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“Learning in a Pandemic”

The Ramifications of COVID-19 on Students' Academic Performance

**The Study Case of Ghardaïa University English
Department Students**

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfilment of
the Requirements for Master's Degree in Didactics

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family and my dear friends.

Acknowledgments

This dissertation would not have been realized without the will of the Almighty God.

First and for most I bear gratitude for my supervisor Ms. Siham SARTORIO for her guidance and patience.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation tackles the recent events in our daily and academic lives that we had and are going through, the issue of the COVID-19 Pandemic, and its effects on the academic performance of students. The accumulation of courses and lessons in a short period accompanied by the overflow and surplus of the information received; put together, had negatively impacted some students; resulting in an underperformance, a lack of comprehension, and apprehension that is shown in mediocre results also a deficiency in incentives, desire, motivation and other psychological factors that are also highly present within students in these times accompanied with various mental health issues. To deal with this unprecedented situation; the higher education ministry and its institutions in ALGERIA (ALG) adopted a mixture of distance/online learning approaches during the COVID-19 pandemic to ensure that students were safe while they received an uninterrupted, quality education off-campus. The purpose of this research was to explore the COVID-19 Pandemic's impact on the students of the Ghardaïa university English department performance. This research used a qualitative approach. In this research, we examine how students perceive the impacts of the first wave of the crisis in early 2020 till nowadays on various aspects of their lives. The result of this study is that there is some negative impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the students of the English Department performance.

KEYWORDS: COVID-19 Pandemic, performance, university students; online learning; mental health.

Introduction

Introduction

A few weeks after the COVID-19 Pandemic first confirmed case in Algeria was announced; the elected government took a decision to put the country on a lock-on and partial mandatory confinement for every aspect of the people's lives both professionally and academically, in which learning for university students was heavily affected. Life was at odds, unrecognizable, and like anything they ever experienced before. Learning was no longer possible, all ceased to stop. Hence, a new format of teaching was born; a teaching/learning approach that does not require the actual physical presence of both the educators and the graduates. But that was a whole new kind of lifestyle for them, an inexperienced phenomenon and an uncommon event to face. Therefore, universities were put to the challenge of providing a safer environment and virtual spaces for the continuation of the academic curriculum and to demonstrate evidence of their improvised method's effectiveness in dealing with the issue, of government and higher education ministry.

The outbreak of COVID-19 brought a heavy challenge to the academic teaching and learning process. By early summer 2020, journals in various healthcare professions began publishing papers discussing the unique challenges and opportunities faced by educators in the wake of the pandemic. The studies highlight that due to maintaining educational activities during the pandemic, instructors actively employed various methods and strategies in response to the impact of emergency remote teaching on students' academic performance. The findings reveal that better academic scores were achieved by during-pandemic students compared to pre-pandemic ones, whereas pre-pandemic counterparts performed better in terms of learning-readiness. Moreover, a study conducted by Pradas et al. shows an increase in students' academic performance. In this research study, we investigate the impact of the pandemic mid-semester disruption on the academic performance of students attending English language courses. A sample data set of around 6 students is employed to conduct the analysis. The

students attended the course in a transitional disrupted the results might have some merits for other courses and instructors.

Research reviewed by Aristovnik et al. (2020) saw that COVID-19-related changes have disrupted students' lives in many ways and indicates that students have experienced changes to their habits and daily routines, reduced social contact and support, as well as to internet facilities, printers, and other essential equipment and services. Students' new at-home study environments are not designed to focused work. And not have been well equipped to function successfully in their new learning environment. Adapting to an unanticipated way of learning may impact performance outcomes because of a lack of confidence in, certainty about, or acceptance of, online learning (Bower, 2019). Students may also have lacked the time management and IT skills to engage effectively with learning materials delivered in the online format (Patricia Aguilera-Hermida, 2020).

Alongside these practical impacts on students' learning experiences, research indicates that the outbreak of COVID-19 has been accompanied by negative psychological effects, including increased feelings of stress, and increased symptoms of anxiety and depression, high levels of uncertainty are associated with academic stress and a higher prevalence of mental disorders (Wu et al., 2020; Taylor et al., 2020), all of which are negatively effective of academic performance. Students interviewed after COVID-19 lockdowns have reported increased stress, anxiety and worries, as well as boredom and a lack of motivation. Ghardaïa English Department Students' anxiety and the feeling of depression levels during the COVID-19 outbreak were higher according to the students. COVID-19, like other public health epidemics, is seen as a chronic stressor, potentially resulting in significant changes to thoughts, feelings and behaviors (Liu et al., 2020) across multiple domains of functioning, including the academic context.

Major studies and analyses have shown that stress, depression and anxiety have a negative relationship with memory and academic performance (Richardson et al., 2012). The impacts of COVID-19 on learning experiences mentioned before demonstrate that students' academic performance will suffer as a result of the psychological impacts of the COVID-19.

1.1 Aims of the study

This study does not represent a generic model to compare all teaching modalities for all courses. Moreover, I do not aim to develop a general approach for comparing in-person, blended, and online instructional modalities. The purpose of this study is to report insightful analysis, results, and conclusions of a case study as a guidance for future design and to investigate on the factors that caused poor academic performance and find out how the students in this study experienced the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak and its social, mental and academic impact and effects on Ghardaïa English Department Students related to their academic performance.

1.2 Research Questions

The research questions are the following:

- What are the effects of COVID-19 on students' academic performance?
- Are there any differences in students' academic performance between those who attended in a traditional classroom, those who had a disrupted semester by the pandemic?
- Is there any relationship between remote/distance learning and students' academic performance?

1.3 Limitations

This study involves Ghardaïa English Department Students and the impact of the pandemic on their academic performances. Six students from different levels have participated in the interviews. The students are between the ages of twenty to twenty-five and are in their third, fourth and fifth years. These students were asked to take part in the research since they have had English for some years. To make a comparison of the students' answers involved in the

study. The answers and results investigated and analyzed are merely written and not the oral questions given to the students.

1.4 Setting

The study was carried out in two different methods; one was using a questionnaire which was answered online social media platform video-audio calls. While the other was carried out in the same classic one-one interview within the university premises inside a classroom. For some of the interviewees, the university was not chosen due to the inconvenience of living far from the desired location for conducting the interview participants. Therefore social-media platforms were used. Some of the interviews were conducted on the one-one interview style while others were by a video-audio call.

1.5 Study outline

The paper begins with an introduction to the research where the aim is described and important concepts are explained. Then, the literature reviews were concepts, ideas and notions were defined and explained. The material used and collected is demonstrated by clarifying the meaning behind the data collection tools with the working procedure and how the material was collected, analyzed and compared. Data was explained then results and a discussion of the findings was given and a conclusion was made.

1.6 Background

This study aimed to investigate the impact of COVID-19 on students' academic performance and the effects of distance learning due to educational, environmental, and social factors that all play a role.

