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The Impact of Online Learning on Students' Academic Achievement: The Case of First year Master Students at SALHI Ahmed University Center of Naama

Dissertation submitted to the department of English as a partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of 'Master' in Linguistics

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Dedications

*I dedicate my work to my precious father Ahmad. May he rest in peace
and paradise*

*To my mom for her unconditional love, for her prayers, encouragements
and for being such a source of motivation for me. Thank you for
everything you have done and continue to do for my happiness*

To Romaiissa and Ahmad Haroune

To my coach AbdelKarim KEBIR and all my team ELWIDAD

This work is dedicated to:

*My beloved mother for her endless love, support, encouragement and
patience.*

My father, who has always been a constant source of support.

*My treasured brothers and sister: Ilyas and Zakaria, chemse-eddine and
Ghoufran Loujayn.*

My beloved family.

All my friends

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Abstract

The current study set out to highlight the main issues that EFL students face in ensuring successful implementation of online learning. To accomplish this, an exploratory case study research was conducted. The researchers collected data regarding learners' academic performance and their personal skills in addition to the major factors that affect their attitudes towards online learning. In fact, a mixed method approach was employed in which a questionnaire was addressed to First year Master students in the Department of English at the Center University Salhi Ahmed, Naama. Additionally, a structured interview was designed to EFL teachers who taught online courses during the academic year 2022/2023 in the Department of English at the Center University Salhi Ahmed, Naama. As far as the online modules are concerned. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses were done to analyze data. The results revealed that online learning did not help too much students to enhance their academic performance and their personal skills in terms of self-evolution, problem solving and engagement due to many reasons including lack of training, lack of video instructions and technical problems. Accordingly, some recommendations are suggested as remedies to various problems that learners and teachers face in online learning and teaching.

Key words: Covid 19, E-learning, higher education, training.

Table of Contents

Dedications.....	I
Acknowledgements.....	II
Abstract.....	III
Table of Contents.....	IV
List of Bar-Graphs, Tables and Figures.....	VII
List of Pie-Charts.....	VIII
List Abbreviations.....	IX
General Introduction.....	1

Chapter One: Literature Review

1.1. Introduction.....	4
1.2. The Educational System in Algeria.....	4
1.2.1. Primary Education.....	4
1.2.2. Middle Education.....	4
1.2.3. Secondary Education.....	4
1.2.4. Higher Education.....	5
1.3. The History of Distance Learning.....	5
1.4. The Distance Learning in Higher Education.....	6
1.5. An Overview of E-learning Platform.....	7
1.6. Types of E-learning.....	9
1.6.1. Synchronous / Simultaneous/ Direct Electronic Learning.....	9
1.6.2. A synchronous or an Indirect E-learning.....	9
1.7. Moodle as an Online Management Learning System for E-learning.....	9
1.8. Benefits of Online Learning.....	11

1.8.1. Flexibility and Convenience	11
1.8.2. Personalized Learning Experience.....	11
1.8.3. Engagement and Interaction	12
1.8.4. Self-Discipline and Motivation.....	12
1.8.5. Access to a Wide Range of Resources and Courses.....	12
1.8.6. Cost-Effective Learning	13
1.8.7. Improved Technical Skills.....	13
1.9. Disadvantages of Online Learning	13
1.10. Conclusion	14

Chapter Two: Research methodology and Data Analysis

2.1. Introduction	16
2.2. Research Design	16
2.3. The Case Study	16
2.4. Research Approach	18
2.5. Sampling Population	20
2.6. Research Participant.....	21
2.7. Research Instruments	22
2.7.1. Questionnaire.....	22
2.7.1.1. Students' Questionnaire	23
2.7.1.2. Formatting the Questionnaire	23
2.7.2. Interview.....	25
2.7.2.1. Teachers' interview.....	25
2.8. Data Analysis and Discussion	26
2.8.1. The Learners' Questionnaire Results.....	26
2.8.2. The Teachers' Interview Results	41
2.9. Discussions	45

2.10. Recommendations	47
2.10.1. Online Learning Leads to Autonomous Learning	49
2.11. Conclusion	50
General Conclusion	51
References	54
Appendix ‘A’: Students’ Questionnaire	57
Appendix ‘B’: Teachers’ Interview	61
Summary	62

List of Bar-Graphs, Tables and Figures

Bar-Graph 2.1. Students' Use of Online Courses after Covid-19.....	29
Bar-Graph 2.2. Students' Preferred Way of Learning.....	30
Bar-Graph 2.3. The Drawbacks of Online Learning	33
Bar-Graph 2.4. The Impact of Online Learning on Classmates and Teachers Interaction	34
Bar-Graph 2.5. The Impact of Technical Challenges on Academic Performance	36
Bar-Graph 2.6. The Benefits of using Moodle Platform	38
Table 2.1. Goals of Exploratory, Descriptive and Explanatory research	18
Table 2.2. Students' Age	27
Table 2.3. The impact of Online learning on Teamwork, Communication, and Time Management Abilities	31
Table 2.4. Examining The Impact of Online Learning on Academic Achievement.	31
Figure 1.1. Evolution of E-learning System.....	06
Figure 1.2. Distance Education Through Three Successive Generations.....	07

List of Pie-Charts

Pie-chart 2.1. Students' Gender	27
Pie-chart 2.2. Students' Use of online courses	28
Pie-chart 2.3. Students' Use of E-learning Platform before Covid-19	28
Pie-chart 2.4. Students Opinion about the Benefits of Online Learning	32
Pie-chart 2.5. The Challenges while taking Online Courses	33
Pie-chart 2.6. The Effect of Online Learning on Grades' Positive or Negative	35
Pie-chart 2.7. The Impact of Online Platforms on Exam Preparation and Assignment Completion.....	36
Pie-chart 2.8. The Impact of Online Learning on Understanding and Retaining Course Material	38
Pie-chart 2.9. Evaluating Support Resources in Online Learning Versus In-person Classes	39
Pie-chart 2.10. The Impact of Online Learning on Perceptions of Educations Value and Importance.....	40

List of Abbreviations

CD-ROM: Compact Disc Read-Only Memory.

COVID-19: Corona Virus Disease 2019.

DE: Distance Education.

E-learning: Electronic learning.

EFL: English as Foreign Language.

ICTs': Information and Communication Technologies.

LM: Learner Management system.

LMS: Learning Management System.

MOODLE: Modular Objective-Oriented Dynamic Learning Environment.

MOOCs: Massive Open Online Courses.

VLE: Virtual Learning Environment.

General introduction

General introduction

The covid-19 pandemic changed everyone's way of life and had an impact on the educational fields. The goal of the approach was to convert face-to-face instruction to online learning according to the Algerian Ministry of Higher Education. In order to adopt online teaching and learning, universities started to utilize an e-learning platform that enables the students to continue their studies and this condition compels students and teachers to be proficient in technology.

By the end of covid-19, the world health organization declared the end of the Corona virus crisis and therefore all educational institutions, including schools and universities were once more open and the traditional method is again used in teaching/learning. Interestingly, e-learning shot up to be in the second place. Even though e-learning was utilized in 2020, it is being used today. The ministry of higher education has introduced a new concept in the world of education namely 'Module Transversal', i.e. teachers started to teach some modules online such as: Teaching Methodologies and Communication, Ethics and Conduct in Universities, Human and Social Science etc. This represented a significant shift in the educational landscape.

While online learning and direct access to information through technology are more advantageous for students in terms of knowledge or information acquisition, learning has migrated away from traditional face-to-face instruction toward online learning. An efficient learning environment can be found in the virtual world, which gives users access to knowledge acquired via experience, e-learning can address many of the problems that students have when learning in a traditional setting because it encourages them to attend classes for a variety of reasons, makes it much simpler for them to work independently and makes it much easier for them to access lectures. However, this kind of teaching and learning may affect both teachers and learners negatively.

Thus, the purpose of this study project is to identify the challenges that learners face when using the e-learning platform and how those challenges affect their performance. As a result, the following questions are addressed by the researchers:

1. Does online teaching make a significant improvement in students' academic performance and their personal skills?
2. What is the major factor that affects students' attitudes towards online learning?

The following hypotheses were developed in response to the research questions:

- a) Online learning helps students to enhance their academic performance and their personal skills in terms of self-evolution, problem solving and engagement.
- b) The lack of video instruction, computer skills has a direct link to students' negative attitude.

An exploratory case study with first-year Master students is conducted to determine the validity of these hypotheses. The study is based on two data-collection tools: a questionnaire addressed to students and a structured interview for teachers at the Center University of Salhi Ahmed, Naama, Algeria.

As far as the organization of the study is concerned, this study is divided into two chapters. The first chapter gives an overview of the educational system in Algeria. Definitions of the distance learning, its types and its benefits were all presented. The second chapter provides a discussion of the methodology considerations used to carry out the field investigation. Thus, it provides information about research design, the population, research instruments, and research approach. This chapter also serves as a form for data analysis and interpretations. The current study ends with practical recommendations that seek to make the online learning a successful experience.

Chapter One

Literature Review

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1.1. Introduction	5
1.2. The Educational System in Algeria	5
1.2.1. Primary Education	5
1.2.2. Middle Education	5
1.2.3. Secondary Education	6
1.2.4. Higher Education.....	6
1.3. The History of Distance Learning	6
1.4. The Distance Learning in Higher Education.....	8
1.5. An Overview of E-learning Platform.....	9
1.6. Types of E-learning	10
1.6.1. Synchronous / Simultaneous/ Direct Electronic Learning	10
1.6.2. A synchronous or an Indirect E-learning.....	11
1.7. Moodle as an Online Management Learning System for E-learning	11
1.8. Benefits of Online Learning	12
1.8.1. Flexibility and Convenience	13
1.8.2. Personalized Learning Experience	13
1.8.3. Engagement and Interaction.....	13
1.8.4. Self-Discipline and Motivation	13
1.8.5. Access to a Wide Range of Resources and Courses	13
1.8.6. Cost-Effective Learning.....	14
1.8.7. Improved Technical Skills	14
1.9. Disadvantages of Online Learning	14
1.10. Conclusion	14

1.1. Introduction

Online learning has become increasingly popular in recent years, especially with the advent of the covid-19 pandemic. This mode of education is convenient and flexible, allowing students to learn at their own pace and their own schedule, without having to worry about attending classes at specific times. In view of that, chapter one defines the online learning. Then, it offers a comprehensive historical overview of online learning. The structure of the educational system in Algeria is introduced with the definition of the distance learning in higher education. Also, an overview about E-learning platform and MOODLE as a tool utilized by university is provided. The chapter ends with disadvantages of online learning.

1.2. The Educational System in Algeria

The educational system in Algeria follows a centralized approach and it is overseen by the Ministry of National Education. The system that is divided into three cycles:

1.2.1. Primary Education

This cycle lasts for five years and it is compulsory for all children aged between 6 and 11 years old. The curriculum includes Arabic, French, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Islamic education and Physical education and English for the third year of primary school

1.2.2. Middle Education

This phase lasts for four years. It is designed for pupils aged between 12 and 15 years old. The curriculum includes Arabic, French, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Islamic education, Physical education, and English.

1.2.3. Secondary Education

This cycle lasts for four years. It is designed for students aged between 16 and 19 years old. Pupils can choose between two streams: the general stream or the technical stream. The general stream is further divided into four areas: Science,

Mathematics, Literature, and Social sciences. The technical stream offers vocational training in fields such as Electronics, Mechanics, and Agriculture.

