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**| RESEARCH ARTICLE**

# The Role of Some Affective Factors in Language Learning during Covid-19 Distance Education among English Department Students

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**| ABSTRACT**

This study aims to investigate the role of psychological factors or affective factors on language learning during Covid-19 distance education. Both the quantitative and qualitative approaches are used in the current study. The research instruments were questionnaires with one hundred students, and interviews with three students. The results show that motivation, anxiety, attitude, self-confidence, and self-efficacy in learning English are correlated and affected by Covid-19 distance education Hence, it is recommended that the psychological factors of learning should be taken into account by the teacher, administrators and decision makers.

**| KEYWORDS**

Attitude, affective factors; Covid-19; distance education; motivation; self-confidence; self-efficacy.

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## 1. Introduction

Traditional theories of language learning, namely behaviourism and cognitivism, have neglected the role of emotions and the affective side of the learners in language education. While behaviourism has focused on the observable behaviour of language learners, cognitivism reduces the act of learning in cognitive processes. However, modern learning theories like. constructivism and socio-constructivism to language learning have started focusing on the affective side of language education. This change in perspectives has led to the emergence of new teaching methods that focus on emotions, such as suggestopedia, community language learning and communicative approach, among others.

### *1.1 Relevance and importance of the study*

Morocco declared a state of emergency in the middle of March 2020. Thereupon Moroccan universities have suspended face-to-face education and adopted distance education. Many Modular Object-Oriented Learning Environments (MOODLE) have been created with lessons in the form of portable document files on them. Few teachers were observed to conduct live sessions with their students on different other platforms, such as Zoom, GoogleMeet, and Facebook Lives. The act of language education has been reduced to a mechanical process. This has created many difficulties for students to keep up with the course as reported on social media.

### *1.2 Research Objectives*

The current study aims to achieve three main objectives. First, the current study aims to investigate the role of affective factors in language learning. Second, one of the objectives is to investigate whether or not there is any difference between male and female students in terms of emotions in language learning during Covid-19. Third, the study aims to investigate the main effects of

affective factors, namely motivation, anxiety, attitude, self-confidence, and self-efficacy on learning English and the correlations between them, especially during Covid-19.

### *1.3 Research Questions*

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

**RQ.1** Is there any effect of emotions on language learning?

**RQ.2** Is there any correlation between motivation, anxiety, attitude, self-confidence and self-efficacy?

**RQ.3** Is there any difference in emotions between males and females concerning language learning?

### *1.4 Research Hypotheses*

The study is based on the following null and alternative hypotheses:

**H0:** There is no correlation between motivation, anxiety, attitude, self-confidence and self-efficacy in language learning.

**H1:** There is a correlation between motivation, anxiety, attitude, self-confidence and self-efficacy in language learning.

**H0:** There is no effect of covid-19 distance education on students' psychological side.

**H1:** There is an effect of covid-19 distance education on students' psychological side.

The research is divided into four main parts. The first part is about the introduction. The second part will shed light on the main theoretical and conceptual frameworks of the role of emotions in language learning. The third part will present the methodology that will be followed to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses. The result part will present the results in tabular and graphical forms. The discussion part will relate the findings to previous studies. The last part will summarize the findings and provide implications and suggestions for further research.

## 2. Literature Review

This part will shed light on the major theoretical and conceptual studies that have been conducted on the role of affective factors in language education, especially learning English as a Foreign Language. The major affective factors are motivation, anxiety, and self-confidence. Each one of these factors will be defined, separately. The major approaches to affective factors have been advanced by Krashen (1982) and Brown (2007). Krashen (1981) mentioned the role of the affective filter in language acquisition. The latter divided the principles of language learning into cognitive, linguistic and affective principles. Last but not least, the current part will delve into the main empirical studies that have investigated the role of affective factors in language education.

### *2.1 Definitions of key terms*

Affective factors are the emotions and attitudes that are thought to influence language learning or language acquisition. Examples of such factors are anxiety, motivation, self-confidence, among others.

Anxiety is a psychological state marked with tension in the production or reception of language. It can be temporary or permanent. It is divided into three types, according to Ellis (1994), trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety. The latter characterizes particular situations like exams, public speaking or presentations online or in person.

Motivation in language learning is what pushes learners to learn the language. According to psychological theories, it is divided into intrinsic or extrinsic motivation. The former stems from the internal self, whereas the latter stems from external sources. These two types are called integrative and instrumental motivation, respectively, according to sociological theories (Dörnyei, 1994).

