
| RESEARCH ARTICLE

Teachers' Evaluation of Online Education during COVID-19 Outbreak

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| ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the biggest and longest school closures worldwide. Over one billion students were sent home away from their schools, teachers, and classmates to study remotely. Teachers in Morocco have opted for different tech tools and platforms to ensure the continuity of education. The study focused on teachers' evaluation of online education during the pandemic. 711 Moroccan teachers from different regions all over Morocco took part in the study. The study adopted a quantitative approach to collect data through an online survey questionnaire. The SPSS software was used to analyze data. The findings revealed that male teachers had different opinions and experiences regarding online education than their female colleagues. The results obtained can be of use in making future decisions concerning the implementation of teaching and learning online programs in Morocco, considering the teachers' gender and effective use of educational technologies.

| KEYWORDS

Online education, evaluation, COVID19, Moroccan teachers

| ARTICLE INFORMATION

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1. Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic is, first and foremost, a health crisis; however, its effects are so massive that it disrupted every other sector, mainly education. The world has witnessed one of the longest and biggest interruptions of the century. As a result, the switch to online education was abrupt and hasty. Most countries worldwide launched programs and initiatives at every educational level to make face-to-face classes into online ones. Zoom, Teams, Skype, etc., offered alternatives to normal classes in order to ensure the continuity of the learning/teaching experiences. Given the circumstances, online education has become a substitute and an alternative to traditional education. Thus, there is a need to investigate the effectiveness of these classes during these special times because it is of paramount importance for more sustainable future educational plans and programs.

The shift to online education provides an opportunity for governments in order to ensure that every student has access to education; however, students expressed that their face-to-face teachers did a better job than their online teachers did (Young and Duncan 2014). This can be explained by the fact that teachers tend to deliver their online classes the same way they would deliver face-to-face ones, ignoring the subtle differences between the two modes of education. (Kreber & Kanuka, 2013)

In addition, Thomas and Graham (2019) argue that insufficient training and support received by online teachers are two main reasons that may hinder the processes of teaching and learning online. Moreover, online education calls for a different set of skills and competencies than face-to-face education (Creasman, 2012). As a result, a teacher who obtained a good score from students in a traditional classroom setting may receive a lesser score in an online setting (Thomas & Graham, 2019). Furthermore, teaching online necessitates an instructor's knowledge of both subject and technology (Miller & Sisk, 2019), which again doubles the instructor's tasks. Furthermore, extra pressure is placed on online teachers due to students' preference for face-to-face methods of delivering information. To illustrate, Roy et al. (2020) discovered in their study that the majority of students preferred to return to traditional classroom education rather than continue with online education, making the task of online teachers even more difficult.

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Different researchers (e.g., Hani & Saleh, 2020; Roy et al., 2020) have investigated students' perceptions during these special times in different ways; however, teachers' perceptions have not received the same attention. Furthermore, Moroccan instructors' opinions of the efficiency of online education during the COVID-19 crisis are under-researched. As a result, the purpose of this study is to investigate Moroccan teachers' perceptions of the success of online teaching in terms of course delivery and to give some insights and useful implications for online teaching.

2. Literature Review

The use of e-technologies alters the structure of the teaching and learning processes (Teo, 2011). In order to maximize the efficacy of the online educational process and compensate for the loss of the physical presence of both professors and students in the same place and time, many instructional approaches must be implemented (Dixson, 2010). Mainly, two forms of communication could take place online: asynchronous and synchronous. Asynchronous communication (e.g., bulletin boards, emails, chat lists, discussion forum/boards, blogs, announcements, shared documents, etc.) happens in delayed time and does not need simultaneous involvement of discussants; while synchronous communication (e.g., chat rooms, text chats, sharing applications, audioconferences, and videoconference, etc.) occurs in real-time and requires simultaneous participation of discussants (Thurlow, Lengel, & Tomic, 2004).

According to the review of the literature, the type of interaction approach adopted in online education is crucial. The goal of these strategies should be to promote discourse and interaction between instructors and students (Gaytan and McEwen, 2007), as these strategies are connected with improved learning outcomes (Bennett, Lockyer, and Agostinho, 2018). Students should be encouraged to study, challenged to think critically and apply active learning strategies, and given extra assistance, as well as different and important assignments. The interaction of students and teachers is an important factor when evaluating the teaching effectiveness of classes. It has been argued that interaction plays a vital role in the success of online education

Assessments are a crucial element of the educational process as well. There are several problems in locating successful procedures in the online context (Liang & Creasy, 2004), as online assessment necessitates a more continuous and methodical approach than traditional assessments (Robles and Braathen, 2002). There is a growing literature on the types of assessment that are effective in online education. Exams, timed tests/quizzes, self-tests, weekly review questions, homework/written assignments/fieldwork, projects, short essays, group work, presentations, and e-portfolios are all forms of assessment that could ensure the effectiveness of online learning/teaching experiences (Robles and Braathen, 2002; Gaytan and McEwen, 2007; Kearns, 2012; Huang et al., 2020).