Events that cause major disturbances in daily life are more likely to have a negative impact on them. COVID-19's modifications, such as physical separation and schooling, closures and

cuts to community-based services have the potential to wreak havoc on the systems. The effects of the epidemic on vulnerable children have been dramatically aggravated. As the fissures in our pillars of support become visible many students have gone through difficult times. Disengagement, persistent attendance issues, academic achievement drops, and credit score reductions are all signs of disengagement achievement throughout the pandemic, with the consequences being more and more severe for those who were already at risk.

The teaching and learning of languages changed abruptly from the face-to-face mode to the online mode and several points must be taken into account to explain the difficulties encountered by the students in Algeria. The background also includes some information about learning and different methods used in teaching when working with remote learning.

The results of the study are presented through the interviews and the informants' answers. The results present how and when feedback is used in school and whether or not students and teachers have different or similar opinions and experiences when working with feedback.

The paper ends with a discussion where the background and the students 'and the teachers' opinions are analyzed, compared and discussed. Finally, a conclusion of the study is presented.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

Student: Is a learner, or someone who attends

Performance: To perform is to take a complex series of actions that integrate skills and knowledge to produce a valuable result.

Students' academic performance: The outcomes of the teaching and learning process in terms of knowledge and skills in students acquires from universities.

Academic performance: Refers to achievement in standardized tests or examinations shown by a student which is assessed by the use of teacher's ratings, tests, and examinations (Niebuhr 1995).

Teaching and learning materials: In this study teaching and learning materials mean all materials that facilitate the teaching and learning in. They include materials such as a text books, projectors, classrooms, desks, libraries as well as syllabus.

Literature Review

Literature Review

1. Learning English in Algeria

Learning English in a university class in Algeria is usually direct. The teacher is the sender of the information or message, the student is the recipient (vertical communication), and when it comes to language or translation (horizontal communication), the opposite is true if both parties are the main characters in the class. Transmission channels are usually direct or multilateral. Algerian modality is usually direct, and the main character of the classroom is usually a teacher, but students are accustomed to being passive in the classroom (Khelfaoui, 2021).

In Algeria, some universities are obliged to suspend all face-to-face education and mentoring activities in favor of students for several months (Lassassi, Lounici, Sami, Tidjani, and Bengherna, 2020), and student enthusiasm is terrible. Become. This computer screen, used as a barrier, interferes with fluid communication between students and their teachers and classmates (Blizak, Bouchenak &Yahiaui, 2020). Professionals in Algeria and around the world must work tirelessly to overcome these complications and find new and more effective ways of communicating in the world of online education. As Reimers and Schleicher (2020) states, "educational leaders should take a proactive approach to mitigate the effects of pandemics and prevent learning losses during the required social distance" (p.7). This is a problem student's encountered during months of imprisonment. As Rapanta, Botturi, Goodyear and Guardia (2020) express, some form of contact and interaction with classmates and teachers is almost essential for students. Even if you are in a remote location and many professors and students show a lack of telecommunications equipment (devices, internet, applications, etc.), there is a need for self-study to learn from and learn with others. All materials and concepts must be clearly explained by the educator so that the learner can study comfortably in his free time. Materials are generally written in a foreign language, and

students can be easily and easily discouraged when faced with the difficult task of translating all concepts and instructions.

2. New Teaching Methods

It is important to make sure that the students are fully aware of the future challenges of the learning session. This is where the importance of effective communication becomes apparent, whether in class or through other means of communication such as email or instant messaging services. Teachers could use different platforms to communicate information. However, most students got lost for months and couldn't understand how the platform works. Second, both teachers and students must show the flexibility and willingness to learn these tools. This is stated as follows. (Rapanta et al., 2020, p.926). With these challenges in mind, teachers have more tasks needed to reach their goals. These points are explained below. University professors need to adapt quickly and seamlessly to new online platforms and many previously unknown technology systems. The purpose is to adapt language education to this technology for effective communication in the classroom. But in Algeria, preparations were particularly quick or unsuccessful. Thanks to tools such as Zoom, Google Hangouts, and Microsoft Teams, educators have moved to virtual classrooms. Nevertheless, some people still have problems getting online. The rapid transition to platforms like Zoom is disrupting the curriculum. This is especially true for professors who have a low ability to navigate the Web and do not have the complexity of managing a screen and microphone classroom. Some professors are simply panicking with the prospect of canceling classes due to technical or WiFi issues or teaching the entire course through a new platform. (Zermane & Aitouche, 2020, p. 164)

The creation of simple systems and portals is possible in all countries of the world, even in those where there is a substandard quality of internet. PDF documents and videos that compile the vocabulary studied in class is a way of informing students and aiding their

learning at distance is possible in this way, including when the communication is not direct but via email. The majority of Algerian students have email access and it is a tool which can be used to uphold interaction with them, even if the teaching platforms have not been accessible for whatever reason.

3.1 The Relationship between the Student, the Teacher and the Classroom

3.1.1 Student and Teacher Relationship

Teachers spend an average of 180 days with kids per year. During the 180 days, teachers see children' incredible academic, social, and behavioral progress. The level of relationship created between the teacher and the student can impact the degree of a student's achievements and improvement.

The establishment of a real relationship between a teacher and a student can have a favorable impact on a student's willingness to prioritize learning and success in life. Relationships between teachers and students begin on the first day of school. Many teachers employ "ice breaker" exercises to introduce students and teachers to one another and learn amusing and intriguing facts about each other. Teachers can compile the fascinating facts supplied by all pupils and utilize them to start talks with them.

Teachers might also ask students about the outcomes of weekend activities like sporting events or dancing recitals. When teachers initiate conversations with students, it provides for a show of interest in a specific kid and a sense of importance for that student. Students of all grades want to impress their teachers with their ability to learn or their special talents. When a student's relationship with the teacher is stable and a level of trust has been established, students feel safe exposing their actual selves. Mutual vulnerability is the next phase in teacher-student relationships, where both parties are comfortable sharing delicate information on occasion. Students will naturally mature into confident and autonomous thinkers and

active learners once the teacher-student relationship is established making teacher-student relationships extremely important and necessary in an educational setting.