Self-confidence is one of the most important affective factors in language learning, especially during Covid-19 distance education. It is the belief in oneself to learn languages, communicate with professors and classmates. Students may not be confident in their abilities to carry out education on their own. That is why they rely too much on their professors. This assumption will be verified further in this study.

Attitude is one of the affective factors that affect learning. It is defined as consisting of feelings and beliefs according to (Latchanna & Dagnew, 2009). Attitudes can be positive or negative. These poles are not dichotomous as there is a degree of negativity or positivity. If students have negative attitude toward the language, culture or even the English teacher, their learning of this language is more likely to be influenced.

Self-efficacy in language learning is students' belief in their capabilities to carry out, organize and perform a task successfully (Ersanli, 2007). Bandura and Schunk (1981) defined 'self-efficacy beliefs' as "people's judgement of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (p.31). There are four sources of self-efficacy, according to Bandura (1997), which affect the development of self-efficacy beliefs: a) mastery experience, (b) vicarious experience, (c) social persuasion, and (d) physiological states Successful past experiences play a vital role in self-efficacy. Even observing other peers performing tasks successfully further increases self-efficacy. Social persuasion is about the encouragement and motivation students get. Last but not least, the psychological state involves anxiety and fatigue.

### *2.2 Approaches to affective factors*

Krashen (1982) developed the affective filter hypothesis based on Dulay and Burt theories in 1870's into five central hypotheses. They include the acquisition-learning distinction; the natural order hypothesis; the monitor hypothesis; the input hypothesis and the affective filter hypothesis. The most important of these is the affective filter because it is thanks to it that learning can take place or not. Krashen (1982) differentiated between language input and language intake in that the latter is what is attained in language learning. It is assumed that negative emotions obstruct the conversion of input into intake as students may be demotivated, uninterested, not self-confident or very anxious. Therefore, no matter how effective teaching, content (input) or methods are, students may not get a lot from it.

Brown (2007) outlined twelve principles in language learning, which are divided into cognitive, socio-affective principles and linguistic principles. Cognitive principles include automaticity, meaningful learning, the anticipation of reward, intrinsic motivation, strategic investment, and autonomy. Socio-affective principles include language ego, willingness to communicate, the language-culture connection. Linguistic principles are about the native language effect, interlanguage and communicative competence. Each one of these principles will be discussed separately.

Cognitive principles are about the mental or intellectual processes followed concerning language learning.

- **Automaticity:** It stems from the speed with which children acquire their first languages. Learners learn rules which linger them during language production.
- **Meaningful learning:** It is opposed to rote or mechanical learning. It aims at understanding the material for longer retention.
- **The anticipation of reward:** Everything students do should be driven by a goal. Behavior is triggered by the reward that can be gotten from it.
- **Intrinsic motivation:** It is about what internal desires, needs, and wants push students to study and perform better. What learners do become self-rewarding by itself.
- **Strategic investment:** Learning a second or foreign language depends on the learners' investment of time, effort and attention to the second language

As to the affective principles that involve emotions in language learning, they are as follows:

- **Language ego:** This means that learners develop new mode of thinking and perception as they learn another language.
- **Self-confidence:** It is the belief of students in their abilities to complete tasks related to language learning;
- **Risk-taking:** Students should dare to explore their language that is beyond their ability.
- **The language-culture connection:** Learning a language comprises learning its cultural aspects, such as customs, values, and ways of thinking. Linguistic principles consist of three principles, namely the native language effect, interlanguage and communicative competence.
- **The native language effect:** The native language can play a positive or negative role in learning another language in its perception or production. For example, French or Arabic kept interfering positively and negatively while learning English.
- **Interlanguage:** This refers to the language developed in the process of learning. It is between no competence and full competence. This process is developed by affective or cognitive feedback. The former refers to encouraging students, whereas the latter addresses issues in understanding the target structures.
- **Communicative competence:** it refers to the ability to use the language to communicate. It has been divided into organization, pragmatic, strategic and psychomotor (Brown, 2007, p.69)

### *2.3 Taxonomies of affective factors*

Affective factors have been in the core of many taxonomies. These taxonomies focus mainly on language learning strategies (LLS). In this section, three taxonomies will be described

#### *2.3.1 O'Malley et al. (1985) Taxonomy*

Affective factors have been in the core of many taxonomies. These taxonomies focus mainly on language learning strategies (LLS). In this section, three taxonomies will be described.

#### *2.3.2 Oxford (1990)*

Language learning strategies (LLS) are defined as "specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, more effective and more transferrable to new situations" (Oxford, 1990, p.8). Oxford (1990) divided

strategies into direct and indirect strategies. While direct strategies contain the creation of mental linkages, the application of images and sounds and reviewing well, indirect strategies are metacognitive, affective and social strategies.