In addition to that, online classes can only be effective if the assessment is consistent with learning activities. According to OECD, critical thinking, course knowledge, problem-solving, teamwork, and communication are the core elements that students should be tested on online. Previous research indicates that for online education to be effective, it must be founded on a solid methodology as well as strong teacher-student and student-student interaction (Maki and Maki, 2007).

3. Methodology

The current paper seeks to explore Moroccan teachers' evaluation of the online teaching/learning experiences during the COVID-19 health crisis. It made use of the quantitative method through several data collection tools, including Google forms, Facebook, WhatsApp, and Telegram groups. The population targeted are Moroccan teachers working in public as well as private schools dispersed across twelve administrative regions all over Morocco. The participants' number reached 711, grouped as 399 females and 312 males.

4. Results and Discussion

Research on COVID-19 impact on the field of education proved that teachers worldwide, as well as in Morocco, have suffered from various challenges. Following this thought, Mounjid B. & EL Hilali E. stated that:

"About 96.9% of the participant teachers confirmed that they encountered numerous challenges while teaching online during the quarantine. The research clearly indicates the major challenges that Moroccan teachers face. The most prominent challenge was students' inability to afford internet costs (72.7%); the second was students' disinterest in learning online (70.7%), followed by low and slow internet (69.3%). Other challenges are linked to the lack of knowledge regarding technology use for online education, teachers' training to implement technology in their teaching practices, and lack of administrative support to move swiftly to online education." (p.10)

The teachers who participated in this study helped evaluate the online education situation in the Moroccan context during the COVID-19 outbreak. Therefore, the variables that were essential to be discussed in this paper are gender, age, place of work, whether or not teachers received administrative support, and to what extent the students were committed to attending online classes.

4.1 Participants by Gender

Assessing the quality of online education in Morocco revealed major differences between male and female participants. The first scored the lowest (43.9%), and the latter scored the highest (56.1%) (See Table 1 and Figure 1 below). This shows that females have more motivation to take part in online research compared to their male counterparts. In addition, there is a "strong body of evidence that suggested women learned differently from men, which made women inherently more successful in the online learning environment" (McKnight-Tutein and Thackaberry, 2011). Moreover, Price's research suggested that women were more confident online than in face-to-face environments, were more willing to learn from others, seek support, were more self-directed than men, and had a strong desire to be academically engaged (2006).

Table 1: Participants by Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	399	56.1	56.1	56.1
	Male	312	43.9	43.9	100.0
	Total	711	100.0	100.0	

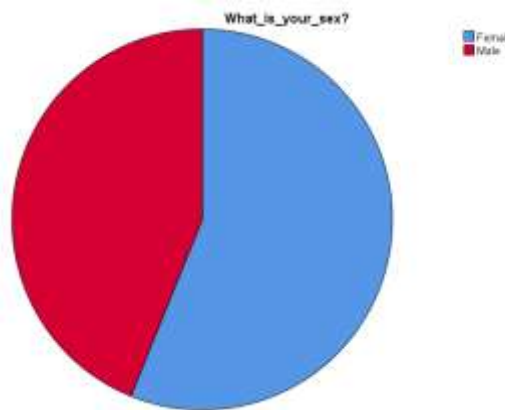


Figure 1: Participants by Gender

4.2 Participants by Age

Exploring the effectiveness of online classes during the health crisis yielded different results as far as age is concerned. There were variations between age groups. In fact, age group 1 (20-30) scored the highest in terms of participation (43.9%), while age group 3 (40-60) scored the least (19.4%). The younger generation, or the millennials, showed more interest, and it might be explained by the fact that since they were born between the early 80s and mid-90s, they have grown up surrounded by technology more than any other generation. In fact, they are used to big technological changes, and they adapt quickly to updates. (See Table 2 and Figure 2 below)

Table 2: Participants by Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	20_30	312	43.9	43.9	43.9
	30_40	261	36.7	36.7	80.6
	40_60	138	19.4	19.4	100.0
	Total	711	100.0	100.0	

