroom.

We can divide distance education into two basic categories: synchronous education and asynchronous education. The difference between these two categories must be understood, as the various forms of distance education fall within one of them. Synchronous education refers to distance education methods in which the educational material is delivered to students at the same time, as it requires direct contact between students and teachers. Technologies such as live conferencing are used to achieve this.

As for asynchronous learning, students receive a set of study materials set by weekly deadlines, allowing them the freedom to study and learn at their own pace (self-paced learning). Not only that, this category of distance education provides students with greater opportunities to interact with the study material and with their colleagues because they can access the study material permanently and whenever they want and interact with it through online chats, short exams, and comments. Thus, both students and teachers benefit from the flexibility of asynchronous learning, which allows them to prepare and consume educational content to suit their free time and schedules.

[1] Satisfaction index: The level of satisfaction is assessed by a scale of 1 to 10 (parameter established on the rating), thanks to the weighting system; If the score obtained is higher than 7 it means that the students are satisfied with the distance learning system. Satisfaction surveys consider that individuals are satisfied from an overall score equal to or greater than 7.

There is another definition of distance education: "It is a part derived from electronic education. In both cases, the learner receives information from a place far from the teacher, and when we talk about e-learning, it is not necessary to talk about immediate, synchronous education. Rather, e-learning may be asynchronous, as education The default is to learn what is useful from distant locations that are not limited by space or time, through the Internet and technologies" (Hussein Faraj, 2005, p. 19).

-Hybrid education

Hybrid education is a model for designing a course in which part of the time is allocated to the usual face-to-face education in the classroom and part of the time is allocated to e-learning. We refer here to the education system adopted at the Algerian university since the Corona pandemic until the present day, where the subjects are taught. The basic and methodological courses are delivered in person and are also offered remotely via electronic educational platforms, and digital learning platforms, and for the remaining subjects, they are taught via the Moodle learning platform. The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research has asked university administrators to activate the Moodle platform for teaching discovery units remotely following Resolution No. 1242 on September 22, 2022, as it was decided to generalize teaching discovery units exclusively through the distance education mode, starting from the academic year 2022-2023. The Ministry has tightened the necessity of putting the Moodle platform into service in all universities to enable all the teachers who teach discovery modules to have their accounts on the platform and invite them to follow the training that allows them to use the platform and control it, and enable the students to create institutional email addresses.

-Moodle platform

The Moodle platform is one of the most and easiest open-source education platforms on the Internet, and it is guaranteed or safe since it can only be used by registered students. This platform allows the exchange of information between geographically dispersed users, thanks to synchronous communication mechanisms (chat) and asynchronous (discussion forums). Students can also be evaluated through this platform through survey tests, without forgetting its free nature. (Jamal. Abu Bakr. 2021. pg. 15.16)

The Results of the Study

1- Total satisfaction index

The overall satisfaction with distance education was evaluated via the Moodle platform for its various systems by first-year students in the common field of social sciences, and this indicator was estimated at 7.61, as this value is considered somewhat acceptable. In such research, if the satisfaction index exceeds 7, this is evidence of satisfaction. This method enables measuring satisfaction levels from several aspects related to distance education variables. After that, another question was asked to measure the importance of each of these aspects, later the importance was dropped on satisfaction. the advantage of this method is that it is more useful from a strategic point of view aiming to obtain a balanced and fair level of satisfaction. Knowing the level of satisfaction and the importance of all aspects related to distance education using the Moodle platform gives an overall picture of the performance provided and helps decision-makers in setting priorities that will raise performance levels in the future.