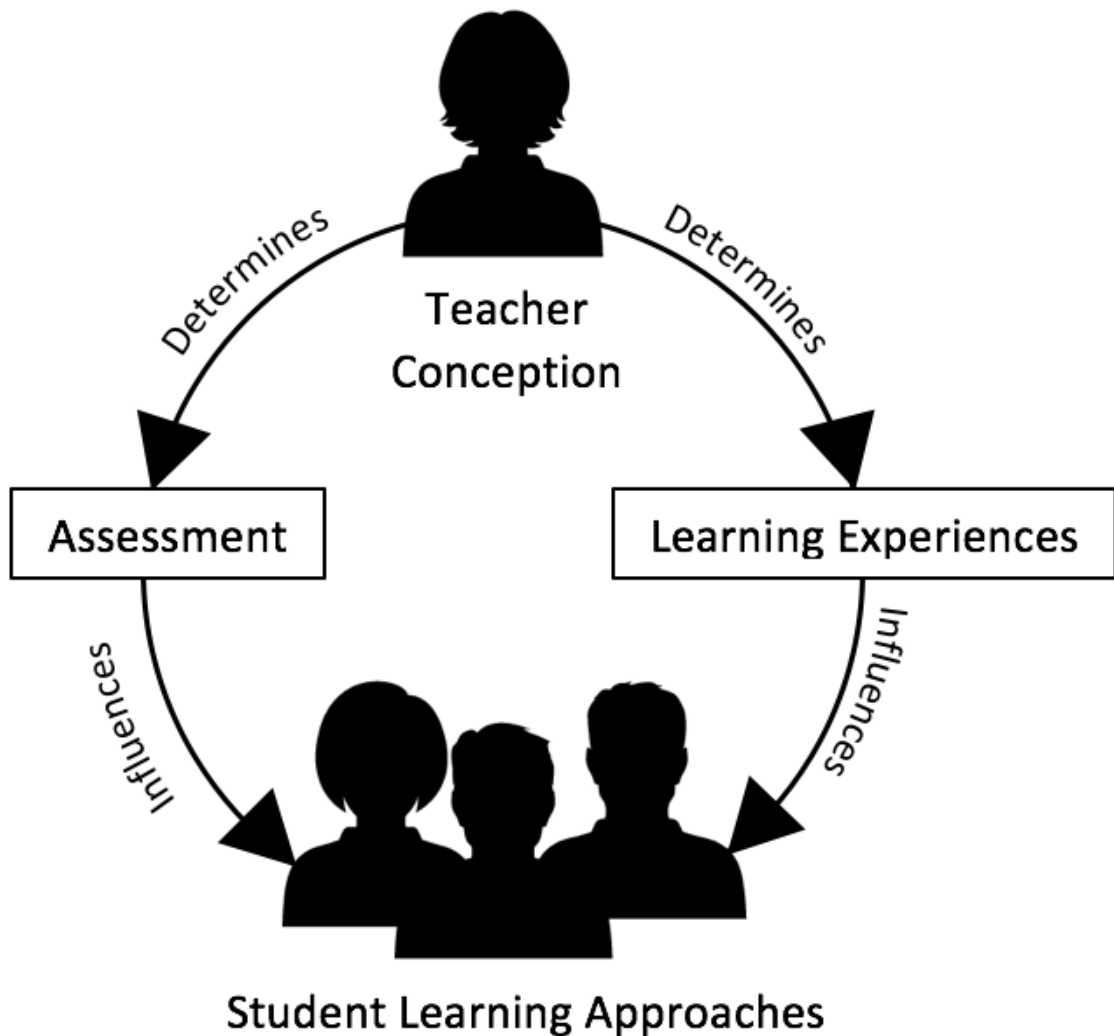


Figure 1: The relationship between teacher-conceptions of teaching and student learning approaches

3.1.2 Student and Classroom Relationship

The importance of student participation is clear; for this reason, teachers must find a way to use their creativity, adapt the material, provoke dynamic exchanges, and challenge the student to participate and not lose their interest (Ellis, Skehan, Li, & Lambert, 2019).

Many studies show that it is the student who encounters difficulties in following the classes online (Guemide & Maouche, 2020), or lacks the necessary motivation to study online because they are used to traditional, face-to-face classes (Lassoued, Alhendawi, & Bashitialshaaer, 2020). However, the professor is the focus in Algerian universities and perhaps it is time for the professor to make some amendments and compel the students to follow the lessons and in this way make the change from the traditional structure. The lack of contact between the teacher and the student is a major hurdle in the attempt to succeed in distance learning in Algeria. Interaction is essential in language classes (Deli GirikAllo, 2020), and encouraging – or even pushing – students to participate is more than recommended, as Guofang (2020) comments, that promoting meaningful interaction in the classroom and engaging students in the assessment process are important.

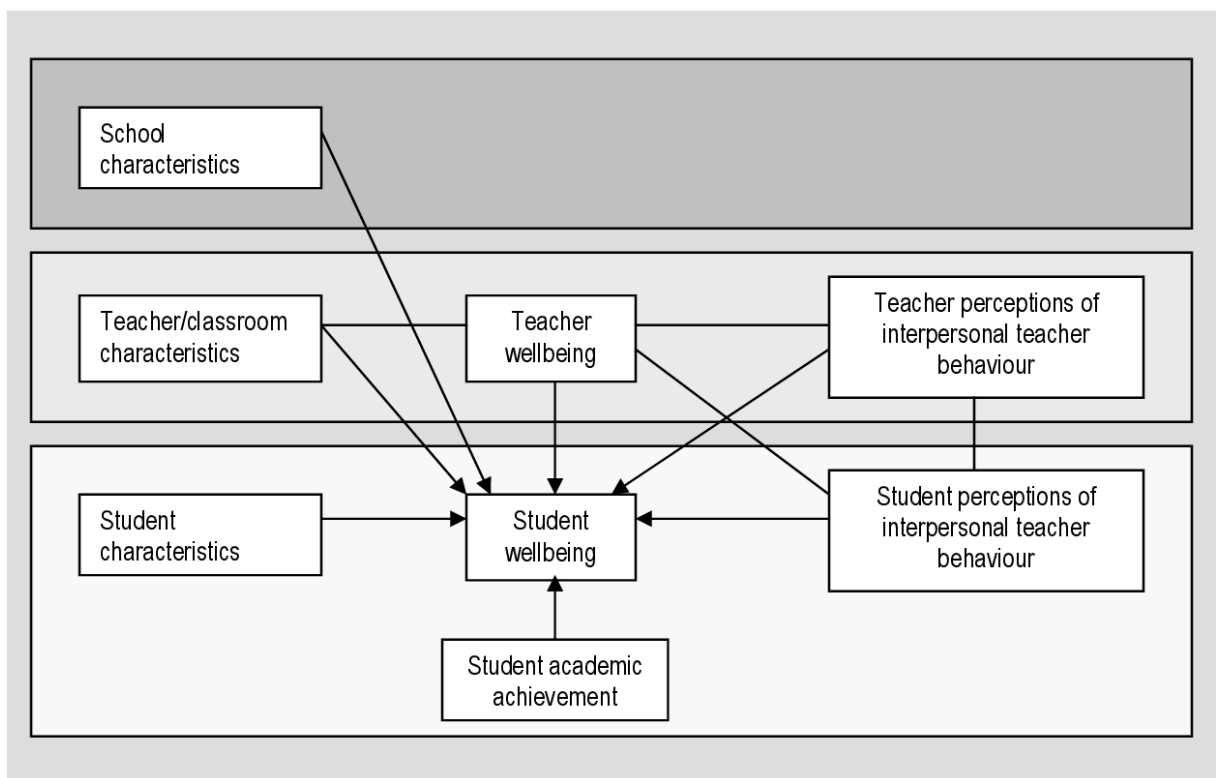


Figure 2: Relationship between the student, teacher and classroom characteristics

3.2 Distance Learning

Merriam Webster defines distance learning as, “a method of study where teachers and students do not meet in a classroom but use the Internet, e-mail, mail, etc., to have classes.”