Metacognitive strategies involve centering learning, arranging and planning learning, as well as evaluating learning. Centering learning is done by linking new and old material, focusing on attention and delaying production. Concerning arranging and planning learning, they involve organizing learning and setting goals and objectives. The evaluation of learning consists of self-monitoring and self-evaluating.

There are three main affective or emotional strategies, namely lowering anxiety, taking emotional temperature and encouraging oneself. Students can lower their anxiety by meditation, relaxation, music and humour. Emotional temperature can be taken by sharing feelings. Besides, the encouragement of oneself can be done by positive statements and rewards.

Social strategies are used when interacting with other people in many ways. First, the interaction can be done by asking questions for clarification, verification and correction. Second, learners can cooperate with others in the class community or target language speakers through peer work or interaction with native speakers. Third, empathizing with others develops cultural understanding and appreciation of others' feelings and opinions.

### *2.4 Previous empirical studies*

Many empirical studies have investigated the role of affective factors or strategies in language learning.

Djigunović (2006) looked into the relationship between affective learner characteristics and the development of speaking and writing competence of Croatian learners of EFL. The author used a 13-item questionnaire on anxiety, motivation and self-concept effects on productive skills of speaking and writing. In addition, the author used three tasks to test the oral performance of students and a special test of speaking which focuses on accuracy, fluency, pronunciation, intonation, vocabulary and coherence. The results showed that younger learners showed better results in the speaking test. Accuracy was found as an issue in text composing skills. In brief, the author found a significant relationship between affective factors and productive skills.

Guiora (1972) conducted a study on the role of empathy in language learning. He conceptualized the term of language ego. Moreover, low inhibitions helped with better pronunciation. Therefore, the empathy factors of ego permeability and inhibitions play a determining role in language learning.

Gardner et al. (1974) investigated the role of attitudinal factors in language learning. His results reveal that motivation, aptitude and attitude play a determining role in language learning. Negative attitude, low motivation and high anxiety are predictors of failure in language learning.

Schumann (1975) investigated early studies on the role of affective factors and age on language learning. He argued that attitude, preference of native culture and motivation affect the way learners approach foreign languages.

Zayed and Alghamdi (2019) conducted a study on seventy-three students – from Administration and Humanities College, Mustaqbal University and Jubail University College, KSA, using a questionnaire divided into two parts. They attempted to investigate the relationship between English language proficiency and affective factors of motivation, attitude and anxiety. The results showed no statistically significant low positive correlations.

In brief, many studies have investigated the role of psychological or affective factors on language learning. The affective factors have been outlined as components in learning strategies taxonomies by Brown (2007), Chamot and O'Malley (1990) and Oxford (1990) in addition to Krashen (1982).

## 3. Method

The current study aims to investigate the main affective factors on motivation, attitude, anxiety and self-efficacy and their role in language learning through a mixed method approach. The latter triangulates both quantitative and qualitative data (Denzin, 2007). Both the questionnaire and semi-structured interviews will be conducted. The non-probability convenience sampling will be used for the questionnaire data, and snowball sampling will be used to get interview data. The research instrument will be pilot-tested on a small-scale study, and their reliability of its scales will be checked. Data will be collected in compliance with the current ethical practices.

### *3.1 Research Design*

The study makes use of mixed-method research design. It departs from a pragmatic stance to knowledge. It uses triangulation. The latter is defined, according to Denzin 2015, as "the application and combination of several research methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon" (p.01). The reason behind using triangulation or mixed-method design is to draw "better inferences based on a greater diversity of divergent views" (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2003, 14–15). Moreover, the social world is changing. No single method can catch this change (Denzin, 2015). In general, there are four types of triangulation:

> (1) data triangulation, which involves time, space, and persons; (2) investigator triangulation, which consists of the use of multiple rather than single observers; (3) theory triangulation, which consists of using more than one theoretical scheme in the interpretation of a phenomenon; (4) methodological triangulation, which involves using more than one method and may adopt within-method or between method strategies. (Denzin, 2015)

In this study, methodological triangulation will be used by using two research instruments, namely the questionnaire and interviews.

### *3.2 Research hypothesis and research objective*

It has been observed that students report many psychological issues during Covid-19 distance education in Morocco. Therefore, it is hypothesized that affective factors of attitude, anxiety and self-confidence are more likely to influence language learning during Covid-19. It is, therefore, the objective of the current study to investigate the relationship between affective factors and distance education during Covid-19.