At the end of each cycle, students must pass an exam to progress to the next level. The most important exam is the Baccalaureate exam, which is taken at the end of secondary education. The Baccalaureate exam is a high-stakes exam, and success in this exam is a prerequisite for university admission. Overall, the education system in Algeria faces many challenges, including limited resources, a shortage of qualified teachers, and high dropout rates. The government has taken steps to address these issues, but more needs to be done to ensure that all children have access to quality education.

1.2.4. Higher Education

Algeria has over 100 universities and higher education institutions, with enrollment of more than 1.5 million students. Admission to higher education institutions is based on competitive entrance exams, and students must have completed their secondary education to be eligible. Algeria faces several challenges in its higher education system, including inadequate funding, lack of resources, overcrowded classrooms, teacher shortages, and low levels of student achievement. The government is working to address these issues and improve the quality of education in the country.

1.3. The History of Distance Learning

Before defining online learning, it is worth mentioning that there are some differences among the following concepts: distance learning, e-learning and online learning even though they seem to be similar. There are similarities and differences among them and the term distance learning is the umbrella term that combines the other terms. So, online learning is just one type of “distance learning” and it is the most popular form of distance education today. It means that education takes place over the Internet and it is often referred to as “E-learning” among other terms (Merine, 2023)

The history of distance learning can be traced back to the early days of the internet, when universities and corporations began experimenting with this type of learning through computer-based courses. Here are some key milestones in the history of distance learning:

- ❖ **1960s:** The first computer-based training programs are developed, primarily for corporate training purposes.
- ❖ **1980s:** The emergence of personal computers and the internet lead to the development of teleconferencing systems and the creation of the first online courses.
- ❖ **1990s:** The World Wide Web is introduced and universities begin offering online courses.
- ❖ **2000s:** Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) gain popularity, and universities increasingly integrate online learning into their curriculums.
- ❖ **2010s:** Online learning platforms like Coursera, edX, and Udemy become mainstream, and virtual reality technologies are used to enhance online. (Kyriaki ,2020) Today, online learning has become an integral part of education, with millions of students around the world taking online courses and degree programs.

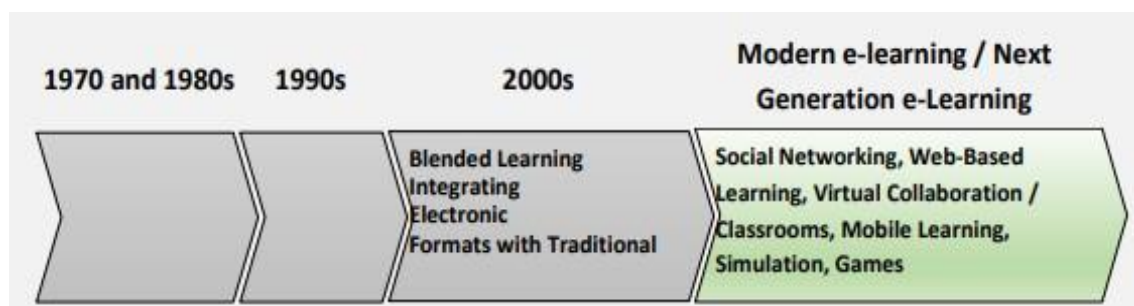


Figure 1.1. Evolution of E-learning System (Adopted from Alshaher, 2013: 194)

1.4. The Distance Learning in Higher Education

Distance education has existed for ages. It sets its first steps in Britain by Pitman (1840) who started teaching his learners via correspondence through sending courses by posts and received his learners' homework's. In other words, it is the delivery of knowledge in terms of course books, printed papers and submitted written

works. “*This formal education is used to open doors and opportunities for the people who want to study but they are unable to attend the traditional schools*” (Papadopoulou,2020). In fact, the concepts of distance education and distance learning are used as synonyms in the field of education in terms of distance in time and space between the teacher and the student (White, 2009).

Distance education (DE) is different from distance learning. The former is based on printed –based materials as text books, courses and assignments with the physically separation of the learners and the teachers. However, distance learning is learning that is focused on the use of technologies, electronic means and the access to the internet as well as the physical separation of both, the teachers and the learners but connected virtually through the internet, either in a delayed time or the learning process can be accessed at any time (asynchronous). Distance education has developed through different stages as it is demonstrated in the following figure:



Figure 1.2: Distance Education through three Successive Generations (White, 2009:13).

Starting teaching and learning through sending courses and activities to the learners by posts and e-mails shifting to images and sounds of audiovisual materials (multimedia) and integrating teaching and learning in television and radio. Moreover, Idir& Isekounen (2018) defines that it has more and more improved thanks to the progress and the development of ICTs’ as well as the variation of technological devices (mobiles, laptops, tablets, data projector, and son). Accordingly, Aladwan (2018) indicate to “*based on these tools related to networks, both, the teachers and the students may communicate, interact, assign and receive the delivered courses despite the geographical distance and time constraints*”.

1.5. An overview of e-learning Platform

Distance learning encompasses different forms: Open learning, Blended learning, Flexible learning, Computer-Based learning and e-learning as well. E-

learning is defined as” *learning that takes place using technology such as the internet, CD-ROMs and portable devices like mobile phones or MP3 players*” (Dudenry & Hockley,2007:136) .

In other words, E-learning platform includes various names which are all related to virtual learning together with the connection of the Internet. It refers to a virtual classroom, a virtual learning environment (VLE), or, learner management system (LM). The learner in this virtual atmosphere is no longer a receiver of an ample knowledge such as courses, video lectures and documents by his teacher only, but he may access to it by himself through the use of the Internet as well as he may communicate and interact in such virtual classroom by doing his tasks, answering to quizzes, tests or questionnaires. *“He can turn back to the content courses whenever he desires to, because they are stored”* (Dudenry & Hockley, 2007:137).

Moreover, E-learning platform is defined as an integration of online services such as information, tools, resources, and course content management, registration, group creating and courses to be provided to the participants as teachers, trainers and learners as well as the administration. In the same context, White (2009) has named online learning as ‘Cyber schools’ or ‘virtual language schools’.

Therefore, she has pointed out that learners use online learning not only to access to information but rather to engage in active learning with other participants by collaborating, communicating, and interacting with them. She claims that learning possibilities can be found online.

1.6. The Types of E-learning

There are two types of e-learning:

1.6.1. Synchronous / Simultaneous/ direct electronic learning

Kaddeche (2021) defines this type. He states that:

This type of learning refers to the virtual classes and environment where the lectures, discussions, research topics and courses are exchanged directly, in a real time between the lecturer and the students through the use of modern communication technologies such as video conferences, real chats, and interactive webinars. It is based on the use of internet network. From this type of electronic learning, the student does not only receive knowledge but he may also interact, participate and communicate in a direct way and online together with his teacher indifferent places, as well as he may receive an immediate feedback.

1.6.2. Asynchronous or an indirect e-learning

Abed (2018) define asynchronous or an indirect e-learning as:

It is a type of e- learning that occurs in different time and place. It refers to an indirect learning in which both the students and the teachers may communicate in a delayed time and different places through the use of emails and forum discussions, or any other social media. In this type of e-learning, the student may return to his courses whenever he wants since it is available to him as well as he has time to reflect about his activities and assignments.

1.7. Moodle as an Online Management Learning System for E-learning

The covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of e-learning across the globe. As more schools and universities turn to online learning as a way to keep students safe, Moodle and other e-learning platforms will continue to play a critical role in education. For instance, the Centre University of Naama has implemented Moodle as its primary learning management system. This has allowed students and teachers to access course materials and communicate with each other from anywhere

with an internet connection. According to a study by E-Learning Industry, Moodle is the second most popular learning management system (LMS) in the world, with over 100 million users in 232 countries. This popularity can be attributed to the platform's flexibility, scalability, and ease of use.

One of the main advantages of using Moodle is that it promotes students' engagement and collaboration. Students can participate in online discussions, work together on group projects, and receive feedback from their peers. Another advantage of Moodle is that it allows flexible learning. Students can access course materials and complete assignments at their own pace, which is especially beneficial for those who have other commitments such as work or family responsibilities. *“Moodle can be effective in promoting learner autonomy as well as in supporting collaboration and learner-centered learning environment”* (Jeong, 2017: 48).

Despite its many benefits, MOODLE also presents some challenges for educators and students alike. One of the biggest challenges is ensuring that students stay motivated and engaged in the online learning environment. Without face-to-face interaction and the accountability of a physical classroom, it can be easy for students to fall behind or lose interest, there are also some challenges associated with implementing it. One of the main challenges is ensuring that all students have access to the technology needed to use the platform effectively. Another one is training teachers and students on how to use Moodle. This can be time-consuming and requires a significant investment of resources.

Actually, Moodle is a powerful and flexible platform that offers a range of benefits and challenges for both educators and learners. Its customizable features, collaborative tools, and assessment options make it an ideal choice for online and blended learning environments. As the world continues to shift towards digital learning, the university is committed to addressing these challenges and continuing to improve the platform for the benefit of its students and faculty. Also Moodle provides a reliable and secure platform for delivering high-quality education that meets the needs of 21st-century learners. All in all, as one educator puts it, “Moodle is not just a tool, it's a way of teaching”.

1.8. Benefits Online Learning

The shift towards online learning has led to several benefits as it is stated by Prince (2007) “*Online learning can be more effective than traditional classroom learning. The flexibility, convenience, and personalized learning experiences that online education offers can help students to achieve better academic results.*” Actually, online learning can be an effective and valuable way for individuals to pursue their education and career goals. Its adaptation, engagement, and access to resources make it a compelling option for many learners. In this regard, (Horn, 2015) declares that online education has been proved to boost student involvement, motivation, and success.

1.8.1. Flexibility and Convenience:

One of the biggest advantages of online learning is its flexibility and convenience. Students can access course materials and lectures at any time and from anywhere with an internet connection. This allows for a more personalized learning experience. Additionally, online learning eliminates the need for commuting to a physical classroom, which can save time and money.

Online learning provides accessibility and adaptability that traditional classroom learning cannot match; also it allows students to learn at their own pace and in their own time. This can help them to better absorb the material and achieve better results. Additionally, online learning can provide students with access to a wide range of resources and learning materials that they may not have otherwise. (Jingping, 2022:34).

1.8.2. Engagement and Interaction

Despite the lack of face-to-face interaction, online learning can still be engaging and interactive. Many online courses incorporate multimedia elements such as videos, animations, and interactive quizzes to keep students engaged and interested. Furthermore, online discussion forums and virtual classrooms provide opportunities for students to interact with each other and with their instructors. This can foster a sense of community and collaboration, which is important for learning and retention.

In this vein Poynter (2010) point that online courses often lack the hands-on learning experiences and face-to-face interactions that are important for some subjects, such as science and the arts.

1.8.3. Self-Discipline and Motivation

One challenge of online learning is that it requires a high level of self-discipline and motivation. Without the structure and accountability of a physical classroom, it can be easy for students to fall behind or lose interest. However, many online courses offer tools and resources to help students stay on track, such as progress trackers, reminders, and study guides. Additionally, setting personal goals and creating a dedicated study space can help students stay motivated and focused. In this respect, Pausch (2015) claims that online learning requires a lot of self-discipline and time management skills, which not all students possess. In her part, Stavredes (2021) indicates that online learning requires a level of self-discipline and responsibility that not all students possess, which can lead to procrastination and poor academic performance.

1.8.4. Access to Resources and Support

Online learning provides access to a wealth of resources and support that may not be available in traditional classroom settings. For example, online libraries and databases offer a vast collection of academic resources that students can use to supplement their learning. Additionally, many online courses provide access to tutoring services, academic advisors, and technical support. This can be especially helpful for students who may need additional assistance or have questions about the course material.

