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Self-directed learning – an effective distance learning strategy during pandemic Covid 19. The case of Master 1 University of Msila

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Partial fulfilment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master*

Submitted by:

Supervised by:

| | |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|
| Miss Brahimi Houda | Dr Bouazid Tayeb |
| Miss Ghalem Karima | |

Board of Examiners

| | | |
|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| Mr Refice Nouredine | University of M'sila | Chairperson |
| Dr. Bouazid Tayeb | University of M'sila | Supervisor |
| Dr Touati Mourad | University of M'sila | Examiner |

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DECLARATION

We hereby solemnly declare that the work we are going to present in this thesis entitled

Self-directed learning -an Effective distance learning strategy During pandemic Covid 19.

The Case of Third Year LMD Students of English at Mohamed Boudhief University of Msila

...is our own to the limits of our knowledge, has not been submitted before to any other institution or university or degree and all sources that we have used and quoted from have been indicated by means of complete references. This work is to be carried out and completed at Mohamed Boudhief University Msila, Algeria.

Signature

Houda Brahimi.....

Karima Ghalem.....

Date: June, 2021

ABSTRACT

Learning is important no matter what the circumstances were. The state of health witnessed by the world requires strategies to maintain the process of teaching and learning in an effective manner since the traditional way of teaching is not safe anymore. Students must learn from home. Hence, this research aims to investigate the effectiveness of self-directed learning as a distance learning strategy in Pandemic Covid-19. The hypothesis raised in this study sets out that self-directed learning is an effective strategy in distance learning process in pandemic Covid-19. Qualitative and quantitative studies are adopted in this paper. Twenty questionnaires were distributed to the teachers and twenty-five questionnaires to third year LMD students. The results obtained have shown that self-directed learning is an effective strategy in distance learning as self-directed learning increases students' motivation and willingness to learn and enhances their familiarity with technology and made them confident, autonomous, self-reliant, motivated, and for sure responsible. Based on these findings, the government must take self-directed learning into consideration; students should also pay attention to the benefits of being self-directed learners especially in distance learning.

Key words: effectiveness, strategy, learning, self-directed learning, distance learning.

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DEDICATIONS

...To our beloved families for their support, encouragement and love...To our friends and classmates for sharing information and experiences.

Houda

Karima

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

Abbreviations

SDL: Self-directed Learning

Q: Question

LMD: License, Master, Doctorate

Symbols

&: And

%: Percentage

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General introduction

1. Background of the Study

COVID-19 pandemic has affected all aspects of human life. One of the aspects where the effect of the pandemic is experienced intensely is education (Akat&Karatas,2020).The pandemic that humanity is going through has affected several sections negatively, including the pedagogical section. Classrooms and lecture Halls are empty, interaction between students and teachers has gone, learning atmosphere inside the classroom has disappeared. This situation demands a single secure solution which is “distance learning”. As in Mohammed Boudhialf University in Msila, learning was handled using MOODLE PLATFORM.

“Distance learning is one of the substitutions approaches which can be replaced with the face to face or traditional learning and is one of the key factors in the development of higher education” (Taylor, 2001). Thus, distance learning presents not only a random strategy in teaching and learning however it is the best suitable alternative method to carry on learning.

Distance learning alone is unable to replace the traditional learning there must be additional strategies for an effective learning. Knowles (1975) stated that there is convincing evidence that people who take the initiative in learning learn more and learn better than people who are passively being taught. Self-initiated learners have a greater and more purposeful motivation and tend to apply, to a greater extent, the knowledge they have learned in their daily lives. Hence, self-directed learning has an influence on learners. In the following study we made an investigation to see the effectiveness of SDL as a distance learning strategy.

The ways of obtaining and using information have changed substantially in recent years as it has become accessible from multiple sources. Individuals who have learned how to learn can organize their own learning, transfer new information to larger contexts, overcome difficulties, and they are open to development and change. They possess self-confidence and awareness, they are willing to learn, they can use various learning strategies, and they know their own learning styles, interests and talents (Rawson, 2000; Giese, 2006; Fredriksson and Hoskins, 2007; Hofmann, 2008).

Also known as learning by oneself, self-directed learning in its largest sense refers to individuals’ ability to taking initiative to identify their own learning needs, their ability to determine their learning goals, their ability to define the sources they need in order to learn, their ability to choose/use appropriate learning strategies and evaluate learning outcomes with or without help from an outsider (Knowles, 1975). Self-directed learning is a process where individuals take primary charge of planning, continuing and evaluating their learning

experiences (Merriam et al., 2007). In self-directed learning, the responsibility to learn shifts from an external source: (teacher, etc) to the individual. Control and active involvement of the learner in the learning process is crucial in this process (Boyer and Usinger, 2015; Grover, 2015). Self-directed learning includes the conceptualization, design, implementation and evaluation of learning guided by learners (Brookfield, 2009). It may be referred as a method of organizing learning where learners control the task of learning. In addition to these, self-directed learning may also be viewed as a target that learners strive to achieve. In order to achieve it, individuals take responsibility for their own learning and embrace individual autonomy and preferences (Kaufman, 2003).

2. Statement of the problem

COVID-19 pandemic has affected educational systems worldwide, leading to the near-total closures of schools, universities and colleges. Most governments decided to temporarily close educational institutions in an attempt to reduce the spread of COVID-19. In response to school closures, the government recommended the use of distance learning programmes and open educational applications and platforms that schools and teachers can use to reach learners remotely and limit the disruption of education. However, distance learning alone cannot fulfill the absence of the traditional educational system. Hence, it is believed that the best solution to fulfill this gap is by using the self-directed learning rather than depending only on teacher's efforts. Thus, the present study focuses on exploring the effectiveness of self-directed learning as a distance learning strategy within pandemic Covid-19.

3. Aim of the study

The most important goal of our study is to investigate the effectiveness of self-directed learning as a distance learning strategy in pandemic Covid-19. The purpose of using self-directed learning is to accomplish the weaknesses of using distance learning as an alternative to the traditional method of teaching. The goal behind this study is to encourage the learners to be self-regulated and to rely more on their own efforts.

4. Research Questions

The present study addresses the following research questions:

- Q1. Is self-directed learning effective as a distance learning strategy, in pandemic Covid-19?
- Q2. To what extent is self-directed learning beneficial in distance learning.
- Q3. Is self-directed learning important when using online learning?

5. Research Hypotheses

From the above questions, we can assume the following hypotheses:

- ▶ Self-directed learning is an effective distance learning strategy in pandemic Covid 19.
- ▶ Self-directed learning is crucial to a far extent as a distance learning strategy.

6. Research Methodology

In this research, a descriptive method is followed. The data is collected through questionnaires as a primary tool to have more reliable data and to have access to the respondent's attitudes and opinions. The first questionnaire was designed for third year LMD students. The second questionnaire was devoted to the teachers of English, 20 teachers were asked to help in this study. This study aims at investigating the effectiveness of self-directed learning as a distance learning strategy during pandemic covid-19. The population of this research comprises third year LMD students at Msila University whereas the sample of this study was composed of 25 students who will be chosen randomly.

7. Significance of the study

This study is significant for both students and teachers. For students, it could be beneficial in making them aware of the benefits of being self-directed learners. This study could be also considered as a guide for the teachers, it could provide them with the needed information to help their student to be more self-regulated.

8. Structure of the study

The present research is divided into three chapters:

Chapter 01: it is devoted to self-directed learning section, including the definition, characteristics of self-directed learners, process and its advantages and disadvantages.

Chapter 02: it consists of two parts. The first part covers the methodology of the study and data analysis. It includes the methodological design, the description of the methods, population, sample, questionnaires and the description of data collection methods and tools. While the second part sheds light on the research findings and discussion.

Chapter 03: the last chapter deals with self-directed learning as an effective strategy to distance learning including.

9. Limitations of the Study

Our study has some limitations within which our study should be interpreted carefully. Some limitations of this study should be mentioned.

First limitation is due to the current situation of COVID-19. Teacher's questionnaire was distributed online. Thus, teachers answered from different universities not only Msila University. Moreover, time was another limitation for us we had to do many things in a short period. Due to time constraints, we were able only to use one tool of research which is questionnaire in order to get more reliable information. We would have conducted an experiment.

The results of this study may not be completely generalized because the sample was restricted to third year LMD students only.

10. Literature review

Modern-day changes at economic, social, cultural and political levels and education systems characterized by transformation and scarce resources, demand SDL, which is vital to students' success in education and in the world of work (Guglielmino, 2013). Self-directed learning is considered as new learning strategy that could cope with the modern technology. Students in the 21st century require skills that will prepare them to collaborate with others on a global level. (Louws, Meirink, Van Veen and Van Driel (2017), debate that the changing world is associated with the digital revolution where self-directedness and SDL have become vital (Guglielmino, 2013). Within this changing world, learners should learn to study more independently, in preparation for higher education, work and life in the 21st century. As a result of the unprecedented rate of change we face in all aspects of our lives, formal education and training no longer effectively assist students to face future learning desires (Brockett, 2006; Douglass & Morris, 2014).

Educators' expectations are important aspects to take into consideration in the self-directed teaching and learning development process, especially in motivating students to participate in SDL and to be more self-directed (Knowles et al., 2012; Lai, 2015). Examples of how educators may support their students to become self-directed learners, can be: a) to display SDL characteristics while teaching in order to establish a classroom structure that promotes SDL; b) to lay the foundation for SDL; c) to provide tools for self-managed learning; d) to construct a co-operative learning environment where he/she encourages students' learning

experiences; e) to facilitate students' initiatives for SDL; f) to assist as a mentor rather than an instructor; g) to embrace resources in the course that inspire students' self-directedness and attentiveness; and h) to deliver students who have knowledge of hands-on, self-directed activities (Du Toit-Brits & Van Zyl, 2017).

Schlosser and Anderson (1994) refer to Desmond Keegan's theory of distance education, in which the distance learning system must artificially recreate the teaching-learning interaction and re-integrate it back into the instructional process. This is the basis of their Iowa Model: to offer to the distance learner an experience as much like traditional, face-to-face instruction, via intact classrooms and live, two-way audio-visual interaction. In contrast, the Norwegian Model has a long tradition of combining mediated distance teaching with local face-to-face teaching (Rekkedal, 1994).

