E-learning Experience at Algerian Universitiesduring Covid-19 pandemic

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Abstract

The main objective of this article is to see the experience of online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic for teachers and students of the Oran School of Economics taking as an example. Our survey was designed using Google Forms and sent to students via social media groups, pages and by surveying students in the school cluster. Qualitative data was collected and analyzed using SPSS. The study results indicated that the majority of participants were trying to make online learning work during the pandemic, but after that, students and faculty prefer face-to-face teaching and learning.

1.   Introduction

With the development of the world and the emergence of new technologies, almost everything has moved online. Nowadays, we tend to hear a lot about e-administration, e-business, e-health, e-banking, e-libraries, E-learning, and much more. E-learning is defined as a new method of learning based on digital technologies and other learning materials, whose central aim is to give learners an open, enjoyable and interactive learning environment that supports and enhances learning processes. The European Commission defines e-learning as "the use of new multimedia technologies and the Internet to improve learning and teaching quality by facilitating access to facilities and services, as well as remote exchanges and collaboration."

Algeria has already launched an e-learning system in 2006. The latter was founded in collaboration with the corporations "Thomson" and "Microsoft." This section service offers 4.000 courses and lectures that are primarily intended to teach ICTs.

E-learning in Algerian higher education institutions has been established to have a significant impact on increasing the effectiveness of learning; it is a new asset in this modern era, and it is becoming increasingly popular among Algerian students. This fact is due to the rising availability of various means and technologies of communication devices.

2020 was a dramatic year because of a virus that brought the whole world down to its knees. Covid 19, as the virus was referred to, is a new form of the Corona virus. Covid19 was linked to Wuhan's South China Seafood City market, a wholesale market for seafood and live animals, in December 2019.

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The world is currently experiencing a catastrophic period as a result of the rapid spread of this extremely critical global pandemic. COVID-19 has infected over 204 countries, including Algeria (World Health Organization, June 2020).

The outbreak of covid-19 in Algeria was reported on 25 February 2020 when the first case was declared by the Ministry of Health, Population, and Hospital Reform. The popular belief among Algerians was that the virus would not be a threat the country because of to its warm climate. Yet, this assumption was quickly proven to be incorrect.

Algerian government had taken a set of instruction to avoid rapid spread of the Coronavirus. Among the important decisions made by the government were the curfew, lockdowns, cancelation of travelling, and the issue of mandatory requirements for face mask wearing in public. In addition,the authorities decided an investment of US$100 million in health-care sector. This considerable amount of money was intended for the importation of medical supplies and PCR tests.

As far as education is concerned, the pandemic transformed this field from a stable sector to a less stable one. It is a sector whose stability period has been relatively long, unlike other sectors such as tourism, transportation, economy, finance, meeting, and politics as well.

Due to the imposed lockdown, most academic institutions were promptly shifting all educational activities from face-to-face or classroom learning to e-learning format or virtual classroom, or the mix between the two types of learning, called blended learning.

The higher education and scientific research sectors have attempted to react to the changes in orderto meet the university schedule deadline for the year 2020, and avoid the prospect of a lost year by introducing e-learning and make it available, in other words, by making ICT available in the learning process.

The Minister of Higher Education in Algeria declared that the pandemic had encouraged new learning methods using digital platforms. This kind of teaching/learning method is an area to simulate a real classroom using the system's interactive and collaborative resources. Students can download documents directly from the lecturer's website or through the department website'sonline courses.

The Graduate School of Economics in Oran is a real example of the switch from face-to-face learning to E-learning. Lectures were delivered by professors to students via the school platform, online platform and social media platform and most of the exams were taken online.

Education, in all its forms, is one of the most important factors in development. Furthermore, it increases the productivity of people and creativity while also encouraging entrepreneurship and technological advancement. Besides, it is critical to ensure economic development and social growth and improving income distribution. The unsteady learning environment in school is the reason for selecting this theme.

The aim of this paper is to throw a glance at the E-learning in Graduate School of Economics and try to find out the opportunities and margins of the movement that the digital delay has missed on Algeria in its response to the Corona crisis. However, at the same time, it defines the areas and workshops that must be opened soon, try to take advantage of this crisis, and identify our digital weaknesses so that we can quickly strengthen them and advance this sector in a way that positivelyaffects the general situation in the country and preparing ourselves for the future.

2. Presentation of Graduate School of Economics

The Higher School of Economics of Oran was created as a result of the transformation of the Preparatory School of Economics, Commercial Sciences and Management of Oran which was created by the Executive Decree No. 10-161 of June 28, 2010. The "Higher School of Economicsof Oran" is governed by the provisions of Executive Decree No. 16-176 of June 14, 2016, and that of Decree

17-85 of February 15, 2017. The Higher School of Economics of Oran, has the central mission of ensuring higher education, scientific research and technological development in the various specialties of industrial economics and networks. The school encourages students to participate in all kinds of scientific, cultural, educational, sporting, and creative activities.

According to the school's web site, the number of students which were enrolled in the academic year 2021/2022 is 856 students, among whom 9 students reading for a PhD degree and lecturers

3. Methodology

In order to respond the problem statement: **"How was the experience of E-learning in Graduate School of Economics Oran?"** we chose a descriptive quantitative study that was divided into two "study population considered in this research project: lecturers, and students of Graduate School of Economics of Oran

The first section was dedicated to students of the Graduate School of Economics of Oran; we provided a questionnaire using Google Forms in English languages and distributed it to school's students in Facebook groups, school pole, students' emails, and Messenger app. The survey was available for one month and we have received 160 responses from students.