Distant learning, also known as distance education, e-learning, or online learning, is a type of education in which teachers and students are physically separated during instruction and various technologies are used to allow student-teacher and student-student communication. Nontraditional students, such as full-time workers, military personnel, and nonresidents or those in remote areas who are unable to attend classroom lectures, have typically benefited from distance learning. Simply put, distance learning is when students are separated from teachers and peers. This means that students learn remotely and do not have face-to-face learning with instructors or other students.

Historically, this described correspondence courses in which students would communicate with their schools or teachers by mail. More recently, distance education has moved online to include a huge range of systems and methods on practically any connected device.

3.3 Online Learning

When teachers or students use instructional materials that are available on the internet, they are referred to as online learning. This means that students can use online resources while in the classroom alongside their teacher and classmates. Because online learning can be done anywhere and at any time, teachers may have students utilize it as a tool in class or for homework and preparation at home. In the classroom, online learning tools are frequently employed to build blended learning environments. This helps students stay interested in the class and the topic. Teachers can also save time in the classroom by using online learning. Teachers can spend more time grading papers and delivering one-on-one attention to pupils with the help of online instructional tools.

3.4 Distance Education

Distance Education means there is no in-person interaction with an instructor or study peers in distance learning. Students study on their own at home, and the learning is more personalized, varying in speed and timing according to each student's availability.

Distance learning relies on online learning's educational tools, which is probably why there is some confusion between the two. It is also feasible to study through online distant learning. Distance learning is a subset of online learning in this sense. Distance education may connect students to colleges all around the world, making it more accessible to students from all over the world.

3.5 The Difference between Online Learning and Distance Learning

1- location

While still in a traditional classroom setting, online learning can include the use of internet resources and platforms. Distance learning, on the other hand, is conducted through the internet and does not involve any face-to-face interaction between the student and the teacher.

2- Interaction

Online learning, as stated above, can include interaction with teachers and peers, whereas distant learning does not feature in-person contacts.

3- Determination

Distance learning substitutes teachers with instruction that is pre-set on the learning platform, although online learning can be utilized as a complement for teachers in their courses.

4.1 Learning during an Outbreak

For many students, teachers, and parents, academic normalcy remains elusive. Schools have encountered acute staff shortages, high rates of absenteeism and quarantines, and continuous school closures, in addition to rising COVID-19 cases by the end of 2021. Furthermore, mental health issues, higher rates of violence and misbehavior, and worries about missed instructional time continue to plague kids and educators.

Modern work patterns have been found to have an impact on social well-being. Boreham et al. show considerable negative effects of contemporary work practices on social welfare, despite the premise that high-performance work systems' or high commitment workplaces' (including a large deal of employee discretion, autonomy, and flexibility) build intrinsic staff motivation. They discover the line between job and social well-being. They discover that the line between work and social wellness is blurred, with interconnected relationships between workload pressure, stress, and quality of life impacts. Academic employees will be familiar with these tensions and strains, combining their great devotion to their profession with the necessity to respond to life beyond the academy in a demanding working environment.

Students, particularly post-graduate students, are vulnerable to stress, anxiety, and depression, which universities are aware with and for which there is a wealth of online assistance, as well as other online HE policy studies and resources. Despite broad recognition of the links between workplace happiness and social happiness, Cottini and Lucifora's study of 15 European countries found that working conditions have a negative impact on mental health due owing in great part to disparities in labor market flexibility and health and safety regulatory settings among countries.

It appears that the overriding importance of implementing the social lockout immediately will emphasize its accompanying stressors, obscuring the longer-term job stressors. The pressures of the lockdown will exacerbate existing work stressors and introduce new ones as the

lockdown continues. In light of this, the study presented here aims to determine the impact of the COVID-19 lockdown on working conditions and social isolation imposed on academic staff and students in higher education institutions around the world.

4.2.1 COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic, also known as the corona virus pandemic, is an ongoing global pandemic of corona virus (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome corona virus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The novel virus was first identified from an outbreak in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. Attempts to contain it there failed, allowing the virus to spread worldwide. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020 and a pandemic on 11 March 2020. As of 30 May 2022, the pandemic had caused more than 528 million cases and 6.28 million confirmed deaths, making it one of the deadliest in history.

4.2.2 Social/Physical Distancing

Social/Physical distancing helps prevent viruses from spreading. You practice some forms of physical distancing yourself, such as choosing where you stand on the bus, staying at home, missing school if any sign of illness is shown. Other physical distancing measures (such as the cancellation of large sporting events) may be enforced by government or private groups and organizations.

Social/Physical distancing practices include:

- staying 1.5 meters away from others when in public
- avoiding crowds and mass gatherings where it is hard to stay 1.5m from others
- avoiding shaking hands, hugging...
- avoiding visiting vulnerable people, such as those in aged-care facilities or hospitals, infants, or people with weakened immune systems

5.1 Definition of Academic Performance

The academic performance of students is the key feature (Rono, Onderi & Owino, 2014) and one of the important goals (Narad and Abdullah, 2016) of education, which can be defined as the knowledge gained by the student which is assessed by marks by a teacher and/or educational goals set by students and teachers to be achieved over a specific period of time. The attainment of academic excellence of students through making them portray better academic performance is the foremost motive of academic institutions (Adeyemo, 2001). Further, academic performance is something immensely significant for anyone who has a concern with education (Osiki, 2001). In fact, academic performance can be understood as the nucleus, around which a whole lot of significant components of education system revolve, which is why the academic performance of students, specifically belonging to Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), has been the area of interest among researchers, parents, policy framers and planners. Since a sound academic performance is considered as a pre-requisite for securing good jobs, a better career and subsequently a quality life, significance of the students' academic performance is immense.

Although it may seem to be a simple outcome of education, but the impact of academic performance of students in any nation is multi-faceted. Narad and Abdullah (2016) mentioned in their research, that at the basic level, the success or failure of any academic institution depends largely upon the academic performance of its students. They also reiterated the general belief that good academic performance signals better career prospects and thus a secure future.

The Academic Performance of students is immensely significant as the economic as well as the social development of any country are both attributable to the academic performance of the students. The better the students perform academically, the better are the prospects of the development of a fine manpower, who will contribute to the economic and social

development of the nation (Ali et.al, 2009). Students performing better than the expectations and norms set by the society are mostly expected to contribute to the growth, development and sustainability of the society (Akinleke, 2017).

5.2 Variables Affecting Academic Performance

Several studies have been conducted in different countries to assess the factors which contribute to academic performance of students at different levels. In Pakistan, Farooq and Berhanu (2011) found that parents’ education and socio-economic status have significant effect on a student’s academic performance in Mathematics and English Language. A study conducted by Jayanthi, Balakrishnan, Ching, Latiff and Nasirudeen (2014) in Singapore revealed that the interest in pursuing a subject, co-curricular activities, nationality of a student and gender affect the academic performance of a student. Additionally, Sibanda, Iwu and Olumide (2015) found that, regular study, punctuality in school and self-motivation are the key determining factors which influence students’ academic performance in South Africa. Ali, Munir, Khan and Ahmed (2013) also found that daily study hours, parent’s socio-economic status and age have a significant impact on academic performance.