1.8.5. Cost-Effective Learning

Online learning is often more cost-effective than traditional classroom learning. Tuition fees for online courses are typically lower, and there are no additional costs associated with commuting, housing, or textbooks. Furthermore, many online resources are available for free, allowing students to access high-quality educational materials without breaking the bank. According to Moore and Anderson

(2003:102) “Online learning can be a more cost-effective way to deliver education. By eliminating the need for physical classrooms and reducing other overhead costs, online education can be more affordable and accessible for students.”

1.8.6. Personalized Learning Experience

Online learning allows for a personalized learning experience that caters to individual needs and preferences. Students can choose the courses they want to take and can often customize the pace and style of their learning. Additionally, online courses often provide instant feedback and assessments, allowing students to track their progress and identify areas for improvement. Conarad and Donaldson (2011:67) indicate that:

Online learning can foster a more collaborative and interactive learning environment. Through the use of discussion forums, group projects, and other collaborative learning activities, students can learn from one another and develop important skills such as communication and teamwork.

1.8.7. Improved Technical Skills

Online learning provides an opportunity for students to improve their technical skills. As online courses require the use of technology, students become more familiar with digital tools and platforms. These skills are becoming increasingly important in today’s workforce, making online learning a valuable asset for those looking to advance their career. Students may feel more in control of their education when they learn online. Students who have access to learning materials and tools at all times can take more ownership of their education and improve key self-directed learning abilities. (Gump, 2010:123)

1.9. Disadvantages of Online Learning

One of the biggest obstacles is lack of motivation. Without the structure and accountability of a traditional classroom setting, some students may struggle to stay on track and complete assignments on time. Another challenge is time management. Online courses require a significant amount of self-discipline and organization, as students are responsible for managing their own schedules and deadlines. Technical

issues, such as internet connectivity problems or software glitches, can also be a barrier to success.

Moreover, it can be challenging to keep students motivated and engaged in online learning, which is a significant drawback. Students may find it challenging to focus and remain on track with their studies without the structure and accountability of a typical classroom environment (Hew and Cheung, 2012: 93). In addition, Barley (2020:107) defines online learning can also lead to a lack of personal interaction between students and instructors, which can make it difficult for students to get the support and guidance they need to succeed in their studies.

1.10. Conclusion

In conclusion, the effect of online learning on students' performance after the pandemic is complex and multifaceted. While online learning has its advantages, it also presents challenges that can affect both students' and teachers. Therefore, it is essential to address these challenges and develop effective strategies to ensure that all students can succeed in online learning environments. In the next chapter, we will examine the situation under investigation that indicates the impact of e-learning on students' academic especially at first year Master. The gathered data will also be analyzed and discussed and the hypotheses will either be confirmed or rejected

Chapter Two

Research methodology and Data Analysis

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2.1. Introduction	16
2.2. Research Design	16
2.3. The Case Study	16
2.4. Research Approach	18
2.5. Sampling Population	20
2.6. Research Participant.....	21
2.7. Research Instruments	22
2.7.1. Questionnaire	22
2.7.1.1. Students' Questionnaire	23
2.7.1.2. Formatting the Questionnaire	23
2.7.2. Interview	25
2.7.2.1. Teachers' interview	25
2.8. Data Analysis and Discussion	26
2.8.1. The Learners' Questionnaire Results	26
2.8.2. The Teachers' Interview Results.....	41
2.9. Discussions	45
2.10. Recommendations	47
2.10.1. Online Learning Leads to Autonomous Learning.....	49
2.11. Conclusion	50

2.1. Introduction

The purpose of the current research is to examine the difficulties of the effect of online learning on students' academic progress. It tries to describe the data collection techniques, procedures, and tools used in this research as well as the justification for using a case study approach. To put it another way, the current chapter offers situational, contextual, and methodological descriptions of the current investigation.

2.2. Research Design

To perform any scientific research, one must first choose and decide on the research model that will be used to achieve the study's goal and produce reliable results. According to Grey (2014) "*the research design sets the procedure on the required data, the methods to be applied to collect and analyze this data, and how all of this is going to answer the research question*". However, the choice of research design depends on the objectives of the research in order to be able to answer the research questions in research problem (Crotty, 1998). Actually, the research problem is a problem or issue that must be resolved. Methodologists have identified a number of different types of research design; for instance, Nunan (1992) identifies experimental, ethnographic, case study, classroom observation, introspective, elicitation, interaction analysis, and program evaluation as the major categories of research design. Accordingly, a case study was chosen for the current study due to its nature. The reason behind this choice is to examine the first-year master's modules (Teaching Methodologies and Communication, Ethics and Conduct in Universities, etc...) that are available online this year.

2.3. The Case Study

The case study method enables a researcher to carefully evaluate the data within a particular context. A case study method often chooses a small geographic area or a relatively small group of people to study. Yin (1984: 23) defines the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon

and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used. There are several categories of case study. Yin (1984) notes three categories, namely: exploratory, descriptive and explanatory case studies. First, exploratory case studies are designed to investigate any occurrence in the data that the researcher finds particularly interesting. Therefore, Morse (1991) describes the choice for the explanatory design to be appropriate because this design is the best approach to use to test a theory or explanation. For instance, when doing an exploratory case study on someone's reading process, the researcher may pose generic inquiries. These broad inquiries are aimed to pave the way for additional research into the phenomenon.

Secondly, descriptive case studies are used to explain the natural events that take place inside the question data, such as the various reading methods and how readers use them. The researcher's intention is to describe the data as they come in. McDonough and McDonough (1997) suggest that descriptive case studies may be in a narrative form. An example of a descriptive case study is the journalistic description of the Watergate scandal by two reporters (Yin, 1984).

Thirdly, explanatory case studies carefully investigate the data to both a surface and deep level to explain the phenomena in the data. According to Zaidah (2003) "*a researcher may ask the reason as to why a student uses an inferencing strategy in reading*". Furthermore, explanatory cases are also deployed by Yin and Moore (1987) for causal studies where pattern-matching can be used to investigate certain phenomena in very complex and multivariate cases. The following table summarises the differences among exploratory, descriptive and explanatory researches in terms of goals.

Exploratory research	Descriptive research	Explanatory research
Become familiar with the basic facts, people and concerns involved.	Provide an accurate profile of a group.	Determine the accuracy of a principle or theory.
Develop a well-grounded mental picture of what is happening.	Describe a process, mechanism or relationship.	Find out which competing explanation is better.
Generate many ideas and develop tentative theories and conjectures.	Give a verbal or numerical picture.	Advance knowledge about an underlying process.
Determine the feasibility of doing additional research.	Find information stimulate new explanations.	Link different issues or topics under a common general statement.
Formulate questions and refine issues for more systematic enquiry.	Present basic background information or a context.	Build and elaborate a theory so it becomes complete.
Develop techniques and a sense of direction for future research.	Create a set of categories or classify types	Extend a theory or principle into new areas or issues.
	Clarify a sequence, set of stages or steps.	Provide evidence to support or refute and explanation.
	Document information that contradicts prior beliefs about a subject.	

Table 2.1. Goals of Exploratory, Descriptive and Explanatory Research
(Adapted from Allyn and Bacon, 1994)

All in all, the current research is an exploratory case study. It is selected because of the nature of the research problem and the questions being asked.

2.4. Research Approach

The research approach is regarded as an important element in any research. As each strategy has a different objective to serve, it has used various procedures for both the quantitative and qualitative approaches. In addition, detailed explanations of the strategies used to improve the validity and reliability of the studies are provided.

There are three approaches or methods to conduct a research: qualitative methods, quantitative methods and mixed methods (Creswell, 2003; Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Mixed methods may be defined as *“research in which the investigator collects and analyses data, integrates the*

findings and draws inferences using both qualitative and quantitative approaches or methods in a single study” (Tashakkori and Creswell,2007:4)

The quantitative technique seems appropriate to provide answers to the study’s above-mentioned central issues, which are primarily quantitative in nature. It is an approach in which the investigator employs strategies of inquiry such as experiments and surveys and collects data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data (Creswell, 2003). Additionally, the qualitative study supports the quantitative method. Qualitative researches are designed to provide the researcher a means of understanding a phenomenon by observing or interacting with the participants of the study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). The significance of quantitative and qualitative approaches is summarized in the following points:

- The quantitative technique enables a researcher to gather information from a large number of participants, increasing the possibility that the results can be applied to a larger population.
- The qualitative approach, on the other hand, honors the perspectives of its participants and offers a better knowledge of the problem under investigation.
- In other words, while quantitative data broaden the scope of the study, qualitative data give it depth.

On the other hand, the use of mixed-methods enables researchers to answer research questions with sufficient depth and breadth (Enosh, Tzafirir, &Stolovy, 2014) and helps generalize findings and implications of the researched issues to the whole population. Thus, triangulation, as a qualitative research strategy, is the use of multiple methods or data sources to develop a comprehensive understanding of a research problem or to test validity through the convergence of information from different sources (Carter et al, 2014).

In fact, the importance of using a mixed-method research approach is to study complex social phenomena in order to comprehend their intricacies. Additionally, a mixed-method study design enables a researcher to concurrently address confirmatory and explanatory questions, particularly in collaborative and applied

research. In other words, a researcher can develop, support, and theories at the same time on the basis of analysis and interpretation from a mixed-research approach

Last but not least, a mixed-method study design enables researchers to explain results that appear to be in disagreement when various methodologies are used. Additionally, combining data from several sources or using data from various ways results in more reliable findings that could support the research's conclusions and implications. In other words, the outcomes of one method can help to inform or advance the outcomes of another. A mixed-method research design also supports the complementary nature of research, which is the comprehension of a study subject through the use of various but dialectically connected methodologies. This approach aids in expanding the depth and scope of any investigation. Based on the above discussion, mixed method approach will be applied in the current research work, i.e., a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches.

2.5. Sampling

Sampling is the procedure by which a subset of the population (individual) is chosen for a study. The population consists of all people who have a specific trait that the researchers are interested in. A census is created when data are collected from every member of the population; a sample is created when data are collected from a subset of the population.

Probability sampling and nonprobability sampling are the two main sampling methods used by researchers. A researcher can specify the chance of an element (participant) being included in the sample using probability sampling. There is no way to calculate the probability of an element being included in a sample when using nonprobability sampling. Probability sampling is far more beneficial and accurate if the researcher wants to generalize the results from the sample to the entire population. Moreover, different types of probability samples procedures can be applied for educational research including; for instance, simple random sampling, stratified random sampling, systematic random sampling, cluster random sampling and the multi-phase random sampling.

Simple random sampling is the commonest type of probability sampling. Mackey and Gass (2005) stress that simple random technique is the most useful technique to develop a sample that is characterized by representativeness, and complex random technique selects participants based on other measures such as age or sex. Simple random sampling, each individual in the population has an equal chance of being selected for the sample. The four steps of simple random sampling are (1) defining the population, (2) constructing a list of all members, (3) drawing the sample, and (4) contacting the members of the sample.

Each unit of the population has an equal probability of being chosen in a basic random selection. Therefore there is no connection whatsoever between the choice of any one unit and the choice of any other. The selection is open to the unrestricted operation of chance law. To guarantee that every unit in the population has an equal probability of being included in the sample, carefully controlled circumstances are set up. Thus, the sample was randomly selected and the number of the students was 30 informants of first year Master.

2.6. Research Participants

An appropriate selection of participants is essential for accurate representation of the population of interest. However, poor recruitment is still a significant drawback for many studies (McDonald et al, 2006; Glasser ,2014). To reach the goal of the current study, which is to examine how online learning affects students' academic progress, Out of 90 first-year Master students at center university Salhi Ahmed Naama, Algeria, 30 were selected randomly. The students were chosen to complete the questionnaire. On the other hand, teachers who taught online modules during the academic year 2022/2023 were interviewed.