The second section was dedicated to lecturers of Graduate School of Economics of Oran; we provided a questionnaire using Google Forms in English languages and distributed it to school's lecturers in their emails due to the fact that it is more professional. The survey was available forone month and we have received 40 responses from lecturers.

4. Analysis of the collected data

Analysis of the data collected was done using SPSS software version 25. We present, a descriptive analysis for our samples before proceeding to explanatory tests to verify our hypotheses.

4.1. Types of questions:

In our questionnaire, we included the following categories of questions:

4.1.1. Closed questions:

We chose closed questions with a single answer option, such as dichotomous questions, as well as closed questions with multiple answers choices.

This type of question makes it easy for responders to complete the questionnaire and for us to anal yze results.

4.1.2. Open questions

In addition to closed questions, we used another sort of question to complement the first: questions open to short answers. We allowed respondents to contribute and participate in our research by giving their opinions in complete freedom, and we discovered several crucial elements in our studyas a result of their responses.

4.2. Analyze the first questionnaire « for student »:

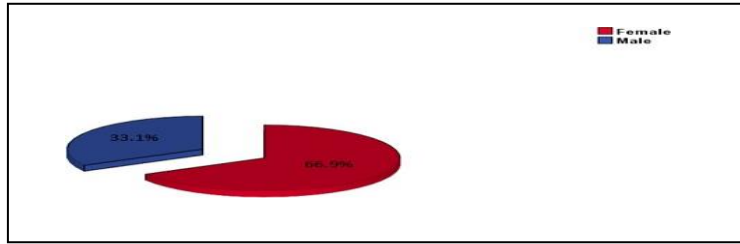-   **Flat tabulation**

Question 1: Gender

Figure 1: presentation of student gender (Source: own presentation by SPSS)

 "We see that our questionnaire get 160 respondent without any missing value"

The results show that 67 % of answers on our survey were female and 33% of male in average of 107 female from 160 students and 53 Male.
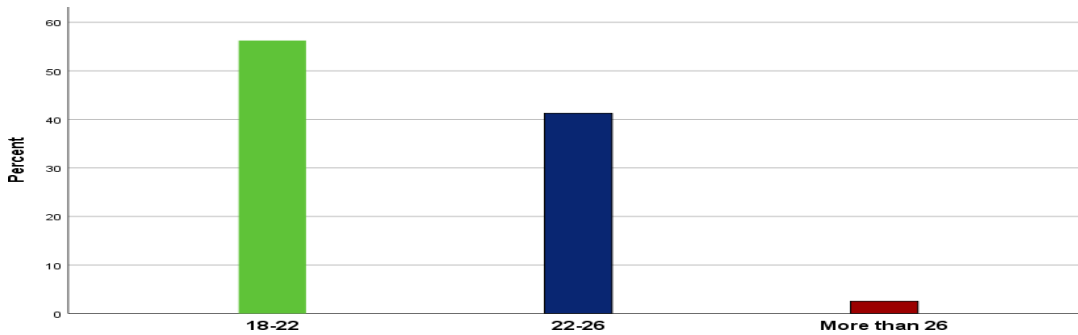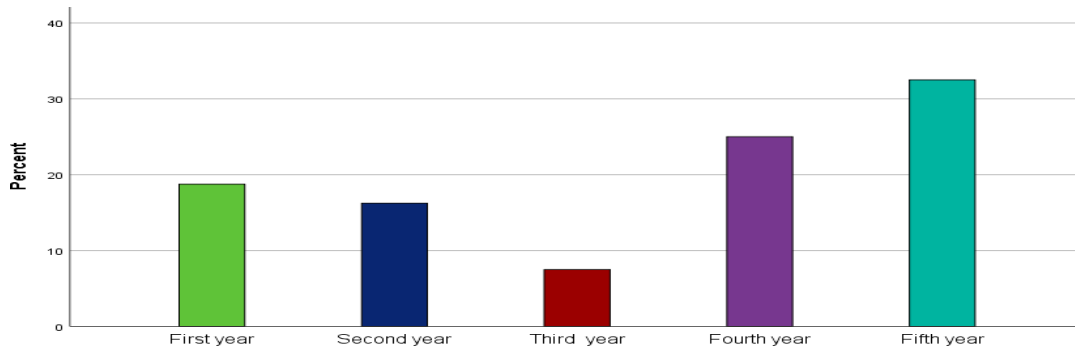
Question 2: Age?

Figure 2: Presentation of student Age (**Source**: own presentation by SPSS)

From the bar chart we can see the distribution of respondents by age: we see that the biggest respondents of the survey are aged between 18 and 22 years old for a proportion of 56.3% followed by students whose age varies between 22 and 26 years old with 41.3 %, and the most low proportion is for more than 26 years old

Question 3: Study level?

Figure 3: Presentation of student level (**Source**: own presentation by SPSS)

From the bar chart we can see the distribution of respondents by level with highest proportion 32.5% of fifth year student, 25% for fourth years, the lowest proportion 7.5% for third year student, 16.3 % second year and 18.8 for first year student .