Figure 1: Variables Affecting Academic Performance

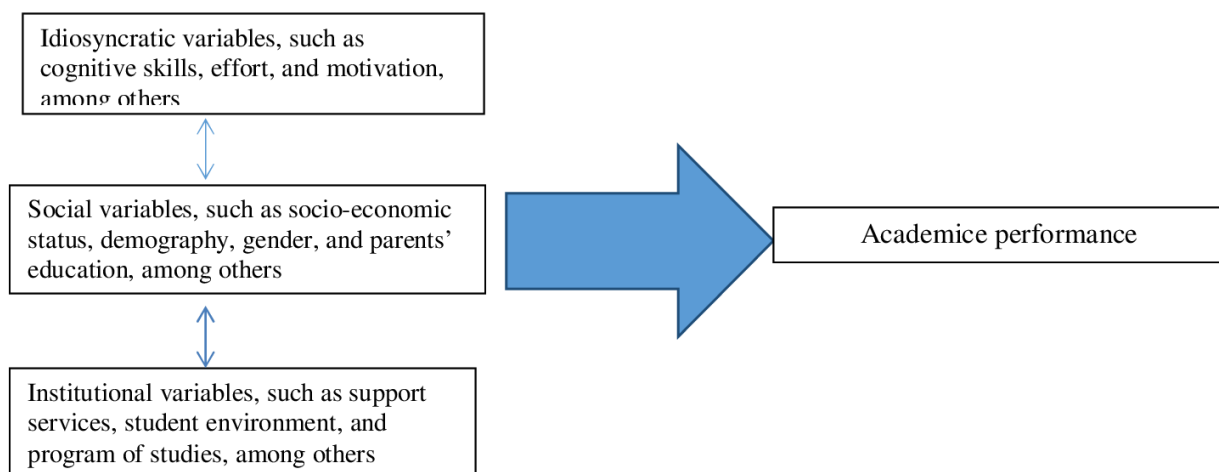


Figure 1: Factors affecting Academic Performance of Students

Moreover, Catherine (2015) found that socio-economic status of parents especially those with high incomes has a significant impact on academic performance of students within the Kitale Municipality of Kenya. Positive classroom environment has also been found as determining factor of academic performance (Moloko Mphale & Mhlauli, 2014). and Osei-Mensah (2012), indicated that the availability of teaching and learning materials, competency of teachers and the environment in which a school is located have an impact on students' academic performance. Furthermore, students' personality traits, personal goals and motivation as well as the support from teachers and the teacher's level of experience significantly influence the academic performance of students (Anthony 2018).

The discussion above suggests that academic performance of students is influenced by a combination of factors which includes but not limited to: Parents level of education, socio-economic status, interest in a subject, gender, regular studying, punctuality in class, self-motivation, availability of teaching and learning materials, and competency of teachers, school environment, personal goals, and personality traits. These factors could be classified into student, teacher, school and parents factors.

Research Methodology

1.1 Methods and Materials

To collect both quantitative (numerical) and qualitative (descriptive) data, the study used a mixed method research design, each should be given equal weight. In this mixed method studies, quantitative and qualitative methodologies are used to collect data; an online survey questionnaire and a semi-structured format Interview.

As a result of the study, the researcher began by gathering quantitative data then the qualitative data comes next. He was in charge of interpreting and reporting the findings.

1.1.1 Quantitative Methodology

The respondents of the quantitative part were 53 undergraduate students from Ghardaïa University English department whose population was estimated to be around to be between 700 and 1000 students for the academic year of 2021–2022. Based on the (Morgan, 1970) table for determining sample size from a given population.

53 students were selected as the sample of the study. A sample is a group of people who are taken from a given population for measurement. The sample of the study will be the representative of the population to assure that the researchers can generalize the finding of their studies to the whole population. Creswell (2012) stated that random sampling gives the chance for every member of the population to be selected as the participant of a study. The researcher estimated that some of the students may not fill out the questionnaire so he selected a high number of students as the sample to reduce sampling error of the study. It is important to mention that the missing data do not have any effect on the interpretation and finding of the data because the participants' response rate is high. As Table 1 shows, 39 of the respondents were female and 14 were male. They were from different classes, i.e., 13 second year, 15 third year, 20 fourth year and 5 fifth year. In addition, 44 of them aged between 18-22 years, 7 of them aged between 23-27 years, and only 2 of them aged between 28 and above (see Table 1).

Demographic Variables		Frequency
Gender	Male	14
	Female	39
	Total	53
Class	Second Year	13
	Third Year	15
	Fourth Year	20
	Fifth Year	5
Age	18-22	44
	23-27	7
	28-Above	2
Total	53	

Table 1: Demographic information of the respondents.

1.1.2 Qualitative Methodology

In order to facilitate the research, the study supposedly was to be taken a place at the university where our learning as students is done but for significant circumstances blamed on long-distance and the inability to choose a specific day to conduct the interviews, in response to that I decided to take some of the interviews online while the rest were face-to-face. The informants, six students, partook in this study using a convenient sample (Bryman, 2006:114) and by being subjectively chosen. The advantage of using a convenient sample is that the choosing and selection of interviewees are random and differ from one interviewee to the other which results in a varied group of informants. However, the convenient sample does not represent the whole group of informants; a small sample is never the general and wide population of students which results in the study being ungeneralisable (Bryman, 2006:114).

Additionally, the advantage and disadvantage of the subjective selection are that informants with certain qualities could be selected.

The students were asked to choose if I could disclose their names or choose to remain anonymous (Kvale, 1996:114) the latter was done. The students' names were encoded from 1 to 6. The rest of the material is collected from the interviews.

1.2 Methods of Analysis

The study is both quantitative comparative and qualitative and descriptive. By using the method of Grounded Theory the data from the research has been analyzed, compared and categorized during the research process (Bryman, 2006:375-380).

1.2.1 Research Instrumentation

1.2.1.1 Questionnaire Overview

To create the study instrument, the researcher conducted a thorough literature review. The questionnaire's items were adapted from the appropriate literature (e.g., Baloran, 2020). Data was collected using an online survey questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into three pieces. The first section inquired about the respondents' demographics. The second component, which was divided into two sub-sections, intended to elicit students' teaching and learning experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic, while the third section looked into the impact of COVID-19 on students' academic performance in higher education during the pandemic.

The respondents of the research were asked to indicate to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statements on a 4-points Likert Scale (1¼Strongly Disagree, 2¼Disagree, 3¼ Agree and 4¼ Strongly Agree).

Questionnaires, according to Brown (2001, 06), are "any written instruments that present respondents with a sequence of questions or statements to which they are to respond, either by writing out their replies or picking from among existing answers." As a result, this study tool

intends to provide the capability of collecting vast amounts of diverse data in a short length of time while using less energy.

There are various types of questionnaires in survey research, including:

- **Postal:** Postal questionnaires are paper surveys that participants receive through the mail. Once respondents complete the survey, they mail them back to the organization that sent them.
- **In-house:** In this type of questionnaire, researchers visit respondents in their homes or workplaces and administer the survey in person.
- **Telephone:** With telephone surveys, researchers call respondents and conduct the questionnaire over the phone.
- **Electronic:** Perhaps the most common type of questionnaire, electronic surveys are presented via email or through a different online medium.