Hilary Perraton (1988) defines the role of the distance teacher. When, through the most effective choice of media, she meets the distance students face-to-face, she now becomes a facilitator of learning, rather than a communicator of a fixed body of information. The learning process proceeds as knowledge building among teacher and students.

Distance education systems now involve a high degree of interactivity between teacher and student, even in rural and isolated communities separated by perhaps thousands of miles. The Office of Technology Assessment stresses the importance of interactivity: distance learning allows students to hear and perhaps see teachers, as well as allowing teachers to react to their students' comments and questions. Moreover, virtual learning communities can be formed, in which students and researchers throughout the world who are part of the same class or study group can contact one another at any time of the day or night to share observations, information, and expertise with one another (VanderVen, 1994; Wolfe, 1994).

11. Definition of keywords

Effectiveness: it is the degree of improvement in the students' speaking skills in English language as a result of using debate strategy and measured statistically by using Eta square of the effect.

Strategy: is an action that managers take to attain one or more of the organization's goals. Strategy can also be defined as "A general direction set for the company and its various components to achieve a desired state in the future. Strategy results from the detailed strategic planning process.

Learning: the cognitive process of transforming information and experience into a relatively permanent change in one's skills, knowledge, behaviors and attitude.

Self-directed learning: the process of learning in which the learner assumes primary responsibility for planning, implementing and evaluating a learning project. The learner chooses what to learn and how to learn and also decides when to continue and when to end the learning project.

Distance learning: is a way of educating students online. Lectures and learning materials are sent over the internet. Students work from home not form classroom.

CHAPTER ONE: Self-directed Learning

Introduction

On March 11, 2020, the World Health organization declared COVID-19 a global pandemic. Following the speed with which COVID-19 spread to all parts of the world, and to contain the spread of the disease, most governments around the world, authorized unprecedented social containment measures to stem the tide. These measures among others required social distancing and the temporary physical closure of educational institutions. The University of Mohammed Boudhiaf had created a platform to make learning available from home without going to the institution.

COVID-19 has brought distance learning to a much wider audience. As a result, schools have had to create or fast-track online education plans to get teachers and students on board with the latest technology as quickly as possible. A collection of software applications and platforms to facilitate online education was already in place, though further improvement is needed to make these tools easier to learn and use.

With advancements in communication technology such as the telephone, radio, television and most recently the internet, new methods of learning, including distance learning, have emerged. Through the internet, students can now obtain instruction and learn with ease at home by simply clicking a few buttons on the computer to listen live or asynchronously to a professor thousands of miles away, interact with the professor, and solve problems without having to physically be in a classroom. While a more expensive option for education in terms of set up, distance education has progressed in concept and practice from an “anywhere” to an “anytime” education delivery method.

COVID-19 pandemic has changed the face of university education in Algeria and the world. The move towards remote teaching has denied medical students to do their practical work in hospitals, science students to access their laboratories where they conduct their experiments as part of their coursework and has denied students a chance to gain information in university libraries. This has had effects on both students and teachers progress in the academic year and has called for an abrupt change in the way they view teaching and learning. Self-directed learning has become a necessity during this pandemic.

1.1 Definition of self-directed learning:

As the name implies, self-directed learning is the learning that the individuals carry out on their own. In other words, the individuals themselves pay attention and direct their learning.

Self-directed learning has proven to be advantageous to the individuals in number of ways. These are, the individuals attain empowerment to take increasingly more responsibility of their decisions that are associated with the learning endeavor. Self-direction is best assumed as the characteristic that exists in some degree in every person or learning situation. Self-directed learning does not mean that all learning will take place in isolation from others. The individuals are required to communicate and take assistance and guidance from others. Self-directed learners are able to transfer learning, in terms of both knowledge and skills in terms of one situation to another. In self-directed learning, the individuals are required to make use of resources, such as, self-guided reading, participation in discussion groups, internship, electronic dialogues and reflective writing activities. In this learning, the educators are required to render an effective contribution by promoting dialogue with the learners, securing resources, evaluating outcomes and encouraging critical thinking (self-directed learning, 2006).

Self-Direction in adult learning has been a topic of increasing interest and investigation by scholars and practitioners of adult education since the mid 1900's. Different educators have represented it with a variety of terms, such as self-education, self-directed learning, independent study, autonomous learning, self-planned learning, adults' learning projects, independent study, lifelong learning and auto-didacticism. But each of these terms emphasizes the self-imposed responsibility of the individual learner in the learning process (Guglielmino et al, 2005). Probably the best definition of self-directed learning is that provided by M. Knowles (1975), he noted: in its broadest meaning, SDL describes a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes.

Suchinda & Muongmee (2007:38) wrote that "self-directed learning means learners taking responsibility for initiating and guiding their own learning which is an essential ingredient of lifelong learning and could take place in many settings."

Self-directed learning (SDL) views learners as responsible owners and managers of their own learning process. Self-directed learning integrates self-management (management of contexts, including the social setting, resources and action) with self-monitoring (the process whereby the learners monitor, evaluate and regulate their cognitive learning strategies) (Bolhuis, 1996 & Garrison, 1997)

In self-directed learning control gradually shifts from teachers to learners. Learners exercise a great deal of independence in setting learning goals and deciding what is worthwhile learning as well as how to approach the learning task within a given framework. – Lyman, 1997 & Morrow, Sharkey & Firestone, (1993).

1.2 Characteristics of self-directed learners

According to Hedge (2000:76), “a self-directed learner is one who is self-motivated, one who takes the initiative, one who has a clear idea of what he wants to learn, and one who has his own plan for pursuing and achieving his goal.” Hedge (2000:76) claims that self-directed learners:

- ❖ Know their needs and work productively with the teacher towards the achievement of their objectives.
- ❖ Learn both inside and outside the classroom.
- ❖ Can take classroom-based material and can build on it.
- ❖ Know how to use resources independently.
- ❖ Learn with active thinking.
- ❖ Adjust their learning strategies when necessary to improve learning.
- ❖ Manage and divide the time in learning properly.
- ❖ Don't think the teacher is a God who can give them ability to master the language.

1.3 The process of self-directed learning

Bolhuis, (1996 & Garrison, 1997) stated that, self-directed learning (SDL) views learners as responsible owners and managers of their own learning process. Self-directed learning integrates self-management (Management of context, including the social setting, resources and action) with self-monitoring (the process whereby the learners monitor, evaluate and regulate their cognitive learning strategies. i.e. SDL is composed of some components to accomplish this process.

1.3.1 Self-motivation

Dweck & Elliott, (1983) argue that, Motivation affects the learning strategies and cognitive processes an individual employ. That is to say, it increments the probability that individuals will pay consideration to something, think

about and hone it, and attempt to memorize it in a significant way. It moreover increases the likelihood that they will seek help when they experience trouble. Motivation directs an individual toward certain goals and fulfills their objectives. Motivation directs an individual toward certain goals and fulfills their objectives. It includes four components *self-efficacy*, *attributions*, *goal orientations* and *intrinsic motivation*.

1.3.1.1 Self-efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to the degree to which an individual is confident that he or she can perform a specific task or accomplish a specific goal (Bandura. 1997). i.e. people's beliefs in their capacities to accomplish and succeed in organizational tasks. Self-efficacy is crucial for SDL because it affects the extent to which learners engage and persist at challenging tasks. Self-efficacy raises students' chance to get high degree in a given task since they are familiar with previous difficult tasks.

1.3.1.2 Attributions

Heider (1958) was one of the first people to study attribution theory. He concluded that when people are trying to understand behavior, they are acting like psychologists. We don't simply passively observe our own and others' actions, but actively seek to explain them. From observing peoples' actions, people make inferences about intentions and responsibility. Attributions refer to how people interpret and explain causal relationships in the world; the process of deciding what caused behavior. For example, two students may do poorly on a test. One student may attribute her bad performance to bad luck, while the other student attributes her poor performance to lack of efforts. These attributions provide very different explanations of the same event. Attributions are important because they affect motivation, which in turn affects future performances, future effort and whether the individual will continue to participate or not.

1.3.1.3 Goal-orientations

Goal setting is a key motivational process (Locke & Latham, 1984). Goals are the targets that a learner aims to realize. When a learner sets his goals, he is ensuring that he is following the right path despite of the struggles he would face in the process of learning. Goal orientations influence student's motivation and push them forward. Dweck and Leggett (1998) proposed that learners adopt either *performance goals* or *learning goals*. Learning goal orientation is a tendency to enhance competence through acquiring new capacities and

mastering new situations. Performance goal orientation is a tendency which shows and validates competence by seeking favorable judgments from others (e.g. a coach or a supervisor)

1.3.1.4 Intrinsic motivation

Intrinsic motivation refers to behaviors that are engaged in for their own sake (Deci and Ryan, 2000). When a learner is intrinsically motivated his behaviors are driven by internal rewards. In other words, the motivation to engage in a behavior arises from within the individual because it is naturally satisfying to him. This contrasts with extrinsic motivation, which involves engaging in a behavior in order to earn external rewards or avoid punishment. Studies reveal that when performing a task because of intrinsic motivation results in satisfaction and desire to do the task again. In contrast, performing a task due to due to extrinsic motivation may lead to indifference or displeasure, and may decrease the desire to perform the task again.

1.3.2 Self- Management

According to Harvard University, self-management, which is also referred to as “self-control” or “self-regulation,” is the ability to regulate one’s emotions, thoughts, and behaviors effectively in different situations. This includes managing stress, delaying gratification, motivating oneself, and setting and working toward personal and academic goals. Students with strong self-management skills arrive to class prepared, pay attention, follow directions, allow others to speak without interruption, and work independently with focus. Self-control in children as young as age five can predict important life outcomes such as high school completion, physical health, income, single parenthood, substance dependence, and criminal involvement. Self-management skills focus on personal responsibility in the following areas: organization, goal setting, time management, self-motivation, stress management and accountability.