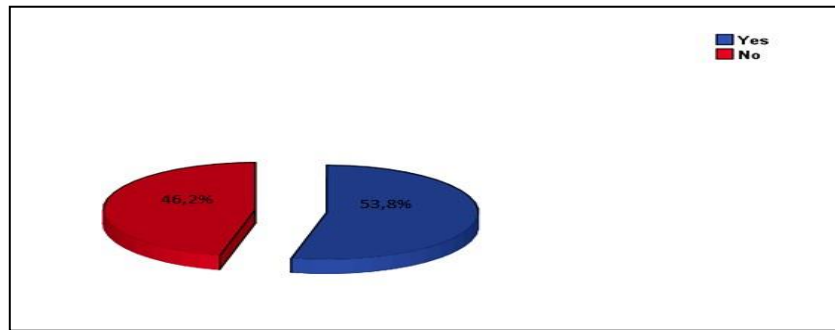**Question 4:** Have you ever participated in any type of E-learning before Covid-19pandemic?

Figure 4: presentation of student level (**Source**: own presentation by SPSS)

According to the students' responses, we see that the biggest proportion said that they have already participated in a different type of e-learning before the pandemic, representing 53.8%. 46.3% of the participants said that they didn't participate in e-learning before.

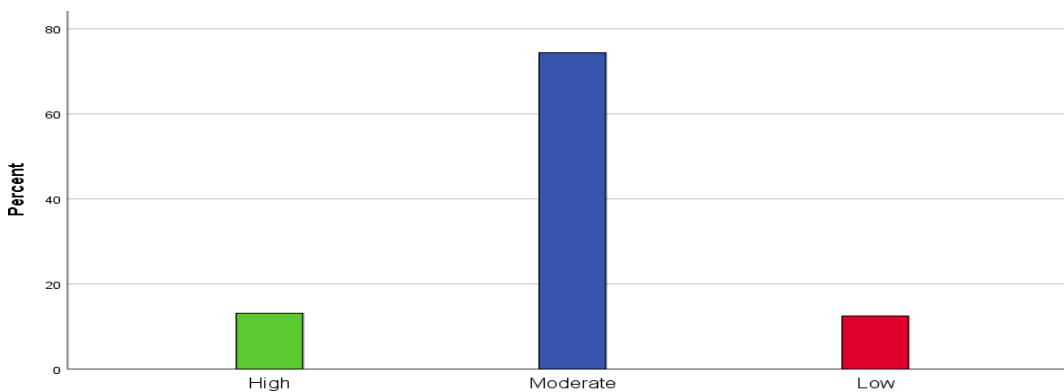**Question5:** How would you describe your IT skills?

Figure 5: Presentation of student IT skills (**Source**: own presentation by SPSS)

We see that most students have described their IT skills as moderate, with a proportion of 74.4%. Besides, those who said that they have high IT skills represent 13.1%. Finally 12.5% have said that they have low IT skills.

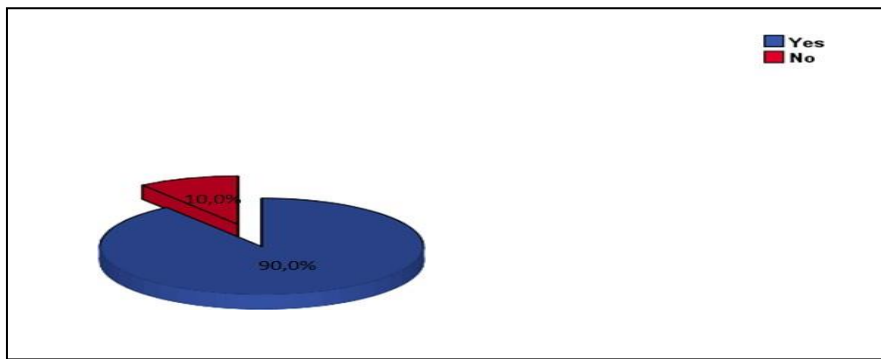**Question 6:** Do you know the school's platform?

Figure 6: presentation of student IT skills (**Source**: own presentation by SPSS)

According to the students' responses we see that the largest proportion, 90%, said that they know the school's platform, while 10% of them didn't know it.

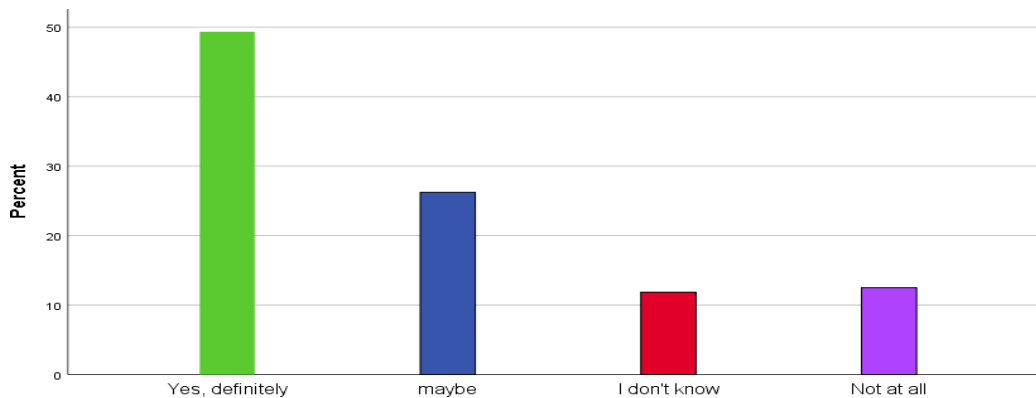**Question 7**: Is it easy for you to use

Figure 7: presentation of student opinion about the easiness of school platform (**Source**: own presentation by SPSS)

From the graph we conclude that the use of this platform is completely easy for 49.4 % of students, while 26.3% said they are not sure if it is easy or not, nevertheless 11.9% said that they didn't know, and 12.5% see it as difficult.

