

## The Reality of Implementing Distance Education in Algerian Universities in the Light of Covid 19 - Case study: The Faculty of Political Science and International Relations at the University of Algiers 3-



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Submission date: 02/02/2023 Acceptance date: 21/05/2023 Publication date: 04/06/2023

### Abstract:

*This research paper aims to assess the extent to which Algerian university institutions succeeded in implementing the distance education system in light of the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic and the suspension of the attendance study as well as examine the advantages and challenges of this experience from the perspective of both professors and students. This paper relies on the case study method by collecting data based on a questionnaire tool directed to students and professors of the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations at the University of Algiers 3, then analyzing the data using the SPSS software. In the conclusion, the article comes with a set of recommendations and suggestions for developing and improving this system.*

**key words:** Distance Education; Higher Education; Coronavirus pandemic; Algerian Universities; University of Algiers 3; Faculty of Political Science and International Relations.

### ملخص:

تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية لمعرفة مدى نجاح المؤسسات الجامعية الجزائرية من تطبيق نظام التعليم عن بعد في ظل انتشار جائحة فيروس كورونا وتعليق الدراسة الحضورية، والتعرف على إيجابيات وتحديات هذه التجربة من وجهة نظر الأساتذة والطلبة. وقد استخدمنا في هذه الورقة منهج دراسة الحالة، وجمع البيانات بالاعتماد على الاستبيان الموجه لطلبة وأساتذة كلية العلوم السياسية والعلاقات الدولية بجامعة الجزائر 3، ثم تحليل البيانات بواسطة برنامج SPSS. وفي الأخير توصل المقال لتقديم مجموعة من التوصيات والاقتراحات لتطوير وتحسين هذا النظام.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** التعليم عن بعد؛ التعليم العالي؛ جائحة فيروس كورونا، الجامعات الجزائرية؛

جامعة الجزائر 3، كلية العلوم السياسية والعلاقات الدولية.

## 1. Introduction:

With the rapid transformations and changes that the world has witnessed in the past few years, especially with the outbreak of the Coronavirus -Covid 19- and the official declaration by the World Health Organization on March 11, 2020 that the spread of Covid19 constitutes a global pandemic, all countries experienced many challenges in all areas of life, including in the higher education sector, which is considered as one of the most important sectors in any country's economy due to its significant role in advancing nations' progress and development through pushing the wheel of growth forward, and producing a qualified personnel for the labor market.

Given the rapid spread of the epidemic and the high number of patient infections, the Algerian authorities urgently announced a health protocol to be followed and took some preventive measures to limit the spread of the virus and preserve the health and safety of the country's citizens, which included the imposition of quarantine measures and the suspension of studies. This resulted in the closure of higher education institutions, making the latter face a great challenge and pushing them to choose between a continuous interruption of education for an indefinite period and the registration of a "white year", or ensuring the continuity of education provisions through the adoption of new methods of delivery of educational provision. As a result, there was a switch from the traditional system whereby a professor would be involved in delivering educational material to students attending physically to a novel system of distance education based on the use of technology in delivering course contents to all university departments, and specializations in tertiary institutions.

Accordingly, given the importance of distance education as one of the most modern educational systems, and after almost two years of its adoption, we will try, in this study, to examine the effectiveness of this educational system at University of Algiers 3, as well the challenges faced in the process.

In this sense, **the research problem** of our study is as follows:

➤ To what extent has the application of distance education at the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations of University of Algiers 3 been effective in circumventing the impact of the spread of the coronavirus pandemic?

In order to answer this question, this study starts from three basic **hypotheses**:

- Distance education has contributed to the continuation of the educational process and to containing the spread of the virus in university institutions.

- The success of the application of distance education depends on providing modern technologies of communication and ensuring continuous training of professors and students.
- The more the characteristics of majors and courses are taken into account, the more distance education has been effective and the contents understood by students.

In order to respond to the problems posed and to go deeper in this study, we divided **the plan** into two main axes, **In the first**, we present the concepts related to the study, and **in the second**, we evaluate the experience of adopting distance education at the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations from the point of view of both professors and students.

## 2. Concepts of The Study

This study deals with two basic concepts: **distance education**, and **the Coronavirus -Covid 19-** and we will address each of these in the following:

### 2.1. Definition of distance education:

In recent years, the world has witnessed unprecedented technical developments and rapid technological innovation. These changes have affected many areas of life, including education, leading to the development of new educational systems and the emergence of new teaching methods. Distance Education, one of the most prominent fields in this area and one of the newest teaching methods epitomized a trend that has become widespread and has been rapidly evolving in recent times, relying entirely on communication technology.