1.3.3 Self-monitoring

Every day we are faced with tasks that we need to finish and expectations we need to meet. These tasks can be personal, such as maintaining appropriate hygiene, or they can be professional, such as completing a task at work. For some of us, we are able to complete these tasks without support from someone or something else. Individuals with disabilities may require additional interventions to complete personal, educational, or professional tasks

independently and to learn to generalize these skills across settings. Teaching self-monitoring skills can be a very useful method to facilitate independence and skill generalization (Bellini & Peters, 2008). Children, adults, and adolescents can benefit from learning how to self-monitor. Self-monitoring is defined as: the process of attending to one's own actions and recording the presence or absence of a specified behavior (Mace, Belfiore, & Hutchinson, 2001). In other words, self-monitoring occurs when an individual keeps track of whether or not he or she has completed, are in the process of completing, or has gotten off track with a targeted skill or behavior.

1.3.4 Self-modification

Behavior modification is learning with a particular intent, namely clinical treatment and change (Ullmann & Krasner, 1965; p. 1). Initially, behavior modification referred largely to operant techniques and behavior therapy to respondent techniques. As early as 1965 behavior modification and behavior therapy were used interchangeably (O'Donohue & Krasner, 1995). Hence, Self-modification is to change one's behavior through techniques to improve behavior, such as altering behavior and reaction to stimuli through positive and negative reinforcement of adaptive behavior and/or the reduction of maladaptive behavior through positive and negative punishment.

1.4 Advantages of self-directed learning

- ✓ It encourages attention to learners' preconceptions. (National Council Research (2005:13).
- ✓ It encourages a culture of questioning, respect, and risk taking.
- ✓ The learners are able to learn more things and learn better (Knowles, 1975) in Hedge (2000:83).
- ✓ The learners can be more responsible for their own learning (Hedge, 2000:83).

From those advantages above, it can be interpreted that learners who have the ability to motivate themselves are better in extracting knowledge and information through utilizing their skills to reach their goals unlike other learners who depend more on teacher's authority in learning.

1.5 Disadvantages of self-directed learning

Mrs. Agnes Monica, Associate Professor, listed the following disadvantages:

- ✓ Possible for frequent errors, since the self-directed learners do not go back to the teacher they tend to fall in the same mistake over and over.
- ✓ Self-directed learning is quite time consuming. Learners must set their needs before start searching and learning.
- ✓ It needs an organized manner of planning; inquiring skills, decision making and self-evaluation of work.

Conclusion

This chapter has focused on the urgent need to use self-directed learning as an effective learning strategy in distance learning within the pandemic of COVID-19. We started by giving an overview to the phenomenon, then, providing a clear insight to self-directed learning, which is considered as an important strategy in teaching and learning. Moreover, this chapter sheds lights on the definitions of self-directed learning, characteristics of self-directed educators, the process of self-directed learning, and its advantages and disadvantages. The next chapter then will be devoted to the analysis of the collected data.

**CHAPTER TWO: Research
Methodology and Discussion of the
Results**

INTRODUCTION

This section is devoted to the practical part of this research work. The current research aims at investigating the effectiveness of self-directed learning as a distance learning strategy in Pandemic Covid-19. It consists of two parts: the first part provides a general description of the research design and the methodology used, then, presented including the data collection methods as well as the population and the sample. Besides, it provides a description for both teachers and students' questionnaires. While the second part deals with the discussion and the interpretation of the results.

Part one: Research Methodology and Design

2.1. Methodological Design

2.1.1. Description of Methods and Tools

Based on the nature of the study, the researcher adopted a descriptive method in order to test the hypotheses of the research. It is a descriptive in its nature because it aims at obtaining various ideas from students and teachers who used distance learning during pandemic and finding the effectiveness of using self-directed learning as a distance learning strategy. Furthermore, the data is collected quantitatively and qualitatively relying on a set of research instruments that are two questionnaires: the first one is designed to third year LMD students at Msila University, while the second is devoted for teachers of different orientations.

2.1.2. Description of Population and Sampling

The population of the present study comprises third year LMD students at the department of English at Msila University during the academic year 2020-2021. The overall sample for the research consisted of 25 Students. They were selected randomly from the whole population in order to respond to the research instruments addressed to them. The selection of such sample is based on the fact that third year students have studied online using the platform that was given by the head of the university for the almost a year hence, they are aware of the topic that is addressed to them.

2.2. Description of Data Collection Methods and Tools

2.2.1. Administration of Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire is administered to third year LMD students. We select randomly a sample of 25 students from the whole population of 50 students. It is important to say that the questionnaire have been distributed online in a group of second year at Msila University. All the questions were clear enough and understandable.

2.2.2. Description of Students' Questionnaire

The students' questionnaire is designed to gather data in order to see if students have used distance learning and self-directed learning within their learning career. Moreover, the questionnaire is designed to investigate the effectiveness of self-directed learning as a distance learning strategy in pandemic COVID-19. The questionnaire consists of ten (10) questions that are organized in a logical order. The questions used vary between open and closed questions.

2.2.2.1. Section One: On Distance Learning Through COVID 19 (Q1_Q4)

This section seeks to find out if students have used distance learning in their studies and to elicit student's attitude towards this strategy. In Q1, they are asked to see if they did use distance learning during the pandemic covid-19. Next, in Q2, they are asked to mention if distance learning is beneficial for them personally. In Q3, they are asked to describe the weaknesses of this strategy. In Q4, they are asked to say what the advantages of using distance learning are.

2.2.2.2. Section two: On self-directed learning (Q5_Q10)

In the first question of this section Q5, students are asked if they did rely on their personal efforts in learning during pandemic Covid-19. In Q6, students were asked to say how self-directed learning affects their cognition. In Q7 students were asked to choose whether self-directed learning effects on their motivation in a positive or a negative way. Moving to Q8, students were asked if self-directed strategy helped them when using distance learning. In Q9, they were asked to justify if they answer with "yes" to the previous question. Finally, in Q10, students were asked to mention what self-directed learning added to them when using online learning.

2.2.3 Administration of Teachers' Questionnaire

Teachers' questionnaire was administered to Msila University Teachers only, however due to the restriction posed by the pandemic Covid-19. The questionnaire was distributed

online and some teachers from other universities helped in answering the questionnaire. We have 20 answered questionnaires that we have studied and analyzed.

2.2.4. Description of Teachers' Questionnaire

The teacher's questionnaire consists of fourteen questions, classified into three sections. It includes close and open-ended questions.

2.2.4.1. Section One: Teacher's Background Information (Q1_Q2)

Questions in section one aim at gathering personal information about the target sample. Teachers are asked to specify their gender Q1 and the teaching experience Q2.

2.2.4.2. Section Two: teachers' attitude towards distance learning (Q3_Q9)

The second section was about teacher's attitude towards distance learning and the importance of using this strategy within pandemic Covid-19. In Q3 teachers are asked to say if they gave online courses to their students. Then, Q4 asks teachers to give their opinion on the usefulness of distance learning for their students. In Q5, teachers are asked to mention if the absence of the learning atmosphere affect the learning outcomes. In Q6, teachers are asked to indicate whether all students get the same amount of information when using distance learning or not. Q7 seeks for justification to the previous question. In Q8, teachers are asked to choose between synchronous or asynchronous learning. In Q9, they are supposed to justify their choice.

2.2.4.3 Section Three: teachers' attitude towards self-directed learning (Q10_Q14)

The third section is about teachers' attitude towards self-directed learning. In Q10, teachers are asked about the usefulness of self-directed learning. Then, Q11 was addressed to know how important is self-directed learning when their students' study online. Next, in Q12 teachers are asked to say whether self-directed learners are better in using distance learning or not. In Q13, teachers are asked to indicate how much do they agree or disagree on the effectiveness of self-directed learning as a distance learning strategy. Finally, Q14 was addressed to mention where the effect of self-directed learning appears when using distance learning.

Part Two: Surveys Analysis-results and Findings

Introduction

This part is concerned with the analysis of data and its results that have been collected through two questionnaires for both teachers and students. In doing so, quantitative and qualitative analysis procedures are used. Hence, findings of the gathered data will be presented in form of tables and pie charts.

2.2. The Analysis of Teachers and Students' Questionnaires

This part is mainly concerned with the quantitative and qualitative analysis obtained through the questionnaires administered to both Teachers and students.

2.2.1. The Analysis of Students' Questionnaire

Thirty questionnaires have been distributed to students and only twenty five were analyzed as sample.

Section One: Distance Learning

1. Did you use distance learning during the period of pandemic COVID-19?

| | Number | Percentage |
|-----|--------|------------|
| Yes | 23 | 92 % |
| No | 2 | 8% |

Table 2.2.1.1: Students' use of distance learning.

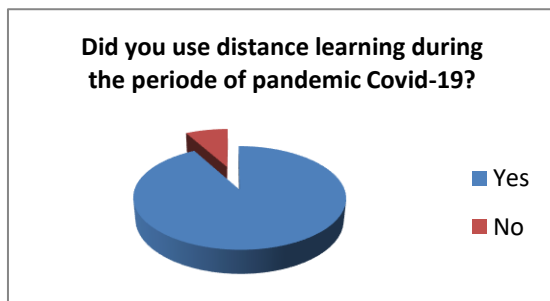


Figure 2.2.1.1: Pie Chart on students' use of distance learning.

Concerning this question, 23 out of 25 students with a rate of 92% have answered with yes and only 02 students with a rate of 08% whose answer is no.

2. Is Distance learning beneficial for you personally?

| | Number | percentage |
|-----|--------|------------|
| Yes | 14 | 56% |
| No | 11 | 44% |

Table2.2.1.2: students' attitude towards the usefulness of distance learning.

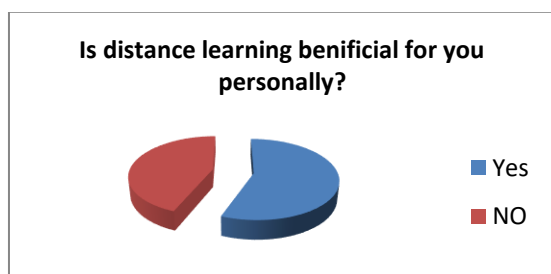


Figure2.2.1.2: Pie Chart on students' attitude towards the usefulness of distance learning.

