



CHALLENGES FACING STUDENTS AND PARENTS IN THE DISTANCE LEARNING PROCESS: SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Distance learning has witnessed significant development in recent years, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, which imposed the widespread adoption of this educational model. Despite the advantages it offers, such as flexibility and accessibility, students and parents face multiple challenges that affect the quality of education and the level of interaction. This study aims to systematically review the main challenges facing students and parents in the distance learning process, and classify them into technical, academic, psychological and social, and logistical axes. Technology is a crucial factor in the success of distance learning, but it also represents the most prominent challenges facing students and parents. Many families suffer from a lack of access to modern devices or fast internet networks, which hinders the continuity of learning. Some parents face difficulty in dealing with electronic educational platforms, which makes them unable to help their children effectively. Students suffer from psychological pressure due to the burden of academic tasks, while parents face pressure to provide an appropriate educational environment at home. The study highlights the importance of concerted efforts between governments, educational institutions, and parents to address challenges and make the most of distance learning as a modern educational tool.

KEYWORDS

Technical challenges,
academic challenges,
psychosocial support,
academic performance
assessment, time
management.

Introduction

Education is the foundation of this nation, and no nation can rise without it. Education in the words has received a lot of attention because of its great impact on the renaissance of society and the advancement of its individuals (Nanayakkara, 2007). The country has faced many challenges in this regard, and one of the most prominent new challenges is the Corona pandemic at the beginning of 2020, which affected all sectors, including the education sector; as this sector faced many difficulties at the beginning of the new changes and the first steps to advance education through the Ministry of Education in the face of these exceptional circumstances and trying to adapt to them was to change the course of the educational curricula; so that education becomes from real to virtual... Through this study, the researchers will address the challenges that students and parents faced in the distance education process (Habes, Alghizzawi, et al., 2023). Arnold Toynbee, the founder of the theory of

civilizational interpretation, says that man faces a set of challenges (difficult situations, circumstances, and problems) on his way to building civilizations, and he deals with them either with successful responses that lead to overcoming them and achieving the desired renaissance and civilization, or with failed responses that do not lead to achieving renaissance and civilization (Olaimat et al., 2022). Accordingly, at the present time, the Arab-Islamic world and the Western world are experiencing a major crisis that has changed the world order in a few days, which is called the "Covid-19" crisis (Sayem et al., 2017; Yaacob & Saad, 2020). This crisis has significantly affected the social, economic, political, health, educational, religious systems, etc. These systems and institutions are now living in a state of constant anxiety and terror about what will happen tomorrow. If we talk about the educational system during the Corona pandemic, we will find that traditional field education has been replaced by distance education (El Refae et al., 2021a). Accordingly, what are the challenges facing the distance education process? How were teachers and those in charge of the educational field able to overcome these challenges? What is the plan through which we can reduce the challenges of Covid-19 and its effects on the educational ladder?

Literature Review

1. Distance learning

It is meant by the presence of the learner in a place different from the teacher in a place, and it is defined by (the American Association for Distance Learning, 2004) as “the process of acquiring knowledge and skills by means of a medium of education and information transfer, including all types of technology, and different forms of learning in distance learning.” It is defined by (Shachar & Neumann, 2010) as “a teaching style based on self-learning, supported by modern technology, that seeks to master and works on the transfer of educational material, and on direct and indirect academic interaction between the teacher and his students, and between students with each other, overcoming temporal and spatial barriers.” It is defined by (Aysun & Sona, 2017) as “a mass educational system.” It is open to all, without restrictions on time, class, or level of education, and is not limited to the type of education, as it is compatible with the nature of society, its individuals, their ambitions, and the development of their professions. Learning is unique to those who are far away from others with the characteristics that distinguish it from others with the types and kinds of learning, the researcher presents in general with those characteristics in what follows, then goes on to describe and analyze those characteristics and advantages with respect to the individual and the institution, including for example: 1- By finally eliminating restrictions in time and place, the student learns while at home or in his office or in his car, at the time he wants according to the available circumstances, even during work days or during holidays and festivals, because communication will be through the Internet with the study materials or educational materials that have been previously downloaded with the professor, so it is not required that the professor be present at the time of communication with the student, so the student may be in Cairo or in Kuwait in the capital and contact him during the hours of the day While his professor in America is sleeping soundly (Singh & Thurman, 2019). At the same time, he is no longer required to prepare classrooms with hundreds or thousands of classrooms, so this is basically without a budget, so we can spend a lot of time on the place, money and capabilities. 2- Documentation of communication between the professor and the student, because the student communicates with his professor through the Internet, and receives the professor’s message at the time that suits him, and he responds to it and receives the student’s response at the time that suits him, and discusses with him