The definition of Distance education varies from one scholar to another, therefore, it is important to mention some of the definitions that have been proposed for to this concept:

For **Simonson & Schlosser**: “Distance education implies formal institutionally based educational activities where the teacher and learner are normally separated from each other in location but not normally separated in time, and where two-way interactive telecommunication systems are used for the sharing of video, data, and voice instruction”. (SIMONSON & SCHLOSSER, *More Than Fiber: Distance education in Iowa*, 1995, p. 13)

Distance education is then an educational system in which the two sides of the educational process are distant from each other in terms of place and time, with the presence of an element of communication and interaction through educational videos.

**Simonson et al** add in another reference that distance education: “is a method of education in which the learner is physically separate from the teacher. It may be used on its own, or in conjunction with other forms of education,

including face to face”. (SIMONSON, SMALDINO, & ZVACEK, TEACHING AND LEARNING AT A DISTANCE FOUNDATION OF DISTANCE EDUCATION, 2015, p. 34)

This definition focused more on the physical separation between professor and student, with the addition of a new element, which is the possibility of adopting distance education along with another educational system to support attendance education within the framework of blended education.

UNESCO’s definition of distance education states that: “Distance education requires:

- Structured planning
- Well-designed courses
- Special instructional techniques
- Methods of communication by electronic and other technologies”.

(BURNS, 2011, p. 9)

In its implementation, the system of distance education, like other systems, is subject to a range of steps and conditions, the most important of which are: developing a well-designed plan, providing the necessary infrastructure and means for its success, as well as training those who have to use it.

After presenting a set of definitions of distance education, it should be noted that the term overlaps with many nearby terms and different types of education, which may cause confusion among researchers. The following will briefly highlight the differences between the various concepts:

- **E-learning:** Is the use of new multimedia technologies and the Internet, to improve the quality of learning by facilitating access to resources and services. (PRAT, 2008, p. 6) It is that education in which technologies are used, whether in in-class or in distance education, and it forms part of distance education.

- **Open education:** is the type of education that propagates knowledge and makes it accessible to all without any conditions or restrictions. Moreover “open education refers to the elimination of barriers that can preclude both opportunities and recognition for participation in institution-based learning” (BONK, LEE, & CREVES, 2015, p. xxi). It often includes distance education in its content as it offers education to a large group of people.

- **Blended learning:** according to **Bersin Josh** “Blended learning is the combination of different training “media” (technologies, activities, and types of events) to create an optimum training program for a specific audience. The term “blended” means that traditional instructor-led training is being supplemented with other electronic formats”. (BERSIN, 2004, p. xv) Blended education is based on a combination of attendance and electronic education, (BONK, GRAHAM, & MOORE, 2006, p. 4) as is done under the health crisis. Most of

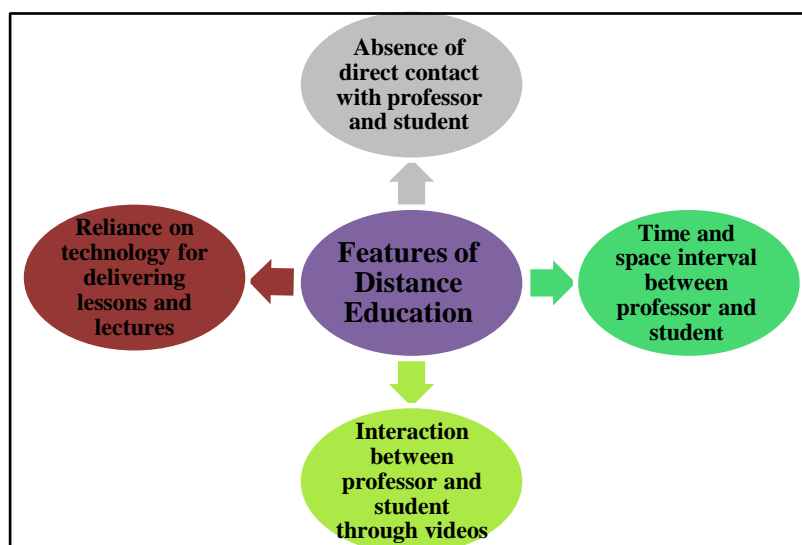
the country's universities provide basic standards of attendance and secondary standards of distance.

Based on these definitions, distance education is one of the most modern educational systems that implies the presence of a student and a professor at a different place and time in a manner appropriate to their circumstances, by using a modern technological means to deliver lectures, such as digital platforms, which allow communication and interaction between a professor and a student or a large group of students.

This pattern also differs from attendance education in that it does not require the student to attend educational centers, as opposed to traditional education, which depends mainly on compulsory attendance and the recording absences, which constitutes an obstacle for students who study more than one specialty or practice other activities elsewhere, or who have a distance problem. Distance education provides an opportunity for the largest possible number of students to pursue their university education. It also relies mainly on the presentation of courses and lessons through technological means, while in-person education is based on what the professor offers to students, with the possibility of using other means within the framework of distance education. In addition, unless recorded, lectures cannot be reheard or attended again, which characterizes the whole distance education system.