### *3.3 Research questions*

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

- To what extent do affective factors (motivation, anxiety, self-confidence and attitude) affect language learning?
- What are the other psychological affects imposed by Covid-19 distance education?
- Does gender have a role in psychological effects on language learning?
- What are the reasons behind the different psychological effects on language learning?

### *3.4 Research Variables*

There are independent and dependent variables in this research. The independent variables are gender and psychological effects, whereas the dependent variable is language learning. Distance education during Covid-19 in Morocco is a moderating variable.

### *3.5 Research Sample*

Non-probability convenience and snowball sampling are the main techniques used in the current study. The questionnaire respondents were chosen by voluntary sampling (n=115). There are 45 male students and 73 female students who average age is 23. The majority of them study in the sixth semester. For the interviewees, they were sampled through snowball-sampling

### *3.6 Data Collection Procedure*

Two research instruments were used to collect data for the current study, namely the questionnaire and interviews. Some items and scales of the questionnaire were adopted from Ayed and Al-Ghamdi who adapted definitions of motivation, attitudes, and anxiety from Fandiño Parra (2008, p. 210) and a definition of self-confidence from Brown (2001) and Ni (2012). Moreover, the scales on intrinsic-extrinsic motivation and test anxiety were adapted from Pentrich (1980).

### *3.7 Data Analysis Procedure*

Quantitative data was analyzed statistically, whereas qualitative data was analysed thematically. Excel 2016 and SPSS version 26 were used to analyze the questionnaire data.

### *3.8 Reliability and validity*

Reliability is "whether an instrument can be interpreted consistently across different situations" (Field, 2013, p. 12). Reliability determines if the research instrument consistently provides the same results. Data was collected from an Online Survey. Cronbach's Alpha produced internal consistencies more than .7 for all the six scales (α=.71, .85, .84, .88, .94, .96). Therefore, the instrument was reported to be a valid, reliable, and efficient measure of psychological factors.

**Table 1**

*Reliability of the six scales*

| Scales | Number of items | Cronbach alpha |
|---|---|---|
| Intrinsic motivation | 4 | .71 |
| Extrinsic motivation | 4 | .85 |
| Test-anxiety | 5 | .84 |
| Attitude | 10 | .88 |
| Self-confidence | 10 | .94 |

## 4. Results and Discussion

### *4.1 Background information*

With respect to the gender, age and level of the respondents, there are 73 female students and 43 male students. In terms of age, the mean age is 23.02 with a standard deviation of 5. The age ranges from 18 to 47. As to the education level, the majority of students are from the sixth semester (n=82). Twenty-two respondents belong to the fourth semester. Six students belong to the second and third semester. The total number of students are 116.

### *4. 2 Affective factors*

**RQ. 1.What are main affective factors English department students have?**

#### *4.2.1 Motivation type*

***RQ. 1 .1 What is the predominant type of motivation?***

**Table 2**

*Descriptive statistics on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation*

| | | N | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.** | **I prefer course material that really challenges me so I can learn new things** | 116 | 4.48 | 2.104 |
| **2.** | **I prefer course material that arouses my curiosity, even if it is difficult to learn.** | 116 | 4.72 | 1.994 |
| **3.** | **The most satisfying thing for me is trying to understand the content as thoroughly as possible** | 116 | 4.72 | 2.058 |
| **4.** | **When I have the opportunity in class, I choose course assignments that I can learn from even if they don't guarantee a good grade.** | 116 | 3.74 | 1.979 |
| **5.** | **Getting a good grade is the most satisfying thing for me right now.** | 116 | 4.91 | 2.089 |
| **6.** | **The most important thing for me right now is improving my overall grade point average, so my main concern is getting a good grade.** | 116 | 4.87 | 2.066 |
| **7.** | **If I can, I want to get better grades than most of the other students.** | 116 | 4.70 | 2.180 |
| **8.** | **I want to do well because it is important to show my ability to my family, friends, employer, or others.** | 115 | 4.68 | 2.203 |

As to the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, the majority of students reported that the most satisfying thing is getting a good grade (M=4.91, SD=2.08). This is followed by the improvement of a good grade (M=4.87, SD=2.06). In terms of intrinsic motivation, preference for course material that arouses my curiosity and trying to understand the content as thoroughly as possible are frequently cited (M=4.72, SD= 1.9, 2.0). These are followed by wanting to get a better grade than other students, (M= 4.70, SD= 2.18). Again, extrinsic motivation is apparent in willing to show ability to family, friends, employer, or others, (M= 4.68, SD= 2.20). Preference for course material that really challenges one to learn new things is ranked just before the last item on choosing course assignments that one can learn from even if they do not guarantee a good grade with mean scores of 4.48 and 3.74 and standard deviations of 2.10 and 1.97.