Question 8: Do you think that the use of the school's platform have added value to yourlearning?
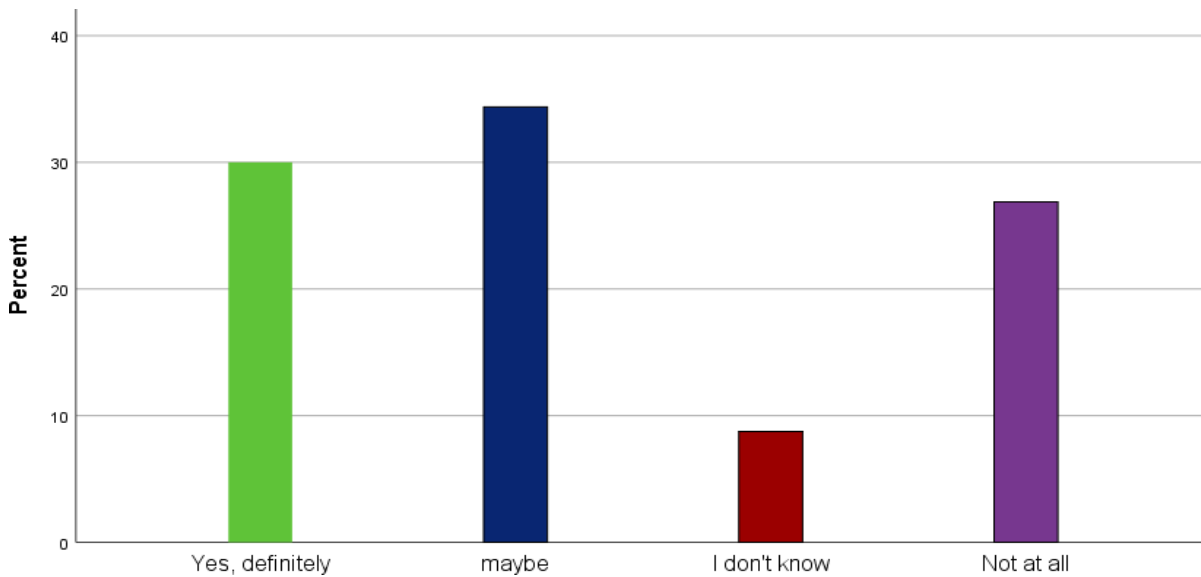

Figure 8: presentation of student opinion about the value added by of school platform to their learning (**source** own presentation by SPSS)

According to the graph we conclude that 30 % see that using the platform has added value to their learning , while 34.4% responded they are not sure if it has added value or not. Nevertheless 8.8 % said that they didn't know, and 26.9 % see that this platform has not a value in their learning.

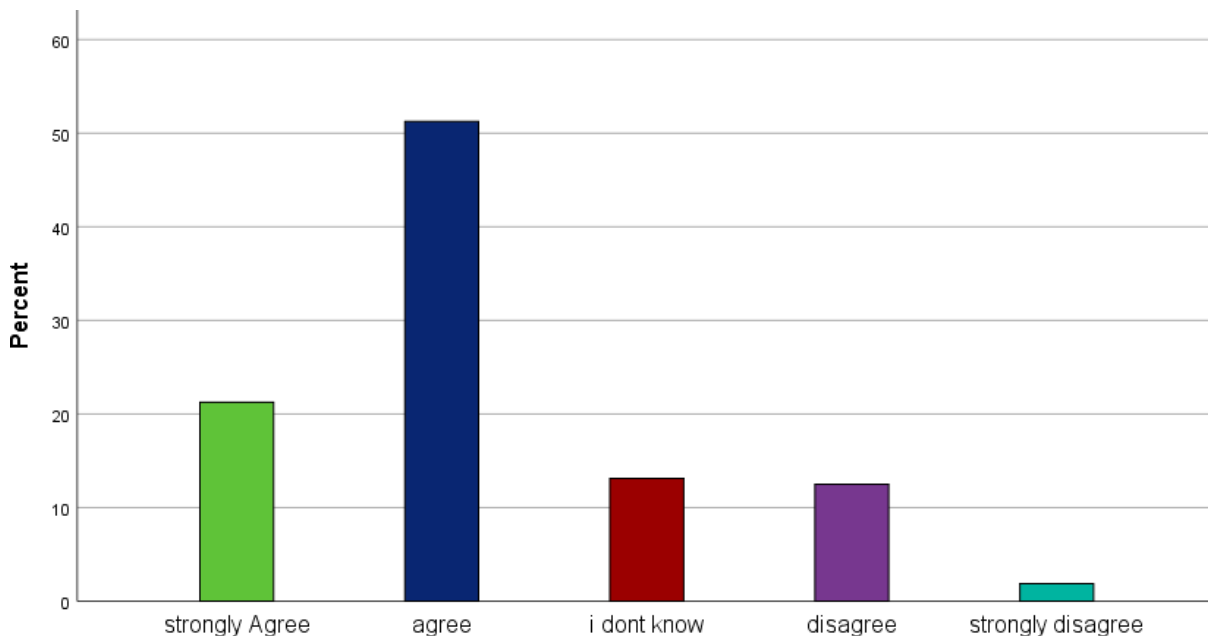**Question 9:** E-learning contributes to acquisition of IT skills

Figure 1.9: E-learning contributes to acquisition of IT skills (**source**: own presentation by SPSS)

According to the results 21.3 % of students strongly agree that the e-learning has contributed to the acquisition of IT skills, while 51.2% said that they agree. However 13.1% said that they don't know, 12.5% disagree, and 1.9% strongly disagree.