Thus, the characteristics of distance learning are illustrated in the following diagram:

Figure 01: The characteristics of distance learning



Source: Prepared by the Researcher

## 2.2. Definition of Corona Virus -Covid 19-:

Coronavirus and Covid 19 are often used to denote the same disease or infection, but it is noteworthy that Coronavirus is one of the types of human or animal respiratory viruses that first appeared in the 1960s in children though no treatment has been found to date. (Arabe League Educational Cultural and Scientific Organization, 2020, p. 16)

However, the current Covid 19 is an infectious disease caused by the COVID virus detected in late 2019 in Wuhan, China's Hubei province. It was dubbed Covid 19 by the World Health Organization. This name is divided into three sections, the first two of which are (Co), derived from corona and the following two letters (Vi), the first two letters of virus and the last letter (D) is the beginning of the word disease, and the number (19) to indicate 2019, the year in which the virus appeared. (CHAKRABORTY & MAITY, 2020, p. 2)

As for the symptoms of this virus, they differ from one person to another, but in general the World Health Organization has identified as being: a high temperature, fatigue, dry cough, nasal congestion, Sore throat, muscle or joint pain, diarrhea, loss of sense of smell and taste... etc. The severity of these symptoms may also increase in the elderly, those with chronic diseases and those with weak immunity, which may cause blood clotting and low oxygen to pose a risk to their lives. That is what happened with the third wave which spread throughout the world last summer, and was the most severe and most dangerous wave since the emergence of the virus. (World Health Organization, 2021)

As a result of the severity of the virus, its rapid spread and the difficulties to control it, the World Health Organization has classified it as a “global pandemic”, a health crisis that has engulfed the entire world. The entire global health system had been hit, and the impact was pervasive to all areas of life leading to many other crises: a political crisis; an economic crisis; an educational crisis... etc. which needed many strict measures to be taken such as the imposition of quarantines, with a state of emergency being declared in many places in the world and the adoption of new educational systems to be introduced to ensure the continuation of education.

### **3. Distance education at the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations from the perspective of professors and students: reality and assessment:**

With the emergence of the Coronavirus - Covid 19 - and the impact of the health crisis, which affected not only the health sector, but extended to other areas such as the education sector, Algerian authorities took strict preventative measures to deal with the crisis, the most important of which was the suspension of all studies on March 12, 2020, which compelled the Ministry of Higher

Education to urgently adopt a system of distance education based on the use of technology and the internet as an alternative to traditional education based on physical presence, which naturally posed a threat to the health of all concerned. Nearly two years after its adoption, and despite the reopening of educational institutions, this system has been maintained as a dual system together with that of compulsory attendance and there has even been talk of it being continued after the end of the health crisis.

Accordingly, in this section, we will try to assess the efficacy of this system from the point of view of professors and students of the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations:

### 3.1. Methodological procedures adopted in the field study:

In this section, we will explain the size of the research community and the study sample that was selected to conduct the applied aspect our research, and the tools adopted in data collection and analysis:

- **Research community:** Our research community is composed of students and professors of the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations of different levels, as they are the main parties in the educational process. The size of the research community consisted of 2077 students from the Faculty of Political Science distributed over the three levels (Bachelor; Master; PhD), and 217 professors of different rank [Professor of Higher Education; Lecturers (A) and (B); Assistant Professor (A) and (B); temporary professor].

- **Sample study:** Our study sample consisted of 130 individuals, 26 professors and 104 students from the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations, who were randomly selected to preserve the characteristics of the research community.

- **Data collection and analysis tools:** In this study, we relied on the questionnaire tool for data collection. We first prepared an **electronic questionnaire**, which was judged at first by a group of the faculty's professors, and then we published the final modified version according to the professor's notes on Google forms. But, after waiting for about 10 days from 04 to 14 December 2021, only 10 electronic answers were received, which made it necessary for us to distribute 120 hard copies of the questionnaire manually to the faculty students and professors in the period from 15 to 16 December 2021. The questionnaire included 20 different types questions, ranging from open to closed questions, and others with specific answers, distributed over two main axes. The first axis pertains to the personal data of the sample members, and the second axis includes questions about the effectiveness of distance education.

After the questionnaire was distributed and answered by the study sample, the **SPSS** statistical analysis program was used to empty the forms and analyse the data statistically.