As far as the online modules are concerned, students were exposed to Teaching Methodologies and Communication, Language Policy and Socio Cultural Aspects in the first semester. In the second semester, the modules were Ethics and Conduct in Universities, Introduction to Neurolinguistics and Socio Cultural Aspects modules.

2.7. Research Instruments

These are the methods of gathering information. They serve as data collection tools. In essence, the researcher must make sure the instrument they select is useful. The suitability of the instruments has a significant impact on the validity and reliability of any research activity. Whatever method is used to gather data, it must be rigorously evaluated to see how probable it is to produce the desired outcomes. Moreover, data collection can be derived from a number of methods which includes interviews, focus groups, surveys, telephone interviews, field-notes, interaction or questionnaires (Heaton, 2004: 37)

The purpose of using both quantitative and qualitative instruments in this study, as stated in the preceding paragraphs, is to capture a comprehensive, holistic image of the subject matter in order to identify information that may have been missed by using a single method. Qualitative research is a method of inquiry that aims to comprehend a social or human problem from several angles. It is carried out in a natural context with the aim of developing a comprehensive grasp of the phenomenon of interest. Quantitative research an investigation into a subject that is based on testing a theory made up of variables, measured using numbers, and evaluated using statistical techniques; the aim is to ascertain whether the generalizations of a theory that predicts outcomes hold true. In this study, two research tools were used for the process of data collection as explained in the next subsections.

2.7.1. Questionnaire

Brown (2001:06) defines questionnaires as *“any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers”*. This is a tool for gathering data that is mainly employed in normative studies. This is a methodically created form or document with a list of questions that are intended to elicit replies from respondents or research informants in order to gather data or information.

The way the questions are written and administered, how they are delivered, and how they are contacted to be returned by respondents all affect how well a questionnaire works as a data gathering tool. The credibility and quality of the data obtained are impacted by these modes. It should be noted that the respondent is not obliged to answer the questionnaire. Therefore, the respondent needs to be persuaded to provide accurate information in response to the questions being asked.

2.7.1.1. Students' Questionnaire

The purpose of the questionnaire was to gather data regarding the students' challenges using the platform, their access to the internet, and the issues they run into when they lack the appropriate resources. The purpose of the questionnaire was to enable the identification of the problems that first-year Master students face. The questionnaires were completed by 30 students overall. The questionnaire consists of a list of written questions intended to gather four types of data: attitude, facts, opinions and ideas.

Three different kinds of questions were used in this research work: closed-ended, multiple-choice, and open-ended. The closed-ended question contains only yes or no responses. Secondly, there are several possible answers or alternatives for the multiple-choice questions, and the respondents must choose one or more of them. In actuality, the closed-ended and multiple-choice questions offer numerical data. The open-ended questions collect qualitative data, therefore, their analysis and response take more time.

2.7.1.2. Formatting the Questionnaire

According to Corbetta (2003), dividing the questionnaire into rubrics will make it logical for the respondents to complete it. Based on her suggestions, the questionnaire is divided into four sections in this study; each rubric has its own title. Moreover, the questionnaire was formed in the following way:

- ❖ The title;
- ❖ The greeting;
- ❖ The aim of this research instrument;

- ❖ The instruction;
- ❖ The questionnaire rubrics;
- ❖ The final thank;

The questionnaire counts twenty two questions: three close-ended questions, eight multiple-choice questions, and eleven open-ended questions

As far as the first sort of question is concerned, it refers to those where participants must select one reply. This type is also known as dichotomous questions. They are simpler to respond to, and data will be quickly coded, entered, and objectively examined.

Eg: Have you taken any online courses before? Yes/No

A range of potential responses is predetermined by the researcher for the second type of questions.

Eg: How do you feel about online learning compared to traditional in-person learning?

- a) Prefer online learning
- b) Prefer in-person learning
- c) No preference

The final sort of question employed in the current study was an open-ended one that allowed participants to freely express and contribute to their ideas on the subject. More specifically, the multiple choice questions in the current questionnaire have an option for ‘others’ meaning that respondents must select one of several possible responses to a given topic in addition to putting ‘others’ at the end of the question if they have an answer which is not included in the choices.

Eg: How was the use of Moodle platform helpful to you?

- a) Easy access to learning documents
- b) Ability to study at home
- c) Ability to contact teachers
- d) Other (Please, specify)

2.7.2. Interview

The term ‘interview’ refers to a spoken exchange of questions and responses between the researcher and the informants. It is a tool the researcher uses to compile data and viewpoints on the subject. The interview is seen according to Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998:12) as “*a powerful method of data collection as it provides one-to-one interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee*”

Another strategy for getting verbal data from the subjects of the investigation is to conduct interviews. When paired with other tools for the purpose of cross-checking the results, it can be utilized as a basic research tool that serves an extra purpose. As the ‘gold standard of qualitative research’, interviews are one of the most often used methods for gathering qualitative data (Silverman, 2000: 51).

There are three different kinds of interviews: structured, semi-structured, and unstructured. An oral questionnaire is used in the structured interview. The same questions, which have been prepared in advance, must be answered by each respondent. The semi-structured interview involves a topic outline; the interviewer orders a series of questions to be asked to the participants, but he is free to add extra information or questions if he wants more in-depth information. Since the informant is required to give the researcher his opinions and beliefs about the topic after the researcher has simply explained it to him or her, an unstructured interview resembles a general talk rather than a set of pre-planned questions (Cohen et al. 2007). Actually, the researchers decided to use a semi-structured interview due to its flexibility; however, interviewees who are the teachers were busy with exams and correction; this made it difficult for the researchers to conduct face to face interview. Consequently, the interviews were sent via emails.

2.7.2.1. Teachers’ Interview

In the survey study, structured interviews are recognized as a typical type of interview. For the purpose of the study's objective, structured interviews are typically created to elicit certain responses from respondents. The probability of variability is reduced because most structured interviews are typically quite specific, which will

speed up data processing and analysis and lower error. The interviewees were given free rein to articulate their opinions in their own words. Open ended questions do not offer any predetermined answers; instead, they are followed by some blank space in which the respondents are free to express their ideas. This is in contrast to closed-ended items and multiple-choice items, which are based on and follow response options that the respondent can choose from. As an example of this type:

Do you have any experience with online education before the pandemic?

2.8. Data Analysis

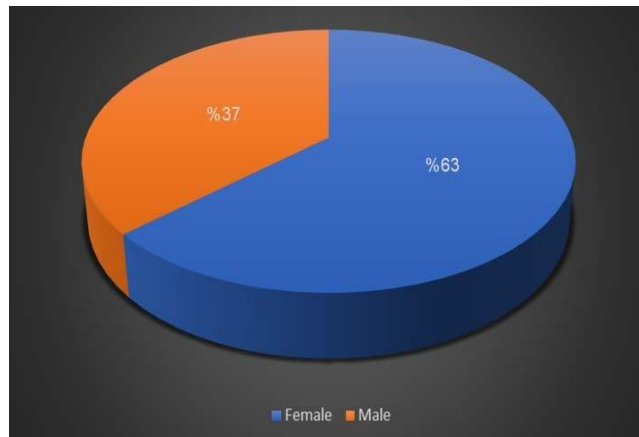
The information gathered from both the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interview will be reported, analyzed, discussed, and recommended in this part to test the research's hypotheses regarding the effects of online learning on first-year Master students. In order to enable the researcher to provide support and comprehend the outcomes through numerical data, quantitative data analysis relies on statistics. Tables, pie charts, and bar graphs are frequently used to convey the analyzed data, in addition to the qualitative data gathered from the interview.

2.8.1. The students' Questionnaire Results

The data analysis in this section focuses on the survey findings from the learners. Each item on the questionnaire will be addressed separately.

Section One: Personal Information

A brief students' profile was intended to be created in the initial part. Inquiring about students' general information was the goal of the researchers. There are two questions in it. In this regard, the students were asked to specify their gender and age.

Question01: Students' Gender**Pie-chart 2.1.** Students' Gender

The complete number of the students who participated are 30 students, only 11 (37%) are males, while the rest 19(63%) are all females. The number of females is higher than males.

Question02: Students' Age

Participants' age	Number of students	Percentage
20_25	20	86,66%
26_30	5	6,66%
30 year and more	5	6,66%

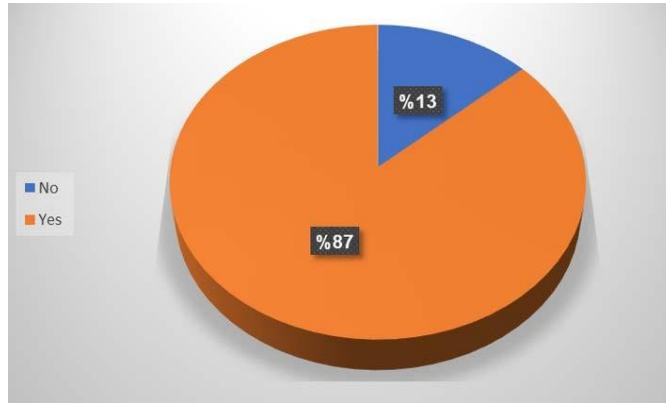
Table.2.2. Students' Age

As the table shows, students' age varies between 20 to 30 years old and more. It shows that the majority (86,66 %) is 20-25 years old. Whereas, the second category 26-30 years old (6,66%) and, the third category 30 years old representing (6,66%). Actually, the last two categories share the same number of students and percentage.

Section Two: The Use of Online Courses.

Students’ opinions about the use of online courses are demonstrated and illustrated in this part.

Question03: Have you taken any online courses before?



Pie-chart2.2. Students’ Use of Online Courses

This question was designed to ask the students about being engaged in online courses before. The majority of students 26 (87%), were actively engaged with online courses while a notable minority4 (13%) did not engage in such kind of learning.

Question 04: Have you ever use e-learning platform before Covid-19?



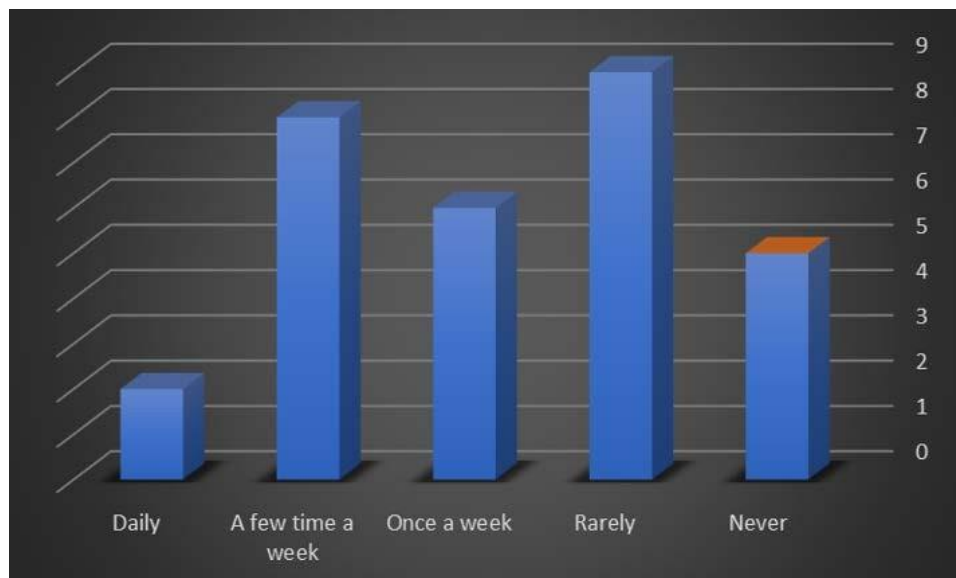
Pie-chart 2.3. Students’ Use of E-Learning Platform before Covid-19

Students were asked whether they use the e-learning platform before covid-19 or not, through the answers, it was noted that, more than half of students 16 (53%) did not use e-learning platform before covid-19 while the less than half 14 (47%) were engaged in virtual platforms.