Comment:

Concerning question two, 14 out of 25 students with a rate of 56% have answered with yes while 11 students with a rate of 44% have answered with no.

3. What are the weaknesses of distance learning for you?

We listed some of the answers as following:

- ❖ You can't ask enough questions.
- ❖ It gives less importance to the subject.
- ❖ The teacher can't control the class properly.
- ❖ It sometimes goes unclear when there are many details.
- ❖ Audio call class disables the face and body expressions which make it hard to understand sometimes.
- ❖ Bad network connection and health problems caused by the phone's blue light.
- ❖ There is no direct interaction between the learner and the teacher.
- ❖ Vagueness in the information that must be delivered.

Comment:

The students were not very satisfied with the experience of using distance learning. For example, they had a problem with understanding the lesson properly which later effects on their outcomes and grades.

4. What are the advantages of using distance learning?

We listed some of the answers as bellow:

- ❖ Save time and money (no traveling is needed).
- ❖ Lack of social interaction, so you are not risking of getting infected with Corona virus.
- ❖ You can study wherever and whenever you want.
- ❖ Became self-reliant and develop autonomy.
- ❖ Adapt with the new technology.
- ❖ Became less dependent on the teacher.

Comment:

Students found that distance learning is beneficial in a way that it saves time and money; students are able to study without travelling to the university. Moreover, they found that they became less dependent on the teacher experience and develop self-autonomy.

Section two: Self-directed learning

1. during pandemic COVID-19, did you rely on your personal efforts in learning without the guidance of the teacher? (Being self-directed)

| | number | percentage |
|------------|--------|------------|
| Yes | 21 | 84% |
| No | 4 | 16% |

Table 2.2.1.3: Students being self-directed.

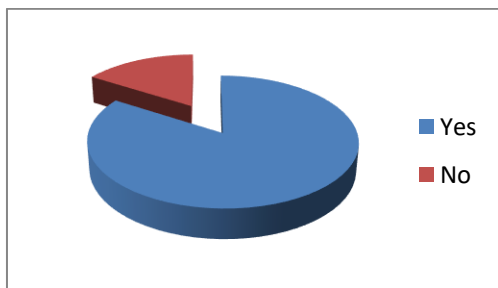


Figure2.2.1.3: Pie chart on students being self-directed.

Comment:

As it is shown in the table and the pie chart, 21 out of 25 students with a rate of 84% have answered with yes while only 04 students with a rate of 16% have answered with no.

2. How does self-directed learning affect your cognition?

We listed the frequent answers as shown below:

- ❖ It develops our cognitive ability and paves the way for critical thinking and for self-reliance.
- ❖ Develops my cognitive skills like memorizing and comprehending
- ❖ Learn how to read and analyze alone
- ❖ Started to seek answers for new many questions because of the tendency to look for new ideas.
- ❖ Develop a skill of solving problems easily because of getting used of facing difficulties alone.

Comment:

Students were very satisfied when using self-directed strategy to learn, they develop many skills which allow them to be more effective than other learners.

3. Did self-directed learning affect on your motivation negatively or positively?

| | Number | percentage |
|-------------------|--------|------------|
| Positively | 15 | 60% |
| Negatively | 10 | 40% |

Table2.2.1.4: the effect of self-directed learning on motivation.

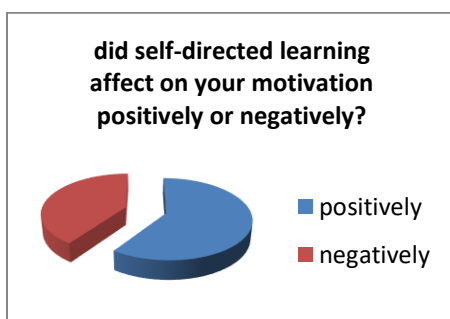


Figure2.2.1.4: on the effect of self-directed learning on motivation.

Comment:

Concerning question three, 15 out of 25 students with a rate of 60% have answered with “positively” While, 10 students with a rate of 40% have answered with “negatively”.

4. Does self-directed strategy help you in distance learning?

| | Number | percentage |
|-----|--------|------------|
| Yes | 18 | 72% |
| No | 07 | 28% |

Table2.2.1.5: the usefulness of self-direction in distance learning.

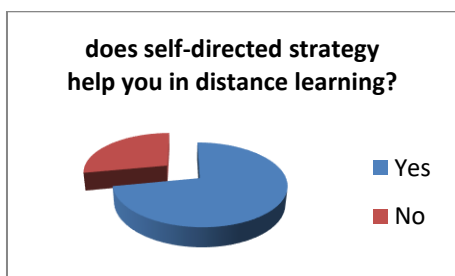


Figure2.2.1.5: on the usefulness of self-direction in distance learning.

Comment:

Moving to the question number four, 18 out of 25 students with a rate of 72% have answered with yes. While only 07 students with a rate of 28% have answered with no.

5. if yes, say how please.

We listed the most frequent answers as in bellow:

- ❖ I became an autonomous learner, self-reliant and independent which helped me a lot in maintaining the online courses although they were difficult.
- ❖ Through self-directed learning I fulfilled the weaknesses of distance learning.
- ❖ I became able to keep myself motivated during online courses since I had developed helpful cognitive skills.
- ❖ I get used with using the technology properly and know what the reliable sources are.

Comment:

Students think that, self-directed learning helped them as a strategy in distance learning. They argue that they became better in the way they think and the way they act while studying online.

6. What did self-directed learning add to you when using online learning?

We listed some answers as in bellow:

- ❖ I detached myself from the teacher' framework.
- ❖ Self-direction made distance learning more enjoyable.
- ❖ Being self-directed learner kept me motivated when studying online.
- ❖ By using self-directed learning, I know my goals more and recognize how to achieve them despite of the difficulty of distance learning.

Comment:

Students found that self-directed learning was an effective strategy in distance learning. It helped them by keeping motivated during distance learning. Students enjoyed attending online classes and started to achieve their goals easily.

2.2.2. Analysis and Discussion of Teachers' Questionnaire

Section One: Background Information

1. Specify your gender

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------|-----------|------------|
| Female | 14 | 70% |
| Male | 6 | 30% |
| Total | 20 | 100% |

Table 2.2.2.1: Gender Status

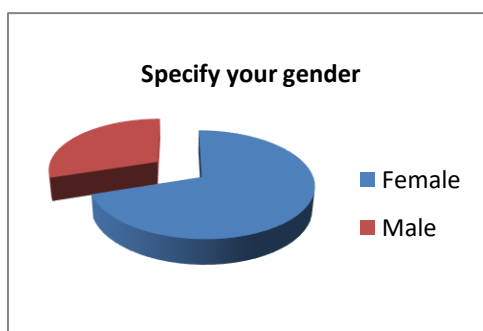


Figure 2.2.2.1: on Gender Status

Comment:

The table and the pie chart above represent the gender of the teachers. 14 were females with the rate of 70% and 06 were males with the rate of 30%.

2. How many years have you been teaching?

| Years of Experience | Frequency | Percentage |
|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1-5 | 09 | 45% |
| 6-10 | 08 | 40% |
| 11-15 | 03 | 15% |
| Total | 20 | 100% |

Table 2.2.2.2: Teachers’ Years of Teaching Experience

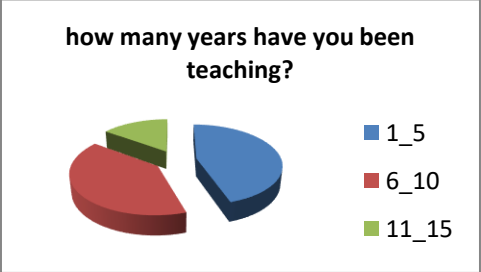


Figure 2.2.2.2: on Teachers’ years of teaching experience.

The obtained results concerning teacher's years of teaching experience show that 09 teachers with the rate of 45% have been teaching from one to five years, 08 teachers with the rate of 40% have been teaching from six to ten years. 03 teachers with the rate of 15% have been teaching from eleven to fifteen years.

Section Two: teachers’ attitude towards distance learning

1. Did you give online courses to your students?

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 18 | 90% |
| No | 02 | 10% |

Table2.2.2.3: Number of teachers giving online courses

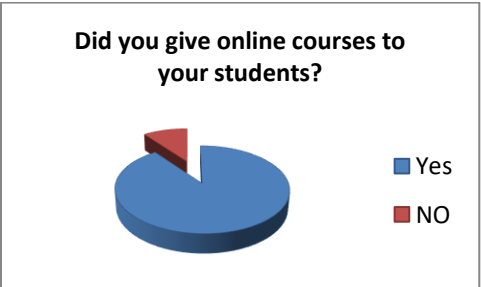


Figure2.2.2.3: on number of teachers giving online courses

Comment:

The gathered data reveals that 18 teachers with the rate of 90% have been giving online courses. While only 02 teachers with the rate of 10% did not.

2. Do you think distance learning strategy is beneficial for your students, especially within the current situation?

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 16 | 80% |
| NO | 04 | 20% |

Table: 2.2.2.4 teachers’ attitude towards the usefulness of distance learning.

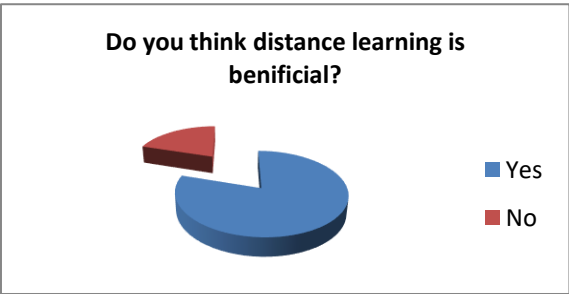


Figure: 2.2.2.4 on teachers’ attitude towards the usefulness of distance learning.

Concerning question number two, 16 teachers out of 20 with the rate of 80% found that distance learning is beneficial for their students. Yet, 04 teachers with the rate of 20% found this a non-helpful strategy.

3. Does the absence of learning atmosphere effect on learning outcomes?

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 15 | 75% |
| No | 05 | 25% |

Table.2.2.2.5: The effect of the absence of the learning atmosphere.