and the two interact to a degree that is not available in the traditional educational system. 3- By conducting discussions and debates among students, they are in different places in different countries around a specific subject that they are studying, whether in a traditional education system or in training (Fathema et al., 2015; GOYAL, 2012; Law et al., 2010).

- It supports distance learning with a multiplicity of cultures and their interactions and mutual benefit between them, because students study with them from all over the world.
- It provides distance learning with the possibility of combining starting life with work at the same time as studying, thus eliminating the need for rigid division in human life, which is a period of about 15-16 years from studying to working.
- It allows learning Continuously learning at any time, in any subject, at any level, without effort or difficulty.
- It allows remote learning to control exams and eliminates cheating, concentration, thinking, analysis, and deduction, rather than just memorization and rote learning.
- Remote learning will ultimately reduce costs, which is a serious problem in the current period that Arab countries suffer from in the era of the Arab Spring and its successive revolutions.
- It eliminates problems in school administration or college administration, discipline and order issues, and costs, as well as security problems, transportation to traditional study centers, especially in the current era, which is plagued by disasters and unrest in the streets.

2. Important of Distance learning

Audiovisual resources have modified perceptions of curricular innovation, mainly in recent decades. Some studies, such as those by (Djerf-Pierre et al., 2019) and (Kaya et al., 2021) argue that through these means the teaching and learning processes have been improved since students, regardless of their level, have a better disposition towards their academic training when audiovisual resources are incorporated into classrooms. (Ali, 2020) In this framework, the YouTube social network is a platform with a lot of interaction capacity that has a great variety of audiovisual content that could be categorized if desired, for example, there are users interested in being entertained, informed and also trained. (Geyser, 2021) The importance of visual learning lies in the implementation of tools that develop thinking skills. These visual learning techniques (charting, organizing ideas, and presenting information) teach students to clarify their thinking, process, organize, and prioritize new information. According to (Alhammad et al., 2021) during the last decade, technological advances have changed the learning environment inside and outside the classroom. The blackboard and the textbook are no longer the main mediation tools between teachers and students. One factor that has contributed to this fundamental change is access to the Internet through different electronic devices such as computers, tablets and smartphones, since this medium allows people to have more and better access to textual and audiovisual information, and save time and money by not having to travel to specific places of study or having to buy high-cost texts. Current generations adapt quickly and in a natural way to technological advances in all fields, including the educational field. As part of the research process of this study, it is desired to define what are the main criteria or motivations that lead the teachers of the June 5 Educational Unit of the city of Manta, , Ecuador, to use the YouTube platform, taking into account their main attraction (the videos), but delving more specifically into its use as an educational aid and its different practices in the pedagogical field within the autonomous teaching and learning process. (Habes, et al., 2021).

