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E-ISSN: 2707-188X

## **Distance Learning: The Attitude of Stakeholders Towards Distance Learning in Arab School, Their Motivation and Interests for the Distance Learning Process**

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Received: 17 Apr. 2021, Revised: 20 Apr. 2021, Accepted: 20 Apr. 2021

Published online: 6 June 2021

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### **Abstract**

There is general agreement and especially in the wake of the Corona plague that the school must change to address the changing social and technological needs. In the Arab sector we see a drastic change that has not been so successful and the learning process seems so far away on the students and teachers and many factors that affect the teaching process. Following the Corona crisis, all schools were forced to switch to distance learning, and Arab society faced a real test that revealed many gaps. The article presents data on the attitude of stakeholders towards distance learning, their motivation for distance learning and their interests if any. The corona crisis was an opportunity for most schools to change to a new and more effective reality, but in Arab society they encountered a reality that revealed a gap between the reality and

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the capabilities found and the application. It was found that most teachers do not have the appropriate technological knowledge for this change, are not talented at a good level, most students do not have enough computers to conduct their lessons remotely, principals are stressed and they only receive instructions without clarification, in addition to problems and gaps related to infrastructure in the Arab sector.

**Keywords:** distance learning, stakeholders (teachers, principals, parents), motivation, teaching in Arab society.

## **1.0 Introduction**

The education system in Israel and around the world has undergone a crisis in recent months that is fundamentally different from previous crises. We need to pay attention to the insights that arise from the way the education system has dealt with the crisis, and especially from teaching and distance learning. The ultimate solution that seems to be for the continued functioning of the education system, as far as knowledge is concerned, in situations similar to the last crisis is distance learning and learning. In recent times, it may have been a short-term temporary solution, but in fact there is a real chance that distance learning and learning, as part of the learning and educational process, will become the new routine. Online teaching is not a substitute for traditional education but it certainly creates a new reality that allows for great improvements but also produces quite a few risks. The Ministry of Education has recommended the communication services of the American company ZOOM as the main platform for this purpose. Their advantage seemed to be to be able to significantly mimic the structure and function of a face-to-face encounter: the teacher teaches and the students listen - and hopefully - internalize the knowledge (Kalman, 2020).

A virtual learning environment allows learners and those involved in education and teaching to break free from the shackles of space and time, and to have learning interactions at flexible times and at sites that are not physically nearby. The uses of computerized technology enable accessibility and availability to individuals and sources, to anyone, from anywhere and at any time. Today, with the development of information and ICT technologies, including the Internet, and their introduction into the education system, diverse distance learning activities are possible, such as:

integrating a variety of information sources; Media of participation and simulation of experiences; Teamwork and collaborative learning, regardless of geographical distance; Dialogue between learners, including discussion, conversation and exchange of opinions and ideas; Mentoring and cognitive sharing; And an international platform for expression and cognitive partnership. Using ICT technologies, the typical classroom is no longer confined to four walls, it is open to students and experts from all over the world. In the professional literature, two main avenues are realized that realize the media option of the Internet for virtual learning: "synchronous learning" and "asynchronous learning" (1999). Geographical location The technology that enables synchronous, interactive learning includes different conversation environments, such as: IRC channels; conference video conferencing; telephone discussion groups; and various MUD environments, which include the possibility of an online conversation. The technology that enables asynchronous, non-interactive learning includes, for example: e-mail; bulletin board; and various discussion groups, which can be both synchronous and asynchronous. In recent years, in parallel with the rapid development of Internet technologies, means and unique educational technology tools that support distance learning McGrath (& Thompson 1999).

#### **\* Distance learning in Arab society**

It is no secret that learning and education in Arab society are the safest way to employment and advancement in society, and the current reality, in which there are low achievements in the matriculation exams and the PIZA test, does not bode well. The corona plague, which surprised Israeli society as a whole and Arab society in particular, also surprised the education system in Arab society, which did not expect such a day and was not prepared for it. The book. (Alkarnawi, 2020).