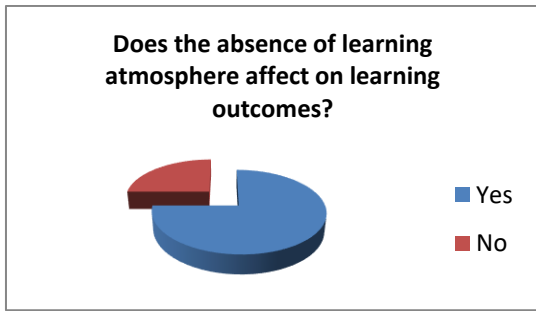


Figure.2.2.2.5: on the effect of the absence of the learning atmosphere.

Comment:

Moving to question three, 15 teachers with the rate of 75% have answered with yes. 05 teachers with the rate of 25% have answered with No.

4. When using distance learning, do all students get the same amount of information?

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------|-----------|------------|
| Yes | 07 | 35% |
| No | 13 | 65% |

Table.2.2.2.6: Amount of information when using distance learning.

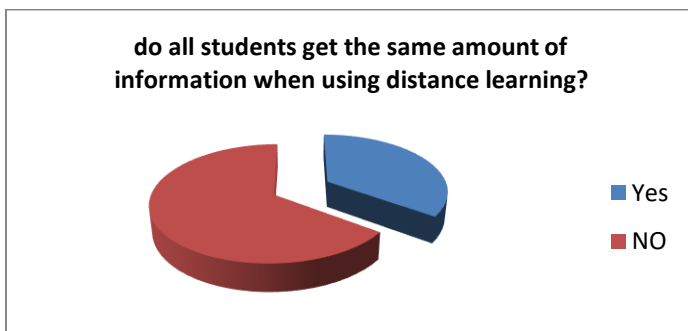


Figure.2.2.2.6: on the amount of information when using distance learning.

Comment:

Concerning question four, the gathered data have shown that; 07 teachers with the rate of 35% have answered with yes while 13 teachers with the rate of 65% have answered with No.

5. if No, please say why

We listed some answers as in bellow:

- ❖ Some students are not very familiar with technology; hence they feel lost all the duration of the course.
- ❖ Each student has his own learning style, they perceive information differently.
- ❖ Because some students lose their motivation when using distance learning.
- ❖ Some learners have certain capacities and skills which help them to extract more information than the others.
- ❖ It is difficult for some learners to adapt with using such strategy rather than the traditional one.
- ❖ The teacher is unable to deal with all the students' problems and needs individually.
- ❖ The absence of interaction could affect on how much the learner would receive information.

Comment:

Moving to question five, the teachers indicate some reasons that make learners receive information differently.

6. as a teacher, do you prefer...

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Synchronous learning | 13 | 65% |
| Asynchronous learning | 07 | 35% |

Table.2.2.2.7: synchronous vs. asynchronous learning.

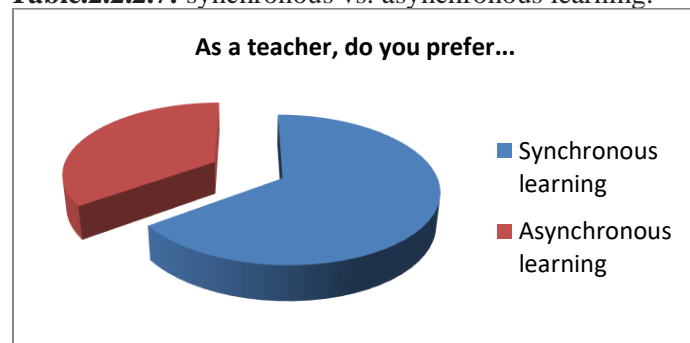


Figure.2.2.2.7: on synchronous vs. asynchronous learning.

Comment:

Concerning question six; the gathered data reveals that, 13 teachers with the rate of 65% have choose synchronous learning. Yet, 07 teachers with the rate of 35% prefer asynchronous learning.

7. Please, justify your choice.

a. Synchronous learning:

- Students can ask their questions during the online course which is quite similar to the traditional method of learning.
- Students become more engaged in their learning.
- Students could benefit from each other's.
- Students feel motivated when working together.
- Synchronous learning creates a sense of collaboration between the learners.

b. Asynchronous learning:

- Asynchronous learning gives the opportunity for learners to check the delivered courses when and wherever they want.
- Students could learn at the pace and the order they prefer.
- Shy students may feel more comfortable when using emails rather than live conferences.

Comment:

The data presents teachers' justification of choosing synchronous or asynchronous learning.

Section Three: teachers' attitude towards self-directed learning.

1. Do you think self -directed learning is beneficial for your students?

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 17 | 85% |
| No | 03 | 15% |

Table.2.2.2.8: teachers' attitude towards the usefulness of self-directed learning.

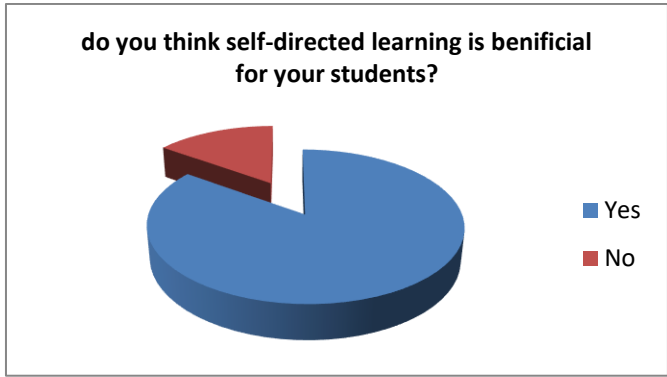


Figure.2.2.2.8: on teachers’ attitude towards the usefulness of self-directed learning.

Comment:

Concerning the first question in section three, 17 teachers with the rate of 85% have answered with Yes. 03 teachers with the rate of 15% have answered with No.

2. according to you, how much important is self-directed learning for students when they study online?

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Very Important | 16 | 80% |
| Somewhat Important | 04 | 20% |
| Not Important at All | 0 | 0.0% |
| Total | 20 | 100% |

Table.2.2.2.9: the importance of self-directed learning for students when studying on-line.

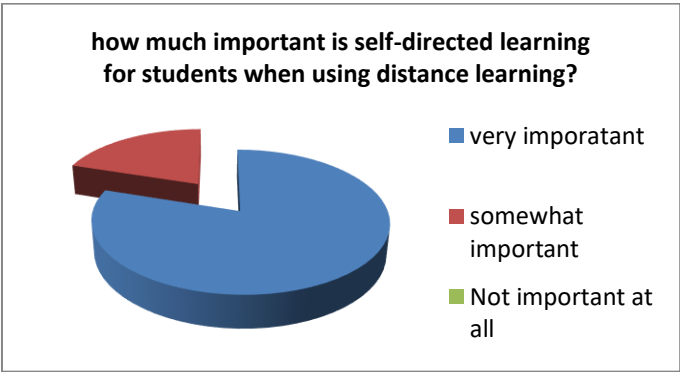


Figure.2.2.2.9: on the importance of self-directed learning for students when studying on-line.

Comment:

Moving to the next question, the gathered data reveals that, 16 teachers out of 20 teachers with the rate of 80% found that self-directed is “very important” when using distance learning. Yet, 04 teachers with the rate of 20% found this strategy “somewhat important”.

3. Do you think self-directed learners are better in using distance learning?

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Yes | 16 | 80% |
| No | 04 | 20% |

Table.2.2.2.10: teachers’ attitude toward self-directed learners using distance learning.

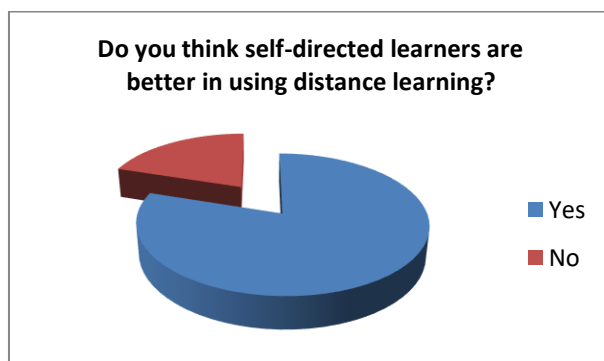


Figure.2.2.2.10: on teachers’ attitude toward self-directed learners using distance learning.

Comment:

Moving to question three, 16 teachers out of 20 teachers with the rate of 80% have answered with Yes. 04 teachers with the rate of 20% have answered with No.

4. Do you agree that self-directed learning is an effective distance learning strategy?

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| a) Strongly agree | 11 | 55% |
| b) Agree | 06 | 30% |
| c) Disagree | 03 | 15% |
| d) Strongly disagree | 00 | 0% |

Table.2.2.2.11. Teacher’s attitude towards: the effectiveness of self-directed learning.



Figure.2.2.2.11: on teacher’s attitude towards: the effectiveness of self-directed learning.

Comment:

Concerning question four on teacher’s attitude towards the effectiveness of self-directed learning as a strategy, the majority of teachers; 11 out of 20 with the rate of 55% answer with strongly agree, 06 with the rate of 30% answer with agree and only 03 teachers with the rate of 15% answer with disagree.

5. Where does the effect of self-directed learning appear when using distance learning? (Multiple choices)

| | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Higher understanding | 10 | 50% |
| Higher motivation | 07 | 35% |
| Higher grades | 03 | 15% |
| Total | 20 | 100% |

Table2.2.2.12: The effect of self-directed learning.

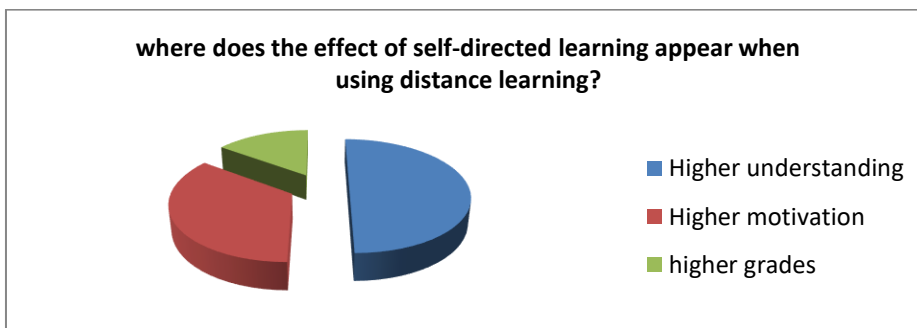


Figure2.2.2.12: Pie chart on: the effect of self-directed learning.