#### *4.2.2 Test anxiety*

**RQ.1 .2 To what extent English department students are anxious due to tests?**

**Table 3**

*Test-anxiety*

| | | N | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.** | **When I take a test I think about how poorly I am doing compared with other students** | 116 | 3.01 | 2.058 |
| **2.** | **When I take a test I think about items on other parts of the test I can't answer** | 116 | 3.56 | 2.168 |
| **3.** | **When I take tests I think of the consequences of failing** | 116 | 3.76 | 2.177 |
| **4.** | **I have an uneasy, upset feeling when I take an exam** | 116 | 3.38 | 2.137 |
| **5.** | **I feel my heart beating fast when I take an exam** | 116 | 3.58 | 2.281 |

With regard to test-anxiety, students show a moderate anxiety with some difference among them. Taking a test and thinking of the consequences of failing is first ranked, (M= 3.76, SD= 2.16). Heart beating fast when taking tests is ranked the second, (M= 3.58, SD= 2.28). Taking a test and thinking about items students cannot answer is ranked the third, (M= 3.56, SD= 2.16). Having

an uneasy, upset feeling when taking an exam is ranked the fourth, (M=3.38, *SD*=2.13). Finally, thinking about how poorly one is doing compared to other students is ranked the fifth, (*M*=3.01, *SD*= 2.05).

### *4.2.3 Attitude*

**RQ.1.3 What is the attitude of English department students toward learning English and its culture?**

**Table 4**

*Attitude*

| | | N | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.** | **I really enjoy learning English and feel excited when hearing English spoken.** | 115 | 5.57 | 2.073 |
| **2.** | **I have to study English, otherwise, I think I cannot be successful in my future career.** | 115 | 3.76 | 2.281 |
| **3.** | **If my teacher wanted someone to do an extra English assignment, I would certainly volunteer.** | 115 | 3.61 | 2.106 |
| **4.** | **When I am studying English, I ignore distractions and pay attention to my task.** | 115 | 4.67 | 2.012 |
| **5.** | **I like to become similar to the people who speak English.** | 115 | 4.63 | 2.232 |
| **6.** | **I like English very much because without it one cannot be successful in life.** | 115 | 3.30 | 2.177 |
| **7.** | **I like TV programmes, songs, and films made in English-speaking countries.** | 115 | 4.85 | 2.284 |
| **8.** | **The British are kind, open-minded, modern, and friendly people.** | 115 | 3.91 | 1.980 |
| **9.** | **The Americans are sociable, hospitable, kind and cheerful people.** | 115 | 3.91 | 1.963 |
| **10.** | **I respect the values, cultures, and customs of English speaking countries.** | 114 | 4.96 | 2.095 |

Concerning the self-confidence of students, the statements will be ranked based on their mean score from the largest to the smallest. Believing that one will be capable of reading and understanding most texts in English in case of studying it is ranked the first, (M= 5.82, SD= 1.89). Being sure that one will be able to write in English comfortably in case of studying is ranked the second, (M= 5.67, SD= 1.95). Being sure that one will be able to master English in case of making more effort is ranked the third, (M=5.67 , SD=1.95 ). Imagining oneself as someone who is able to speak English is ranked the fourth, (M= 5.54, SD= 2.00). Imagining oneself writing English e-mails/letters fluently is ranked the fifth, (M= 5.52, SD= 2.04). Imagining oneself in the future giving an English speech successfully to the public is ranked the sixth, (M= 5.46, SD=1.97). Imagining oneself using English upon thinking of future career is ranked the seventh, (M= 5.45, SD= 2.12). Probably feeling comfortable around native speakers of English is ranked the eight, (M=5.25, SD= 2.00). Thinking that one is doing the best to learn English is ranked the ninth, (M=4.96, SD= 1.94). Thinking that one is studying English relatively hard compared to other classmates is ranked the last, (M= 4.36, SD= 1.91). Worth-noting is that there is a statistically significant difference between male and female students in terms of self-confidence in favor of females. The latter have more self-confidence (M=62.88), whereas male students show low self-confidence (M= 48.27).