Criteria	Average evaluation score	Average Importance Rating	weight	Overall satisfaction index OSI
the possibility of access to distance learning	*5,33*	*7,29*	*0,103*	*0,55105*
general information about the course	*5,71*	*7,49*	*0,105*	*0,59955*
Ease of use of the platform for distance learning	*5,33*	*7,33*	*0,103*	*0,54899*
using the platform to view the course	*5,77*	*7,19*	*0,101*	*0,58277*
The format of the conference on the platform	*6,17*	*7,16*	*0,101*	*0,62317*
The content of the course on the platform	*6,87*	*7,83*	*0,11*	*0,7557*
the resources used (videos, links, images...)	*5,76*	*7,04*	*0,099*	*0,57024*
Activities on the platform	*4,73*	*6,67*	*0,094*	*0,44462*
exams on the platform (MCQ, CCM ..... chat)	*4,04*	*6,14*	*0,867*	*0,350268*
Homework on the platform	*4,33*	*6,32*	*0,089*	*0,38537*
Achieving the objectives of the conference	*5,57*	*7,23*	*0,102*	*0,56814*
Understanding the conference	*5,68*	*7,29*	*0,103*	*0,58504*
ease of communication between teacher and student	*7,94*	*6,97*	*0,098*	*0,46452*
Downloading files	*5,83*	*7,11*	*0,1*	*0,583*
Overall satisfaction index	*7,612*			

Table 1: Distribution of sample members according to students' evaluation

2-Evaluating the satisfaction index

All the variables that are related to the entry system are the expected goals of knowledge and performative knowledge at the end of the lesson learned. The basic functionality that allows him/her to learn the lesson, the lesson plan and the ease of accessing the platform were rated from 5.30 to 5.70.
As for the learning system, which includes variables that are related to the content of the lesson, the form of the lesson placed on the platform by the teaching staff was evaluated between 6 and above, as for the percentage of educational activities, which is everything related to tests, meals, and managing educational activities, including direct contact or virtual halls, the average did not exceed more than 5.

As for the exit system, which was allocated to evaluate the educational process concerning understanding the lesson and downloading it, it was appreciated more than 5.50 and above. For the communication between the teacher and the learner for activities and tests, the average was estimated at only 4.75.

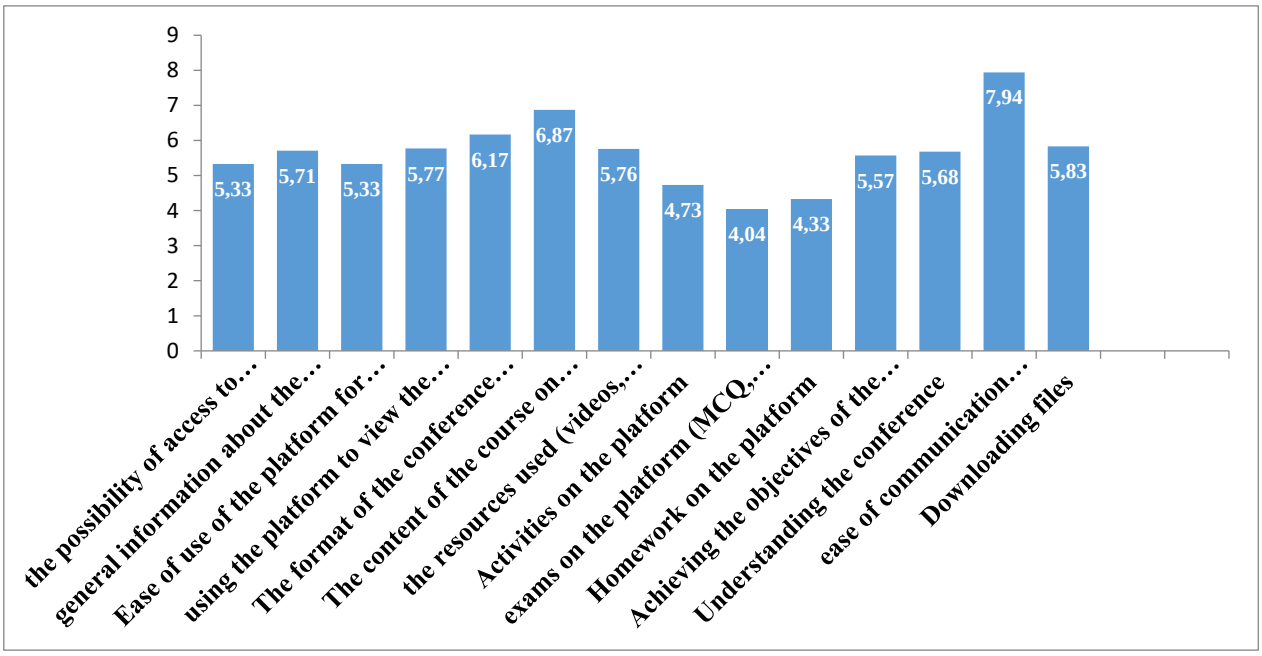

Figure 1: Distribution of the sample according to the level of students' satisfaction with the distance education platform

3-A comparison between the points of satisfaction criteria and the points that are given according to priority and importance

when the comparison between the satisfaction criteria points and the points that were given according to priority and importance on the one hand, we note that all the important points were rated high by the students compared to the satisfaction points, and all the points had an average rating between 7 and 7.50, and it was less than 7 in the education system, especially the variables related to tests and activities.

