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Using Different Approaches to Organizing Distance Learning During the COVID-19 Pandemic: Opportunities and Disadvantages

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> Abstract---In recent years, distance learning has become widespread in both secondary and higher educational institutions around the world. However, the pace of the spread of remote technologies has significantly increased with the introduction of physical distancing and quarantine against the background of the development of the COVID-19 pandemic, since most educational institutions in various countries of the world were closed to hold the spread of the virus. Many educational institutions were not fully ready for the mass introduction of distance learning, and if in developed countries schools and universities had the opportunity to use developments in the educational process of various programs and technologies for conducting online learning, then in countries and regions where there were serious problems with the implementation of distance learning, attempts were made to use the possibilities of social networks and messengers for organizing the educational process. However, since these resources were not fully intended for the implementation of fullfledged pedagogical activities, their use in the educational process, along with the advantages, had several disadvantages. In general, the advantages of distance learning are that it allows one to solve several

educational tasks that are necessary for the implementation of a continuous educational process in a remote format. It allows organizing the training of school students and students both in an individual mode and in the classroom form through various technologies. The organization of distance learning allows one to motivate students to solve educational problems since the very form of such training is interesting for students. In addition, each student can contact the teacher for advice at any time, which also increases the availability of knowledge and improves the level of feedback in the teacher-student interaction. The secret of successful distance learning lies in a reliable technology that provides online distance learning classes using attractive distance learning methods. Parents and their school-age children note that technology can improve their distance learning experience. However, it was determined that there are links between logistics barriers and distance learning. These barriers included difficulties in using distance learning and insufficient training of students, dissatisfaction with the form of distance learning, and the inability of distance learning to meet the needs of students. The purpose of the work is to consider the possibilities and disadvantages of using various approaches to organizing distance learning during the pandemic.

Keywords---coronavirus infection, disadvantages, distance learning, educational process, opportunities, pandemic.

Introduction

During the COVID-19 pandemic, people around the world began to use social networks and messengers for various purposes en masse during physical distancing. This process was not accidental: it is known that the mechanism of social networks was quite effective in natural disasters, such as earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, or any other man-made disasters, such as wars or mass riots. During such situations, people use their smartphones, tablets, and other devices to log into social networks to exchange information with each other in real-time and social exchange (Abuhammad, 2021).

Similarly, social networks have become an integral part of access to information and social interaction during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the social media capabilities used to meet the learning needs of students during school closures due to the COVID-19 pandemic have become more important. Research shows that the use of social networks is effective for supporting active student participation, the professional development of teachers, and the development of student communities. The researchers believe that the use of social networks in the organization of the educational process contributes to the development of teachers 'ICT integration skills, as well as inspires and encourages their students to continue learning using technologies.

The use of social media resources made it possible to organize an educational process with school students and students who were forced to stay at home

during the pandemic (Anderson et al., 2020). Accordingly, in order not to deprive school children and students of the opportunity to gain knowledge, schools in developed countries have switched to online learning, including using social network resources. Some authors believe that social networks are the most successful solution for organizing the educational process remotely during a pandemic. Their ability to organize social interaction and allow teachers to determine the goals of the curriculum taking into account the needs of students. The purpose of the work is to consider the possibilities and disadvantages of using various approaches to organizing distance learning during the pandemic (Leung et al., 2003; Pratelli et al., 2000).

Materials and Methods

Comparative methods were used in the work, and an array of literature related to the study of the possibilities of using social networks in the process of distance education was analyzed.

Results

Social networks allow one to organize communication in real-time. They allow users to create certain content. The authors distinguish a "social" component in the process of using social networks, which is attributed to activities carried out among people, as well as an "instrumental" component, which includes a social network platform, tools, and technologies with Internet support. Social networks are collaborative online applications and technologies that ensure user participation, connection, information exchange, and cooperation between the user community. This is a group of Internet applications that allow one to create and share useful content. Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, and LinkedIn are examples of existing social media platforms that are widely distributed among users (Brooks et al., 2020).

Web-based learning is an essential component of e-learning and distance learning, aimed at expanding the knowledge of users and improving the quality of training. The possibility of personalization is an important aspect of e-learning. There are also e-learning initiatives that provide learning resources to facilitate technological content and interaction. Interaction through e-learning leads to online learning communities in which there is an exchange of knowledge between individuals, including friends, families, communities, and organizations. In this regard, social networks play a key role in facilitating the exchange of knowledge in online communities (Zhang et al., 2020; Vecchio et al., 2020). The researchers suggest that teachers use the capabilities of social networks in online learning. Research has shown that the use of social networks is very useful for creating and distributing collective knowledge for academic purposes.