### 3.2. Presentation and analysis of questionnaire results:

In this section, we will present the results of the respondent's answers to the questionnaire questions in tables and graphs, before analyzing and interpreting them:

- **The first section** devoted to the personal data of those researched, there are 05 groups, as shown in the following table:

**Table No 01: Personal data of the sample members**

Variables	Categories	Respondents	Percentage
Gender	Male	39	30%
	Female	91	70%
	Total	130	100%
A Professor or a student	University professor	26	20%
	University student	104	80%
	Total	130	100%
Degree of professors	Temporary professor	4	3.1%
	Assistant Professor	8	6.2%
	Professor Lecture	11	8.5%
	Professor of higher education	3	2.3%
	Total	26	20%
Student's academic level	Bachelor	69	53.1%
	Master	31	23.8%
	Doctoral	4	3.1%
	Total	104	80%
City of residence	Algiers	108	83.1%
	Other cities	22	16.9%
	Total	130	100%

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS program outputs

The table above shows the personal data of the member of the selected sample. The sample includes 39 males (30%) and 91 females (70%). The dominance of the female element can be explained by the fact that females are more interested in studying than men and make up the majority of students in the classrooms, while males prefer to go to work and make a future for themselves because they are expected to take on family responsibilities sooner



by getting married. Moreover, the teaching profession is in great demand amongst females due to some ethical matters in the Algerian society.

The sample includes 26 professors and 104 students. The majority of students in this sample reflect the majority of students in the research community, in which students are ten times the number of professors. Regarding the ranks of the professors, the majority of them are either lecturers or assistant professors, while a small percentage is made up of chair professors of higher education, which is the highest rank in the higher education sector.

Concerning students, on the other hand, 53.1% of them belong to the Bachelor’s cycle, whereas 23.8% of them are master students, and only 3.1% are of PhD level given that the number of students decreases with each study cycle as many of them are unwilling or unable to enroll onto the next cycle. Furthermore, 83.1% of these students are from the city of Algiers. This is obvious because the university is located in Algiers, the capital city of Algeria, and some of non-Algiers residents prefer not to move to Algiers because of the costs of travelling and the long distance.

- **The second section** assesses the effectiveness of distance education system and contains 14 questions devised to figure out how best this system can be applied and what hurdles need to be overcome.

**Table No 02: A comparison between distance and attendance education from the point of view of the sample members**

Questions	Answers	Respondents	Percentage
Which is better?	Attendance education	117	90%
	Distance education	13	10%
	<b>Total</b>	130	100%
Can distance education replace attendance education?	Yes	25	19.2%
	No	105	80.2%
	<b>Total</b>	130	100%
Is distance education compatible with your studies?	Yes	41	31.5%
	No	89	68.5%
	<b>Total</b>	130	100%

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS program outputs

This table shows us both professors and students’ respondents’ opinion as to whether distance education system could replace attendance education in special circumstances, and if this system is compatible with their studies.

From the answers of the sample members, we note that more than a third of the sample size prefers face-to-face education by 90%, which can be attributed to the advantages that characterize the attendance education, which helps to deliver information to students and gives them the opportunity to ask

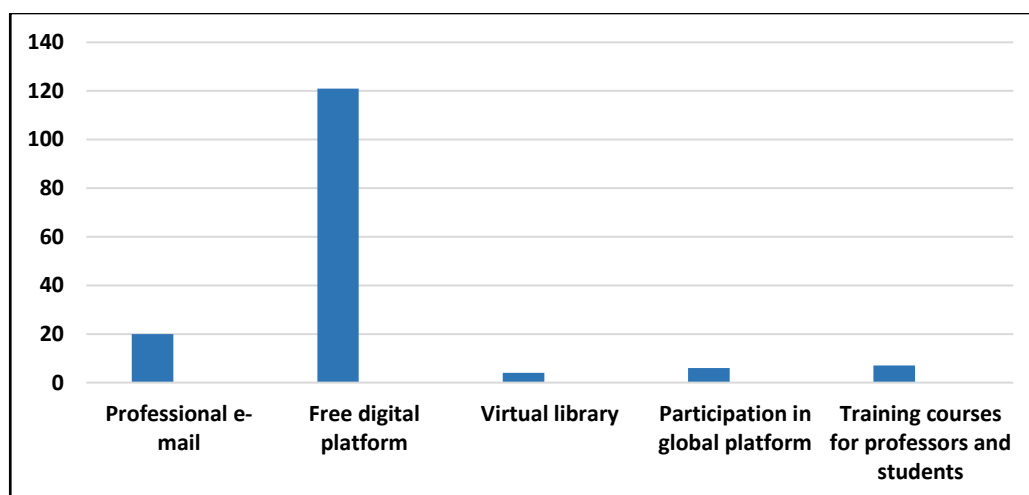
and discuss questions through direct contact with professors. This is not possible in the distance education option which is preferred by only 10% of the sample members over attendance education.