You can use multiple question types in a questionnaire. Using various question types can help increase responses to your research questionnaire as they tend to keep participants more engaged. The best customer satisfaction survey templates are the most commonly used for better insights and decision-making. Some of the widely used types of questions are:

- **Open-Ended Questions:** Open-ended questions help collect qualitative data in a questionnaire where the respondent can answer in a free form with little to no restrictions.
- **Dichotomous Questions:** The dichotomous question is generally a “yes/no” close-ended question. This question is usually used in case of the need for necessary validation. It is the most natural form of a questionnaire.
- **Multiple-Choice Questions:** Multiple-choice questions are a close-ended question type in which a respondent has to select one (single-select multiple-choice question) or many (multi-select multiple choice question) responses from a given list of options. The multiple-choice question consists of an incomplete stem (question), right answer or answers,

incorrect answers, close alternatives, and distracters. Of course, not all multiple-choice questions have all of the answer types. For example, you probably won't have the wrong or right answers if you're looking for customer opinion.

- **Scaling Questions:** These questions are based on the principles of the four measurement scales – nominal, ordinal, interval, and ratio. A few of the question types that utilize these scales' fundamental properties are rank order questions, Likert scale questions, semantic differential scale questions, and Stapel scale questions.
- **Pictorial Questions:** This question type is easy to use and encourages respondents to answer. It works similarly to a multiple-choice question. Respondents are asked a question, and the answer choices are images. This helps respondents choose an answer quickly without over-thinking their answers, giving you more accurate data.

1.2.1.2 Interview Overview

The informants were selected both subjectively and randomly. They participated in semi-structured interviews to promote a discussion and further questions (Kvale, 1996:124). To make the interviewees feel comfortable and to prevent the loss of information. Answers by 6 Informants who decided to use Arabic were translated into English. The interviews were recorded using an audio recording phone application and then transcribed where important parts of the interviews were quoted. The application prevented the loss of useful information and enabled re-access to information. The students' opinions and experiences with learning during the outbreak were compared and to facilitate for the reader the information from the interviews was categorized into themes in accordance with the interview questions.

Grounded theory is a qualitative method that enables you to study a particular phenomenon or process and discover new theories that are based on the collection and analysis of real-world data.

Unlike traditional hypothesis-deductive approaches of research, where you come up with a hypothesis and then try to prove/disprove it, grounded theory is an inductive approach where new theories are derived from the data.

The process of data collection, data analysis, and theory development happens in an iterative process. Iterative data collection and analysis occur until you reach theoretical saturation, the point at which additional data adds no additional insight into your new theory.

Interviews can be defined as a qualitative research technique that involves “conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, program or situation.”

There are three different formats of interviews: structured, semi-structured and unstructured.

Structured interviews consist of a series of pre-determined questions that all interviewees answer in the same order. Data analysis usually tends to be more straightforward because researchers can compare and contrast different answers given to the same questions.

Unstructured interviews are usually the least reliable from a research viewpoint because no questions are prepared prior to the interview and data collection is conducted in an informal manner. Unstructured interviews can be associated with a high level of bias and comparison of answers given by different respondents tends to be difficult due to the differences in the formulation of questions.

Semi-structured interviews contain the components of both, structured and unstructured interviews. In semi-structured interviews, interviewer prepares a set of same questions to be answered by all interviewees. At the same time, additional questions might be asked during interviews to clarify and/or further expand certain issues.

Advantages of interviews include possibilities of collecting detailed information about research questions. Moreover, in this type of primary data collection researcher has direct control over the flow of process and she has a chance to clarify certain issues during the

process if needed. Disadvantages, on the other hand, include longer time requirements and difficulties associated with arranging an appropriate time with perspective sample group members to conduct interviews.

When conducting interviews you should have an open mind and refrain from displaying disagreements in any form when viewpoints expressed by interviewees contradict your own ideas. Moreover, the timing and environment for interviews need to be scheduled effectively. Specifically, interviews need to be conducted in a relaxed environment, free of any forms of pressure for interviewees whatsoever.

Respected scholars warn that “in conducting an interview the interviewer should attempt to create a friendly, non-threatening atmosphere. Much as one does with a cover letter, the interviewer should give a brief, casual introduction to the study; stress the importance of the person’s participation; and assure anonymity, or at least confidentiality, when possible.”

There is a risk of interviewee bias during the primary data collection process and this would seriously compromise the validity of the project findings. Some interviewer bias can be avoided by ensuring that the interviewer does not overreact to the responses of the interviewee. Other steps that can be taken to help avoid or reduce interviewer bias include having the interviewer dress inconspicuously and appropriately for the environment and holding the interview in a private setting

The interviews demonstrate students’ views on the pandemic consequences on their academic learning path, which was the purpose of the study. The study is based on interviews of the informants’ opinions and experiences, which make the results subjective.

2.1 Data Collection

2.1.1 Interview

Sample size was calculated to be 6 participants as a minimum number of participants (4). Data collection was done by conducting interviews both with the physical presence of the interviewees and virtual using a social-media platform. Data collection was done during the period from April 15th to May25th, 2022.

2.1.2 Questionnaire

Sample size was calculated to be 53 participants as a minimum number of participants (30). Data collection was done by conducting an online questionnaire. Data collection was done during the period from April 15th to May25th, 2022.

2.2 Data Analysis

The researcher used Ms.Word to analyze the data. First, the data was transcribed from an audio-video device and the rest was written on the spot, some were translated from Arabic to English and then converted to Ms. Word file. This study used a mixed technique approach, with the data being statistically and thematically examined. The researcher analyzed the data using Ms. Excel for the quantitative portion. The data was first downloaded from a Google form and then converted to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet. The data was subsequently imported and statistical analyses were performed, including descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. To determine frequency, percentage, and mean, descriptive analysis was used. Independent Samples T-tests were used to see if there were any changes in the responses of participants based on their demographic factors, such as gender, class, and age. In addition, regression analysis was used to investigate the relationship between students' perceptions of teaching and learning, as well as the impact of the COVID-19 on students' learning and academic performance.

Results & Discussion

1. Results

1.1 Quantitative Results

The data collected will be analyzed quantitatively. Furthermore, the findings will be presented in a form of tables to make the explanation clear.

