The Distance education during COVID-19 in Morocco

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Abstract

Following the coronavirus pandemic, Morocco has decided to close all educational establishments in the public and private sector, the act of learning was provided by distance education, hence the importance in this study of focusing on the impact of this pandemic on distance education. This study is based on a questionnaire of 35 questions, which revolve around four axes relating to distance education on the one side and the impact of COVID-19 on the other side. It is about a work, which gave a clear and clear vision on the teaching in its various levels, which was very late in this field of E-learning; it is thanks to this crisis that we were able to try the challenge. The teachers have played the role of several speakers, they have become, mentors, educational engineers, directors of studies, computer technicians, and tutors. If they accepted this situation, it is sure to correct and improve learning in a process aimed at renovating their efficiency and creativity in a climate of tension generated by the spread of the crisis. Indeed, a large number of teachers have mobilized to make this distance learning successful. Much effort has been made by the various education stakeholders to overcome this crisis of stopping face-to-face lessons. Throughout my work, it turned out that distance education was seen as one of the efficient solutions to meet the needs of our learners. E-learning would never replace the face-to-face teacher, which is why this new mode of teaching should be considered as an addition, an added value, which would enrich face-to-face teaching. This coronavirus pandemic should serve as a lesson to us. Of course, there are still efforts to be made in this direction, because other teachers are not yet involved in this new mode of teaching.

Keywords: Distance Learning, Education, COVID-19, Teachers, Learners

1. INTRODUCTION

Because of the spread of the coronavirus pandemic, and after the state of health emergency declared by the Kingdom. The Ministry of National Education, Vocational Training, Higher Education and Scientific Research announced, in a press announcement released on Friday, March 13. The suspension of classes from Monday, March 16 until further notice in all educational and vocational training establishments and universities in the public and private sectors". The learning process was affected [7]. The objective was to deal with the spread of "the COVID-19 pandemic" [10]. And at the same time to ensure pedagogical continuity; this use of online education could never have seen the light of day in this way outside of this crisis. Such an observation justifies this act of transition: face-to-face lessons have been replaced by distance learning, something that was done unexpectedly and in a hurry without any previously established preparation. All of these elements were a catalyst factor in arousing my desire to embark on this study aimed at unveiling the impact of the coronavirus on distance education.

2. OBJECTIVE

This modest work aims to measure the impact of COVID-19 on distance education. And to do this, I decided to collect the experiences and opinions of some fellow professors from different disciplines in a questionnaire that was carried out online with about fifty colleagues from different regions of Morocco after two months of distance learning. And more precisely on May 16th, 2020. My objective was to study and assess the impact of COVID-19 on distance education while emphasizing the availability of the equipment used, the tools offered, the time work and the participation of learners and their autonomy, the commitment of teachers and their students to succeed in this challenge and consequently to identify the impact of COVID-19 on the development of distance education in Morocco.

3. METHODS AND MATERIALS

Given the complexity of the situation and the facts analyzed, we opted for a questionnaire of 35 questions which revolve around four axes:

      1-Distance education experiences before COVID-19

      2-The means and methods used to succeed in the act of distance education

      3-The impact of COVID-19 on distance education.

      4-Notes and recommendations relating to distance education.

In order to make good use of these results, I engaged in a plural approach dealing with the realities analyzed from three complementary points of view: a deductive perspective implementing the achievements of research in educational technologies [1]. This theoretical choice gives an important place to qualitative approaches.

My work is a study with two stakes, that is to say, it is both qualitative and quantitative because the results collected will allow me to identify the concerns shared by a significant part of the teaching staff.

4. RESULTS

4.1.1 Data Analysis: A little insight into higher education before COVID 19

Higher education in Morocco, despite the many reforms implemented, has not yet been able to play the expected role, and to improve the quality of higher education [2]. An emergency program putting the learner at the center of educational activities, and integrating ICT in education and training within the framework of the national strategy "Maroc Numeric 2013" was adopted. "Tilmidtice" is a portal that has existed for a long time, since the start of the GENIE program (that means generalization of information and communication technologies in education in Morocco). The research project on the use of distance education platforms falls within this framework, the challenge was to modernize Moroccan higher education by integrating ICT into teaching practices at the university [3]. And yet the results achieved were not up to the desired expectations [4]. Consequently, all establishments are limited to face-to-face teaching.