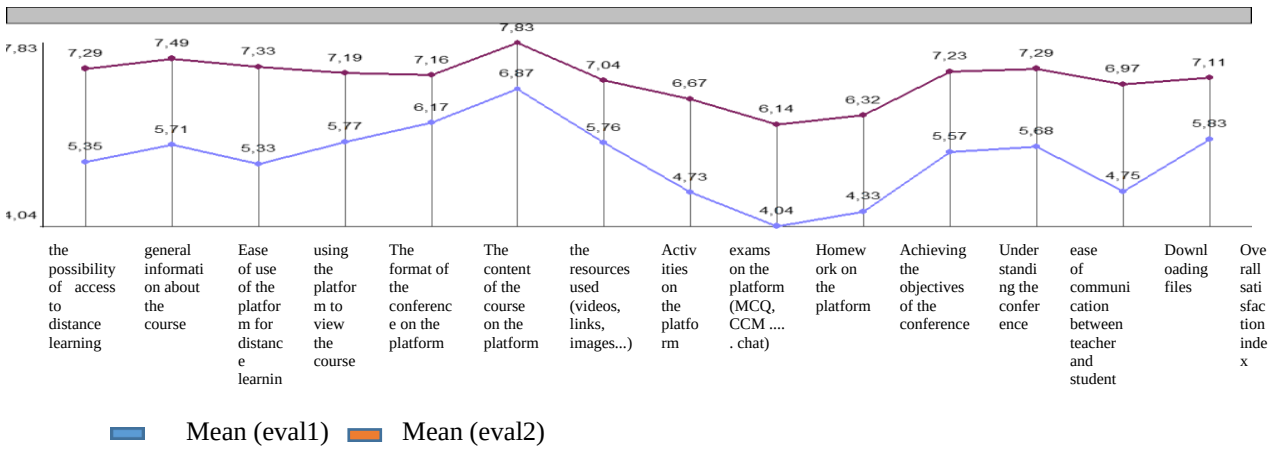

Figure 2: Distribution of the sample according to the criteria of satisfaction and evaluation of students for priority and importance

4. Importance and performance map

by linking the points of importance and the points of satisfaction evaluation, it is possible to obtain a map of importance and performance, as applying the map allows identifying all the variables that have importance in distance education, as well as the variables that have low performance. this allows us to identify the reasons why students do not use the distance education platform, as well as the problems they face when accessing this platform.