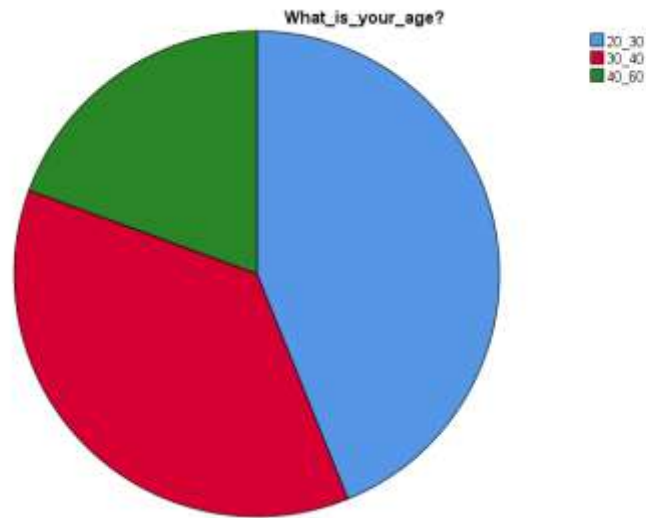


Figure 2: Participants by Age

4.3 Participants by Place of Work

Place of work as an important variable was also examined in this study, whether the teachers work in urban or rural areas. The obtained results revealed significant findings in descriptives, which table 3 and Figure 3 below indicate. Teachers from urban areas were more present in this study. This could be related to having better access to the internet and the availability of tech tools which is a struggle that teachers in rural areas have to deal with.

Table 3: Participants by Place of Work

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rural_Area	153	21.5	21.5	21.5
	Urban_Area	558	78.5	78.5	100.0
	Total	711	100.0	100.0	

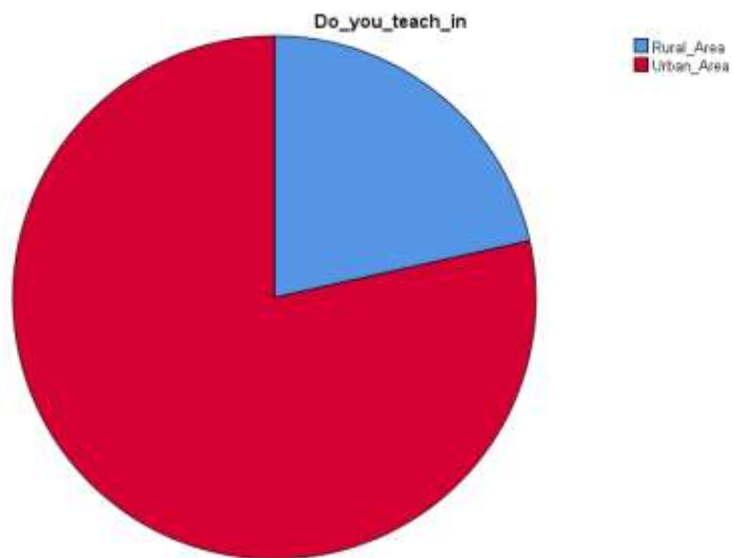


Figure 3: Participants by Place of Work

4.4 Technology used during COVID-19

During the health crisis, Moroccan teachers were forced to find new ways to teach their students. The current study showed that different technology was used for online emergency education. Figure (4) below showcases that WhatsApp was mostly used between students and teachers. This wide usage can be due to the free nature of the application and how users can send text and voice messages, make voice and video calls, and share images, documents, and other content. Zoom is the second tech tool that Moroccan teachers made use of, mainly because it offers a wide variety of videoconferencing tools that other technology tools lack.