4.1.2 Data Analysis: During the spread of COVID 19

Indeed, since the closure of all educational institutions on March 16, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they have all mobilized to digitize their content. A few days were enough for all the establishments to be able to carry out a colossal work in e-learning. No one had ever imagined that such a scenario could come true so quickly under these conditions.

The pandemic has allowed the country to dispel its reluctance and take a giant step towards E-learning. This truth finds its magnitude in the words of Yahia Boughaleb, president of the University of El Jadida: "The face-to-face session seemed essential to us. It's a new culture that takes hold ".

The advent of the pandemic has led to a change in behavior and mentalities. In fact, everyone was really surprised to see teachers mobilized to record video clips, to prepare digital lessons

when they categorically refused the idea of distance education before. This crisis has allowed us to finally enter a new era, that of digital education. All the establishments were trying, using all the means at their disposal, to take advantage of this situation of health crisis and inaugurate the establishment of a new digital identity in their educational kits or packs.

5. DISCUSSION

My study allowed me to conclude that, in order to face this crisis and to find an urgent solution, several measures were taken: as an example, and I quote:

5.1 Distance education experiences before COVID-19

Table 1: professors' experiences in Distance teaching before COVID-19

Activities	Have experienced	Have never experienced
Synchronic Learning in Digital courses	10%	90%
Asynchronic Learning in Digital courses (on plate forms	10%	90%
Making videos	20%	80%
Numeric's documents (Pdf, Word, Ppt..)	72%	28%
Email (courses, explications ...)	55%	45%

• 90% have never had a distance learning experience before this pandemic.

• 10% of teachers are used to giving lessons online and synchronously [10].

• 10% of teachers are used to giving lessons online asynchronously by using some platforms of teachings and 90% had never experienced that type of activity.

• 20% of teachers had already made videos to explain the courses to their learners.

• 72% have already prepared digital courses in format (PDF, PPT, Word)

• 28% had never done any digital resources for their learners and 45% have never sent them any email.

• 100% of the professor explained that they were not ready to teach at a distance.

5.2 Means, tools and methods used to succeed in the act of distance teaching

100% of the teaching staff has not been prepared to face this crisis. 100 % of the teachers questioned declared that they used the on-board resources at their disposal and that it was thanks to social networks that they were able to stay in touch with their learners while using

Facebook or more particularly WhatsApp, as channels communication skills to be able to share documents with their learners.

Table 2: Tools, methods and means used in distance teaching

Tools employed	yes	No
PC	90%	10%
Laptop, Tablet, Smartphone…..	95%	05%
Email (courses explications)	98%	02%
Social network, WhatsApp , Facebook)	100%	0%
Making videos	92%	08%
Numeric's documents (Pdf, Word, Ppt..)	100%	0%
Platforms (Zoom, Google meet, Teams…)	90%	10%
Integration of TIC	6%	94%

Teachers can choose more than tool to make courses

- 90% of teachers use their PC to make courses.
- 95% of teachers use their Laptop, Smartphone and tabled
- 98% of professors have sent courses to their learners
- 100% means; all teachers have used the social network to get contact with the learners.
- 92% of teachers create video clips to help students who are supposed to take certification exams at the end of the school year.
- 100% of the teaching staff limit has sent files of different formats (PDF, Word, etc.) to their learners.
- 90% of them have experienced some platform to exchange with learners in the synchronic situation to ensure educational continuity.
- 6% of the teachers surveyed do not integrate information and communication technologies into their teaching practices.

5.3 The impact of COVID-19 on distance education

In some universities, 90% of the courses are already online and soon 100%. All teachers now have their institutional addresses, the same for students, which allows them to access platforms, to exchange information, and share documents.Students are now used to this kind of educational platforms such as Moodle, Google meet, Classroom, Teams, Taalim.ma, etc. the latter allowed teachers to create virtual classes to ensure pedagogical continuity for the students.

In Moroccan higher education, each university has a recording studio and a distance learning pedagogical platform which has helped it in its mission. But the exploitation of specialized and professional studios set up within universities where teachers take turns recording their lessons: either in the form of MOOCs (Massive open online courses), or CLOMs (Massive and open online courses), or videos to be transmitted to all students in the form of a lecture, where students will be called upon to give feedback.

Recording lessons in the form of videos was not the only option that existed; several teachers have chosen to put courses online in format (PDF, PPT, Word, etc.