According to the results related to the effect of self-directed learning when using distance learning, 10 teachers with the rate of 50% believe that it provides higher understanding, 07

teachers with the rate of 35% think that self-directed learning provides students with a higher motivation. Finally, only 03 teachers out of 20 teachers think that the effect appears in students' grades.

2.2.3. Discussions of Questionnaires' Main Results

The following part includes discussions of both students and teachers.

2.2.3.1. Discussion of Students Questionnaires' Main Results

The analysis of the collected data from the students' questionnaire helps us draw a set of results to see if students have used distance learning and self-directed learning within their learning career. Moreover, the results gathered helped us to investigate the effectiveness of self-directed learning as a distance learning strategy in pandemic Covid-19. To begin with, the majority of students 92% indicate that they did use distance learning during the period of pandemic Covid-19. This means that they applied distance learning to learn. In opposite to 08% who did not use distance learning to study; perhaps they had no access to the internet. Besides, 56% of students consider that distance learning was beneficial for them. That is to say, they benefit from using this strategy when learning. Furthermore, the results show several weaknesses of using distance learning. This means that this strategy is not perfect but it needs to be enhanced in some way. In other hand, the data gathered reported some advantages of using such strategy to learn. The students mention the strengths of distance learning claiming that it was a good alternative to the traditional way of teaching.

Next section was about self-directed learning. 84% of students indicate that they relied on their personal efforts to learn, without the guidance of the teacher. This means that the respondents were self-regulated while only 16% of students did not rely on their efforts to learn; perhaps they had no idea of how to learn by themselves. Or they like to learn only inside the framework of the teacher. The respondents described how self-directed learning affects their cognition. According to students' answers about if self-directed learning affect on their motivation positively or negatively, 60% have answered with "positively" which means that self-directed learning is a solution for those who lose their motivation each time they take online courses. However, 40% of students indicate that self-directed learning have affected their motivation negatively; may because they used to receive an extrinsic motivation like a reward from the teacher for example, which now with self-directed learning it is not available anymore.

Additionally, concerning the question related to students' opinion on the usefulness of self-direction in distance learning. 72% of students agree that it was a helpful strategy in distance learning. That is to say; once a student is a self-directed learner he is better in distance learning than any other regular learner since according to the respondents, self-directed learning could fulfill the weaknesses of distance learning. While 28% of students found it a non helpful strategy in distance learning; perhaps they could elaborate other strategies or skills to help them in distance learning rather than using self-directed learning. Those who answered with yes in the previous question justified their answers claiming that they become better in different aspects. For example, they have developed some cognitive skills. Finally, the students have mentioned several answers related to the question: what did self-directed learning add to you when using online learning? They argue that with self-directed learning they were able to enjoy distance learning and stay motivated at the same time. This means that, self-directed learning was an effective strategy in distance learning.

2.2.3.2. Discussion of Teachers Questionnaires' Main Results

The sample of the study is heterogeneous. It consists of teachers from both genders who held different degrees and each one has some years of experience in teaching. First of all, The majority of teachers indicate that they have delivered online courses during the pandemic Covid-19. Since distance learning was instituted by the ministry of high education in order to avoid gatherings. Moreover, 80% of teachers claimed that distance learning was a beneficial strategy for their students. Yet, only few teachers found this strategy unhelpful during the pandemic of Covid-19 perhaps they had difficulties to contact their students or they were not satisfied with this strategy in general.

Additionally, 65% of teachers argue that when their students use distance learning they do not receive the same amount of information. They claim that the learning styles, motivation and the absence of interaction are features that effect on how much information they will receive. Besides, they add saying that they are unable to deal with the students' needs one by one especially because some students were not able to adapt with using this strategy.

According to their experience, 65% of teachers prefer synchronous learning, arguing that it is closer to the traditional method of teaching. Thus, students are engaged in learning, feel motivated when working together and may ask question during the course. However, 35% of teachers prefer asynchronous learning claiming that this strategy gives the students the opportunity to check the delivered lessons as they like. Hence, they learn at the pace they

order they prefer. Also, shy students would feel more comfortable than in synchronous learning.

For 85% of teachers, self-directed learning was regarded as a beneficial strategy for students. Furthermore, the majority of them indicate that this strategy was also important in distance learning and self-directed learners were better than other learners in using distance learning. In addition, the majority of teachers agree that self-directed learning is an effective distance learning strategy and the effect appears according to them in higher motivation and higher understanding of the lessons also higher grades.

2.2.4. Recommendations

The research's findings have confirmed that self-directed learning is very important for students especially if the pandemic of corona virus last for a long time, this strategy could be the best alternative for the traditional method of teaching. The research also has proved that self-directed learning is an effective distance learning strategy. Based on the results of the study some recommendations are as follow.

- Train instructors to develop and deliver distance education courses that help overcome obstacles such as motivation and time management.
- Promote distance learning in social media to target potential students and encourage them to take courses.
- Urge government agencies to accredit distance learning courses and programs.
- Students should rely more on their efforts through searching and reading books.
- Teachers should provide their students with the needed advice on how to be a self-directed learner.
- The teachers should include self-directed learning as a strategy to distance learning to enhance their motivation and self-efficacy to overcome their difficulties.

CONCLUSION

This Chapter presents the research design, methodology, description, analysis and the discussion of teachers and students questionnaires' findings. It involves the analysis of both questionnaires that are designed in order to know their attitudes and perceptions towards the effectiveness of using self-directed learning as a distance learning strategy. Lastly, some recommendations, dedicated to teachers of English, are provided in this section basing on the results obtained from the questionnaire.

Chapter Three: Self -directed learning as an effective strategy to distance learning during pandemic Covid-19

3.1 Distance Learning

Due to social distancing, teaching and learning methods have changed. In this respect, distance learning is a key to keep the learning process going. The World Wide Web has made information access and distribution of educational content available to a large fraction of the world's population and helped to move Distance Education (DE) to the digital era. DE has become increasingly common in many universities worldwide (Allen & Seaman, 2017). Distance education is an educational experience where instructors and learners are separated in time and space (Keegan, 2002) which means it can happen away from an academic institution and can lead to a degree or credential (Gunawardena, McIsaac, & Jonassen, 2008).

Hence, distance learning is a field of education that focuses on teaching methods and technology with the aim of delivering teaching, often on an individual basis, to students who are not physically present in a traditional educational setting such as a classroom. It has been described as a process to create and provide access to learning when the source of information and the learners are separated by time and distance, or both (Honeyman & Miller, 1993). The United States Distance Learning Association defined distance learning as the organizational framework and process of providing instruction at a distance. Distance education takes place when a teacher and student(s) are physically separated, and technology (i.e., voice, video, data, or print) is used to bridge the instructional gap. (USDLA, Glossary, p 45)

Thus, distance learning is a form of education that includes the physical separation of the students and teachers during instruction, with the use of different technologies to make it simple for the students to interact with teacher and with one another. Moreover, the term distance learning represents approaches that focus on opening access to education and training, freeing learners from the constraints of time and place. It offers flexible learning opportunities to individual and group learners. The potential impact of distance learning on all education has been emphasized by the development of internet-based technologies, particularly the World Wide Web. It can be described as learning involving implementation of information, computing and communications technology applications in more than one location (Webster & Hackley, 1997, p. 1284).

3.1.1. Distance Learning Historical Background

A Critical History of Distance Education” Jennifer Sumner stated that, although its beginnings are disputed, the history of distance education is well documented, especially in

the 20th century” (Sumner). Meaning that, distance learning origins are known despite of the huge number of sources. Some sources trace distance learning as far back at the 1700s. Soon after this time, distance education was practiced through a method called correspondence education. This form of education grew without bounds, and swept across countries.

According to Mike Erwin of the University of Advancing Technology, the process was very simple: students received instruction via mail and responded with assignments or questions to the instructor. The process was very slow and could take several weeks for a response from the instructor. Correspondence courses grew in spite of the drawbacks, in large part thanks to maturation in postal service that allowed correspondents to study across long distances.

Some argue that the beginning of distance learning was in 1840, when an English educator, Sir *Isaac Pitman*, taught shorthand by mail. Pitman would mail text on postcards to students, and students would mail their assignments back to him. (Michael G. Moore and Greg Kearsley, 2004)

As time went on, technological advances played a pivotal role in distance education. The introduction of the radio allowed universities to broadcast information and courses to students. In 1922, Pennsylvania State College became the first college to broadcast courses across radio networks. About a decade later, the University of Iowa followed suit, becoming the first university to employ television as a learning tool. The University of South Africa today is known as one of the world’s open distance learning mega colleges, as it became a champion and innovator of distance learning since reshaping its mission in 1946.

Technology continued to allow advances during the 1980s. According to Foundations of Distance Education, “The possibility of teaching face to face at a distance was achieved by an electronics revolution in the 1980s. The deregulation of the telecommunications industry allied to the speeding up of chips and the introduction of broadband technologies brought about this veritable revolution” (Keegan, 1996). This allowed students to communicate with one another and their professors, so that they learned interactively, rather than just being taught passively.

After the television, the personal computer with internet capabilities was the next major invention to revolutionize distance education. In 1989 the University of Phoenix became the first institution to launch a fully online college institution that offered both bachelors and

masters degrees. Keegan goes on to write, “In the late 1990s distance education was a valued component of many education systems and has proved its worth in areas where traditional schools, colleges, and universities have difficulties in meeting demand such as large systems capable of handling 100,000 students or more (Keegan, 1996). Distance learning had greatly developed by the 1990s through the use of satellite virtual classrooms, mobile telephones, video conferencing, and the Internet.