### *4.2.4 Self-efficacy*

**RQ.1.4 To what extent English department students have self-efficacy?**

**Table 5**

Self-efficacy

| | | N | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **1.** | **I believe I will receive an excellent grade in this class.** | 114 | 4.57 | 1.969 |
| **2.** | **I'm certain I can understand the most difficult material presented in the readings for this course.** | 114 | 4.49 | 2.001 |
| **3.** | **I'm confident I can understand the basic concepts taught in this course.** | 114 | 5.24 | 1.915 |
| **4.** | **I'm confident I can understand the most complex material presented by the instructor in this course.** | 114 | 4.54 | 1.942 |
| **1.** | **I'm confident I can do an excellent job on the assignments and tests in this course.** | 114 | 4.66 | 1.923 |
| **2.** | **I expect to do well in this class.** | 114 | 4.99 | 1.984 |
| **3.** | **I'm certain I can master the skills being taught in this class.** | 114 | 4.89 | 1.918 |
| **4.** | **Considering the difficulty of this course, the teacher, and my skills, I think I will do well in this class.** | 114 | 4.91 | 1.967 |

Students' self-efficacy is measured through an eight-item scale. Being confident that one can understand the basic concepts taught in this course is ranked the first, (M= 5.24, SD= 1.91). Expecting to do well in the class is ranked the second, (M= 4.99, SD= 1.98). Thinking that one will do well in this class, considering the difficulty of the course, the teacher, and skills is ranked the third, (M= 4.91, SD= 1.96). Being certain that one can master the skills being taught in the class is ranked the fourth, (M= 4.89, SD= 1.91). Being confident one can do an excellent job on the assignments and tests in this course is ranked the fifth, (M= 4.66, SD= 1.92). Believing that one will receive an excellent grade in this class is ranked the sixth, (M= 4.57, SD= 1.96). Being confident that one can understand the most complex material presented by the instructor in this course is ranked the eight, (M= 4.54, SD= 1.94). Being certain that one can understand the most difficult material presented in the readings for this course is ranked the ninth, (M= 4.49, SD= 2.00).

#### *4.2.5 The impact of Covid-19 distance education on motivation*

***RQ.2 To what extent has Covid-19 distance education affected students' motivation negatively***

**Table 6**

*The impact of Covid-19 distance education on students' motivation*

| | N | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| **To what extent has Covid-19 distance education affected your motivation to study negatively?** | 113 | 6.49 | 2.803 |

Students were asked to state the extent to which Covid-19 distance education has affected students' motivation negatively on a 10-point scale. The majority of students reported that Covid-19 distance education has affected their motivation negatively to a great extent, (M=6.49, SD=2.80).

As to the interview data, interviewee 1 (female) stated:

> I was anxious because I wasn't familiar with online study. Personally, it was difficult for me to study online because I don't get motivated to study when I am at home. Actually it was good ,for most teachers did online sessions which helps me to understand the lessons. I didn't get motivated at all. I think our university needs to work on herself in this aspect.

Interviewee 2 (female) argued:

> As a student who had to wait for two hours at the bus station every morning to get to the university, online learning seemed like a better idea or option, at that time. However, later on I was overwhelmed with the experience of online learning. Knowing the sickening level of our educational system, online made the situation even worse.
>
> It is difficult to concentrate the way we used to in the classroom. Some of the methods used by the teachers are good. However, most are a total disappointment. Concerning the timing, some teachers stacked with the usual timetable which was good. However, others adopted a flexible schedule, which means we had to have sessions whenever it was convenient for the professor. Online learning sucks the life out of students, brings them down and shatters their mental health. I don't support the idea of online learning especially in the University.

Interviewee 3 (male) stated some affective factors as follows:

> When I was heard for the first time that I will study at home I was stressed and nervous because most of the teachers were not explaining to us the lessons, but it gave me motivation, and I lost the sense of self confidence, it was difficult to study only in the beginning, but it was not impossible because I helped myself by watching my lessons in YouTube but when the internet stopped or cut down, I feel so stressed and moody.

Interviewee 4 (male) narrated he experience as follows:

> When I heard that I am going to study online I had no idea about how it will be because this is something I have never experienced, so I was worried about how it would be. What was difficult in online learning is to accept the idea of studying online as we have used to see the professors in front of us but we are adapting to it. Some professors are trying to deal with online learning by doing meetings and make it easy as much as possible for students, while other professors prefer to send PDFs which is not enough especially in debatable modules. The most things I find difficult in studying and sitting for exams is to sit for exams based on PDFs hat need explanation. Online studying at the university was not entirely successful because not all the professors manage to deal with e-learning which make it not easy for us as students to study in this difficult environment. When the internet cuts down during attempting a class, I get a little bit mad because I missed what the professor was saying and I may even lose focus during reconnecting.

In brief, students have shown divergent attitudes towards distance education during Covid- 19. They have all focused on the emotional sides involved. This shows the important of affective factors as revealed in the quantitative study.