As to the question of whether distance education can replace traditional education, we find that the majority of respondents share the opinion that distance education system cannot replace the attendance system. The lack of financial capabilities and the lack of mastering of modern technologies are factors explaining this trend, besides the advantages offered by the presence system of education that allows students to understand the lessons much better when delivered by a professor who gets their attention and focus through his voice and body language. The respondents from the Faculty of Political Science have also stated that their specialty requires communication and interaction between professor and student and discussion on modern political issues to develop a student’s analytical skills.

The table also demonstrates that the 68.5% of respondents agreed with the idea that distance education is not compatible with their major, political science, which requires discussion, analysis, and interaction between students and professors.

Accordingly, we find a great convergence of answers from sample members, due to their agreement on the fact that the attendance system could not be replaced by any other system, except in very special circumstances. This is due to the fact that they are accustomed to the attendance system since their first day at school, a system which gives the student the opportunity to share his views and ideas.

**Figure 02: The means and props provided by the faculty of Political Science in the context of distance education**



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS program outputs

Through the above illustration of the means and props provided by the Faculty of Political Science, we note that the faculty provided an email to only a

small group of 20 respondents, because access to professional emails is not available to everyone, but only to professors and doctoral students, but 120 individuals from the same specialty responded that the University has established a digital course platform for providing lessons and publishing lectures accessed through a personal student or professor’s account.

Figure 03: A picture of distance education platform of the university Algiers 03



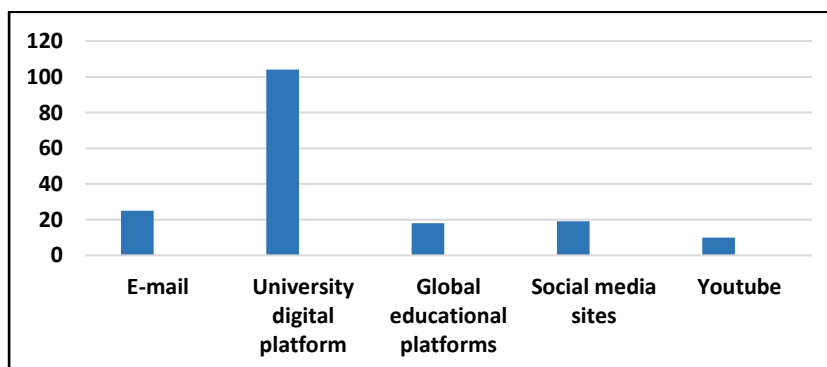
Source: <https://www.univ-alger3.dz/e-learning/>

We note the almost complete absence of participation in global databases and the failure to provide training courses for both professors and students on the use of this technology and educational platforms, both of which are essential in the adoption of a new technology-based system. In addition, there is no virtual library accessible to download sources and references from. So, how can students study remotely in light of the closure of most educational institutions and national libraries during the quarantine, especially since there are some who are about to graduate and prepare their theses for submission?

This explains the absence of prior planning and unpreparedness of higher education institutions for such modern educational systems that require an infrastructure equipped with all technological means and supports.

Figure 04: The technique that is adopted to provide distance lessons at the faculty of

Political Science

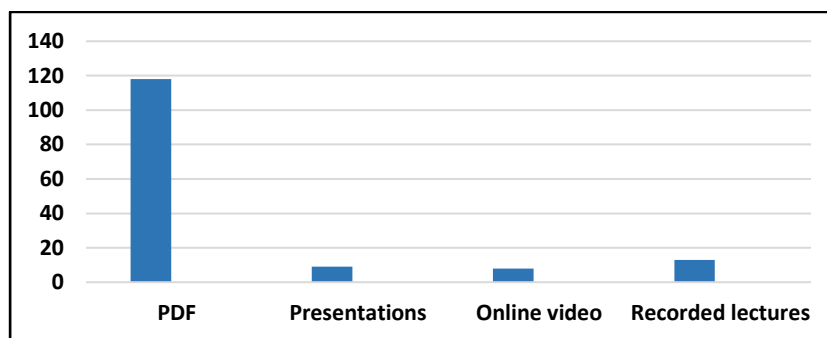


Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS program outputs

The above figure illustrates in graphic columns the techniques adopted for course content delivery in distance education which was relied upon by the Faculty of Political Science. We found that a large group of students complain about the difficulty of accessing the platform, while others are unaware of its existence.

At the beginning of the semester, some students couldn't download their lessons and didn't even bother to see what was published on the platform by professors. This suggests the absence of an element of supervision and control. In addition, some professors did not know how to use the platform well and were negligent in publishing their lectures under the pretext that this was not one of their tasks. This shows a total absence of distance teaching culture at the Algerian university studied and indicates that the techniques adopted by the faculty in question are still very far from the internationally recognized distance education standards, which could not but reflect negatively on the possibility of any academic success.