The epidemic caused much confusion among decision-makers and left an open dilemma as to which more serious damage - the physiological damage of the virus or the psychological damage manifested in uncertainty, collective frustration, inability, and undermining of resilience. However, the academic impairment does not seem to have been adequately taken into account: the cognitive-learning damage among students, which increases the learning gaps between them and students in the general population, and students around the world, cannot be ignored.

Students were pushed between a rock and a hard place: they found themselves in a situation where policymakers wanted a reduction in the number of patients even if it came at the expense of studies, and ignoring the challenges of distance learning in Arab society; On the other hand, Arab society itself preferred to hold mass weddings, even when it was known that this could lead to the shutdown of the education system and the transition to distance learning due to the proliferation of corona cases. (Alkarnawi, 2020)

Many problems and many challenges face the Arab education system, which has not known a single day of rest. While talking about closure and the closure of schools, the Arab student is for him again in the great freedom, or even in the longest and most boring freedom. Since March there has been no stable learning, and this poses a great challenge, how to build a learning routine at home. Students became accustomed to the atmosphere at home with no hourly schedule, no clear goals and no guidelines for learning and behavior. Sitting at home causes negative emotions, anxiety and worries of the students and their parents in addition to the academic harm to them. To enable distance learning to take place, a great deal of effort is required from the parents who will encourage the student to participate in the activity, and an effort from the teachers to offer fascinating and interesting lessons to the student.

The corona crisis has made Arab society think differently, according to Samantha's article: "How has COVID-19 affected your access to public spaces?", It seems that COVID-19 will affect the design world; This causes a huge technological leap into more futuristic spaces.

## **2.0 Methodology**

The issue of distance learning took an important part this year in the wake of the corona plague, whether it be in the benefits of distance learning and the challenges and obstacles found, the gap in Arab society in particular stood out. Therefore, I conducted semi-structured interviews among principals of education, school principals and teachers and students in the Arab community in Israel.

The aim of the study was to answer the following questions: What is your attitude towards distance learning and how do you perceive distance learning as an opportunity for change, and what were the challenges of distance learning, and were there certain interests towards the organization?

An online questionnaire (structured closed) was handed out to teachers, students and parents.

Research population: Three principals of the education department in Arab localities in the north of the country participated, in addition to six Arab school principals.

In addition, 30 teachers and 40 students and 25 parents participated. The target population was high schools in the north of the country.

In high schools, distance learning has also become a preparation course for the matriculation exams, and it is possible to check results and grades at the end of the matriculation period.

### **3.0 Findings**

The results elicit findings on stakeholder attitudes toward distance learning during Corona time, their motivation and interests.

#### **\* Heads of Education Departments**

The principals of the Department of Education were central to the distance learning process and they stood between the school educational institution and the Ministry of Education in charge of the educational organizations. And especially in high schools that belong to the local government and therefore there is a heavy responsibility on education principals who have followed the distance learning that is done in schools and tried to help schools to lead the distance learning process more effectively.

But especially in Arab society, there was a problem with the directors of the education department, especially with regard to the budget and the preparation of a suitable infrastructure for rapid change in the wake of the crisis.

They focused on dealing with the issue of equipping distance learning schools and began looking for solutions due to lack of mobility in schools and homes among students.

In their view, Arab education received a severe blow in the shadow of the Corona crisis, and the vast majority of students did not study because they did not

have computers, and the Ministry of Education did not prepare an appropriate outline for Arab society, we discovered infrastructure problems in Arab Society Jewish education, lack of educational content in the Arabic language, other problems resulting from poverty and the socio-economic situation from which Arab families suffer.

Prior to the discussion in the Knesset Committee on the Rights of the Child on 28.7.2020 on the lack of computers for distance learning, the following was found as follows: On 7-8 April 2020, data were collected from 50 localities inhabited by 907287 Arab residents. Computers and mapping were conducted through departments and education departments of Arab authorities that collected data from schools. There have been many plans in the Ministry of Education to help Arab society but most of the budget is not enough to solve the problems, the conditions for computer distribution are unknown.

