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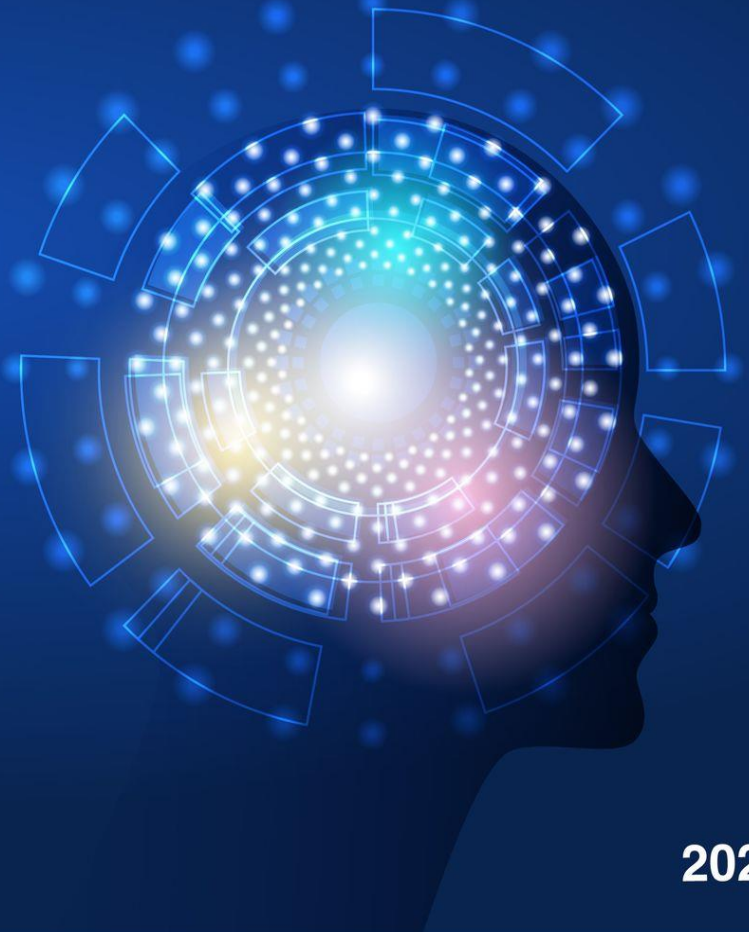

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Book registration number:

VR. 3383 – 6860 B

First edition

2024

The views and opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Arab Democratic Center

E-Learning: A Communication Style Between Students and Instructors: A Study of its Nature, Negative and Positive Effects

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Abstract

E-learning is one of the most prominent phenomena that has accompanied the world community since the emergence of the digital and technological revolution. The need for these digital technologies has increased with the increasing cases of urgent need for them according to the realities of the situation. For example, the world's need for e-learning technologies emerged after the COVID-19 pandemic, which proved that the advantages of e-learning are no less important than face-to-face education, but rather that e-learning has exceeded the importance that face-to-face education has enjoyed, according to what this type of education (distance learning) has provided from features and data that have affected the virtual educational reality and led to the emergence of a distinguished group of professors who are proficient in dealing with computers and electronics. This in itself formed a positive point among a series of positives that came out of this education.

Keywords: e-learning, e-learning, applications, computer, digitization, digital transformation.

The first topic: What is e-learning?

Anyone who follows the history of education in general will see that there have been a number of important historical turning points that have affected the methods, curricula, and approaches to education around the world. As a result, many countries have been forced to adopt alternative methods for fear of halting the education process. Perhaps one of the most important historical milestones and turning points in the history of education was the COVID-19 pandemic. This pandemic forced all countries in the

world to close their schools, universities, and scientific institutes, and to resort to e-learning out of necessity. (Alalaq, 2023).

There is no single definition for the term "distance education" (e-learning). When such a name is mentioned in academic circles, the phenomenon of dealing with computing, digitization, and the data of the technological revolution comes to mind, and what resulted from it is the birth of that huge amount of applications, programs, and websites that have provided the opportunity to receive education in various forms (lessons, courses, conferences, workshops, lectures, seminars, etc.). So, today we are faced with one of the most important scientific phenomena that accompanied its emergence with exceptional circumstances that forced everyone to resort to the advantages of this type of education.