The attitude and social behavior of individuals explain their participation in specific applications, guidelines, and principles for the development and implementation of a social network system. Similarly, people's attitude to the use of SM in online learning remains phenomenal. The authors note that the use of social networks is determined by the attitude and expectations of teachers. They consider their pedagogical beliefs and current practice to be an integral part of

teachers' use of social networks in teaching and learning. Studies that take into account the attitude of teachers to the use of social networks remain limited, since most studies in this regard have explored the attitude of students and the use of social networks (He et al., 2005; Markova et al., 2017).

Nevertheless, the attitude of teachers to the use of ICT in online learning in the context of the transition of schools to online mode due to the COVID-19 pandemic remains key. More importantly, the increase in the use of social media opportunities during the pandemic seems to have had a positive impact on the attitude of teachers to the use of social networks in online learning (Shen et al., 2020). Researchers believe that the attitude of teachers determines the possibilities of using social networks in teaching and learning. Since social networks allow one to access almost all student accounts and organize both individual counseling and group training, teachers believe that social network resources can play an important role in the pedagogical process.

The introduction of social media tools requires a transformation of the roles of teachers and educational strategies. Therefore, teachers should be aware of and support the use of social networks in their instructions. The authors believe that teachers' knowledge about the use of social networks in instructions, such as online learning, is very important. They must constantly study to be able to effectively use social networks in online learning. Some authors suggested that teacher training strategies should include peer mentoring.

Teachers can also interact with their colleagues through social networks to share knowledge. Online forums for information exchange are also configured as communities of practice, where teachers' participation and subsequent training are organized around common goals, joint activities, and mutual understanding between participants (Wenham et al., 2020). The researchers believe that the involvement of teachers is mainly determined by the knowledge they need and the necessary practices. However, according to some authors, teachers' lack of knowledge related to social networks demotivates them to use SM in online learning. The current surge in the use of social networks during the pandemic is because the amount of knowledge of teachers about the use of social networks in online learning has expanded due to regular access to them in the educational process. Accordingly, the use of social networks against the background of COVID-19 has a positive effect on the knowledge of teachers about the use of social networks in online learning.

Discussion

It should be noted that the use of social networks in online learning also motivates both school children and students to learn. The authors note that students perceive online courses differently than traditional courses. The researchers conducted a large-scale study of graduate students' perception of online learning and found a combination of contributing and discouraging factors. Students believe that the design of courses is an important factor that distinguishes a successful online learning experience from a failed one. Research data indicate an improvement in learning outcomes in online classes compared to

traditional classes due to increased motivation of students (Golitsyna, 2017; Mora et al., 2015).

Some studies show that students can even perform better in an online learning environment. The authors investigated the relationship between students' perception of the practice of online learning, social affiliation, and the educational climate, controlling age and gender. They claim that successful online learning is aimed at the social dimension to resist the absence and overcome the distance (Adnan & Anwar, 2020). The authors concluded that the successful experience of full-volume online learning requires the use of active learning strategies to create opportunities for communication and exchange. Indeed, some studies report that students value active learning strategies in online environments more.

The literature recognizes that online learning is a learning environment that is different from the offline learning environment. Students, as a rule, have a positive perception of online learning, although they have doubts about the technical skill of the teacher and the adequate design of the courses. The authors determined that among the problems of distance learning, it is necessary to highlight the flexibility of pedagogical approaches, technical problems, difficulties with the design of training courses, etc. Many distance learning programs are successful, and students succeed in learning when they are provided with adequate support from teachers. However, the problems caused by the pandemic indicate that many students were deprived of adequate educational support. For this reason, the use of social network resources in the educational process contributed to the partial solution of educational problems both at the level of general education schools and universities (Haman, 2020).

However, the organization of distance learning in various variants caused several problems that were voiced by the parents of students. As already mentioned, distance learning is a platform that many schools use to meet the learning needs of students. Distance learning is an effective approach from the point of view of parents at the school and university levels. When students are required to stay at home, as a case of the current COVID-19 pandemic, parents need not only good parenting skills but also a good level of education. In addition to controlling the temperament and academic performance of their children, parents should try to meet the educational needs of their children as effectively as possible (Ismail et al., 2020).