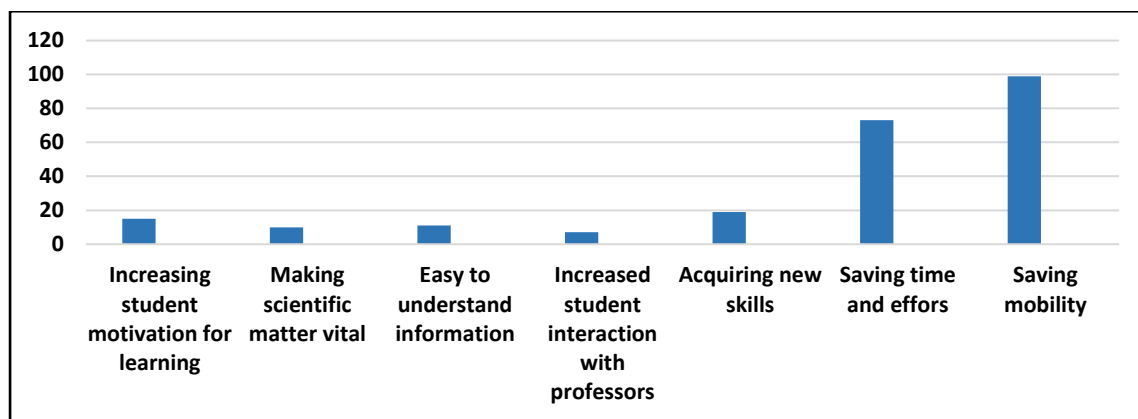
**Figure 05: How to provide distance lessons in the faculty of Political Science**



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS program outputs

From what we can conclude the above chart illustrates the way in which distance lessons are provided at the Faculty of Political Science and it obvious that almost all course contents are provided in written Pdf format, which displays a significant weakness in the implementation of distance education as there is a lack of interaction between students and professors. In this way, the student becomes a receiver of lessons without having a chance to ask for further details or explanations, which, in turn, may lead to poor comprehension of the scientific material distributed, in addition to the printing costs of the material that the students have to bear to avoid spending hours in front of computer screens, itself likely to cause them health problems, such as back pain, and eye problems.

**Figure 06: The advantages of distance education from the point of view of the sample members**



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS program outputs

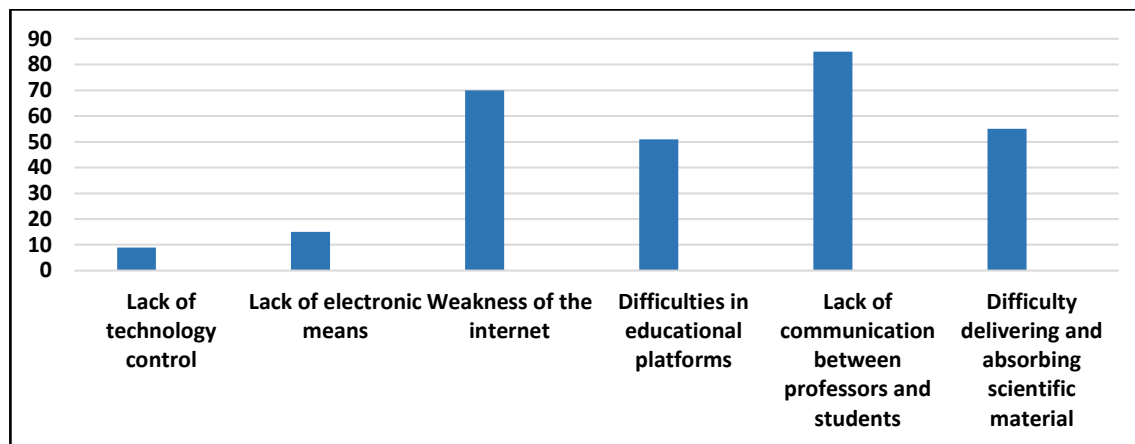
The above table illustrates clearly in graphic columns that there are no other significant advantages of distance education other than saving time, effort and mobility from the point of view of the sample members.

Distance education gives more time for professors and learners to practice and engage in other activities in order to improve their living standards. Also, students may engage in training courses in various other fields to develop their knowledge and analytical skills, or to exercise a specific profession to provide for their own needs, cover the costs of their studies and also gain professional experience, which increases their chances for employment after graduation. Moreover, distance education allows students and professor alike to save on transportation costs, especially those coming from other provinces.