Question 10: E-learning increases the students' motivation for learning:
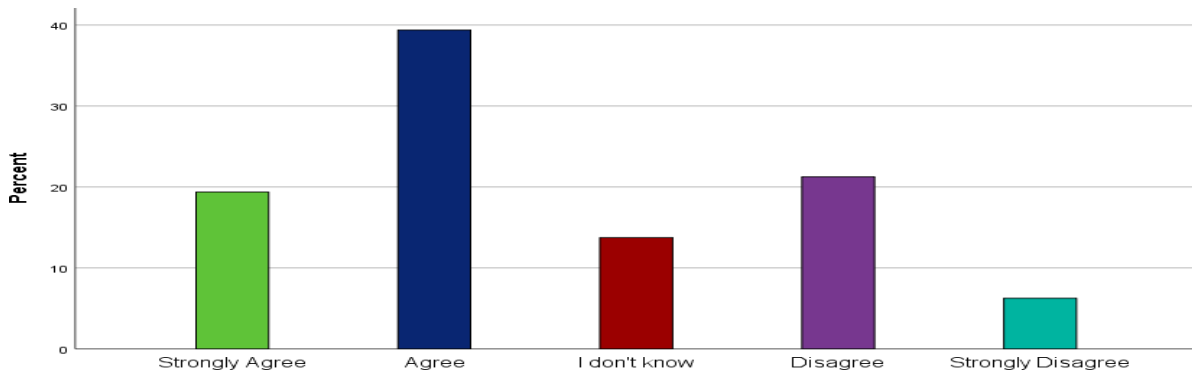
Figure 10: E-learning increases the students' motivation for learning (**source**: own presentation by SPSS)

We notice that 19.4% of students strongly agree that E-learning increases their motivation for learning, while 39,4.% said that they agree, However 13,8% said that they don't know; 19.4% disagree , and 6.3% strongly disagree.

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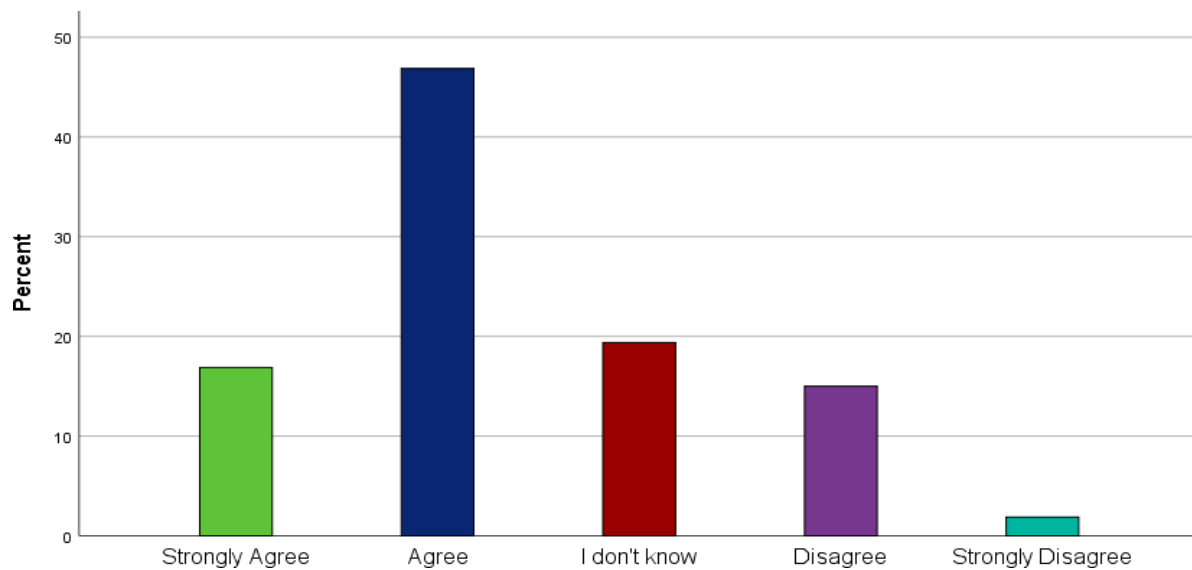**Question 11:** E-learning assists the students to better manage their time

Figure 11: E-learning assists the students to better manage their time (**source**: own presentation by SPSS)

From the above result we see that 16,9 % have positively answered that E-learning assists the students to better manage their time, while 46,9 % said that they agree, However 19,4% said that they don't know; 15,0 % are disagree , and 1.9% strongly disagree