Statements	SD	D	A	SA
During the COVID-19 pandemic, I had access to online education.	1.8	5.4	71	21.8
During the COVID-19 pandemic, I had access to the Internet.	12.6	7.2	59.4	20.8
During the COVID-19 pandemic, I had access to technology.	1.8	3.6	75.6	19
During the COVID-19 pandemic, I had a greater understanding of how to use technology.	0	1.8	7.2	91
During the COVID-19 pandemic, I collaborated with my classmates and group members.	0	9	80	11

Table 2: Statistical data on students learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

1.1 The Process of Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Table 2 displays descriptive information about students' teaching and learning experiences throughout the COVID-19 epidemic. It demonstrates that the majority of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with statements indicating that they did have a continual access to online teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Statements	SD	D	A	SA
The COVID-19 pandemic impacted my learning performance.	3.6	5.4	81.8	9.2
The COVID-19 pandemic impacted my subject knowledge.	1.8	5.4	76.4	16.4
The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the quality of my learning.	3.6	3.6	75.6	19
The COVID-19 pandemic impacted my future educational goals.	7.2	1.8	7.2	91
The COVID-19 pandemic impacted my educational activities.	9	1.8	81.8	7.2
The COVID-19 pandemic caused me to lose educational opportunities.	1.8	63	25.2	11.8
The COVID-19 pandemic impacted me psychologically.	0	5.4	3.6	91
The COVID-19 pandemic impacted my motivation for learning.	0	7.2	83.6	9.2

Table 3: Descriptive statistics on the ramifications of COVID-19 pandemic on several areas of students' performance, objectives and accomplishments.

1.2 The Effect of COVID-19 Pandemic on Students' Learning

Table 3 displays descriptive statistics of students' perceptions of the impact of the COVID-19 program on several aspects of their learning in Ghardaïa University's English department. It shows that over 90% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with statements indicating that the COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on them.

1.2 Qualitative Results

A semi-structured interview with six individuals was used to collect qualitative data. Themes collected from the interview recordings are shown in Table 1. The raw data revealed that nearly all of the participants were dissatisfied with online teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that they faced a variety of challenges, including a lack of a stable Internet connection, inadequate technological facilities, lost motivation, all of which harmed their learning experience during the pandemic. According to interviewee 1, their instructors used to prepare some questions from each section of their classes and then ask students to digest and find answers to them as a result, she wasn't paying attention in class. During the COVID-19 epidemic, interviewee 2 stated that he could not have a pleasant learning experience due to stress related problems. He also stated that the department's online learning communicated through the platform (Zoom). In addition, interviewee 3 stated that she had difficulty using technical devices. She claimed she didn't have access to a computer. Her academic performance was harmed as a result.

Furthermore, interviewee 4 stated that his lecturers were sent via social media. They, on the other hand, did not take teaching and learning seriously. In any case, he advised, teaching and learning should not be interrupted. He also stated that the COVID-19 had a psychological influence on him, as he was unable to get the same high grades as he had in 2019. Furthermore, interviewee 5 stated that teaching and learning were not satisfying due to the COVID-19 affecting her attention and the institutions closing for months. During the COVID-19, interviewee 6 felt that instruction and learning were insufficient; therefore he used to examine his notes and do some self-studies at home. He also mentioned that it is a common occurrence in our community that pupils do not study effectively when professors do not push them. As a result, it has an impact on their learning outcomes. Finally, nearly all of the

participants were dissatisfied with online teaching and learning, and they had issues with the Internet and technological facilities, which harmed their learning outcomes.

The results of Table 4, 5 and 6 (below) summarize the findings of the interviews.

Theme	Students' teaching experiences during COVID-19
Interviewee number 1	Our lecturers created email group and used to share some materials.
Interviewee number 2	I was living in a district and most of the time could not manage to follow my lectures
Interviewee number 3	Online lectures were not effective for every me because I did not have a smart phone and computer
Interviewee number 4	Our lecturers used to communicate through emails and share some recorded lectures with us
Interviewee number 5	Teaching was not satisfactory for me because we did not have live lectures for months
Interviewee number 6	Lecturers used to communicate and share some learning materials through social media.

Table 4: Descriptive statistics about the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on of students' teaching.

Theme	Students' Learning experiences during COVID-19
Interviewee number 1	Online lectures were stopped after few sessions because I did not have access to Internet.
Interviewee number 2	Due to lack of Internet and technological problems, online learning was not effective for me.
Interviewee number 3	I just used to contact with my classmates through social-media and ask them for the assignments given by the lecturers.
Interviewee number 4	The learning experience did not have a positive result because our lecturers were not serious in their teaching.
Interviewee number 5	COVID-19 damaged my learning style and concentration for gaining new knowledge. I worked with my classmate to prepare class projects.
Interviewee number 6	I used to review my chapters and notes, but my learning outcome was very low because there is no pressure from the lecturer, so we did not study enough.

Table 5: Descriptive statistics about the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on of students' learning.

Theme	The effect of COVID-19 on Students' Academic Performance and Learning
Interviewee number 1	COVID-19 had both positive and negative impacts, but the negative ones devastatingly affected my learning.
Interviewee number 2	I had the worst learning experience because of the poor Internet, even I could not manage to read messages and emails
Interviewee number 3	I was very stressful and feel that I did not study for years.
Interviewee number 4	Achieving low grades because of COVID- 19, my graduation was postponed and I was worried psychologically for my health and future.
Interviewee number 5	The positive impact is that we experienced online learning for the first time which introduced us with online learning.
Interviewee number 6	COVID-19 delayed my graduation and felt very stressful during the COVID- 19.

Table 6: Descriptive statistics about the effect of COVID-19 on Students' Academic Performance and Learning

2. Discussion

The COVID-19 epidemic has had an impact on all aspects of human life, including student learning in higher education. In a country with little resources, the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on pupils' learning differs from that in a country with more resources. The goal of this study was to determine the influence of the COVID-19 pandemic on students' learning in Algerian higher education. It also aimed to determine whether demographic factors such as gender and age influenced students' responses because to a lack of facilities and resources, the majority of students did not have consistent and effective online learning and instruction during the COVID-19 epidemic, according to the study's findings. Students' engagement in higher education was hampered by these limitations.

This study looked at the various aspects that were directly associated to students' success in remote learning and online classes during COVID-19. Because of the global epidemic, all schools and universities have been forced to switch to a semi-online format by their individual governments. As a result, the teaching approach was changed to an online format. Despite the fact that some of the educators were not tech-savvy, they updated their skills in order to deal with unforeseen events (Pillai et al.,2021). The findings of this study will aid instructors in improving student satisfaction and performance in online programs. The current study aids educators in comprehending the various aspects required for online instruction.

The study also investigated the relationship between student satisfaction and performance. According to the conclusions of this study, the quality of the instructor is the most important element that influences student happiness during online lessons. This necessitates a high level of efficiency from the lecturer during the lectures. To teach the course information effectively, he must first grasp the psychology of the pupils. The student's pleasure and performance are affected by the teacher's ability to present the course content correctly. The teachers' point of view is crucial since their excitement results in a higher quality online learning experience.

According to the current study, student expectations are the second most important factor impacting student pleasure during online sessions. During class, students may have certain expectations. It is predicted that students would perform better on tests if the instructor recognizes that expectation and customizes his or her course design to meet the students' expectations. Feedback is the third component that influences student satisfaction. Instructors should take relevant feedback after giving the course in order to organize future courses. It also aids in the formulation of future strategies (Tawafak et al., 2019). Because feedback is the true image of the course material, there must be a robust feedback mechanism in place for improvement. Design is the final component that influences student satisfaction.