If yes, how did you use this device and what did use it for?

The majority of the students reported using electronic devices out of curiosity, while others specifically mentioned their use for studying design courses and marketing digital. The students used Zoom with other teachers who were paid by the month to study other languages like German and Turkish as well as English to improve their pronunciation.

Question05: How frequently do you take online courses after covid-19?

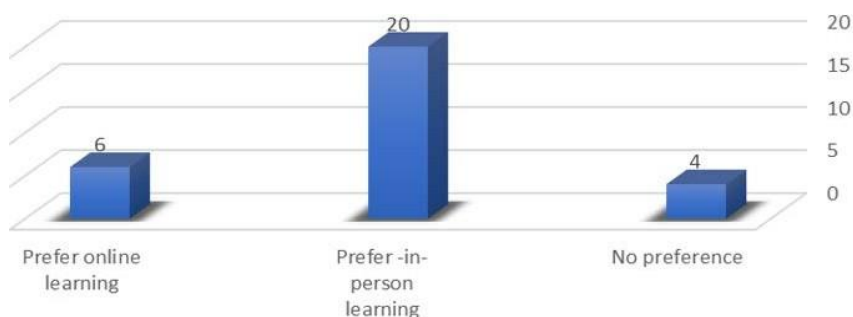


Bar-Graph 2.1. Students' Use of Online Courses after Covid-19

As displayed in the above bar-graph, and through the answers, the researchers noted that 2 (6%) of the participants use online courses every day after covid-19; whereas the majority of participants 9 (30%) stated they rarely use online courses after covid-19. Furthermore, 8 (27%) of the participants a few times after covid-19, while 6 (20%) said that they use it once a week. However, 5 (17%) indicated that they never use online courses after covid-19.

Actually, there is a kind of contradiction. The students have more than five modules online and the majority of them did not enter the platform. In this respect and after asking some questions, it was clear that the students suffer from technical problems, i.e. most of them are not trained to use and enter the platform. Thus, their teachers started to provide them with the lessons via Facebook application.

Question06: How do you feel about online learning compared to traditional in-person learning? Why?



Bar-Graph 2.2.Students' Preferred Way of Learning

The question was asked for the reason to compare between online learning and traditional in-person learning, most respondents 20 (67%) prefer in-person learning (traditional one). In fact, they prefer this kind due to many reasons:

- ✓ Direct interaction and communication with teachers and classmates.
- ✓ More effective than online learning.
- ✓ Better understanding of the lessons.

However, 6 (20%) prefer online learning. The prefer online learning for the following reasons:

- ✓ Online learning provides students with complete control over their learning courses.
- ✓ The ability to work at their own speed.

- ✓ Online learning allows quiet and shy learners to express their thoughts and ideas.
- ✓ More free time and less courses.

Finally, 4 (13%) pointed out that they do not prefer any kind.

Question07: Do you think online learning has affected your ability of team work, communication and time management?

Answer	Number of students	Percentage
Yes	18	72%
No	07	28%

Table.2.3. The Impact of Online Learning on Teamwork, Communication, and Time Management Abilities

It appears in the table above that the majority of students 18 (72%) believe that their soft skills have been impacted, while the rest 7 (28%) believe that they have not been affected.

Question08: How has online learning affected your academic achievement?

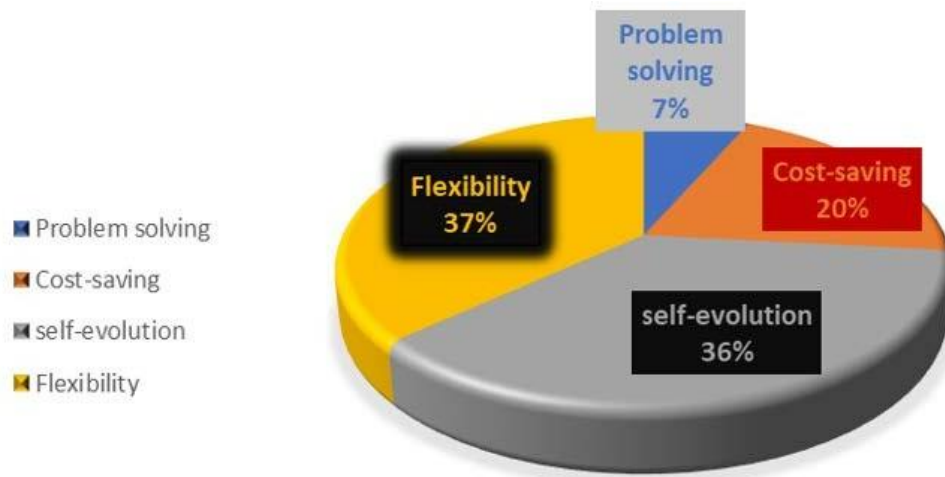
Answer	Number of students	Percentage
Improved it significantly	06	20%
Improved it somewhat	12	40%
No effect	7	23,33%
Made it worse somewhat	2	6,66%
Made it worse significantly	3	10%

Table 2.4. Examining the Impact of Online Learning on Academic Achievement

Through the research being conducted and as it is shown in the table above, it can be see that the minority of 6,66% achievements were partially affected negatively

by online learning. However, the ones that stated significant negative impact were 10%, while 23% were not affected at all. The ones that saw improvement significantly were 20%, staying with the highest rate of those that saw improvement somewhat 40%

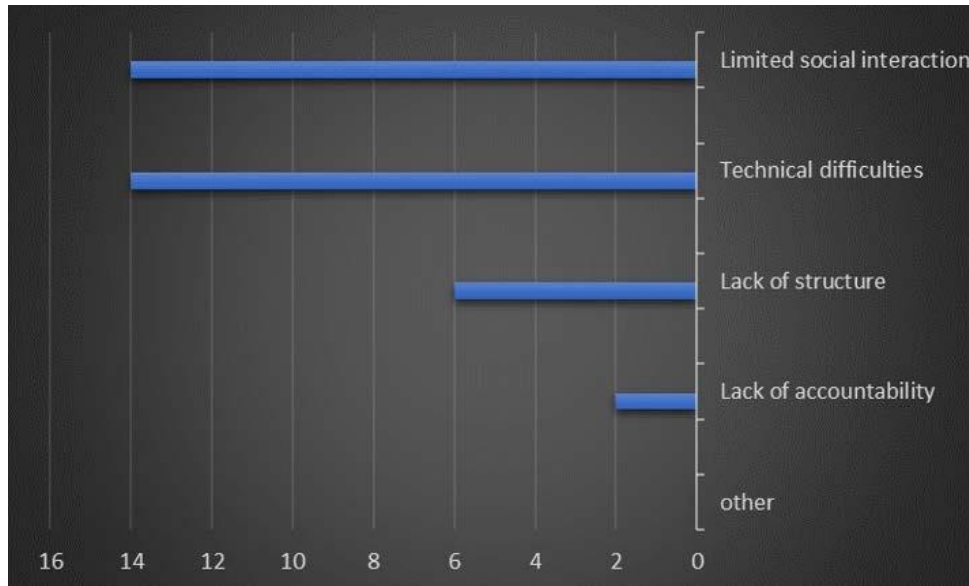
.Question09: In your opinion what are the benefits of online learning?



Pie-chart 2.4. Students’ Opinion about the Benefits of Online Learning

While asked about the benefits of online learning to a bunch of students, the vast majority split into two parts, where 11 (37%) of them agreed on flexibility and where the other 11(36%) said self-evolution. Dropping to 6 (20%) students that chose cost-saving, and the rest 2(7%) of them with the option of problem solving .

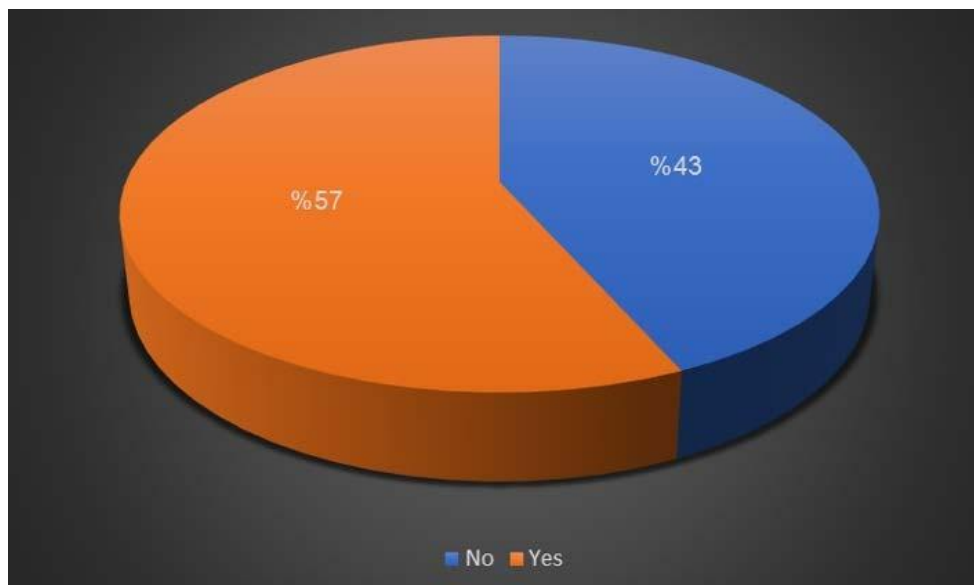
Question10: What do you think are the drawbacks of online learning?



Bar-Graph 2.3. The Drawbacks of Online Learning

The graph displayed the drawbacks of online learning , students find that limited social interaction and technical difficulties sharing the same number 14, and the same percentage(46,66%).Where we notice the minority in lack of accountability 6(20%), and also lack of structure 6 (20%).

Question11: Have you faced any challenges while taking online courses?



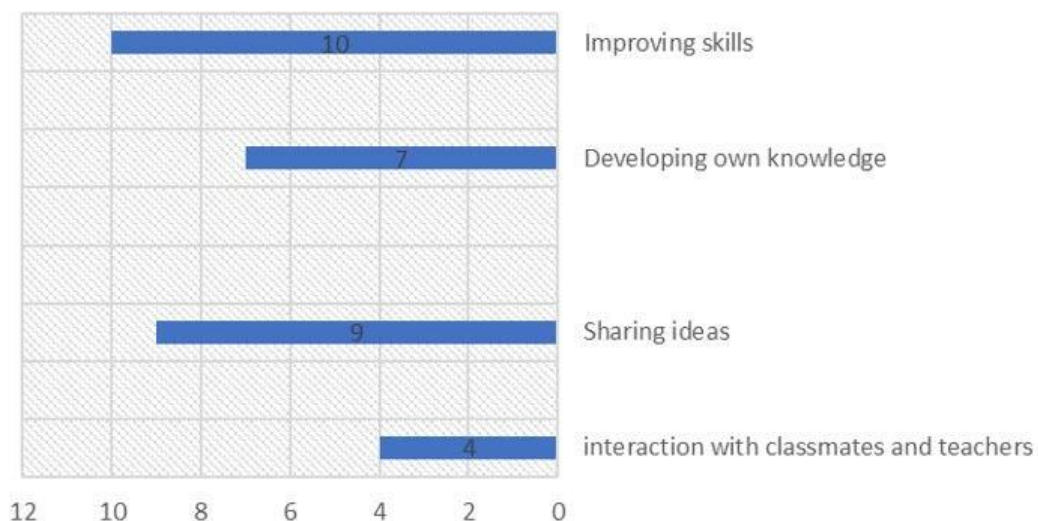
Pie. Chart 2.5. The Challenges while Taking Online Courses

The statistics shown in the pie-Chart above demonstrate that the majority of the students answered yes 17(57%), i.e. they faced challenges while were taking online courses. However, 13(43%) of students they did not face any difficulty.