3.1.2. Nature of Distance Learning and its Characteristics

Distance education is a form of education in which the participants in educational process teacher and learners are physically separated, and communicate by different means and at different times, from the definition we can differentiate the main characteristics of distance education.

- Separation of teacher and learners in space and time.
- Use of different media to realize the interaction among teacher, learners, and educational content.
- The provision of two ways of communication between teacher and learners.
- Control of the learning process by learners rather than by teachers.

According to scientists examining the nature of distance education by indicating its special features, which distinguish it from traditional education:

a. Sociability: distance education satisfies the continuously changing needs of society for educated staff in different fields of human activities.

b. Flexibility and independence: distance education gives an opportunity to learn independent from time and place. The learners define self-pace learning.

c. Individuality: the teacher personalizes the distance education courses in keeping with characteristic features of learners. He chooses suitable technologies for distance education.

Participants in distance education are teachers, learners and learning content.

Teachers:

In distance education, teachers are assigned a new role. Unlike in traditional teaching where the teacher is the main figure in education, he delivers the lectures and controls the

pace of the course. In distance education, the teacher's role is limited to an adviser and a coordinator to the process of learning. In distance learning the process of learning is shared between the learner and the teacher.

Learners:

In distance learning, learners have a new role that differs from that in the traditional method of learning. They become the central part in distance learning. They determine the speed of learning and the preparation.

Contents:

The learning content is composed of materials already used in traditional education or specially created for distance education. The existence of modern information technologies allows for diversification of the learning content with voice, pictures and videos. The learning content is dynamic, it can be renewed continuously. Materials are delivered to learners by using new communication technologies mails, mass media and internet.

Distance learning requires **interaction** between participants in the learning process. The interaction determines to a certain extent the effectiveness of distance education. Moore (1993) specifies three types of interaction:

3.1.2.1. Learner-teacher interaction:

It provides motivation for education, feedback and dialogue between these participants. Learners consult teachers in various ways. The feedback is very important and gives teachers interactions about the level of learning. The feedback should be timely in order for the teachers to be able to correct and adapt the learning contents based on the circumstances and the needs of learners.

3.1.2.2. Learner -learner interaction:

It includes formal and informal communication between learners. Isolation is an essential problem in distance education. It can be overcome by exchange of information among students: exchange of ideas and dialog through discussions, working together and solving issues.

3.1.2.3. Learner-content interaction:

It includes the methods of delivering content, various ways for navigation through it, and searching for specific information.

3.1.2.4. Nature of communication between participants in distance learning:

Synchronous Learning:

Synchronous learning refers to learning/teaching that takes place simultaneously via an electronic mode. Synchronous voice or text chat rooms provide an opportunity of teacher-student and student-student interaction. Apart from chat, video-conferencing facilitates face-to-face communication. Web conferences through surveys, polls and question-answer sessions can turn out to be more interactive than video conferencing.

Synchronous mode instills a sense of community through collaborative learning (Teng, Chen, Kinshuk & Leo, 2012; Asoodar, Atai, Vaezi & Marandi, 2014). A synchronous virtual classroom is a place for instructors and students to interact and collaborate in real time. Using webcams and class discussion features, it resembles the traditional classroom, except that all participants access it remotely via the Internet. Lessons can be recorded and added to an e-library. Using the archived e-library, students can access and replay teacher's lectures as many times as necessary to master the material. Direct interaction with teachers and students in real time is very much like a traditional face-to-face classroom, rather better, as distance is no more a barrier and by connectivity via the Internet no time is wasted in traveling. Etc. Synchronous sessions can result in high levels of motivation to stay engaged in online activities due to teacher and class-fellows presence (Yamagata-Lynch, 2014). Instant feedback and answers can help students resolve any problems they encounter in learning. Facial expressions and tones of voice can aid them to have the human feel at a broader spectrum and lead to global interaction without much cost.

Asynchronous E-Learning:

An asynchronous mode of learning/teaching has been the most prevalent form of online teaching so far because of its flexible *modus operandi* (Hrastinski, 2008). Asynchronous environments provide students with readily available material in the form of audio/video lectures, handouts, articles and power point presentations.

Asynchronous e-learning is the most adopted method for online education (Parsad & Lewis, 2008) because learners are not time bound and can respond at their leisure. The opportunity of delayed response allows them to use their higher order learning skills as they can keep thinking about a problem for an extended time period and may develop divergent thinking. The spontaneity of expression is replaced by a constructed response. Therefore, asynchronous space leads to a self-paced, independent, student-centered learning (Murphy, Rodríguez-Manzanares & Barbour, 2011). Hence, asynchronous e-learning can scaffold students' previous knowledge with new concepts (Lin, Hong & Lawrenz, 2012).

Less reliance on memory and notes and more opportunity of discussions with peer groups help build critical thinking and deep learning (Huang & Hsiao, 2012). Shyness is reduced due to the distance mode, which alleviates the fear of the teacher. As there is less pressure than a real time encounter, the affective filter remains low and learners can respond more innovatively and creatively. The chances of getting irritated by technological problems (like low speed and non-connectivity) are the least, as adequate time to attempt online activities is available.

3.3.3 Advantages of distance Learning:

Distance learning might not be the best choice for every student seeking to pursue a college degree or university program but the list of advantages seems to outweigh the list of disadvantages.

I. Study from Anywhere, Anytime

The best thing about the distance education is you could learn it from anywhere and at any time. It does not matter in part of the country you are living you can join the course and start learning. Even if your course is offered by an international school you could easily get access to course material if you are a citizen of a different country. Get all the knowledge and training anywhere you reside on the planet (Nagrале, 2013).

II. Saving Significant Amount of Money

According to Bijeesh (2017), for any given program, the fee of a distance education degree (online or otherwise) may be much more affordable than the fee of a regular on-campus degree. Students who are looking for economically viable options can go for a distance learning program. You don't have to live in the same city or the same country to attend the

learning institution of your choice. You can study wherever you have access to a computer and Internet connection. Moreover, the course offered at distance learning centers are cheaper than the courses provided at traditional education centers (Brown, 2017).

III. No Commuting

Nagrale (2013) stated that if you are opting for a distance education, then you do not have to commute in crowded buses or local trains. You need a computer with an internet connection in your home. Entire college would be in your bedroom and you do not have to go out. Commuting is the most difficult part because you waste a lot of time, money, and more importantly the energy. No one likes commuting for long hours.

IV. Flexibility to Choose

Learners will have to follow a set schedule of learning as per the curriculum of the school if they are following traditional ways of learning. But different types of distance learning allow learners to set their learning schedule as per their convenience without following a regular schedule of learning. Even if they are out of touch from learning process, distance learning program offers them flexibility to choose their course of teach (Brown, 2017).

V. Saving Time

Bijeesh (2017) argued that there's no time wasted in going to and from college, no time wasted waiting for a bus or train. In a distance learning program, your classroom is right in your bedroom - the study material on your desk or the e-material on your computer. Students who don't have enough time on their hands can turn to distance education as an option and pursue it from the comfort of their homes.

VI. Earn While You Learn

Those who want to improve their resume by getting higher education and without breaking their existing job then distance learning can be the best option for them. Learners can go on earning their livelihood along with improving their qualification as distance learning will accommodate both learning as well as earning (Brown, 2017).

3.3.4. Disadvantages of Distance education:

Although distance learning offers more people an opportunity to attain higher education, it is not all advantages and benefits.

I. High Chances of Distraction

According to Bijeeesh (2017), with no faculty around for face-to-face interaction and no classmates who can help with constant reminders about pending assignments, the chances of getting distracted and losing track of deadlines are high. You need to keep yourself motivated and focused if you want to successfully complete your distance learning course. Distance education is not a good idea if you tend to procrastinate and can't stick to deadlines. Moreover, if you have any doubt then you have to clear yourself without taking help from your teacher or friends since you cannot talk to friends and other colleagues that you do in a normal college course (Nagrle, 2013). It only requires one to be self-motivated and focused to be able to complete a course successfully (Brown, 2017).

II. Complicated Technology

Brown (2017) explained that any student seeking to enroll for a distance learning program needs to invest in a range of equipment including computer, webcam, and stable internet connection. There is absolutely no physical contact between students and instructors as instruction is delivered over the internet. This overdependence on technology is a major drawback to distance learning. In case of any software or hardware malfunction, the class session will come to a standstill, something that can interrupt the learning process. Moreover, the complicated nature of the technology used in distance learning only limits online education to students who are computer and tech savvy.

III. No Social Interaction

Learners will often be studying alone and so they may feel isolated and miss the social physical interaction that comes with attending a traditional classroom. Moreover, they don't have the chance to practice the lessons verbally. The lack of physical interaction in the education process may cause many problems, such as a great degree of flaming and isolation (Dyru, 2000). Brown (2017) held the idea that learning in a brick-and-mortar institution presents students with the opportunity to meet and interact with people from different locations on a personal level. Distance learning only limits students to classes and learning materials that are based online. Though students can interact through chat rooms, discussion boards, emails and/or video conferencing software, the experience cannot be compared to that of a traditional campus. Hara and Kling's controversial study (2000) also found that the difficulty and distress experienced by students online might not be adequately understood. Working alone at night caused many complexities and depressing experiences.

IV. Difficulty Staying in Contact with Instructors

If learners ever have trouble with assignments, or questions about a lecture while in a traditional class it's generally quite simple to talk to the instructor before or after class or schedule meetings online at a different time. When learners are distance learning, however, they are going to have more difficulty getting in touch with their instructor. Though they can send an email, it's definitely not going to get them the immediate response they would get if they were able to sit down with their instructor (Hutt, 2017).

V. Job Markets Do Not Accept Online Degrees

Nagrle (2013) believed this is could be quite dangerous if you are totally relying on distance education for a degree. You might get a degree but that is not going to be recognized by private companies in the job market and the same problem in government jobs. Still employers prefer a degree from a regular college over online or distance education. They think that distance education is still not a serious form of education.