According to research, online teaching and learning is most effective when all students have equal access to facilities and lectures. During the COVID-19 pandemic, virtually all of the students were dissatisfied with online teaching and learning, according to the qualitative findings. According to them, the majority of the pupils encountered issues with the Internet and technological equipment. For example, participant 2 claimed that the 3G network was down in his area and that he couldn't keep up with his lectures using 2G Internet. Furthermore, the participants stated that most Internet bundles were prohibitively expensive and that they had financial difficulties purchasing Internet subscriptions

Furthermore, the mobile companies' Internet was unstable, and they were unable to engage in effective online teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, they recommended that Algeria's Ministry of Higher Education or the faculty English Department evaluate its rules, develop, and launch an online platform that could be used in Algeria. For example, participant 2 proposed a learning management system that is free for students and works even when the Internet is slow. The findings support the findings of Agormedah et al. (2020), who concluded that online teaching and learning was not suitable due to a lack of adequate facilities. The COVID-19 epidemic has also had a negative impact on students' learning in higher education, according to one study.

According to the findings of the data analysis, nearly 90% of respondents said the viral epidemic and lockdown had a significant impact on their learning. The study's participants discovered that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted various aspects of students' learning, including class projects, assignment loads, learning quality, motivation for learning, educational activities, goals, subject knowledge, learning performance, educational opportunities, and the length of their studies. This study backs up earlier research by Khlaif et al. (2020) and Onyema et al. (2020), who found that the COVID-19 epidemic has had a negative influence on students' learning. According to Praghlapati (2020), many students have suffered anxiety and depression as a result of the COVID-19 epidemic, which has negatively impacted their learning outcomes and academic progress.

According to this study, educational institutions should provide psychological and counseling services to help students succeed in higher education. Furthermore, the study's findings revealed that the gender of the respondents had no bearing on their responses. It was discovered, however, that the respondents' social class and age had an effect on their responses. Furthermore, the study discovered a statistically significant association between teaching and learning, as well as the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on students' learning in Algerian higher education.

The COVID-19 has an impact on students' learning in higher education, according to the qualitative findings. The COVID-19 has both a beneficial and negative impact on kids' learning, according to the participants. In terms of positive impact, students were exposed to online learning for the first time, which allowed them to readily absorb new information. The kids also stated that the COVID-19 pandemic had a negative impact on their education. Also, according to Dutta et al. (2020) and Tamrat (2021) studies, the COVID-19 has both a beneficial and negative impact on students' learning.

Conclusion

Conclusion

In conclusion, I identified in this study the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on students' academic performance and learning experienced during the pandemic.

COVID-19 is a serious global issue that requires global cooperation and coordination to mitigate its effects. In every corner of the globe, the virus epidemic has profoundly altered people's lives. The World Health Organization (W.H.O.) reported in March 2020 that the virus pandemic has spread worldwide, posing a threat to education. Since the time of Coronavirus, education and learning have gone through various paradigm shifts and variations. Students' learning in higher education has been hampered as a result of these developments.

Because resources were scarce and students did not have consistent teaching and learning activities, Algerian students' learning was negatively impacted more than any other country in the world. During the COVID-19 pandemic, students faced a number of challenges, including unstable Internet, a lack of technological facilities, insufficient resources, high Internet costs, a lack of awareness, a lack of linguistic skills, a lack of full-time power supply, and preparation issues for online teaching. These issues have had the greatest impact on higher education teaching and learning, and they are felt by students, instructors, educational institutions, and other stakeholders.

During the COVID-19 epidemic, the respondents at Ghardaïa University in Algeria stated that they did not have constant online teaching and learning. The study found that the majority of nearly all of the respondents agreed that the COVID-19 pandemic had harmed their learning and that they had not studied for months as a result of it. Furthermore, data analysis revealed that there was no statistically significant variation in student responses based on gender. They did, however, find statistically significant differences in student responses based on class and age. Furthermore, the study's findings revealed a statistically significant association between

teaching and learning, as well as the impact of the COVID-19 epidemic on students' learning in Algerian higher education.

In the event of another outbreak, several recommendations were given for future practice and study in online learning. To begin, educational leaders and higher education management should examine changing settings, flexibility in techniques, and ways to increase students' involvement and creativity in higher education. Authorities should give adequate technical support to assist students in overcoming potential internet and technical issues, as well as recommending online learning systems that are optimized for smart phones. Second, tailoring an online pedagogical design for students of various years and levels, with a special emphasis on giving adequate guidance and more online collaborative opportunities. Third, because students faced numerous obstacles during the COVID-19 epidemic, platforms and regulations for online learning in higher education need to be critically evaluated and reviewed.

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Appendices

Questionnaire form

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfX_e5IqbDCJvPtixnaWLzcYP2dPxY-M6k9IiUO0Mx9peimbw/viewform?usp=sf_link

Dear students,

You are invited to participate in the current research through filling in the questionnaire. The questionnaire is designed to gather information about (The Ramifications of COVID-19 on Students' Academic Performance) .You may be assured that your responses will be used just for research purposes and will be kept confidential.

Rubric One: Demographic information of the respondents

- **Are you:**

Male

Female

- **How old are you?**

Between 17 and 22

Between 23 and 28

28 and above

- **What year do you study?**

Second year

Third year

Fourth year

Fifth year

Rubric Two: The Process of Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, I had access to online education.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Disagree

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, I had access to the Internet.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Disagree

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, I had access to technology.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Disagree

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, I had a greater understanding of how to use technology.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Disagree

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, I had a greater understanding of how to use technology.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Disagree

- During the COVID-19 pandemic, I collaborated with my classmates and group members.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Disagree

Rubric Three: The Process of Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic and the ramifications of COVID-19 pandemic on several areas of students' performance, objectives and accomplishments.

- The COVID-19 pandemic impacted my learning performance.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Disagree

- The COVID-19 pandemic impacted my subject knowledge.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Disagree

- The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the quality of my learning.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Disagree

- The COVID-19 pandemic impacted my future educational goals.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Disagree

- During The COVID-19 pandemic impacted my educational activities.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Disagree

- The COVID-19 pandemic caused me to lose educational opportunities.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Disagree

- The COVID-19 pandemic impacted me psychologically.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Disagree

- The COVID-19 pandemic impacted my motivation for learning.

Strongly disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Disagree

Interview Questions

- As a student how was your experience of teaching during COVID-19?
- As a student how was your experience of learning during COVID-19?
- What was the impact of COVID-19 on your mental health?
- Have you experienced any troubles in receiving lessons and courses online?
- Did you face any technical issues while learning?
- Does the teacher interactions and presence make you feel more secure about your learning?
- Did you access online materials with ease?
- What distance learning/e-learning useful and beneficial for your learning?
- What is your opinion of the new learning methods applied by the university?
- What kind of effect is the current learning model having on your social-emotional well-being?
- Were the learning conditions at home or university suitable for you?
- How did the pandemic affect your performance at the university?
- How concerned are you about academic growth right now?
- How concerned are you about social-emotional well-being?
- Compared to past years, how much harder or easier is it to understand and comprehend the information received?