3. The most important applications of educational technology in distance learning:

(Hamad, 2017) indicates that using electronic educational media in a distance learning system makes education more effective and easier and makes the learner the focus of the educational process. He also presented two groups of modern technological media that are used in distance learning in advanced industrialized countries, the first of which is electronic media that is used in information sources, the most important of which are: electronic books and electronic libraries. As for the second group, it is the electronic media that are used as tools to deliver education and learning, including video conferences, virtual classrooms, computer communications networks (Internet, satellite programs, e-mail, CD-ROMs, computer conferences, and e-mails) (Tutkun, 2011). 2- Content: Researchers believe that the educational content of the educational material requires good preparation in distance learning institutions, and that its preparation can be done by individual effort in educational material that is characterized by specifications and features that suit the nature of the learner in distance learning. For this reason, what is called a team appears in preparing the educational content. Boeri, Malik B (2000, p. 52), stated that the preparation of educational materials or educational content can be theoretically divided into three main stages, represented by planning, design, and ending with production.

(Fischer et al., 2014; The Rapid E-Learning Blog., 2010) point out that design is the process of specifying the conditions for learning and the intended learning outcomes, and of creating strategies and products at the macro level, such as programs and curricula, and at the micro level, such as lessons and modules. They assert that this definition is consistent with current definitions of design, which refer to specifying educational specifications, but differs from them in that the focus is directed towards the conditions of learning rather than the components of the educational system, and thus the scope of educational design is expanded from the design of learning resources or individual components of systems to the comprehensive design of educational environments and systems. (Alsalmi et al., 2019) stated that writing about the content of distance learning requires descriptive information in which the required outcomes are specified under certain conditions, then searching for the effectiveness that is achieved by this outcome or the return in this way expands the base by searching and thinking about the learner, and it is basically building educational programs. As for descriptive information, it is not recommended to use it in educational programs in distance learning except necessarily (Almarzooq et al., 2020). They explained that the descriptive method is the prevailing scientific means in traditional writing, where the effectiveness is presented under certain conditions to obtain the specific outcome or return (Habes, Pasha, et al., 2023).

4. Challenges of distance education

Humans tend to drive towards progress and innovation. Education is a fundamental part of understanding society and advancing human development. However, we have to acknowledge the fact that education is not perfect (al-Shamri, 2016). Many reasons that affect the process of education can be related to technology, teachers and parents. Students face a number of challenges that discourage many of them from receiving an education because they feel like they would be fighting an uphill battle with little chance for success. These problems vary from one place to another; according to Save the Children (2015), the main problem of education in the Middle East is how to deal with the lost generation that described Syrian students who moved to neighboring countries and other nation (Osman et al., 2023). While at the same report, Save the Children, identified issues in other nations

such as New Zealand and how they create a modern learning environment. The list of educational problems is endless, but the most recent problems are learning online, lack of qualified teachers and the disliking school (الشمرى, 2024). Due to the spread of COVID-19, millions of students and teachers have to communicate online. The pandemic drives governments all over the world to close schools and shift to online learning. The process of transfer does not go as smoothly as expected. Although online learning saves time, effort, money and provides a safe environment for education, it generates a frustration for teachers and students. Teachers and students experience technical difficulties because of the large number of online learning users. S. Venkataraman (2020) states that all students feel a kind of isolation during the pandemic since they are a way from interaction during classes. Shortage of internet and equipments (electronic devices) deprive students from the right of education. Venkataraman describes the process as poisoning, "Too much of anything is Toxic." Therefore, classrooms were and still are the source of acquiring information; no one can ignore the importance of classrooms in the process of learning (Babu et al., 2020).

Teachers are the center of the education process, assigning qualified teachers and supporting them with the resources can help the development of education. Budget cuts can lead to fewer resources, smaller staffs and the quality of services for students (Habes et al., 2018). The role of the teachers is not only to deliver information as they are responsible for shaping new generations. They should not follow the instructions of how, when and what to teach but they have to follow their sense in discovering every student individually to find out their need and teach them what they really need at the suitable time. It is not a matter of giving heavy tasks that should be done with deadlines; it is rather a matter of knowledge and understanding. Lanier (1997), describes the relation between teachers and students saying that "Students aren't consumers of facts. They are active creators of knowledge" (Nwazor & Godwin-Maduikwe, 2015).