### *4.2.6 The correlation between different affective variables*

**Table 7**

*The correlation between different affective variables: Motivation, test-anxiety, attitude, self-confidence and self-efficacy*

| | | ***Intrinsic Motivation*** | ***Extrinsic Motivation*** | ***Motivation Scale*** | ***Test Anxiety*** | ***Attitude*** | ***Self-confidence Scale*** | ***Self-efficacy*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Intrinsic Motivation*** | Correlation Coefficient | 1.000 | .364** | .774** | 0.019 | .508** | .471** | .483** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.837 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.00 |
| | N | 116 | 116 | 116 | 116 | 115 | 114 | 114 |
| ***Extrinsic Motivation*** | Correlation Coefficient | .364** | 1.000 | .857** | .333** | .469** | .471** | .321* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.00 |
| | N | 116 | 116 | 116 | 116 | 115 | 114 | 114 |
| ***Motivation Scale*** | Correlation Coefficient | .774** | .857** | 1.000 | .200* | .585** | .545** | .447** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | 0.000 | | 0.032 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.00 |
| | N | 116 | 116 | 116 | 116 | 115 | 114 | 114 |
| ***Test Anxiety*** | Correlation Coefficient | -0.019 | .333** | .200* | 1.000 | 0.168 | 0.091 | 0.052 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.837 | 0.000 | 0.032 | 0.073 | | 0.336 | 0.584 |
| | N | 116 | 116 | 116 | 116 | 115 | 114 | 114 |
| ***Attitude*** | Correlation Coefficient | . 508** | .469** | .585** | 0.168 | 1.000 | .711** | .585* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.073 | | 0.000 | 0.000 |
| | N | 115 | 115 | 115 | 115 | 115 | 114 | 114 |
| ***Self-confidence Scale*** | Correlation Coefficient | .471** | .471** | .545** | 0.091 | 711** | 1.000 | . 650* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.336 | 0.000 | | 0.000 |
| | N | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 |
| ***Self-efficacy*** | Correlation Coefficient | .483** | .321** | .447** | 0.052 | .585** | .650** | 1.000 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.000 | 0.584 | 0.000 | 0.000 | |
| | N | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 | 114 |

There is a statistically significant slight positive correlation between motivation and test anxiety, r(114)= .20, p= .03. Similarly, there is a strong positive correlation between motivation, on the one hand, and attitude, self-confidence and self-efficacy r(114)=.58, .54 and p<.001. There is a statistically significant strong positive correlation between self-confidence and self-efficacy among English department students, r(114)=.6, p<.001.

As to the correlation of Covid-19 impact on motivation and other affective factors, low motivation during Covid-19 distance education is not correlated with motivation, attitude, self-confidence and test anxiety. Therefore, the scale of Covid-19 distance effect on motivation and other affective factors, namely motivation, attitude, self-efficacy, self-confidence and test-anxiety.

**Table 8**

*The correlation between Covid-19 distance education and other affective factors*

| | | ***Motivation*** | ***Attitude*** | ***Self-efficacy*** | ***Self-confidence Scale*** | ***Test Anxiety*** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Covid-19 distance education*** | Correlation Coefficient | -0.061 | 0.034 | -0.043 | 0.047 | 204* |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | 0.524 | 0.722 | 0.651 | 0.619 | 0.030 |
| | N | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 | 113 |

The results showed a relationship between affective factors of motivation, attitude, test-anxiety, self-confidence and self-efficacy. As to the source of emotions to students, Hascher (2010) found out that teachers are the major source of emotions to students. Moroccan English department students are more extrinsically motivated to learn the language. Students who are more motivated tend to be self-confident, less anxious, have positive attitudes toward the language and culture and have more self-efficacy. However, Covid-19 distance education has negatively affected the motivation of students to study.

Positive emotions encourage students to be engaged with difficult cognitive tasks as supported by the study of Trope and Neter (1994). There may be a reciprocal relationship between affective and cognitive factors. Failure in cognitive tasks may simulate negative emotions, which will hinder upcoming tasks. Affective factors affect each other. In this regard, Sikhwari (2007) found out that there is a significant correlation between self-concept, motivation, and academic achievement of students at the University of Venda. Interested students tend to be more motivated, and they achieve higher than others.

Students in the sample show more positive attitudes towards the English culture. Sikhwari (2007) divided attitude into attitudes towards the institution, field and lecturers. He found that attitude was significantly related to self-concept and motivation. This indicates that affective factors of attitude and motivation are interdependent.