E-learning is defined as the phenomenon of using computer tools, communication devices, and remote communication between the student and the professor without the recipient being physically present in the classroom. Such a phenomenon can be considered as an emergency situation that may occur in a society under certain circumstances that force them to resort to this type of education.

The forms of e-learning have diversified with the development and modernization of the technical system. Conferences, seminars, and workshops have become accompanying phenomena of e-learning, and have even become inseparable from it. They have become a familiar phenomenon for many universities and research centers, even with the possibility of providing face-to-face education. However, many people have come to appreciate and prefer e-learning because of its ease of access and handling without any material or physical costs.(www.viewsonic)

Some people define e-learning as being parallel to distance learning, which emerged at a time when everyone was forced to stay at home and use computing and digital learning tools. Therefore, it is "the transfer of an educational program from its location in the campus of a particular educational institution to geographically dispersed locations, and aims to attract students who cannot continue in a traditional educational program under normal circumstances." This usually involved correspondence courses

in which the student corresponded with the professor through a variety of digital communication and reception channels.(https://is.gd/fAhbAu).

In general, it can be said that this type of education includes education that is conducted through the Internet, and taking advantage of the advantages of this global network, whether through forums, platforms, or specialized programs. E-learning does not require the same requirements as face-to-face classroom education, such as being bound by a specific time or having interaction between the teacher and the recipient at the same time.(https://is.gd/Qyk6IA)

The second section: The positive results of e-learning

The most important benefits of e-learning are related to what some call facing the challenges associated with classroom education for students, of course. It is not affected by the student's absence from the class, and e-learning also reduces the waste of time and money in order to reach school or university. It also enhances aspects of self-responsibility in the student's self-discipline, and gives the student a greater opportunity to expand sources of knowledge.(https://is.gd/Qyk6IA)

Based on what was mentioned in one of the articles and studies that discussed highlighting the benefits of e-learning, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic, Professor Amani Hazaa Al-Anezi mentioned the following: "This type of education is considered new to some people, and it has shown both positive and negative aspects for the teacher, the learner, and the parent." Among the positive aspects that Professor Amani mentioned are the following:

1. Providing students with an exceptional opportunity to continue their studies without interrupting their educational journey due to health conditions or any other exceptional circumstances.

2. Ensuring the health safety of learners by preventing them from directly mixing with the educational environment.

3. Presenting the scientific material in a modern way that is compatible with the technology of the current era.

4. Employing educational technology in a way that helps to reduce the cost of education.

5. Saving time and effort, especially the time that the learner spends going to and from the educational institution.

6. Enhancing the concept of self-directed learning among learners through this experience.(al-ʻAnzī, 2021)

Therefore, we can say that the phenomenon of distance learning has a set of advantages that can be described as very flexible for people who do not have enough time to complete their education, or for those who find it difficult to reach the place of in-person lessons, or for those who do not have enough money to complete their education. This is especially true if education in some countries is paid for, not free, or at the very least, the cost of reaching the place of study, whether it is a school, center, institute, or university. This is not only the case, but both the teacher and the recipient are also freed from side expenses such as repairing transportation malfunctions, fuel costs, or even the cost of new clothes. In such cases, both parties may not have to spend such amounts.

In addition, we note that such a phenomenon may save a lot of time for both the recipient and the teacher. Some people live in remote areas from places of study, which requires time to reach the classrooms – naturally for both parties. This may cause both parties to delay performing their duties to the fullest, which may cause a problem that may obstruct the updating or development of one of the aspects of the educational and learning process alike. Thus, e-learning in such cases is like a lifesaver to cope with cases of delay and thus the stumbling block that may afflict the process as a whole.

This educational experience is a great experience for teachers and learners, even if this crisis ends, it will make them ready to face any exceptional circumstances without stopping education. All these efforts in e-learning directly serve the interests of learners in their educational journey.

On the other hand, we find that some countries have had a somewhat successful educational experience, especially European countries and the United States of America. These countries had already mastered and used the

experience of e-classrooms before the pandemic, so the results of their outputs were serious compared to third world countries.