One of the ways to support this additional parental role is to provide children and parents with access to distance learning materials and methods via the Internet. However, despite the huge growth in the use of online distance learning at all stages of education in various regions, there are still some obstacles to distance learning. These barriers may hinder the implementation of distance learning. Many parents noted the presence of technical problems when using distance learning. This is, first of all, the lack of necessary technical means, as well as an unstable Internet connection. Many messages from parents discussed the frequency with which their children were disconnected from the Internet and could not complete their assignments, attend classes or take exams. The Internet connection speed was also unsatisfactory, it was not always suitable for lessons

in the form of distance learning, where a lot of video content was used (Passerini & Granger, 2000; Motiwalla & Tello, 2000).

Some parents also reported that they are facing logistical problems. They included three aspects:

- difficulties in using distance learning and insufficient training of students and pupils;
- dissatisfaction with the form of distance learning;
- the inability of distance learning to meet the needs of students and pupils (Limaye et al., 2020).

Parents pointed out that the introduction of distance learning was unfair, and that their children were not ready to use distance learning as the main means of learning. There was also an opinion that children lack computer skills, as well as the necessary skills to achieve good results through distance learning. Some parents were dissatisfied with distance learning and believed that this type of education should not replace full-time education, despite the advantages of distance learning, such as saving time and effort for schoolchildren. In addition, the reports of parents concerning this type of education showed that, in their opinion, it does not meet the educational needs of schoolchildren, and they are dissatisfied with the level of their children's education. Some parents also expressed the opinion that the method of distance learning in education does not provide flexibility in meeting the needs of the child, because if the child does not understand something, he cannot get explanations at the time when it is necessary (Ritonga et al., 2021; Dudar et al., 2021).

Also, several parents faced financial problems:

- inability to purchase the necessary equipment;
- inability to pay for Internet access services.

Thus, difficulties arose in connection with the acquisition of computers and laptops and related technologies that are necessary for effective distance learning. Moreover, some posts drew attention to the fact that the Internet is not free, and the use of data is not unlimited. In other words, parents have to pay for the Internet, and if their children have to spend more time online for educational purposes, it will cost them more money. Many lectures and assignments on several subjects require a high-quality Internet connection or a large amount of data, which increases the cost of online distance learning. The lack of trained specialists is a common obstacle to distance learning. In addition, many parents point to the lack of technical assistance. The lack of personnel to manage distance learning has also been identified as an obstacle to the organization of distance learning (Mulenga & Marbán, 2020).

Conclusion

In general, the advantages of distance learning are that it allows one to solve several educational tasks that are necessary for the implementation of a continuous educational process in a remote format. It allows one to organize the training of school children and students both in an individual mode and in the classroom form through various technologies. The organization of distance learning allows one to motivate students and students to solve educational problems since the very form of such training is interesting for students. In addition, each pupil or student can contact the teacher for advice at any time, which also increases the availability of knowledge and improves the level of feedback in the teacher-student interaction.

The secret of successful distance learning lies in a reliable technology that provides online distance learning classes using attractive distance learning methods. Parents and their school-age children note that technology can improve their distance learning experience. However, it was determined that there are links between logistics barriers and distance learning. These barriers included difficulties in using distance learning and insufficient training of pupils and students, dissatisfaction with the form of distance learning, and the inability of distance learning to meet the needs of pupils and students.

Financing distance learning is another obstacle that parents face since the purchase of technologies for distance learning lessons and the cost of conducting lessons via the Internet can lead to financial problems. Not all parents have the opportunity to purchase a computer for their children, pay for the necessary highspeed Internet access, and also get the necessary and timely assistance from a technology specialist. In addition, the need to purchase webcams for video conferencing adds another burden to the cost of distance learning. The costs associated with mastering a computer, Internet access, and other equipment can be considered an obstacle, especially if the family has insufficient income to cover such expenses. Accordingly, it can be concluded that the organization of distance learning, regardless of whether it is implemented during the period of forced isolation of students, or is carried out in a pre-planned main or mixed mode, should be carried out taking into account the capabilities of both the trained audience and the teachers who conduct classes. In addition, technical support for the organization of remote classes should be provided, since not all parents, pupils, students, and teachers are ready to correct technical malfunctions and software failures.

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