If yes, what were the challenges that you have faced?

Most of students face lack of self-discipline during the online courses and the lack of video instruction that would help student to understand the lessons. Moreover, other students faced the internet connection problem. Finally, only few pointed out at other problems as the difficulty of understanding. From the results, it can be seen that the students really encountered most of the problems stated and listed in the analysis of the results related to the previous question. In addition, the students raised the financial problem since the access to e-learning requires internet network. It can be conclude that despite the problems which hindered the students to use e-learning to study, it has played a crucial role especially during the covid-19.

Question12: How has online learning affected your ability to interact with your classmates and teachers?

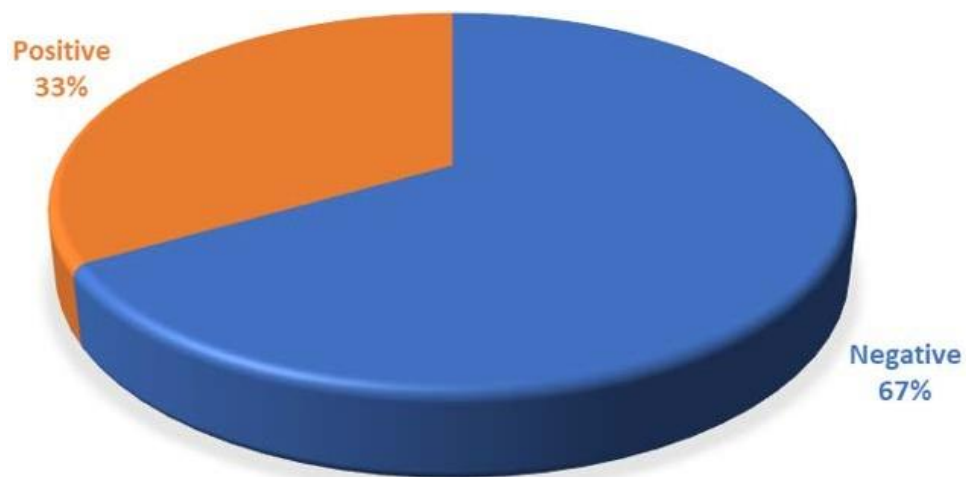


Bar-Graph 2.4. The Impact of Online Learning on Classmates and Teachers Interaction

Through the answers of participants, it was found that online learning has impacted their ability to interact with teachers in several ways, most of respondents answered in terms of improving skills 10(33,33%) and sharing ideas 7(23,33%).

Moreover, there are some students who declared that online learning developed their own knowledge 7(23,33%). Finally, 4 students (13,33%) agreed for interaction with classmates and teachers.

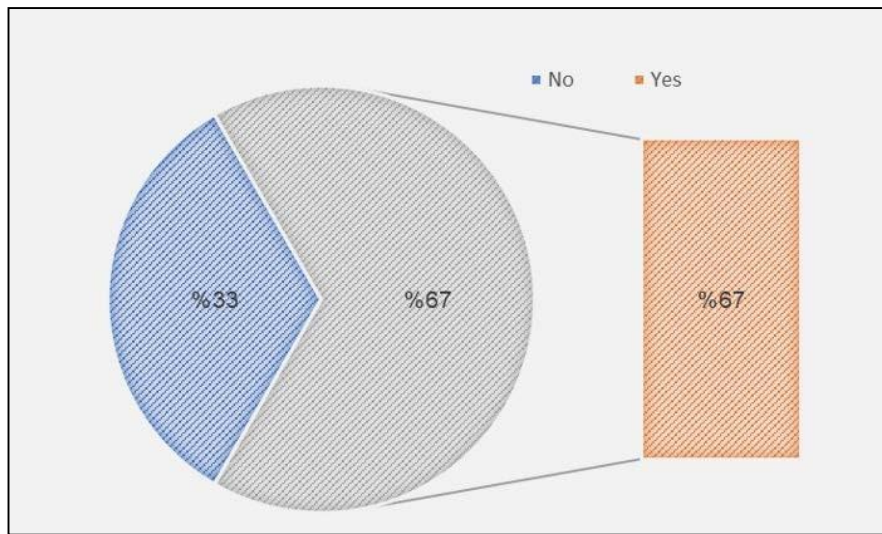
Question13: Has online learning impacted your grades in positive or negative way? Why?



Pie. Chart 2.6. The Effect of Online Learning on Grades’ Positive or Negative

The majority of the respondents in the study 20(67%) have evaluated e-learning negatively; whereas the minority 10(33%) have evaluated it positively in terms of their high grades.

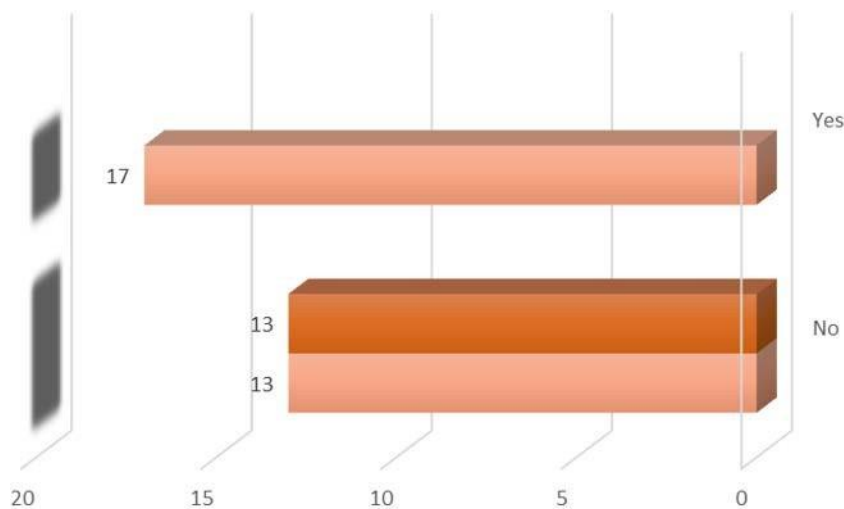
Question14: Do you think online learning has affected your ability to prepare for exams and complete assignments?



Pie. Chart 2.7. The Impact of Online Platforms on Exam Preparation and Assignment Completion

20(67%) of students believe that online learning has indeed affected their ability to prepare for exams and complete assignments while the remaining 10(33%) believe that it hasn't affected their ability at all.

Question15: Have you faced any technical difficulties or challenges for you that have impacted your academic performance? Why?



Bar-Graph 2.5. The Impact of Technical Challenges on Academic Performance

The statistics shown in the bar-graph above demonstrate that the majority of the students 17(56,66%) faced difficulties and challenges that impacted their academic performance. However, 13(43,33%) of students they did not. As a result of this finding, we might deduce that most first-year Master students face challenges while using online learning. Their justifications were as follows:

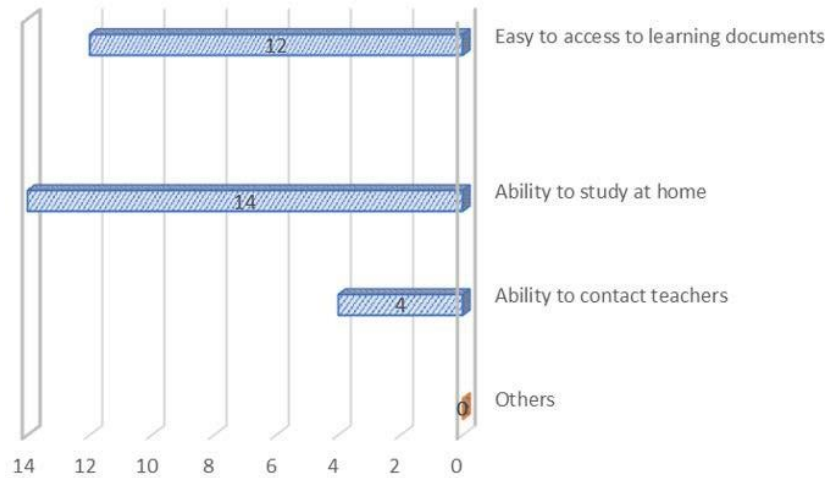
- Quality of the network (poor connection, server error).
- Access issues to the E-learning platform (technical problems, password forgotten).
- Facing difficulties understanding posted lectures (courses without explanation).
- Lack of communication and contact with teachers.

Question16: What do you suggest to improve the e-learning platform at the department of English where you actually registered?

The students' suggestions to enhance e-learning platform of the department of English at the University of SALHI AHMED Naama are as follows:

- **Free access:** The students suggested free connection because the majority of them face financial problems.
- **Motivation:** Using attractive methods of online teaching as videos, colors, and non-verbal communication (such as emoji's, pictures, and so on) for better motivation.
- **Seminars:** the students proposed attending seminars before exams in which the teacher explain the lessons that are put in the platform.
- **Time management:** The EFL students of master one linguistic recommended publishing the courses on the right time since they have received some of them few days before the exams.

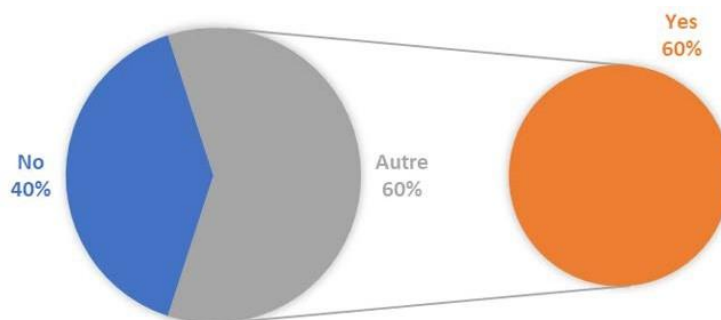
Question17: How was the use of Moodle platform helpful to you?



Bar-Graph 2.6. The Benefits of using Moodle Platform

This bar graph shows that the majority of study participants indicated that they could study at home with a score of 14 (46,66%), while others indicated that it was simple to acquire educational materials with a score of 12 (40%) in the survey. Few of them 4 (13,33) answered the ability to contact teachers. There are no further advantages outside those, to sum up.

Question 18: Do you think online learning has helped or hindered your ability to understand and retain course material?



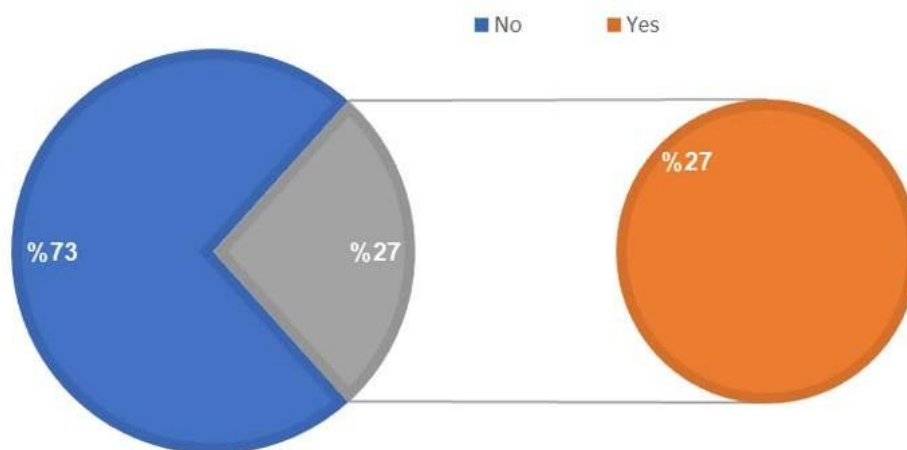
Pie.chart 2.8. The Impact of Online Learning on Understanding and Retaining Course Material

The findings imply that a considerable number of the participants have faced problems, 18(60%) of the participants said yes. However, 12(40%) believe that online learning hindered their ability to understand and retain course material.