There was really a lot of motivation to change the teaching process in schools, education department principals thought it would go fast but the reality completely, they reported a decrease in motivation because of most of the problems found and especially the two big problems of attendance and lack of computers are very acute in Arab society.

One of the principals says that "we are after purchasing hundreds of digital devices for students in the city and still by a very large gap. There is a population with many children that even if there is a computer at home, it has 5 to 7 children and that is a difficult to impossible thing." He said, despite the teachers' efforts, "I must be open and say that from tests we have done there is a significant percentage of students who are less connected, some because they do not have computers and some from hard classes or youth at risk.

The principals of the Department of Education had an open interest towards schools, to help advance the learning process and reduce gaps, and to support the population of weak students and to address all students in order to achieve results and successes in the matriculation exams.

**\* School principals**

If the main role of the principal-leader of the school is to lead the school to its central goal; And if the main purpose of the school is to motivate and guide learning; After all, the main role of the school-leader is to explicitly lead the school - or rather, its students - to learning.

During the Corona Crisis the role of the principal became more effective, the role of the principal was to ensure that the school system would operate on a regular basis. It is his responsibility to follow the guidelines of the Ministry of Education and to ensure that a learning routine is maintained even when the studies are not held in the school or in the classroom.

Principals had to maintain an emergency team, recruit teachers and operate an emergency system and program and monitor the learning process, so distance learning places an emphasis on the principals' work process.

Most principals noted insecurity towards the learning process, especially due to poor guidelines from the Ministry of Education. For about a whole month, the distance learning was conducted without proper instructions from the Ministry of Education: each educational institution formulated its own curriculum and decided independently how to implement it, one principal noted: There were no clear guidelines, the teachers were stressed, I felt resistance and despair from the students and parents and teachers, we had to give support to the teachers to increase effort from home and share most of the students in the lessons, we had difficulty keeping track, and order system and agenda, we encountered many problems .

Principals noted infrastructure problems in schools, lack of computers, lack of ICT centers, lack of training for educational staff on technology.

Principals were unmotivated in the beginning, trying to empower the system and mobilize resources and maintain an emergency system and emergency staff: teachers, counselors, ICT coordinators, psychological support centers, emergency lines to reduce anxiety and uncertainty as a result of the crisis.

The interest of the principals was clear, the matriculation tests and achievements. Most principals indicated high concern about the matriculation exams, how the students complete study materials in distance learning, is the distance

learning sufficient for the student and prepares him well for the exams and gives an answer to the student ?. Therefore, the concern of the teachers and their interest in leading the students to full success in the matriculation exams continues, but their concern continues until the end of the crisis and until the results and achievements of the matriculation are obtained.

**\* school teachers**

In the distance learning process the teachers were unhappy because they are the agent who carried out the instructions and the learning process. Most of them raised the point of substantial change in their role as teachers, and they became intermediaries between learning and students.

Their attitude towards distance learning was negative, they expressed anxiety, worry, apathy, reluctance, and even despair for various reasons, especially the lack of student participation in classes, uncertainty that students attend classes, excessive parental intervention in classes, technical problems in ICT, invasion of privacy during classes, Difficulty doing homework while you were family.

Their concern was from completing the material for the matriculation exams through distance learning while the students were not present in most of the lessons and if they were not fully present.

The teachers are helpless, not well trained for the distance learning process, and have encountered problems with students who do not have access to a computer and how to deal with them.

There are studies or researchers who point out that the problem of motivation in distance learning stems in no small part from the teacher and not necessarily from the student. One of the main causes of failure of distance learning is the unmotivated instructor, just as there are unmotivated students, there are also teachers who covertly fear the media of online teaching and students feel it faster than lesson planners think. In some cases, the teacher's lack of motivation is due to a lack of adequate financial reward or a lack of involvement in the development teams, the teacher in many cases does not feel responsible for learning as in the classroom.

The interest of the teachers was obvious, most of them were afraid that they would not receive full pay for distance learning, And to pay teachers a salary, the



Ministry of Education asked them to "work." That is, continue to teach children from a distance. It was supposed to be an orderly continuation of the teaching of the material being taught, as well as the transfer of tasks to be performed at home, and if they did not do so they might not be paid. And there are teachers who took care of the students, the study materials, did their job and were creative and did not think about pay at all.