Question 12: General Satisfaction with online learning

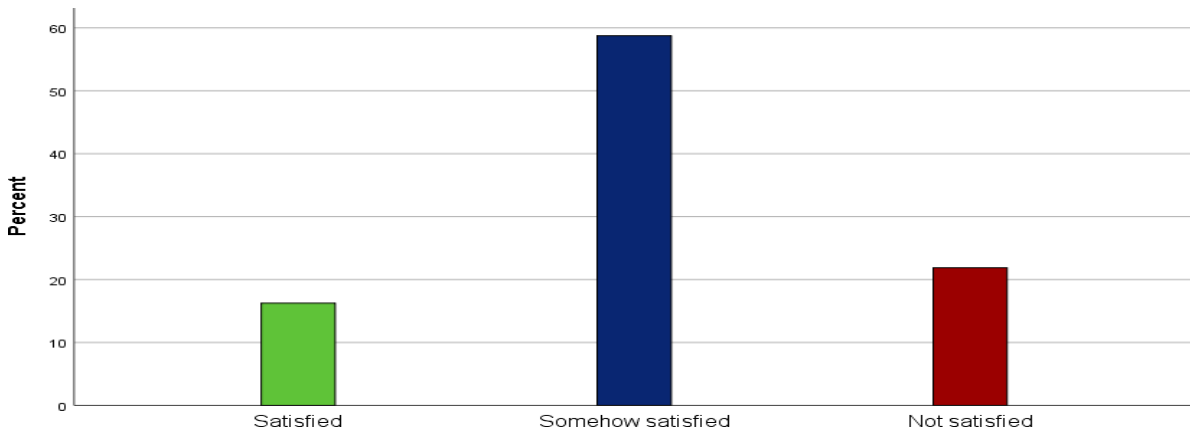**E-learning Experience at Algerian Universitiesduring Covid-19 pandemic**

Figure *12:* Satisfaction with online learning. (**Source**: own presentation by SPSS.)

From the above result we see that 19.4 % of students are generally satisfied with E-learning, while 58.8 % said that they are Somehow satisfied. However 21.9% said that they are not satisfied and strongly disagree.
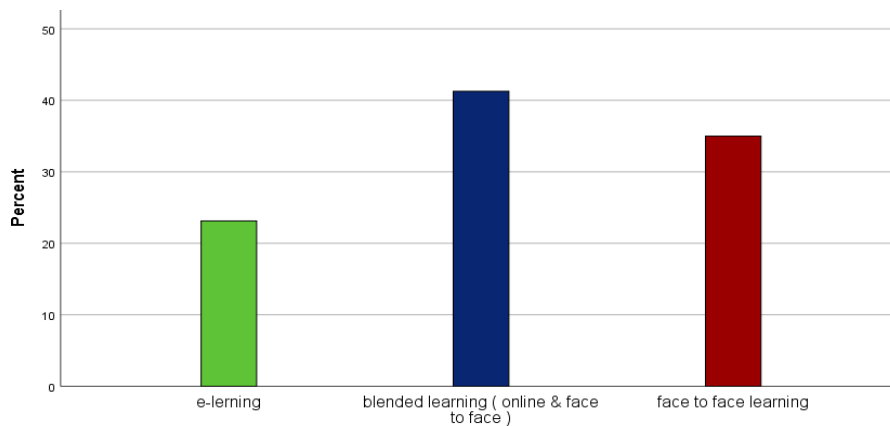
QUESTION 13: You prefer?

Figure 13: You prefer. *(***Source**: own presentation by SPSS.)

23,7% of students prefer E-learning while 35% of them prefer the traditional way of learning. And 41,3% of students had preferred the mix between E-learning and face to facelearning.

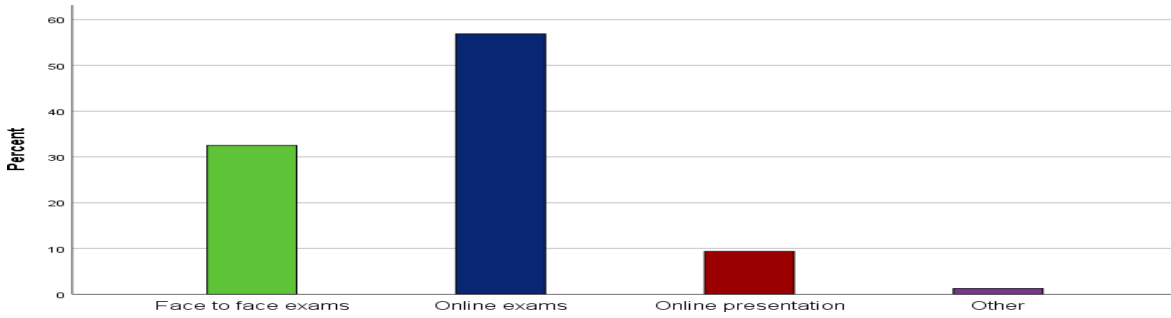**QUESTION 14:** During Covid-19 pandemic which exam methods did you preferred?

Figure 14: During Covid-19 pandemic which exam methods did you preferred (**source**: ownpresentation by SPSS.)

This graph is to identify the proportion of students who responded on their preference. When it comes to their exam method, we find that 56,9% of respondents prefer online exams while 32,5% prefer face to face exams, and 9,4% prefer online presentation. Only 1.3% prefer other methods of exams

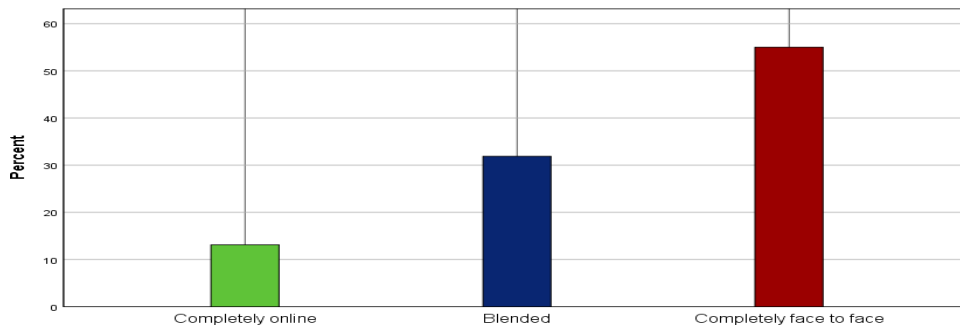**Question 15:** What kind of education do you prefer after Covid-19 pandemic**?**

Figure 15: What kind of education do you prefer after Covid-19 pandemic? (**Source**: own presentation by SPSS)

From the graph we identify the proportion of students who respond on their preference when it comes to the kind of education they would like after coivd-19 pandemic. We find that 55% of respondents prefer Completely face to face method, while 31,9% prefer Blended learning (face to face and e-learning).