National channels, the example of (Attaqafia, Laâyoune, Arrabiaa, Arryadia, Al Amazighia, etc.) Have stopped their programs to broadcast the contents of the various cycles of education in the country.In order to cover the entire target population, the ministry used radio to broadcast courses serving all regions of the kingdom in particular, those most isolated to reduce the disparities between regions in access to information.

100% of teachers observed initiatives on the part of their colleagues - even those who do not master the computer tool to help students to benefit from distance learning via the recording of videos; audio, definitions or explanations in the form of SMS or texts transmitted by e-mail.

5.4 Notes and recommendations relating to distance education

Table 3: Teachers' observations

Observations	Yes	No
Difficulties to teach online	85%	15%
Teaching online is more exhausting than face to face one	90%	10%
Establishment of tutors in educational establishments	100%	0%
Help teachers to get tools and digital material	100%	0%

Expressing difficulties to motivate learners	95%	05%
Find difficulties to evaluate learners	95%	05%
Distance learn cans substitute face to face teaching	97%	03%
The Moroccan's system of teaching must be reviewed	100%	0%
There a hole gaps in access to e-learning	100%	0%

- 85% of teachers admitted to finding it difficult to give distance lessons.
- 90% of teachers admitted that doing distance lessons is very tiring than face-to-face.
- 80% claimed to have done several jobs at the same time to be successful in the educational activity.
- 85 testified that there is a glaring lack in the means necessary to succeed in the act of teaching.
- 100% Asked to provide teachers with the necessary tools to be able to conduct distance-learning courses while granting them payment facilities.
- 100% agreed to the establishment of tutors in educational establishments to support teachers who encounter difficulties in integrating digital tools or resources into their teaching activities.
- 95% found it difficult to motivate learners.
- 90% claimed to have had difficulties regarding how to assess the act of learning.
- 97% explained that distance education will never be an alternative to face-to-face education.
- 100% asked to review the philosophy of Moroccan teaching of all its different levels.
- 100% mentioned that there are large gaps in access to distance education, whether for teachers or learners.

6. Acknowledgement

Also, this crisis has, sincerely, been able to show the true sense of responsibility of the teachers which they showed, they did not lack voluntarism, resilience, patience, and dedication since they, almost all, accepted to work in the emergency and with the means of fortunes available in their hands to make this transition phase linked to the health emergency a success.

This crisis has highlighted the issue of education in Morocco, it has given food for thought on the state of play of education in general and has provided an opportunity to debate the perspectives, the challenges and the future of traditional face-to-face education when we are currently in an almost digitized world. Indeed my work showed me that there was a glaring lack in the employability of digital technology, not only in the acquisition of digital means and tools, (such as having a smartphone, a tablet, a computer or even access an Internet connection) but also, some teachers who, unfortunately, do not regularly integrate information and communication technologies into their teaching practices.

Other difficulties noted during this new experience of using technologies are that teachers are not accustomed to using this new method of distance learning formally. They find themselves perplexed by the immense amount of information to be processed and transmitted in a digital world which opens up to all the resources of the universe, hence the importance of reflecting on the current philosophy of our teaching.

CONCLUSION

No one can deny that before the era of COVID-19, teaching at its various levels was very late in this area of E-learning, it took a crisis like this to give it a blow. Pushes so that we can meet the challenge. Teachers, for their part, would have to perform many functions at once to be successful in the act of distance education [6]. This point represents one of its constraints: teachers see themselves playing the role of several educators; they have become coaches, coaches, mentors, educational engineers, study directors, computer technicians, and tutors. If they accepted this situation and this condition, it is sure to correct and improve learning in a process aimed at renovating their efficiency and creativity in a climate of tension generated by the spread of the crisis. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight everything that has been done in this small period, which is why, I must point out that among the advantages of this epidemic, it is because a large number of teachers have mobilized to make this distance learning successful. Much effort, to be welcomed, has been made by the various players in

education to overcome this crisis which has forced more than half of the world's population to confine themselves.

It turned out that distance education was seen as one of the efficient solutions to meet the needs of our learners. It goes without saying that e-learning would never replace the face-to-face teacher, which is why this new mode of teaching should be considered as an addition, an added value, which would enrich face-to-face teaching. This coronavirus pandemic should serve as a lesson to us. Certainly, there are still efforts to be made in this direction, there are a big gap and a glaring disparity concerning the equity and the equality of access to digital tools whether it is among teachers who are not yet involved in this new mode of teaching, or among learners who do not have the means. More difficult when it comes to internet access [8].

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