Anxiety can be a positive or negative factor in language learning. According to Liebert and Morris (1967), test-anxiety consists of two components, namely the emotionality and the worry components. The former pushes students to learn and exert more efforts when they are afraid of failure, whereas the latter limits the cognitive capacities of students by making them confuse things or unable to speak. Anxiety can be debilitating or facilitating, and it is divided into communication apprehension, test-anxiety and fear of negative evaluation (Aida, 1994). Test-anxiety has been the focus of this study in view of the extrinsic motivation of grades students have.

Female students are more self-confident than male students. This difference between male and female students was not found in other factors. Therefore, it was not reported. Selfconfidence as the belief in oneself is more or less similar to self-esteem in that it can be divided into global, situation and task self-confidence (Brown, 2000, p.145).

Self-efficacy is one of the components of social cognitive theory. Ersanli (2007) found that there is a low-level negative correlation between English language learning motivation and self-efficacy beliefs of students in Grade 8. Moreover, there is no statistically significant difference in the students' academic self-efficacy beliefs in terms of gender. Self-efficacy beliefs and intrinsic values were positively related in in the study conducted by Pintrich and De Groot (1990). Moreover, even motivation was found to be affected by self-efficacy (Pajares, 1996; Schunk, 2003). Students who study in low-anxiety environment tend to have higher self-efficacy beliefs.

This research has implications on understanding learners' differences, which include personality traits, learning styles, learners' beliefs, strategies, aptitude, age, motivation. Motivation, self-confidence and self-efficacy as the belief in one's capabilities can predict language learning performance (Bandura, 1997). These beliefs predict performance better than abilities. Some learners are more involved and engaged in tasks, whereas others are not despite studying in the same environment. Understanding the reasons behind these differences is more likely to result in potential solutions to address the problems. Future research should focus on other affective factors to learn English.

## 5. Conclusion

The main objective of the current study has been to investigate the correlations between affective factors in learning English among Moroccan English department students during Covid-19 distance education. The studied affective factors are motivation, attitude, test-anxiety, self-confidence and self-efficacy. Mixed-method research design and methodological triangulation were adopted in the current study. Non-probability voluntary sampling was used to gather data from more than one hundred students. An adopted

questionnaire of 45 items with five main scales was used in the current study. The Cronbach alpha showed a firm consistency of the scales to measure the constructs.

The results have shown that students have mostly extrinsic motivation which agrees with the study of Benhima and Benabderrazik (2021). Concerning extrinsic motivation, the majority of students reported that the most satisfying thing is getting a good grade. In terms of intrinsic motivation, preference for course material that arouses my curiosity and trying to understand the content as thoroughly as possible are frequency cited.

With respect to test-anxiety, students show a moderate anxiety with some difference among them. Students fear mostly from the consequences of failing. As to the attitude of students toward English, the majority of the respondents enjoy studying English.

Concerning the self-confidence of students, believing that one will be capable of reading and understanding most texts in English in case of studying it is ranked the first. Female students have more self-confidence than male students. No difference in terms of gender was found in the other variables. In terms of self-efficacy, being confident that one can understand the basic concepts taught in this course is ranked the first.

As to the extent to which Covid-19 distance education has affected students' motivation, the majority of students reported that Covid-19 distance education has affected their motivation negatively to a great extent. As to the correlation between the affective variables, there is a statistically significant slight positive correlation between motivation and test anxiety. Similarly, there is a strong positive correlation between motivation, on the one hand, and attitude, self-confidence and self-efficacy. There is a statistically significant strong positive correlation between self-confidence and self-efficacy among English department students.

Limitations included the presence of error, the use of a non-probability sampling and lack of generalizability beyond the site location. Given the interesting findings there are opportunities to replicate this study to compare results and extend the results. Moreover, there is a gender bias as more female students volunteered to answer the questionnaire. This is indicative of gender difference in terms of willingness to participate.

As to the pedagogical implications, teachers and administrator should take into account the psychological state of their students, especially during crises. Teachers should keep motivating students and raising their curiosity to learn in order to develop their intrinsic motivation. Moreover, teachers should lower students' anxiety especially during tests which have become online in some cases. The fear to fail can be doubled by the use of information and communication technology tools. Increasing self-confidence and self-efficacy are one of the goals that teachers should focus during distance education as students, especially male students, do not have self-confidence in their abilities. When students ask to change groups or classes, they may have negative attitudes towards the class, the teacher or even their peers. Therefore, administrations should take this into account.

Suggestions for further research include targeting other affective factors to learn languages. Introversion and extroversion are key psychological factors that can have an influence on language learning, especially pair/group-work and participation. Moreover, self-esteem is also important in raising regulating the effort students make to learn the language. Last but not least, inhibition is one of the feelings that restrains the students to learn the language. Therefore, future research should focus what inhibits students when it comes to learning English.

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