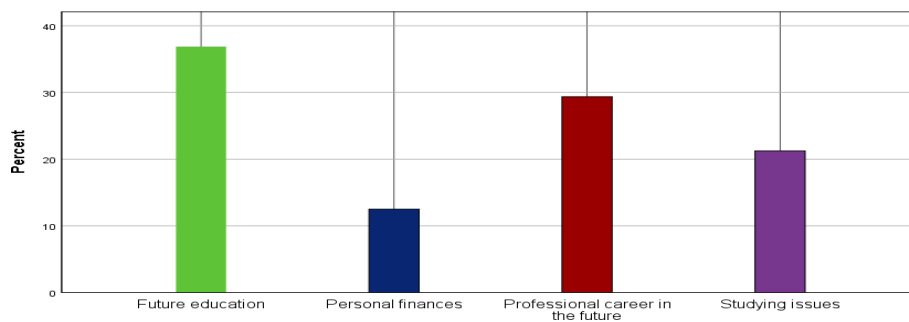**Question 16 :** Personal worries during COVID-19 pandemic:

Figure 16: Personal worries during COVID-19 pandemic (**source**: own presentation by SPSS)

This graph shows the proportion of students who respond on their personal worries during COVID-19 pandemic. As noticed, we find that 36,9 % of respondents had issues with Future education, while 29,4% had issues on professional career in the future. 21,3% of students had a problem withstudying issues and 12,5% had problems with personal finances.

Question 17: what was The impact of E-learning during COVID-19 pandemic on youracademic results?
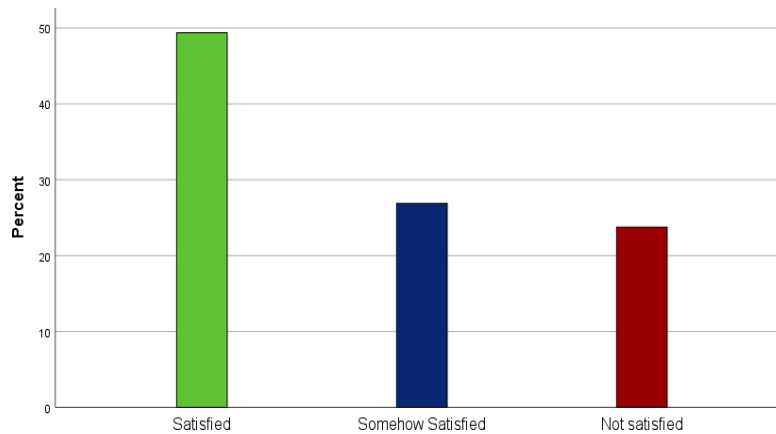

Figure 17: the impact of E-learning during COVID-19 pandemic on your academic results (**source**: own presentation by SPSS)

The results show that 49,4% of students showed satisfaction about the impact of e-learning during COVID-19 pandemic on their academic results,while 26,9% of them said that they were somehow satisfied. 23,8% of students were not satisfied of their academic results during the covid-19 pandemic.

Question 18: Online educational platforms used during Covid-19 pandemic
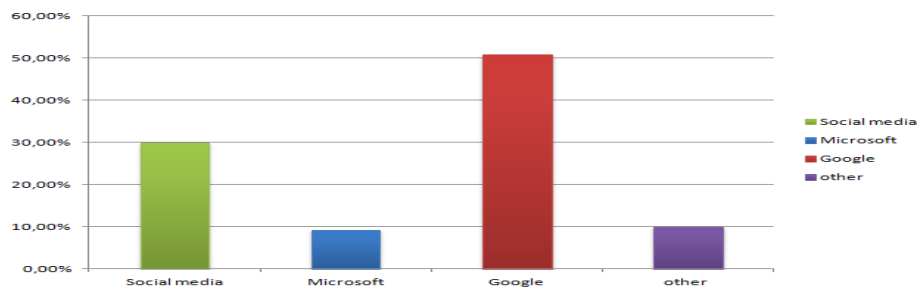

Figure 18: the impact of E-learning during COVID-19 pandemic on your academic results(**source**: own presentation by Excel)

From the above result we see that 50,8 % of student said that online educational platforms used during Covid-19 pandemic was Google platform ,while 30,0 % said that they used social media platform, However 10,0 % said that they used other online platform and 9,2% of students used Microsoft platform to continue their learning during pandemic time.