The success of the e-learning experience that suddenly appeared with the emergence of the Corona pandemic actually depends on the development and selection of certain manifestations and models of e-learning. In other words, it is imperative that it meet the aspirations and requirements of education that they aspire to in the fourth industrial revolution, such as the continuous updating of educational networking and platforms to keep pace with developments and take into account the regulations and standards in the revolutionary education system, if you will

The third section: The negatives of e-learning

While we encourage the progress and development of the e-learning system due to the important educational data and results that this wonderful experience has produced, we stop for a moment when we want to evaluate this experience definitively and put the dots on the letters from all aspects of this phenomenon. Just as it had very important positive results, it had negative effects that some found to be an obstacle to the development of the individual system of the recipient (student), researcher, writer, and author.

This e-learning phenomenon had both positive and negative results. Among the negative results is that many countries in the world were new to the use of distance learning tools, and many of them did not use any of these tools in normal days (before the pandemic). Therefore, these countries faced a very complex problem in accepting the results and outputs of e-learning. Moreover, some of them did not have the infrastructure or human resources capable of receiving such technologies and dealing with them, so the experience was very bitter.

Also, one of the complex issues that some countries faced was that Internet services were very poor, and in other countries they were not available, and therefore those countries also faced a problem in opening electronic classes for their students, and this is what we find clearly in third world countries and developing countries in general (Alalaq, 2023)

Also, among the complex issues that these countries faced was the issue of the lack of response of many students to electronic classes, and this resulted from those students not using e-learning applications and tools before the pandemic, which resulted in a delay in the results. Rather, most of the outcomes of that experience in those countries were Very poor (Alalaq, 2023)

One of the prominent and significant negative outcomes of the phenomenon of online education is the complete social isolation it has caused for both teachers and learners. As it is known, face-to-face lessons create interaction not only within the classrooms but also within the university, institute, or center. Through traditional education, we find that people interact socially, meet, eat, drink, and converse with each other. All these aspects are a result of traditional education. Traditional education is not just about receiving the lesson directly from the teacher; it is a vital social phenomenon in itself. The isolation generated by online education makes many individuals unable to comprehend many concepts, matters, and issues related to their study materials. Furthermore, they are unable to interrupt the lesson as they require sufficient time for the teacher to complete their lecture and then open the floor for discussion, along with the overlapping voices and delays in response or the lack of receiving an adequate answer (Alṣlāfyḥ, 2023)

We can also observe one of the harms that affect students and act as a stumbling block in their path, which is the phenomenon of cheating in exams. Through online exams, it is impossible for the teacher to have control over the online exam room in any way, no matter how hard they try to combat the phenomenon of student cheating. Additionally, the technological revolution has not put an end to this dangerous problem that spreads among students.

Furthermore, one of the prominent negative aspects produced by online education is that many teachers tend to focus more on the theoretical side without emphasizing the practical aspect. As everyone knows, the practical aspect is important in many disciplines and may be much more significant than the theoretical aspect. In some fields, there may be specializations that do not rely on the theoretical side at all. This causes clear confusion in the educational outcomes for that group of students, and as a result, they are unable to keep up with their practical skills after graduation and employment.

This applies to medical specialties, which have clearly suffered setbacks in managing their tasks in hospitals and health centers. (Taysīr, 2022)

Among the negative outcomes of online education, there is also the issue of inflexible engagement with digital materials and computing, including applications, software, and technological tools. Many individuals are not familiar with the use of digital technology, and some may not even know what a computer, the internet, or an application/program means. Therefore, involving such groups in the practical side of using digital systems has caused confusion and delays in what they deliver to students or to the institution they work for. Naturally, this has affected educational outcomes. Additionally, the need for digital infrastructure has been and continues to be a barrier to updating the remote learning system. This in itself poses a danger to those who adopt or advocate for online education. (Maḥbūb, 2018)

Therefore, after considering all that has been mentioned, we can say that the phenomenon of online education has both drawbacks and negative aspects, as well as positives. In both cases, we are compelled to follow and adopt blended learning, which combines face-to-face education with online education.

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