**\* Parents and distance learning**

The parents' attitude was particularly sharp and negative towards distance learning, most of them were not satisfied with the distance learning process because they had to be at home during quarantine, unemployed, poor financial situation in addition to staying home with their children and watching the distance learning process. The parents stated that there was no synchronous remote instruction ("zoom sessions", as some parents called it) but were given tasks via WhatsApp or the school portal, in addition they said that remote instruction is not as effective for students as in the classroom, and some parents noted technological difficulties. That there was no distance teaching, teachers did not control the class and canceled lessons, and saw that the teachers were not properly trained for distance learning.

There were many obstacles to distance learning that led to decreased motivation in parents for distance learning like children with difficulty and concentration who have difficulty learning remotely, having many children at home and everyone will learn at the same time and restlessness at home, lack of ICT equipment, cameras and microphone, lack of availability and requests to help children. Which led to stress and depression in parents. Therefore, motivation problems and lack of emotional appeal arose among parents, and parents did not like distance learning and had fears that their children would lose an entire year.

Parents had an interest in their children learning in an educational setting and being allowed to work outside the home, but with distance learning this would not happen, so they did not prefer distance learning and noted that distance learning is a failure for the education system and a loss to students. Regarding preparation for the matriculation exams, most parents of children in grades 11-12 noted that there was not enough preparation for the matriculation exams and it is also possible that these parents felt the difference between the current closing period and corresponding

periods in previous years when much of the learning and preparation for matriculation was done independently. Filed complaints to schools, and wanted their children to return to schools as soon as possible.

### **\*School students**

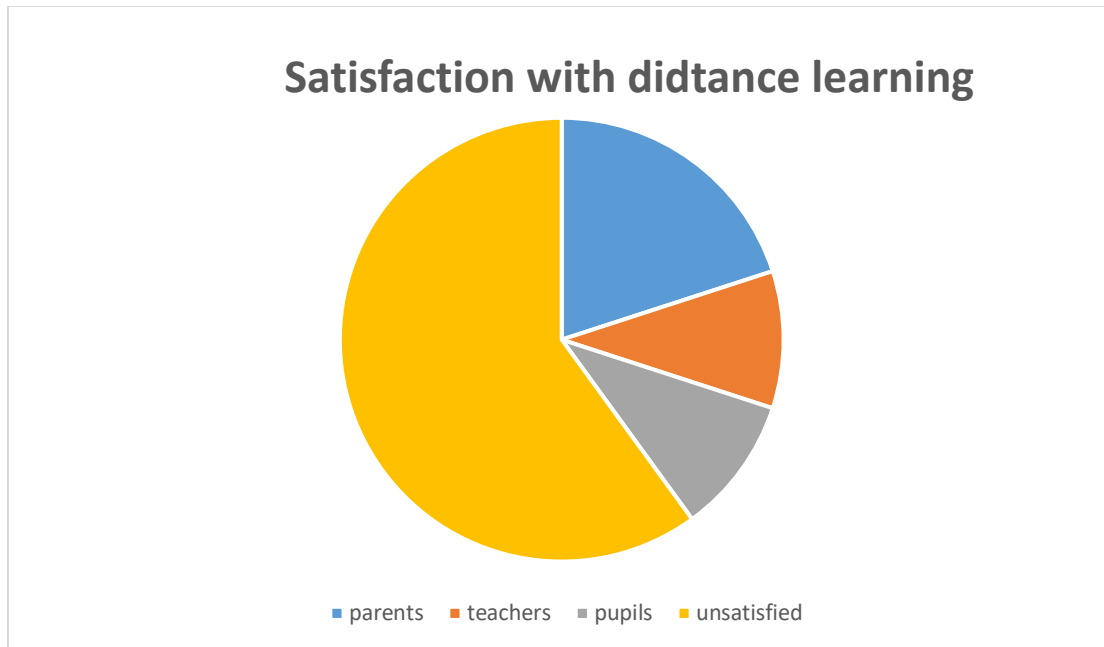
The attitude of the students was different from student to student, maybe it depends on the class because high achieving students showed concern and fear of the distance learning process and were not satisfied with the distance learning lessons even though they were fully present in the classes, and well equipped but not enough. Compared to the weaker classes who do not care about distance learning and did not even attend or attend classes.