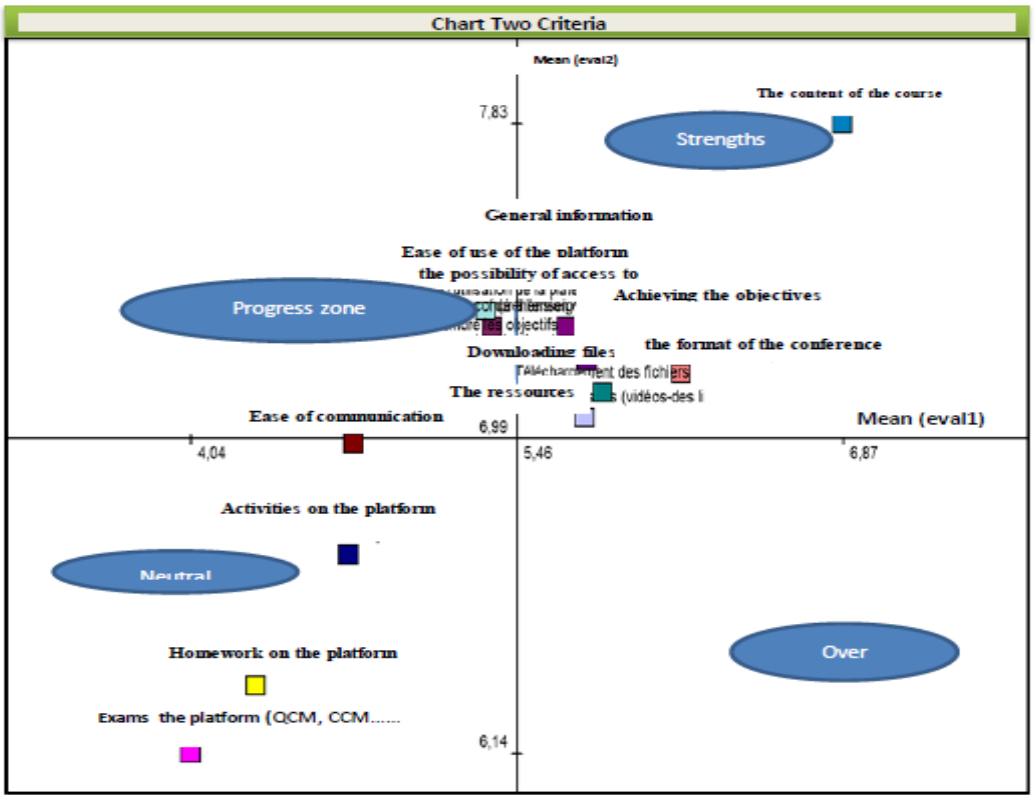

Figure 3: Importance and performance map according to students' evaluation of distance learning

Through the map (Chart 3) The following can be concluded:

Distance education is via the Moodle platform bringing together the evaluation points of the various changes and importance that gave students a good and positive impression of the learning system, especially the lesson content that is placed on the platform in different ways, and to general information about the lesson.

From the side supreme on the left side of the map, you can notice the points which first-year students in social sciences believe that improvement should be implicit, which is the ease of the use of the platform and the ease of communication and interaction with the faculty, that is, everything related to verbal and non-verbal communication. In addition, on the left of the map at the bottom are all the variables that came

in the neutral variables that were not given attention by the students of the Faculty of Social Sciences, namely activities, tests, electronic duties and everything related to virtual interaction.

5- students' opinions and attitudes about distance education

the questionnaire of the study included a set of questions about students' opinions and attitudes toward basic elements related to distance education, which were: the communication process between the teacher and the student, the student's adaptation to the new system of education, self-education...etc.

5.1-Difficulty communicating between the student and the teachers in the light of the spread of digitization similar to the traditional system

Through the results of the descriptive analysis of the question of the difficulty of communication between the student and the teacher with the spread of digitization and its comparison with the traditional system that is, in-person education stated more than two-thirds of the sample (67%) that they have difficulties in direct communication with the teacher.

Communication and teaching	Nbre	%
No response	1	0,7
Yes	101	67,3
No	49	32,0
Total Obs	150	100

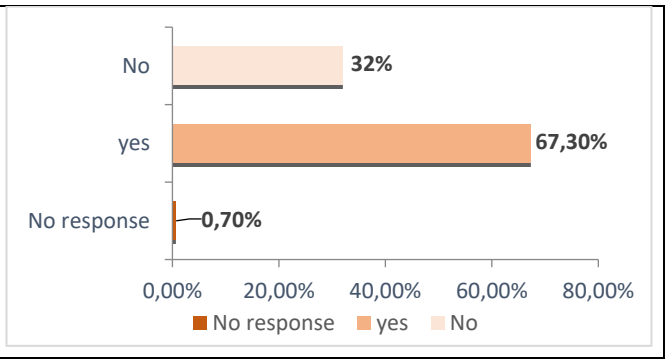

TABLE 2: Students' opinions about the process of communicating with the teacher

5.2-Adapting to the new system of distance education

Distance learning system	Nbre	%
No response	1	0,7
Yes	68	45,3
No	81	54,0
Total Obs	150	100