One of the biggest problems in education nowadays is the idea of the boredom that takes over students when they think about school. All parents all over the world who are following up with their kids at different stages will hear so common phrases like: "school is boring" or "I don't like school" (Irum, 2011; Lund & Wang, 2019). The main reason behind this idea is that they see school as work; they have to get this work done so they can move to something more interesting and more fun than study. They try to find a way out of school tasks where pleasure is. Parents and schools are driving students to reach this level of boredom. If the students do school works, they are allowed to have fun. They dismantle education from the idea of fun and make school's work the bridge that should pass to reach enjoyment (Al-rahmi, 2013).

Distance education has become a significant mode of learning, especially with technological advancements and the increasing need for flexible educational options. While it offers numerous benefits, including accessibility and flexibility, it also comes with its unique set of challenges that impact students, educators, and institutions alike (Rana et al., 2014). These challenges can broadly be categorized into technological, pedagogical, social, psychological, and logistical aspects (Lemoine et al., 2016).

1. Technological Challenges

Technology is the backbone of distance education, but it is also its greatest challenge.

- **Limited Access to Reliable Technology:** Many students, particularly in remote or economically disadvantaged areas, lack access to high-speed internet, modern devices, or reliable software platforms.

- **Technical Difficulties:** Issues like software glitches, outdated systems, and cybersecurity threats can disrupt learning. Educators also face challenges in mastering new technologies, which can lead to inefficiencies in teaching.
- **Digital Divide:** The gap between those with access to modern technology and those without widens inequalities, making it harder for certain groups to fully benefit from distance education.

2. Pedagogical Challenges

Distance learning requires a shift from traditional teaching methods to digital or hybrid models, which can be difficult to implement effectively (Tabata & Johnsrud, 2008).

- **Quality of Instruction:** Designing engaging and effective online courses is complex. Many educators are not trained to adapt their teaching methods for online platforms, leading to lower instructional quality.
- **Assessment Integrity:** Evaluating students remotely raises concerns about fairness and academic honesty. Online exams are more susceptible to cheating, and alternative assessments may not fully reflect students' understanding.
- **Interactive Learning Deficit:** Instructors often struggle to replicate the interactivity of a traditional classroom online. The lack of face-to-face engagement can lead to reduced participation and limited critical thinking exercises.

3. Social and Psychological Challenges

Distance education can impact learners' mental and social well-being (Saglik & Ozturk, 2001).

- **Isolation and Loneliness:** Students often feel disconnected from peers and instructors, which can lead to a sense of isolation. This lack of interaction can negatively affect motivation and engagement.
- **Mental Health Issues:** The stress of managing self-paced learning, balancing responsibilities, and navigating technical challenges can contribute to anxiety and burnout.
- **Lack of Support Networks:** Unlike traditional education, where students can seek immediate help from peers or faculty, distance learners often struggle to access timely support.

4. Logistical Challenges

Operational and administrative issues are common in distance education systems (ALSHAMMARI, 2022).

- **Time Management:** Self-paced learning demands strong time management skills, which many students lack. Procrastination and poor scheduling often lead to incomplete assignments and missed deadlines.
- **Course Accessibility and Inclusivity:** Designing inclusive content for students with disabilities is a significant challenge. Many platforms fail to accommodate individuals with special needs, further marginalizing them.
- **Financial Constraints:** Although distance education can reduce costs, expenses like internet access, devices, and learning materials still pose financial barriers for many learners.

5. Cultural and Contextual Challenges

The global nature of distance education means it often operates across diverse cultural and social contexts (Osman et al., 2023).