It is noteworthy that distance education may lead to laziness on the part of students who are not being forced to go to classes on a regular basis. This is in contrast with the presence system in which absence is forbidden, and more than 3 unjustified absences and 5 absences (justified or not) could cause the student to be excluded from the course. It must also be noted that if distance education increases the motivation to learn in a very small percentage of the sample members, it contributes to increasing laziness and complacency for a large percentage of them as a result of their not being forced to attend and the lack of follow-up by the professors, as opposed to the attendance pattern, whereby the students are accountable for their absences. In fact, attending classes increases student perseverance and motivation to continue their studies. Also, distance education doesn't make the material lively and enjoyable and doesn't offer the possibility of interaction between professors and students, students and their colleagues, and it makes the process of understanding the lessons difficult as a result of the way the lessons are delivered at the faculty (mostly in pdf format).

Nonetheless, distance education allows for course contents to be saved on websites, and the possibility of watching the lectures again and again. It also develops students' self-learning skills without supervision or monitoring.

Figure 07: Difficulties of distance education from the point of view of the sample members



Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS program outputs

The above figure illustrates the level of ease or difficulty faced by both students and professors at the Faculty of Political Science in the context of distance education. What can be clearly seen is that the issue of controlling the use of technology and the issue of electronic devices availability did not constitute a major obstacle for either students or professors in providing or receiving course contents remotely. This indicates that the digital revolution and the technological development that the world has known have forced everyone to use and own such devices.

However, what members of the sample really agreed upon was that the weakness or absence of access to the Internet, the difficulty of communicating and understanding course contents, and the absence of direct communication between the professor and the student are the main obstacles to the distance education system, because in some cities of Algeria, the access to internet is weak and suffers from constant interruptions, while other cities, which could be described as “dark spot areas”, there is no access to the internet. Moreover, video and film presentation on line need a very high internet debit rate to avoid “buffering” while we find that some areas in Algeria, including major cities, suffer from the weakness of the internet network and constant high speed internet interruptions while others do not have internet coverage at all. The reality is that there are areas in Algeria with no access to electricity or running water, let alone internet access.

Consequently, the absence or weakness of this network compelled most professors to present their course content in PDF format so that it could be easily downloaded, without the possibility of interaction, a basic condition in the educational process in the understanding and assimilation of course contents. What was also noticeable was that of the 51 members of the faculty of the Political Science sample, nearly half of the total number indicated that there was

a defect in the university's educational platform itself, which caused difficulty of access or in the actual downloading of contents. This defect may be due to difficulties of access, or the inability to download lessons from it, which might indicate that there is a lack of qualified personnel provisions for this platform to make it work properly, and a need to improve its management, operations and overall performance, and to remedy the significant imbalances still in existence.

**Table No 03: Evaluation of the distance education experience and its future from the point of view of the sample members**

Questions	Answers	Respondents	Percentage
How was the student evaluation process?	Easy	24	18.5%
	Somewhat difficult	85	65.4%
	Very difficult	21	16.2%
	Total	130	100%
What is your assessment of this experience?	Good	18	13.8%
	Medium	78	60%
	Bad	34	26.2%
	Total	130	100%
Do you support the idea of the continuity of distance education even after the -covid 19-?	Yes	50	38.5%
	No	80	61.5%
	Total	130	100%

Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS program outputs

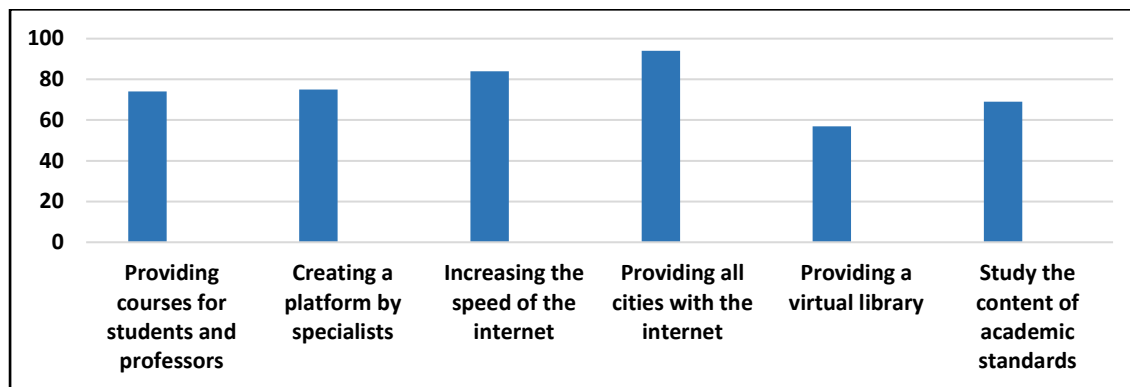
This table displays an evaluation of the education experience during the Covid-19 crisis and looks into the future of this system from the point of view of the respondents and we notice a great convergence of the responses, which indicates that student evaluation was remarkably difficult because electronic exams are not particularly useful since the answers given by students do not actually reflect their level, knowledge or effort.