The most crucial issue which hindered the ability to understand and retain course material when using online learning is the problem of the internet connection. Few of the participants have stated that it is due to technical problems. Accordingly, from these findings, they justify their answers as follow:

- ✓ The connection has never been regular nor fluid since it is considered as a national problem in addition to the fact that some students live in rural areas.
- ✓ No accounts
- ✓ Electric punctures
- ✓ Log in and Password are forgotten

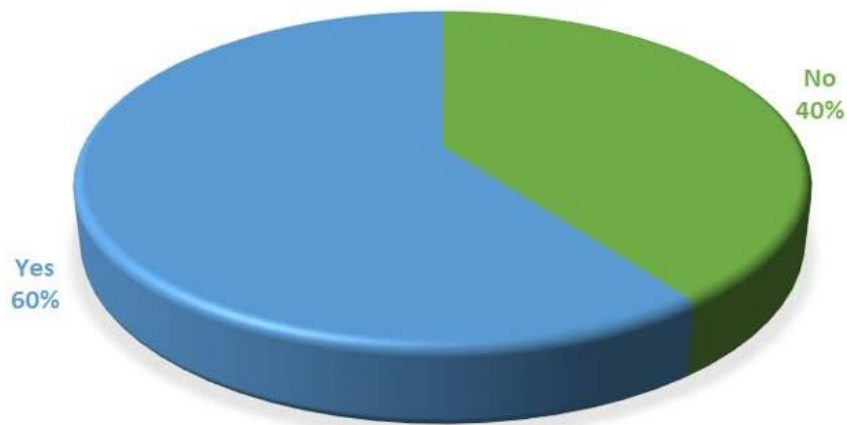
Question19: Do you feel that you have access to the same level of support and resources with online learning as you did with in-person classes?



Pie.chart 2.9. Evaluating Support Resources in Online Learning versus In-person Classes

As it appears, it is clear that the vast majority of 22 students (73%) do not have access to the same level of support and resources with online learning as in-person classes, whereas, the rest 8 students (27%) have accessibility to the same resources, from in-person classes to online learning.

Question 20: Do you think online learning has changed your perception of the value and importance of education?



Pie. Chart 2.10. The Impact of Online Learning on Perceptions of Education's value and Importance

Students' answers when it comes to the value and importance of education and if their perspective of it has changed through online learning, 18(60%) said yes, while 12(40%) denied saying no.

2.8.2. The Teachers' Interview Results

This section discusses the outcomes of the teachers' interviews. To refresh the reader's memory, this structured interview was conducted with four (4) instructors who taught the following online modules (Teaching Methodologies and Communication, Language Policy, Socio Cultural Aspects on first semester) and (Ethics and Conduct in Universities, Introduction to Neurolinguistics, Socio Cultural Aspects on second semester) at the English department of Salhi Ahmed Center University, Naama. The interview is broken up into a few stages, and the outcomes of each section were taken into consideration in relation to each distinct question.

Section one: Teachers' experience

The teachers were asked about their background in a variety of issues in this section.

Question01: Do you have any experience with online education before the pandemic?

The purpose of this question is to determine whether there are any teachers who have used an e-learning system and, if so, whether they are capable of using it as a teaching tool. Three out of the four teachers who responded indicated that they had never used e-learning previously. Only one teacher said that she had used e-learning.

Question02: How would you evaluate your online learning experience before and after covid-19?

Teachers were asked to evaluate their experiences utilizing e-learning before and after covid-19. The interviewees' responses were summarized as follow:

- Finding this new experience interesting
- Enhancing one's knowledge base
- They are unable to assess it without testing it first

One participant described it as a positive experience but she did not explain how a true experience may be.

Chapter Two Research methodology and Data Analysis

Section Two: The impact of e-learning

In this part, teachers were asked about the effectiveness, difficulties that students face, and how Moodle has affected their academic performance.

Question03: Does the e-learning platform affect the teacher or the student more and, in what context did it go? (Positive and negative way)

All the teachers being interviewed indicated that both the teachers and the learners are negatively impacted by online learning in beginning. On the other hand, the teachers indicated that they are not trained. Also, some modules like oral expression requires direct contact between the learner and the teacher, it was extremely challenging to develop the courses for such modules online. On the other hand, for learners, they pointed out that students suffered from various problems such as lack of interaction (face-to face), lack of training, lack of strong internet connection; lack of time management, lack of self-motivation. All these factors lead to students' stress and anxiety "psychological problems". The most significant issue that students encountered with online learning was a lack of effective communication skills (speaking and writing), as those abilities cannot be taught online. All in all, it can be said that the lack of computer education and technical difficulties are the major problems.

The interviewees went on to say that: As far as the positive side is concerned, later on, both teachers and students began to recognize the benefits of this platform as they gained experience in online teaching and learning, for example, they could manage their time effectively because the platform contains dates for submitting assignments, responding to questions, taking tests, etc. Students can attend lessons at anytime and anyplace. Therefore, it can be concluded that online learning is useful for a variety of students, particularly workers. In addition, students began to depend on themselves, which turns the role of teachers into advisors. The Moodle platform actually offers a wide range of possibilities, such as the ability to integrate videos, photos, and other media.

Question04: what are the main challenges that you have faced in online teaching?

The researchers query four respondents. After reading and organizing the responses, the researchers may sum up the following findings as they are presented by the teachers being interviewed:

The absence of training and evaluation on e-learning is the most important problem that restricted the teachers' use of it. Furthermore, the majority of them "three interviewees" experienced issues with their Internet connections and challenges of time management because most of teachers are inexperienced to use devices and applications which are being used in online teaching , while only one respondent claimed that students were uninterested in using the e-learning platform (especially for their classes and homework). The findings addressed a wide range of problems including:

- ✓ Lack of training
- ✓ The Internet connection
- ✓ Passive students
- ✓ Technical problems
- ✓ The difficulty of evaluation on learning.

Question05: Did Moodle as a learning platform have a significant impact on students' results, as in the traditional method? (Is there any differences)

One participant stated that E-learning does not help students to develop their critical thinking skills because it cannot build a lot of discussion potentials between students and teachers. Introducing some skills into the course becomes very difficult and difficult for students to understand, according to the majority of the teachers.

Another participant also believes that universities are not currently able to move to online education due to the level of students and that e-learning does not motivate students for better education due to the reasons being discussed previously. It is supposed that online learning would develop students' personal skills in terms of problem solving and self-evolution because the student will be responsible for the learning process; however, it was proved that the majority of students greatly depends and relies on their teachers' competencies and guidance. Thus, the majority could not develop personal skills. In contrast, one teacher who has had a little experience with online learning, she believes that using an online tool, i.e. e-learning platform and a traditional method provides the same results for students.

In contrast, it was also mentioned that e-learning platform speeds up the learning process and requires little work. Thus, this platform is efficient and valuable for carrying out lessons and even assignments (homework). Finally, it was agreed upon the fact that e-learning platform helps students to manage time effectively and be autonomous learners.

Question06: What do you suggest to make this experience a successful one, i.e. online learning?

According to the interview's results, EFL teachers' answers were more heavily weighted toward technology and continuous training. This would make it easier for them to use it and enable them to choose different strategies. It makes sense that doing so would increase e-learning's effectiveness and enhance students' academic progress. When asking them to provide suggestions to improve this experience and deal with the problems they face, the following set of suggestions was provided:

- Most importantly, the online courses must be joined with video instructions to explain and clarify the courses.
- To make this type of learning effective, teachers must promote and encourage interaction and feedback.
- Training sessions on the usage of platforms and its different features must be made available to both teachers and students.
- Teachers must provide students a lot of help.
- Have a minimum of one synchronous session or seminar to provide students with instructions and a chance to ask questions and comprehend difficult lessons and issues.

2.9. Discussions and Interpretation of the Main Findings

This part is devoted for discussing the major findings of students' questionnaire and teachers' interviews taking into consideration the hypotheses of this research. In fact, the majority of the teachers who responded the interview in this study claimed that e-learning cannot create many opportunities for conversation between students and teachers, hence it cannot assist students to their personal skills, because they suffered from various problems such as problem solving and engagement. On the other hand, when the students asked about the influence of online learning on their capacity to develop critical skills more than half of students faced many problems such as problem solving that had a negative effect on their grades. So, the results refute the first hypothesis which state that online learning helps students to enhance

their academic performance and their personal skills in terms of self-evolution, problem solving and engagement.

In addition to the problems that refute the first hypothesis, other problems are mentioned such as lack of interaction (face-to face), lack of training, lack of strong internet connection; lack of time management, lack of self-motivation. Indeed, the teachers preferred the traditional way of teaching, and justified this by being untrained to use the e-learning platform appropriately.

Regarding the second hypothesis which states that the lack of video instruction and computer skills has a direct link to students' negative attitude, Students were required to use this platform without any prior training because this experience was completely new for them. Due to their lack of computer knowledge and video training, they encountered some access issues with the Moodle platform that would not be effective without an internet connection, as well as effective strategies like instruction, content, motivation (via video conferencing and live lectures). Overall, it can be claimed that technological issues and a lack of computer education are the main challenges they face. Thus, the results confirm the second hypothesis.

Additionally, learners confronted other issues with the platform itself, the difficulty of the large load of lectures that teachers sent without explanations; there was no interaction with teachers to request clarification and examples. Due to the fact that effective communication skills like speaking and writing cannot be taught online.

2.10. Recommendations

Based on the previous discussion and based on the problems being mentioned in the results, the researchers will try hopefully in this part to suggest some recommendations as remedies to the major challenged faced by both learners and teachers. Firstly, more attention must be paid to continuous training. This would make it easier for them to use e-learning platform and enable them to choose other tactics. Continuous training would lead to the effectiveness of e-learning and would have a positive impact on the students' achievement in addition to the organization, simplicity, and clarity of the education.

Distance learning and teaching requires a significant rethinking of the subjects, behaviors, engagements, and psychology. The following suggestions can lead to the developments of online learning.

- ✓ Promoting interaction within the educational system, such as encouraging students to connect with one another, teachers, and the university setting as a whole.
- ✓ Generate a generation of educators and students who can use technology, contemporary skills, and global changes.

As a result of the students' responses, the study makes the following recommendations for government:

- Enhance the utilization of the e-learning platform in universities to promote the technical support.
- Offer a strong internet connection on a nationwide scale.
- Use synchronous and asynchronous classes in combination.
- Organize a working group to examine the usage of e-learning and its applications at each university.
- Acquire a high level of awareness regarding the importance of technology in general, in our day.
- E-learning should be a full or partial representation of the educational model used, based on the use of electronic media and

devices as tools for enhancing access to training. Communication and interaction also help to encourage the adoption of new models for comprehending and developing learning, as well as the systematic scheduling of the sessions.to-day lives, and in the field of education in particular.