- **Cultural Misalignment:** Courses designed for a specific cultural or linguistic context may not resonate with international learners, leading to reduced understanding and engagement.
- **Resistance to Change:** Traditional societies or institutions might resist adopting distance education due to skepticism about its efficacy or unfamiliarity with the approach.
- **Addressing the Challenges**
- While these challenges are significant, they are not insurmountable. Governments, educational institutions, and technology providers must collaborate to address them effectively.
- **Infrastructure Development:** Expanding internet access and providing affordable technological tools can reduce the digital divide.
- **Capacity Building:** Training programs for educators to develop effective online teaching strategies are crucial.
- **Psychosocial Support:** Institutions should offer mental health resources and foster virtual communities to combat isolation.
- **Customized Solutions:** Tailoring content and delivery methods to diverse learners can enhance inclusivity and engagement.

Distance education holds the potential to revolutionize learning, but its success depends on overcoming these challenges. By addressing technological gaps, improving pedagogical strategies, and fostering supportive environments, educators and policymakers can ensure that distance education remains a viable and equitable learning model for all.

Distance learning& Teachers' Challenges

E-learning differs from distance learning in that it is related to the nature of the educational process, content, methodology, and evaluation (Al-Rahmi et al., 2015; El Refae et al., 2021b). While the role of the teacher in traditional education is passive, as he receives information without participating in the lesson or interacting with the educational material, in distance learning it is more positive, as he participates in the educational process step by step, as the learner sees the teacher on a computer screen and interacts with him through e-mail and direct dialogues, and the learner answers every question directed to him and receives reinforcement for his correct answer (Hassan B. Imad B. Makkawi, 1997). As for the educational material in traditional education, it is prepared for all individuals regardless of the learners' abilities, while its content and presentation method in distance education change according to the learner's abilities and current and future needs, and this is consistent with the principle of individualization of education. In terms of evaluation, most traditional education models assess what the learners have accomplished at the end of the course, while distance education evaluates in an organized and continuous manner the collection of information about the impact and effectiveness of education, so that evaluation is used to improve education, to know whether the learner has achieved his goals, or to measure the value of education for the institution that used it (Parton, 2016). From the above, it is clear that the teacher used to spend time explaining and clarifying, while the learner was merely a recipient of information. The roles then changed, and the teacher gradually became more

involved as the learner gained experience. After the teacher was at the center of the learning process, his role changed to facilitate and assist the learner in discovery. Thus, it is clear that the teacher's role evolved from being a transmitter of knowledge and information to becoming a helper, assistant, and advisor. The role then changed from being a trainer, guide, and problem solver, to now his role has become a guide (Micho Bakako, 2001). This does not mean that the teacher's role has been abolished, but rather his role has become more important and more difficult, becoming a creative and efficient person. The teacher is highly qualified and competent in the educational process, working to achieve ambitions for progress and technology (Al Jwaniat et al., 2023; Tahat et al., 2017, 2024). He has become a professional teacher with a mix of tasks as a leader, a project manager, a researcher, a critic, and a supervisor. In order to be an effective teacher, he must combine specialization, experience, qualifications, and the necessary expertise, with the necessary experience, in light of his experience, accurately, and with technical guidance. In the era of e-learning, the teacher plays new roles based on planning, designing and preparing the educational process, in addition to being a researcher, assistant, guide, designer, manager and simplifier of content and processes (Elamanza et al., 2013; Habes et al., 2021; Tahat et al., 2022). The teacher tries to help the learners rely on themselves, instead of relying on them to receive information, thus applying modern theories centered around the learner, which are achieved through self-learning.

Conclusion and future studies

Teachers and parents are essential elements of education; the role of the teacher is to know the needs of the student and provide them with active knowledge. Students become competent once they are able to have their role in the society and that can be done through teachers. Parents are required to follow up with students, participating in the process of education by paving the way of enjoyment and supporting teachers to level up the fun of education. It is an integrated operation between teachers and parents to reach the goals of education that are not limited to learning, but also achieve counseling, modeling and knowledge. In order to get back the trust of parents and society, we have to reconsider shifting totally to learning online. The perfection of education requires essential elements of which teachers and classrooms are the most important ones. Shifting to online learning without making sure of the readiness of the stage will cause troubles, make gaps in education and deprive student from their right of education.

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