Dropout among at-risk children has risen, and for many among the underprivileged populations, the main problem with distance learning is not the learning itself, but the ability to use the required technological tools. It is extremely important to work immediately on alternatives that will succeed in presenting learning to students and underprivileged populations so that learning does not remain out of their reach. It is important to immediately return to school especially students from underprivileged populations, and at least in part, as the accumulated learning gaps are no less dangerous than the corona. We must act now to prevent, along with the spread of the corona, the spread of psychological and cognitive damage - and so that distance learning is not far from within reach.

Therefore, the motivation to learn in decline among students, do not feel belonging to a school setting, do not care about the lessons and are too far removed from distance teaching. They lack everything, a computer, equipment, a learning atmosphere, support and assistance in their lives.

Students have many interests, to study appropriately according to their needs and ability and not in distance learning that is far from their world, they need to be in a school setting and not at home with many people and no privacy in the learning process, would take care of their future, matriculation and material completion.

And there is an interest in children at risk of dropping out of the system and school surveillance who have found a solution in distance learning for them, so they were in real danger without a solution.



**Illustration: Satisfaction of teachers and students and parents from the distance learning process versus dissatisfied with distance learning.**

### **\* Discussion and Conclusions**

The findings of the study indicate a real crisis in the education system in Arab society regarding distance learning during the corona, all stakeholders: principals of education, school principals, teachers, parents and students indicated uncertainty and concern about distance learning, noted ignorance and unprepared for the new world, infrastructure problems , Budget problems, lack of information technology and equipment and lack of knowledge in the use of technological means because they had no prior experience and did not prepare themselves for this moment.

Most executives had previously tried to change and implement technological change but were not assimilated for many reasons but with the Corona crisis they stood the test and failed. Principals were enthusiastic at first and saw the crisis as an opportunity for school change, thinking it was time to change and implement change and ignore opposition from teachers and outsiders, but they really failed and faced obstacles related to society and the environment. Related to external factors (parents and society, etc.).

The findings indicate the non-preparation of schools in Arab society for emergencies such as the corona crisis, there is a shortage of technological equipment

and there is a lack of awareness of the use of technological means, lack of training and therefore a situation of failure and gap compared to Jewish schools.

Therefore, the Corona crisis was an opportunity for a test of problems in schools in the education system, from which future conclusions should be drawn and lessons learned and not repeated mistakes.

**\* Summary**

Let us not be surprised by the widening educational gaps within Arab society and also within Israeli society in the wake of the crisis. The struggling students will have more difficulty, the poor and uneducated families will suffer more, and the consequences will be felt in a few years, because if the learning base is missed there will be less matriculation and less success in PISA, fewer people integrated into employment and more people in need of unemployment, and more poverty.

As the distance learning situation in the general Jewish public is problematic, the situation in the Arab sector is much worse. A document from the Monitoring Committee for Education in the Arab Sector reveals that more than half of Arab students are disconnected from the distance learning process, in addition, "in many cases infrastructure problems cause the quality of learning for students who have computers to be problematic and unstable." Two-thirds of Arab students come from families in difficult socio-economic situations, so the ability to purchase computers independently is very limited.

It should be remembered that this has been the situation in the Arab sector for more than half a year. Do not despair, crisis management over the years I have managed several crises. My success depended on two actions. These actions were critical to success: First, stay calm, analyze the situation and decide what you can do now in the current situation.

Second, analyze what you can do in the future and the current situation. This means the next moment, time, day, tomorrow, etc. Understand that as the current progresses now during the crisis the situation will change. The future of now may change your actions, so you need to stay flexible (Gym, 2020).

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