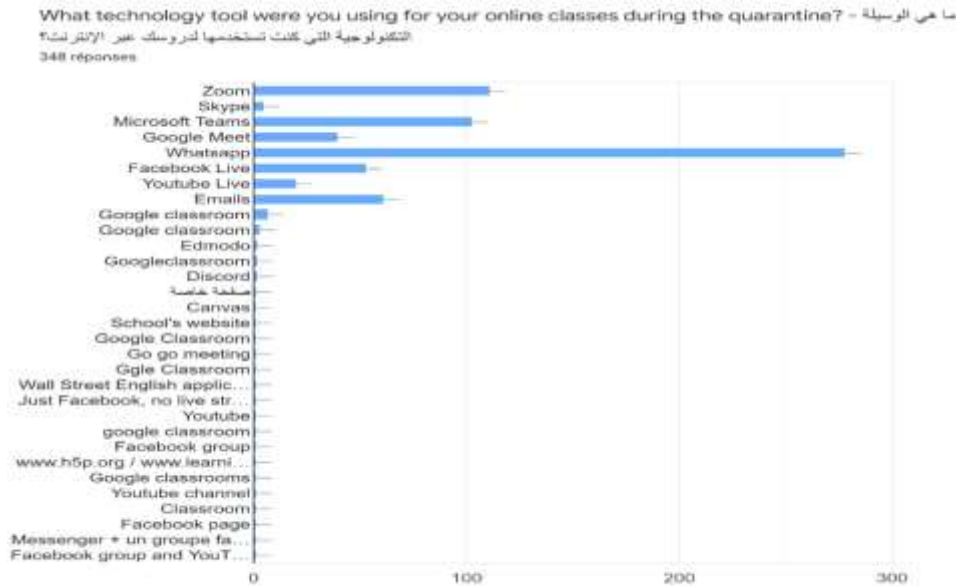


Figure 4: Technology used during COVID-19

In this regard, Moroccan teachers were in need of administrative support to better the transition into online emergency education. 80.2% of the participants reported that they did not receive any support in order to switch their classes to online mode, whereas 19.2% of the teachers shared that they received some form of administrative support. One can only deduce here that the lack of support has had a negative impact on the quality of online classes to the extent that many students were deprived of attending their classes. This is clearly shown in figure (5) below.

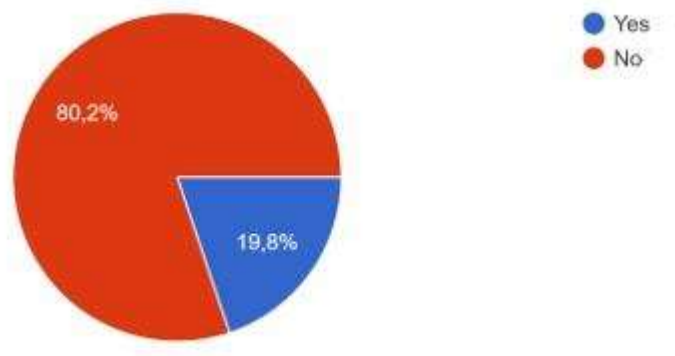


Figure 5: Administrative support for teachers

Although many students did attend online classes, their commitment was not fully observed by their teachers. 53.4% of the students were somewhat committed compared to 2.6% who were very committed, while 44% were not committed to their online classes, according to their teachers' observations. These are alarming percentages since they show that online classes did not meet students' expectations and failed to get their attention and interest.

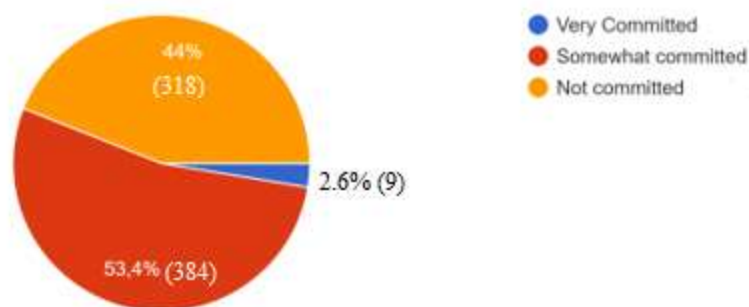


Figure 6: Students' commitment to attend online classes

5. Conclusion

This paper aimed to explore Moroccan teachers' evaluation of the online teaching/learning experiences during the COVID-19 health crisis. The study yielded that Moroccan teachers had to face several challenges that acted as barriers to the online teaching/learning processes. Namely, the lack of students' interest as well as the absence of adequate administrative support from the schools. This paper also showed that the younger the teacher is, the more open they are to using tech tools in their teachings. Surprisingly, this study demonstrated how female teachers are more interested in online teaching than their male colleagues are. As far as the limitations are concerned, this study made use of quantitative research tools, but it could have used qualitative tools too in order to double-check the results as well as to get a better understanding of the situation. In addition, the study could have delved more into students' disinterest in online education.

Future research should use diverse research tools and focus more on the gender differences between male and female teachers. What's more, decision-makers should take into account conducting more research to improve the online teaching/learning processes. Equipping educational institutions with the necessary tech tools in terms of good internet access, computers, and interactive boards could play a pivotal role in making online education more reliable and interesting to teachers as well as to students. In addition, it is mandatory to offer professional development training for Moroccan teachers to improve the teaching and learning processes.

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