3.2. Self-directed learning as an effective strategy to distance learning

3.2.1. Self-directed learning as a strategy

Self-directed learning does not mean giving up on teaching standards. It is simply a way that allows students to decide how they learn and present the material. It also is not a means for replacing the teacher, as there is still a need for a teacher to guide and model important strategies. Some of these strategies according to Knowles, (1975) include:

- **Learning to Set Goals:**

The teacher can lead students in setting goals. Together, they can make a list of topics about which the student will set out to master. Students can then document their learning results and feel a sense of accomplishment as they check off topics. Teachers can help students set realistic and obtainable goals until the student is ready to do this process on their own.

- **Advancing Understanding:**

It is important to allow students to start with a familiar topic. This will help guide students through the learning process and challenge them to learn new facts about a known topic. In this way, students will begin to understand how they learn new information.

Teaching the Difference in Useful and Useless Information:

As students begin to take charge of their learning, it will be important for them to know how to determine if information is valid and reliable or simply fun or a fallacy. Part of learning how to learn is: knowing what information can be trusted. Teachers may provide perimeters for gaining information until students acquire a full understanding of this process.

- **Sharing New Knowledge:**

Given a list of topics or standards, students may choose what most interests them to research and create a slide presentation. Once the research is completed, students can share their presentations. This will further develop skills needed to be both a presenter and an attentive audience member.

- **Creating a Challenge:**

Using game-based strategies will encourage students' participation. Just like adults, students sometimes need friendly competition and rewards for working hard toward completion of a project. One strategy is to provide students with a Bingo card of options. Each card might have nine activities based on the standard needing to be learned. Students can then choose three to complete. The activities can then provide choices for each learning style. One choice may be a cooperative learning activity; one might be a creative writing; while one may be informative writing. One choice may reach the artistic learner while another may allow the student to do a book report or study a map or diagram.

- **Getting Creative:**

Have students create something to show what they have learned. By creating a habitat, a diorama, a song or poem, a short story, a model, or a map, students begin to apply their understanding and tap into their creativity.

- **Allowing Collaboration:**

Self-directed learning does not have to be a single-person strategy. Students need to know how to work together, and self-directed learning is a perfect way to encourage cooperative learning. Students who work together can support each other and learn to communicate their own understandings. They may brainstorm to collect ideas and then chose a common topic to further develop.

With the wealth of online resources at today's students' fingertips, self-directed learning is easily implemented in the classroom – whether traditional or virtual. It is a great way to reach virtual learners who may easily become distracted in video conferencing styles of teaching or who need valuable things to do independently. No matter which classroom setting, students

will gain more than the just the knowledge they are researching as they will also develop important life skills in reaching their learning goals.

For those that are used to other-directed instruction, teachers may want to begin by modeling and using this new technique along with traditional means of instruction delivery. Remember, teachers are still needed to guide and monitor the exploration of topics. However, soon teachers and students will most likely determine that they learn best when students take charge of their learning.

3.2.2. Self-directed learning as an effective strategy to distance learning.

By using self-directed learning, students learn how to navigate, evaluate and filter through the Internet: they use their search and retrieval skills to sift through the wealth of resources they have access to online; they evaluate their sources to identify data they can comprehend and learn from; they filter out inappropriate or unhelpful resources that could take them away from their learning path; and, they become more responsible and digitally literate learners who are take a proactive stance with how they interact with and leverage online resources. Students become trusted modern learners students become highly proficient in a range of technological applications and media

The most important factors need to consider for online distance learning methods are the student must possess computer/Internet literacy (Hernandezselles & Munoz-carril, 2019), self-directed and high-level motivation of learning (El-Saoud, 2016) to complete their study. Self-directed learners tend to search the online learning platform for resources. Researchers highlighted that a student who has self-directed learning element are possessed high self-disciplined, self-independent study and high self-confident to complete a task in online distance learning (Zainuddin, 2019). So, according to experts, self-directed learning is a very important and effective strategy in distance learning. Self-directed learners tend to be more familiar with internet using and networking. Thus, they were effective learners and they had no problem in adapting with distance learning.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The pandemic Covid-19 has affected our world in different aspects. In education, it restricted our ability to get in touch with our teachers and class mates. Distance learning was the best solution to carry on learning within those circumstances. However, this strategy was not adequate enough to replace the traditional method of teaching. Thus, in this research we investigated the effectiveness of self-directed learning as an effective strategy to distance learning in order to see if this strategy could compensate the face to face learning.

The current research work takes place in Mohammed Boudhiaf University in Msila, the case of third year LMD English students, it intends to determine the effectiveness of self-directed learning as a distance learning strategy, it also seeks to determine teacher's and learner's attitude towards it.

Our study strives to answer the following questions: is self-directed learning an effective strategy to distance learning in pandemic Covid-19? To what extent is self-directed learning beneficial in distance learning? Is self-directed learning important when using online learning? Additionally, we hypothesize that self-directed learning is an effective strategy to distance learning.

To carry out our study, a descriptive method has been adopted. The data have been collected through a combination of quantitative and qualitative study. The study is composed of questionnaires for both students and teachers that were analyzed carefully. The findings reveal that self-directed learning is an effective distance learning strategy. Both students and teachers show positive attitude towards the use of self-directed learning in distance learning.

Therefore, the framework of this study consists of three chapters, the first chapter deals with the theoretical part that includes certain concepts related to self-directed learning. The

second chapter is devoted for the practical part of this research paper. It is about the research design and analysis of data which was analyzed, discussed, and interpreted in order to test our hypothesis. The third chapter is devoted for self-directed learning as an effective strategy to distance learning. This section sheds light on distance learning, in one hand and on using self-regulation to benefit better when using distance learning in other hand.

Finally, we recommended the teachers to include self-directed learning as a strategy to distance learning to enhance their motivation and self-efficacy to overcome their difficulties. We also recommended government agencies to accredit distance learning courses and programs. Furthermore, we recommended the learners to rely more on their efforts through searching and reading books.

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- SEMINAR ON SELF DIRECTED LEARNING, MICRO TEACHINGSUBMITTED TO:
Mrs. Agnes Monica, Associate Professor, Department of Psychiatric Nursing, Saveetha University. SUBMITTED BY: Mrs. Shanthi S.N. MSc Nursing Ist Year, Saveetha University.
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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

We would be very grateful if you could devote some of your time to answer the following questions meant for an academic research on self-directed learning as an effective distance learning strategy. Your answers will be confidently treated.

Section One: On Distance Learning Through COVID 19

1. Did you use distance learning during the period of pandemic COVID-19?

Yes No

2. Is Distance learning beneficial for you personally?

Yes No

3. What are the weaknesses of distance learning for you? (Mention 2 weaknesses)

1.....
.....

2.....

4. What are the advantages of using distance learning? (Mention 2 advantages)

1.....
.....

2.....
.....

Section Two: on self-Directed Learning

1. During pandemic COVID-19, did you rely on your personal efforts in learning without the guidance of the teacher? (Being self-directed)

Yes No

2. How does self-directed learning affect your cognition?

.....
.....

.....
.....

3. Did self-directed learning effect on your motivation negatively or positively?

Negatively Positively

4. Does self-directed strategy help you in distance learning?

Yes No

5. If yes, say how please.....

.....
.....

6. What did self-directed learning add to you when using online learning?

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

Thanks for your collaboration

Appendix B: Teachers' Questionnaires

Dear Sir/ Madam,

This questionnaire serves as data collection tool for an academic research. We will be so much thankful if you could take the time and the energy to answer our questions. Your cooperation is very important and will be of much help for this research work.

1. Section One: On teacher's Background

Gender: Male Female

Teaching Experienceyears

2. Section Two: Section two: teachers' attitude towards distance learning

1. Did you give online courses to your students?

Yes No

2. Do you think distance learning strategy is beneficial for your students, especially within the current situation?

Yes No

3. Does the absence of learning atmosphere effect on learning outcomes?

Yes No

4. When using distance learning, do all students get the same amount of information?

Yes No

5. if No, please say why

.....
.....

6. as a teacher, do you prefer...

a. Synchronous learning

b. Asynchronous learning

7. Please, justify your choice

.....
.....

Section Three: teachers' attitude towards self-directed learning.

1. Do you think self -directed learning is beneficial for your students?

Yes No

2. according to you, how much important is self-directed learning for students when they study online?

Yes No

3. Do you think self-directed learners are better in using distance learning?

Yes No

4. Do you agree that self-directed learning is an effective distance learning strategy?

a. Strongly agree

b. Agree

c. Disagree

d. Strongly disagree

5. Where does the effect of self-directed learning appear when using distance learning?

Higher motivation

Higher grades

Higher understanding

Great thanks for your Cooperation

المخلص :

التعلم مهم مهما كانت الظروف ، فالحالة الصحية التي يشهدها العالم تتطلب استراتيجيات للحفاظ على عملية التدريس والتعلم بطريقة فعالة لأن الطريقة التقليدية للتعليم لم تعد آمنة بعد الآن يجب أن يتعلم الطلاب من منازلهم. لذلك يهدف هذا البحث إلى التحقيق في فعالية التعلم الذاتي كإستراتيجية للتعلم عن بعد في ظل جائحة كوفيد 19. توضح الفرضية التي أثبتت في هذه الدراسة أن التعلم الذاتي هو إستراتيجية فعالة في عملية التعلم عن بعد في جائحة كوفيد -19. تم اعتماد الدراسات النوعية والكمية في هذه الدراسة. حيث تم توزيع عشرون استبياناً على المعلمين وخمسة وعشرون لطلاب السنة الثالثة في جامعة محمد بوضياف مسيلة. أظهرت النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها أن التعلم الذاتي هو إستراتيجية فعالة في التعلم عن بعد حيث أن التعلم الموجه ذاتياً يزيد من دافعية الطلاب ورغبتهم في التعلم ويعزز إلمامهم بالتكنولوجيا ويجعلهم واثقين ومستقلين ومعتمدين على الذات ومتحمسين و بالتأكيد مسؤولين. بناءً على هذه النتائج يجب على الحكومة أن تأخذ التعلم الذاتي في عين الاعتبار؛ يجب على الطلاب أيضاً الانتباه إلى فوائد كونهم متعلمين موجهين ذاتياً خاصة عند الدراسة عن بعد.

الكلمات المفتاحية : فعالية, إستراتيجية, التعلم عن بعد, التعلم الذاتي.