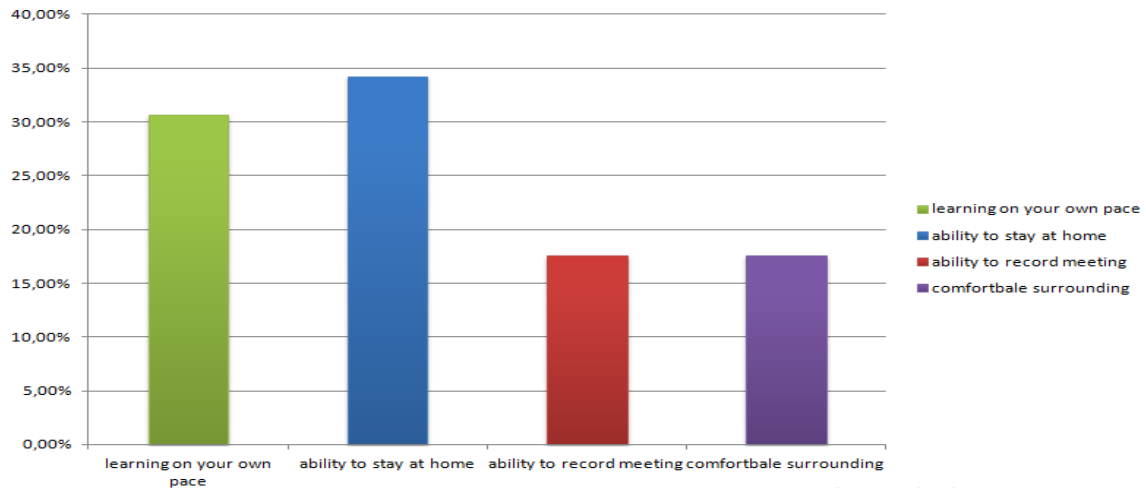**Question19:** Advantages of E-learning

Figure 19: Advantages of E-learning (**source**: own presentation by Excel)

According to the graph, we conclude that 34.2 % see that one of the   advantages of e-learning is the ability to stay at home, while 30,7% responded they can learn on their own pace. 17,6% said that can record meeting , and 17,6% see that they are in comfortable surrounding
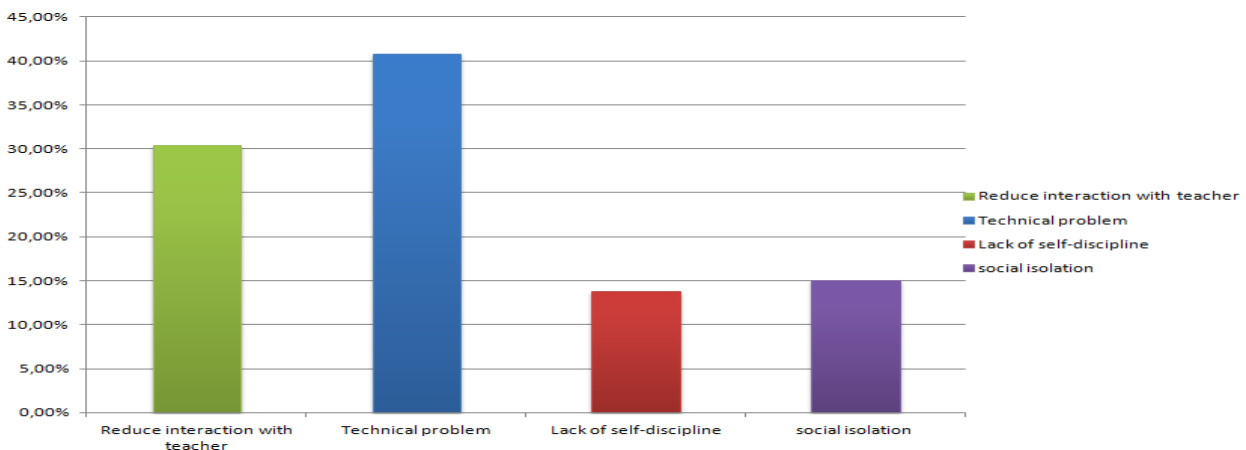
Question 20: disadvantages of E-learning

Figure 20: disadvantages of E-learning learning (**source**: own presentation by Excel) According to the graph, we conclude that 40,8% see that one of the disadvantages of e-learning is related to technical problems, while 30,4% answered that e-learning reduces interaction with teacher, while 15,0% said that the problem is with social isolation. 13,8% see that they lack self- discipline.

5. Conclusion

After collecting responses from two key actors at the Graduate School of Economics and using SPSS software to generate several relevant results, we shall draw the following results:

According to the findings presented in our first questionnaire, which included 21 questions and was intended for school students, we discovered that most students are usual with e-learning and that they have a moderate IT skills level.

The student of graduate school of economics are somehow satisfied with the e-learning in the school while they prefer the mixed between face to face learning and e-learning approach which is blended learning. They also prefer the online exams during the covid_19 era. On the other hand, the students prefer to back to face to face learning after the pandemic. This shows that the students in the pandemic

time prefer to study online in order to protect themselves and their families. Yet, in normal conditions, they prefer the traditional way.

During the pandemic, most students were worried about the future of education while they responded that their results in this tile were satisfied and the platform used were Google platforms

The students had learned using Google platform as first chose.

The advantage of e-learning, which is the most chosen by students, was ability to stay at home while the disadvantage was related to technical problems

From the findings presented in our second questionnaire, which included 16 questions and was intended for school lecturers, we discovered that the most of school's lecturers had taken at least an IT course

The lecturers believe that the students were the resistant group for the implementation of e-learning in the school

The lecturers prefer to continue teaching face to face or blended learning but not e-learning

The majority of lecturers agree about supporting the implementation of e-learning in the school along with face to face learning. Lectures believe communication is important for the teaching process

The lecturers think that the way to foster interaction between them and their students is to create interactive course and question to students , a high internet connection. They also consider the use of social media platform as a tool to foster interaction, send them course on tell students that online courses are included in exams.

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