Additionally, the study suggests that the teachers should:

- Design lectures that will enhance the connection between students and instructors.
- Recognizing and removing students' emotions of isolation.
- Schedule and control time for both traditional and online sessions.
- Reduce the number of classes and homework assignments that put students under strain.
- To engage and inspire students during the online process, give feedback.

In addition, the study recommends the following for the students:

- Being a part of the online learning environment.
- Need to understand more about how the e-learning platform operates.
- Know how information and communication technologies (ICT) are being integrated into the educational system.
- Expose students to a multi-source learning environment to improve the educational process overall.
- It can be claimed that implementing virtual techniques would encourage students to communicate, participate, and have a good impact on their performance.

Finally, students will be motivated, gain a better understanding and assimilation of the new knowledge, and be more interactive and interested in e-learning when the teacher is trained, well-prepared, and uses various online teaching methods and strategies (video conferencing, visual books, and so on).

2.10.1. Online Learning leads to Autonomous Learning

If it is used effectively, online learning will provide a unique opportunity for students to take control of their own education. By engaging with course materials, participating in online discussions, and completing assignments on their own schedule, students can develop the self-discipline and motivation needed to become autonomous learners. Furthermore, online learning encourages students to take responsibility for their own learning outcomes. With access to a wealth of resources and support, students can explore topics in depth and pursue their own interests. This fosters a sense of curiosity and intellectual independence that will serve them well throughout their lives.

Developing autonomy in online learning is not always easy, but there are several practical tips and strategies that students can use to achieve it. One key strategy is to set clear goals and create a plan for achieving them. This can help students stay focused and motivated, even when faced with distractions or setbacks. Other strategies include managing time effectively, seeking feedback from peers and instructors, and using technology tools to enhance learning. By taking an active role in their education and seeking out resources and support as needed, students can become more self-directed and independent learners. In fact, there are many benefits to developing autonomy in online learning. Perhaps the most significant is increased motivation and engagement. When students have control over their learning experience, they are more likely to be invested in it and feel a sense of ownership over their progress. In addition, autonomy can lead to greater creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. By choosing their own materials and setting their own goals, students can explore their interests and develop a deeper understanding of the subject matter. They will also avoid academic dishonesty such as plagiarism.

While developing autonomy in online learning can be highly rewarding, it is not without its challenges. One common challenge is the lack of accountability that comes with online learning. Without the structure and deadlines of a traditional classroom, students may struggle to stay on track and complete assignments on time.

Other challenges include distractions from social media and other online activities, as well as feelings of isolation or disconnection from the learning community. However, there are many solutions and resources available to help students overcome these challenges, such as time management apps, online study groups, and virtual tutoring services.

In conclusion, developing autonomy in online learning is a powerful way for students to take ownership of their education and achieve success in the modern world. By setting clear goals, managing their time effectively, and seeking out support and resources as needed, students can become more self-directed and independent learners. It is the responsibility of teachers to empower students to develop these skills and habits. By providing guidance, encouragement, and access to resources and support, students would achieve their goals in online learning and beyond.

2.11. Conclusion

The emphasis of this chapter was on presenting information regarding the study setting, the research design, and the findings. Both qualitative and quantitative analyses were performed on the main findings. One of the research hypotheses has been disproved, while the other has been proven. The major findings discussed in this chapter revealed that teachers and students struggle with online education and that they have identified some potential remedies to take into consideration. The last part presents some useful recommendations that would help students, teachers and the government as well to improve the online learning and hence students' academic achievements.

General conclusion

General conclusion

The educational sector has been completely changed by the emergence of Corona Virus. In actuality, a large number of universities and colleges were shut down. Therefore, many technical tools and applications had been deployed as an urgent fix and for the goal of monitoring the teaching and learning processes, such as Zoom, Google Meet, Facebook Messenger, and so on. The teachers and students in higher education in Algeria had no choice but to adopt a new Internet-based technology that is more often known as e-learning. The latter has been particularly important throughout the pandemic period. However, both teachers and learners had to deal with a variety of challenges, including technological issues, a lack of interactivity and training, as well as internet accessibility.

The objectives of this study is to examine e-learning use and to find out from teachers' and students' perspectives whether using the Moodle platform with the following modules (first semester: Teaching Methodologies and Communication /Language Policy /Socio Cultural Aspects and for the second semester: Ethics and Conduct in Universities /Introduction to Neurolinguistics / Socio Cultural Aspects). Additionally, the researchers attempted to shed light on the solutions that have been put up to improve the quality of online learning especially in Algerian higher education. In light of this, the research tries to answers the following questions:

1. Does online teaching make a significant improvement in students' academic performance and their personal skills?
2. What is the major factor that affects students' attitudes towards online learning?

In answer to these questions, the following hypotheses were created:

- a) Online learning helps students to enhance their academic performance and their personal skills in terms of self-evolution, problem solving and engagement.

b) The lack of video instruction, computer skills has a direct link to students' negative attitude.

The current work is divided into two chapters. It starts with a review of the relevant literature of the educational system in Algeria. Definitions of the distance learning, its types and its benefits were all discussed. The second chapter provides a discussion of the methodology considerations used to carry out the field investigation. Thus, it provides information about research design, the population, research instruments, and research approach, data analysis and interpretations, it's ends with recommendations to make the online learning a successful experience.

The current study is an exploratory case study which used qualitative and quantitative approach. In order to gather accurate data, the researchers used two research tools: an interview with teachers and a questionnaire for first year Master students, to gather data about their attitudes and perceptions toward using the e-learning platform. The analysis of data and discussions of the results have all been covered in the final section. Some recommendations are presented at the end.

The first hypothesis of this research, which is online learning helps students to enhance their academic performance and their personal skills in terms of self-evolution, problem solving and engagement, is disproved by the findings. In addition, the second hypothesis which was the lack of video instruction, computer skills has a direct link to students' negative attitude, was confirmed.

In fact, it is important to note that there are some limitations in this study. For instance, generalizability of the results is quite problematic in the sense that the research study only considered 30 students' of first year Master. Actually, homogeneity of all Masters' was not taken into account. As a result, the results cannot be generalised on the entire population. Additionally, gathering data was not an easy process because our interviews had to follow a structured format, due to the end of exams. Many students didn't complete all questionnaire; many questions were kept unanswered.

General conclusion

A further finding from our study's data analysis was include that both teachers and students were used e-learning platforms to monitor their educational progress. The results showed that instructors and learners needed additional training because they were not as well-prepared as they should have been. They also showed a preference for face-to-face instruction only.

In essence, it is important to note that the researchers handled this study because they thought it was crucial to investigate how effective e-learning is for undergraduate students. Additionally, they want to portray the challenges of online learning. It is hoped that the suggested solutions will satisfy the requirements of the students as well as the teachers' expectations for effective teaching methods and learning outcomes.

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Appendices

Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

You are kindly requested to express your opinions about the impact of online learning on students' academic achievement during the process of your learning as EFL students. Please answer the following questions in an objective way.

Part one:

1. Gender

a) Female

b) Male

2. Age

a) 20-25 years old

b) 26-30 years old

c) 30 years old -and more

3. Have you taken any online courses before?

Yes

No

4. Have you ever used e-learning platform before COVID-19?

Yes

No

If yes, how did you use this device and what did you use it for?

.....
.....

5. How frequently do you take online courses after COVID-19?

a) Daily

b) A few times a week

c) Once a week

d) Rarely

e) Never

6. How do you feel about online learning compared to traditional in-person learning? Why?

- a) Prefer online learning
- b) Prefer in-person learning
- c) No preference

7. Do you think online learning has affected your ability to develop important soft skills, such as teamwork, communication, and time management?

.....
.....

Part two:

8. How has online learning affected your academic achievement?

- a) Improved it significantly
- b) Improved it somewhat
- c) No effect
- d) Made it worse somewhat
- e) Made it worse significantly

9. In your opinion what are the benefits of online learning?

- a) Flexibility
- b) Convenience
- c) Self-paced learning
- d) Cost savings
- e) Other (please specify)

.....

10. What do you think are the drawbacks of online learning?

- a) Limited social interaction
- b) Technical difficulties
- c) Lack of structure
- d) Lack of accountability
- e) Other (please specify)

11. Have you faced any challenges while taking online courses?

Yes

No

If yes, what were the challenges you faced?

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.....

12. How has online learning affected your ability to interact with your classmates and teachers?

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.....

13. Has online learning impacted your grades in a positive or negative way? Why?

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.....
.....

14. Do you think online learning has affected your ability to prepare for exams or complete assignments?

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.....
.....

15. Have you faced any technical difficulties or challenges for you that have impacted your academic performance?

.....
.....

16. What do you suggest to improve the e-learning platform at the department of English where you are actually registered?

.....
.....
.....

17. How was the use of Moodle platform helpful to you?

a) Easy access to learning documents

b) Ability to study at home

c) Ability to contact teachers

d) Other (Please, specify).

Part three:

18. Do you think online learning has helped or hindered your ability to understand and retain course material?

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.....
.....

19. Do you feel that you have access to the same level of support and resources with online learning as you did with in-person classes?

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.....
.....

20. Do you think online learning has changed your perception of the value and importance of education?

.....
.....

Thank you for your participation and collaboration

The formal interview

We would be so grateful, if you could answer the following questions and give your point of view concerning the impact of online learning on students' academic achievement. Your answers will be very helpful for the research project we are undertaking.

1. Do you have any experience with online education before the pandemic?

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.....
.....

2. How would you evaluate your online learning experience before and after COVID-19?

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3. Does the e-learning platform affect the teacher or the student more and, in what context did it go?(positive and negative way)

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4. What are the main challenges that you have faced in online teaching?

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5. Did Moodle as a learning platform have a significant impact on students' results, as in the traditional method? (is there any differences)

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6. What do you suggest to make this experience a successful one, i.e. online learning?

.....
.....
.....

Thank you for your collaboration

Summary:

This research aims to study the effect of e-learning on the academic achievements of first-year master students. The main objective of this research is to answer the question related to whether teaching via the Internet led to a significant improvement in the academic performance of students and their personal skills or not, and what is the main factor that It affects students' attitudes towards online learning, and accordingly, an exploratory study was conducted as a response to the lack of experience and lack of training for both parties

Key Word: E-learning, Online Learning.

ملخص :

يهدف هذا البحث الى دراسة تأثير التعلم الالكتروني على الإنجازات الاكاديمية للطلاب السنة أولى ماستر. ان الهدف الرئيسي من هذا البحث هو الإجابة حول السؤال المتعلق حول هل التدريس عبر الانترنت أدى الى تحسن كبير في الأداء الاكاديمي للطلاب و مهارتهم الشخصية ام لا و ما هو العامل الرئيسي الذي يؤثر على مواقف الطلاب تجاه التعلم عبر الانترنت وبناءا عليه تم اجراء استكشافي باعتباره استجابة لعدم وجود خبرة ونقص التدريبات لكلا الطرفين

الكلمات الافتتاحية: التعلم الإلكتروني، التعلم عبر الإنترنت.

Résumé:

Cette recherche vise à étudier l'effet de l'apprentissage en ligne sur les résultats scolaires des étudiants de première année de master. L'objectif principal de cette recherche est de répondre à la question liée à savoir si l'enseignement via Internet a conduit à une amélioration significative des performances scolaires des étudiants. Étudiants et leurs compétences personnelles ou non, et quel est le principal facteur qui affecte les attitudes des étudiants à l'égard de l'apprentissage en ligne, et en conséquence, une étude exploratoire a été menée en réponse au manque d'expérience et au manque de formation des deux parties.

Mot clé : apprentissage en ligne, apprentissage en ligne.