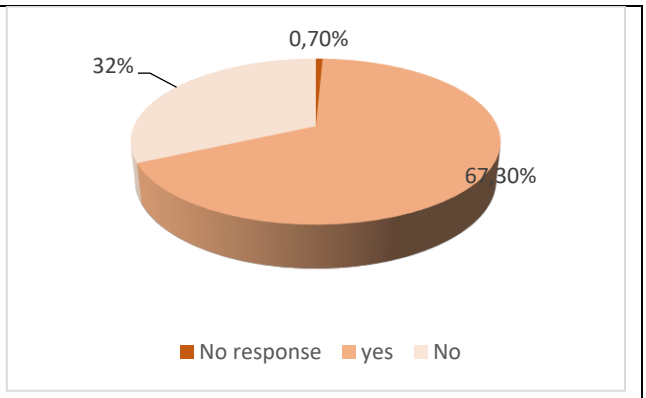

TABLE 3 : Students' opinions aboutthe new system of distance education

The results of the study showed that less than half of the sample that is 45.3% only they could adapt to the new system for education (teaching remotely), while the rest of the sample, despite their use of the platform, did not adapt to the new education system.

5.3 The development of self-education in the context of the spread of digitization:

Improving self-education	Nbre	%
No response	1	0,7
Yes	86	57,3
No	63	42,,0
Total Obs	150	100

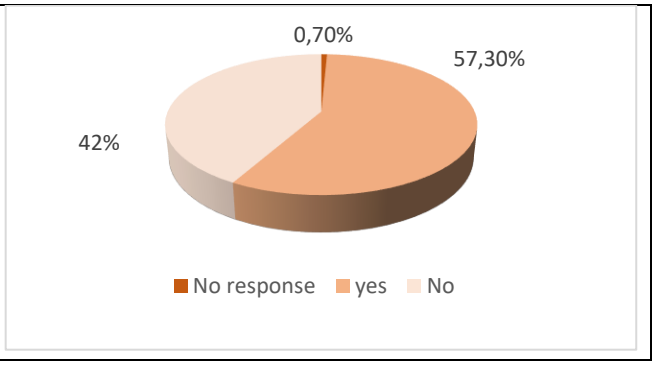

Table 4: Students' opinions about the development of self-education in the context of the spread of digitization

557% of the students surveyed stated that self-education has developed and this corresponds to the most important advantages of distance education.

5.4- Dispensing with in-person lessons while there are lessons via the platform:

Replace face-to-face classes	Nbre	%
No response	1	0,7
Yes	54	36,0
No	95	63,3
Total Obs	150	100

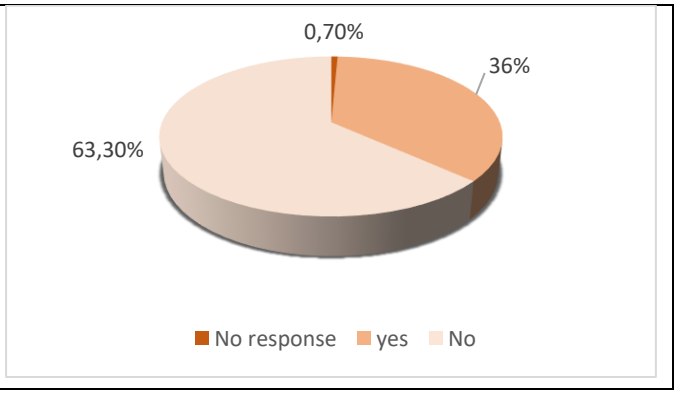

Table 5: Students' opinions about dispensing with in-person lessons while there are lessons via the platform

In the transformations taking place in the higher education sector, especially the emergence and spread of digital platforms and the shift from traditional education to e-learning, more than half of the sample was distracted from their direction and preference for in-person education over distance education, with an estimated 63.3%.

6-Discussion and the findings of the study:

The Corona pandemic prompted Algeria to develop distance education. The Algerian University has become very important for this type of education due to the shortage of pedagogical structures and framing on the one hand, and further in order to improve and develop the quality of composition. Since 2020, the Ministry of Higher Education has emphasized this. The coronavirus crisis forced the Algerian university to change its traditional educational system with another system based on modern technology and more particularly on e-learning platforms., and for the latter has positive aspects, including enhancing the student's self-responsibility in self-discipline and expanding sources of knowledge. Distance education was implemented via the Moodle platform in all Algerian universities according to a ministerial decision, the content of which was as follows:: "In order to bring harmony to the technological structures used, their means and pedagogical techniques, the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research suggests adopting a unified digital space, represented by the Moodle platform, in the process of designing your online supports and putting them into service. (Ministry of higher education and scientific research ...)