The majority of respondents (60%) expressed some reservations about future implementation of distance education at the Faculty of Political Science and International Relations due to the difficulties they faced, mainly the weak internet access or, even, the total lack thereof, which is a basic requirement for the success of this modern system of teaching.

As for the continuation of this system for the future beyond the end of the pandemic, respondents were skeptical about its effectiveness and showed reluctance to support its continuation, as they believe it reduced the level of study amongst many students and it did not succeed in achieving its desired educational objectives even though it contributed to limit the spread of the covid-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, **Yulia's** study (YULIA, 2020, p. 52) suggests

that distance education would prevail in the future as a result of the attachment of the current generation of students to technology and electronic devices.

**Figure 08: Suggestions for improving distance education from the point of view of the sample members**



**Source: Prepared by the researcher based on SPSS program outputs**

This figure shows the graphic columns of the proposals made by professors and students of the Faculty of Political Science to improve and develop the distance education system in Algeria. we notice that the sample's members agree on the need to increase the speed of the access to internet in the first place and to provide it for all cities of the country as a pre-requisite for online education, so as to facilitate the process of downloading lessons, showing videos on educational platforms, and interacting with them without any problems or interruptions.

In addition, it is necessary to take into consideration the content of courses and modules and make them compatible with distance education. There are courses that can be presented remotely, while others need to be taught and discussed with both student and professor present in the same place as they could not be delivered remotely but rather require the presence of the two parties in one place to enable the exchange of ideas and opinions.

In addition, respondents raised the need for a virtual library that contains all sources and references that professors and students need access to do their studies and prepare their theses. Other propositions include also the provision of training courses for professors and students alike on how to use educational platforms, so that they get used to such new systems of study. Consequently, as the **Marija** study has confirmed, although distance education has been present for more than 15 years, it will remain a non-fading approach and strategy that needs to be developed for more efficiency and effectiveness, to ensure its success and sustainability. (BUŠELIĆ, 2012, p. 30)

#### **4. Conclusion:**



According to the above analysis, we conclude that distance education is a global educational system that relies on modern technologies that allow interaction and communication between professors and their students. Although distance education means have been in existence for a long time, the system was only adopted in Algeria as a result of the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, as a circumstantial and urgent mechanism to limit the spread of the pandemic and its impact, and ensure the continuation of the educational process.

Despite the implementation of this system in all university institutions and in all kinds of disciplines, distance education has not been able to replace attendance education. The Algerian experience showed that the adoption of distance education was confronted to many challenges and laid bare a number of flaws. Its weakness can be attributed to the lack of prior planning for it, the unfamiliarity of the Algerian institutions with this new system, in addition to the absence of the required infrastructure for it, the lack of technological devices for many students, and the poor access to the Internet in many areas of the country.

Finally, despite its lack of effectiveness in the country, distance education remains necessary and complementary to the system of attendance. Indeed, it contributes to the introduction and inclusion of technology in higher education institutions, which may raise the ranking of Algerian universities in the world higher education tables.

In order to improve and develop distance education in Algeria and increase its effectiveness, we need to put forward a set of **recommendations**, which can be outlined as follows:

- The necessity of adopting distance education as a complementary system to face-to-face education in the future and not as a substitute for it, given that it is impossible to do away with attendance and direct contact between students and professors.
- The necessity of legalizing the process by a ministerial decree that forces professors and students to deal with this technique.
- The necessity of increasing the awareness of students, professors, administrative staff and the community on the whole, of the importance of this type of system and its inevitability in the future, especially, during specific circumstances when it becomes essential.
- The necessity of having a complete strategy and advanced planning for the implementation of distance education through the provision of a robust technological infrastructure.
- Improve the wider possibility of access and use of modern technological devices such as phones; electronic boards, computers for all students and professors.
- Extending high speed internet coverage to all areas of the country so that professors can present their course contents in easily accessible video format.

- Providing all professors and students with a professional e-mail from their institution and urging them to use it as an official means of communication.
- Improving the level of know-how needed to ensure that courses contents are made compatible with distance education.
- Providing a virtual library so that students and professors can download sources and references.
- Activating e-learning through live videos in order to allow interaction between professors and their students, and not only relying exclusively on Pdf format of the courses being published on platforms.
- Training and providing a qualified workforce able to establish a nationally unified educational platform and to ensure its continuous development and improvement with the ability of remedying any technical problems.
- Providing continuously available training courses for professors and students on the use of modern technology and educational platforms and making additional efforts on the part of professors and students to develop their technological skills and familiarity with these advanced technologies.

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