The Moodle platform enables the teacher to provide lessons and exams to his/her students in different electronic formats. Therefore, teachers and students can use this platform through a special website for each university. They can communicate with each other even outside of work or study hours.

Regarding the evaluation of the Moodle platform by students of the College of Social Sciences at the University of Oran 2 for its various systems, the study showed that the students' evaluation was limited to the importance of the lesson content, although it is practical distance education via the Moodle platform which Includes all elements of the curriculum: objectives, content, methods, and activities and calendar, in the sense that the lessons provided through the Moodle platform attach great importance to the content without paying attention or taking into account the importance of the rest of the elements, which cannot be dispensed with, regardless of the quality of the taught material, such as the method of presenting the lesson, its complementary activities, and evaluation tests. This confirms the findings of the study of the two researchers Sharp Polonio And Karima (2020).In the distance education system, the teacher's task should not be limited to presenting the lesson via... Electronic media is different, but the evaluation stage is considered the most important thing in order to know whether the objectives set out in the lesson have been reached and thus learning has been achieved. Moreover, this fact can be achieved through questions related to content, form, drawings, summaries, etc., This method may enable the teacher to be aware of some cognitive discrepancies in receiving the lesson as well as the extent of benefit from the educational method used.

Therefore, distance education via the Moodle platform requires a set of technical rules that are useful to improve work and achieve good performance. Moreover, Increasing the quality of university education. Through the results reached, it is necessary to adapt the training programs for the teaching staff and even for the students in activating the feature of communication and virtual interaction (Verbal and non-verbal communication) by the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Oran 2 As stated in a study by the researcher Naima Ould Ben Ali and Lamia Boukarchi (2021). Furthermore, distance education in the faculty of Languages at the University of Bejaia was limited to putting the lesson on the platform without interaction between the teacher and the students, Out of 28 teachers, only 10 teachers interacted with the learners. The rest stated that the interaction takes place in my presence. Note that the university was pursuing hybrid teaching. It was stated in the same study that: Among the demands raised by the learners

is to interact online with the teacher and answer questions that are asked either in forums or chat workshops., added to Monitoring their work remotely.

Hence, we can conclude that distance education puts the teacher in a state of continuous learning, as it forces him/her to train and master the learning process and technical control of all modern educational means, and this means that he/she is always obliged to develop and train his skills similar to the traditional process, which depends on a unified model that may last for years or decades and does not change unless an amendment changes in the study program. Distance education depends on technology and its modern means, where the learner has the primary role in research, learning and information exchange, while in traditional education the teacher is considered the main carrier and source of knowledge and thus indoctrination. Therefore, students of the Faculty of Social Sciences prefer traditional education (63%). Thus, it can be concluded that e-learning does not eliminate the role of the teacher, but changes and supports him and allows him to help the learner at any time.

Conclusion

Such evaluative studies, which concern the university in particular, With the adoption of a new educational system based on technology must be activated in all universities through different periods. Hence, it must affect all the active groups in it, including administrators, teachers and learners, in order to reach the basic objectives of this process and give an overall picture of this new system in terms of the provided performance, and also helps decision-makers in improving performance and quality, as well as correcting all shortcomings and raising the level of performance soon.

Among the recommendations we reached in this study, the following can be mentioned:

For the success of distance education, all material and human capabilities must be provided for the benefit of students and teachers.

- Providing individuals with the skills that qualify them to use technology
- Benefit from experiences that master distance education
- From an engineering point of view, it is necessary to design universities that are compatible with distance education through the establishment of qualified university facilities that are available on the Internet with a stream that allows the success of the distance education process, computers and rooms that allow chat.

In addition, one of the key areas of improvement is related to progress in the design of lectures and progress in their planning and organisation. Furthermore, to improve the quality of distance teaching/learning, several aspects should be noted. Therefore, the planning and organisation of the process should be flexible and efficient, university lecturers should be encouraged to be more creative, and learning should be more advanced with innovative teaching methods and must be provided with technical assistance.

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