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THE NEEDS OF IMPLEMENTING DISTANCE LEARNING
IN HIGHER EDUCATION (THE CASE OF UZBEKISTAN AS AN EXAMPLE)

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НЕОБХОДИМОСТЬ ВНЕДРЕНИЯ ДИСТАНЦИОННОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ
В ВЫСШЕЕ ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ (НА ПРИМЕРЕ УЗБЕКИСТАНА)

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Abstract. Distance education is becoming popular in a modern society. People of all ages and of different professions have an opportunity to learn from a distance. The emergence of distance learning entailed the need for the development and implementation of distance learning technologies. Like all new technologies, distance learning has certain advantages and disadvantages.

Аннотация. Дистанционное образование становится популярным в современном обществе. Люди всех возрастов и разных специальностей получили возможность учиться дистанционно. Возникновение дистанционного обучения повлекло за собой потребность разработки и внедрения дистанционных образовательных технологий. Как и все новые технологии, дистанционное обучение имеет определенные преимущества и недостатки.

Keywords: distance learning, online education, full-fledged communication, computer-based interaction, extracurricular activities.

Ключевые слова: дистанционное обучение, онлайн-обучение, полноценное общение, компьютерное взаимодействие, внеклассные занятия.

A couple of decades ago, a person who wanted to gain new knowledge was forced to attend regularly educational institutions or libraries. Today, for training, students only need a computer with Internet access. In this article we will look at the main pros and cons of distance learning.

Nowadays, there is an increase in trend of distance learning. In recent years, distance teaching and learning has become increasingly popular among the students and this is perceived differently by learners. Many students perceive this as a beneficial aid in learning while others think that they are not as much effective as classroom teaching. This essay will discuss about the merits and demerits of distant learning [1–6].

Studying an online course provides a flexible timing and less budgeted learning for students. They are able to learn their desire course and subjects on their suitable time. This gives a great opportunity for learners to gain new skills and strengthen their knowledge level staying in their own place.

Distant learning is economic and time saving. However, online courses give more emphasis on the theoretical part of learning and there is less teacher and student interaction. Distant learning

lacks the practical aspects of learning and encourages the passive learning. This is very obvious that students find it as a less effective learning than in the classroom.

A recent study suggests that a greater number of students found classroom teaching far more effective than the distance learning. Nevertheless, online education is becoming more and more popular every year. And there are reasons for this. We would like to talk about key factors that will help students evaluate the benefits and love distance learning.

Often, online learning is associated with optional or extracurricular activities. But few people know that studying remotely they can get a diploma of higher education. Many universities have developed a special online system that allows students to study after enrolment. This system includes electronic courses that a student must master in a year. Depending on the university, courses may consist of text-based teaching materials, audio and video lectures. Distance can refer to both material and interaction.

Distance learning provides access to learning when the source of information and the learners are separated by time and distance, or both. During this type of education students communicate with the faculty and other students via e-mail, electronic forums, videoconferencing, chat rooms, bulletin boards, instant messaging and other forms of computer-based interaction. After mastering each topic, students' knowledge is checked using intermediate tests, control and laboratory work, the results of which affect the final grade.

Learners can get education online at many universities with a worldwide reputation. For example, the London School of Business and Finance, Stanford University, the Polytechnic School in Paris have long introduced this form of education. In foreign practice, numerous forms of distance learning are used. We list only a few of them:
– Blended Learning.
– Learning Communities.
– Content Sharing.
– Virtual Classroom.
– Web Based Collaboration.
– Whiteboard.
– Business TV.

Today's students better understand exactly what programs and courses they need, and often have practical experience that helps them better and faster understand theoretical postulates. However, learners are more critical to the essence of training courses and want to know the content of these courses in advance. Because, the traditional form of information content of new material are presented in the form of lectures for them is less acceptable. They prefer interactive, non-linear forms of presentation of the material and are more responsible for independent work. Instead of having a diploma, many of students prefer to receive a "certificate", confirming their knowledge of specific disciplines and techniques.

In this regard, quality of distance learning is very important. A survey was to identify students' attitudes toward distance learning confirmed this fact. We have asked the students whether they like to learn using online courses and 90% of respondents answered positively, arguing that they can learn the subject at any time. It should be noted that distance learning requires the students to be highly independent, but the results showed that not all students were ready to work independently.

Almost all the students (95.6%) have positively assessed the effectiveness of using distance e-courses. They noted that the advantage of such training is that there is a wide opportunity to learn the material and perform assignments in any place and at any free time. Students noted a wide variety of assessment materials worked out in the electronic courses: tests and problems, creative

assignments or case studies, group projects on-line, essays, interactive lectures, hyperlinks, group chat, forum.

In addition, students noted that the electronic course is enriched with a large amount of reference information in the form of links to specific sites, electronic textbooks, video materials. This aspect is very important for learning the course. As for the quality of distance learning, students have highlighted both its advantages and disadvantages: 85.14% of students noted the availability of distance learning as its advantage. One can learn any electronic course anywhere with any electronic device with Internet access. As it turned out, the psychological aspect of learning with a distance course is also important for a student. At this point, 57.01% of respondents experienced a decrease in anxiety when performing control tasks, for example, tests.

Besides, respondents' answers indicate that distance learning contributes to the development of independent activity skills. The student can independently define how many times he or she needs to go through the same course unit. The students have pointed out to the possibility of communicating not only with the student-teacher interaction during such education, but also among the student-student interaction throughout the period of learning the course.

The main shortcomings of distance learning are the lack of full-fledged communication with teachers and fellow students (about 44% — 541 students), the lack of skills required for handling the computer-based online learning systems (57.9% respondents) and the critical attitude of parents to such type of activity (39.7% respondents). As for the positive aspects, almost all the participants have pointed out to an opportunity to expand their own space (89.7%) and save their free time (80.9% students)

Thus, the undeniable bonus of distance learning is cost. Studying remotely is much cheaper than if learners attended full-time university. A Distance-learning master's options provide many opportunities for career advancement. Fully online self-paced study offers employed students the time flexibility needed to balance work and studies. By using the latest advancements in communication technology, online masters open the way to new business opportunities by building networks of students with common goals.

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev signed a resolution "On additional measures to improve the system of training, retraining and advanced training of personnel in the field of corporate, project management and public procurement". In accordance with the document, the head of Uzbekistan granted higher education institutions, postgraduate education institutions, retraining and advanced training of personnel, regardless of their forms of ownership and jurisdiction, the right to organize distance education. It is planned to introduce distance learning in three higher education institutions of Uzbekistan. From the 2020–21 academic year, distance learning may be introduced at the Tashkent University of Information Technologies named after Muhammad al-Khwarizmi, Tashkent State Pedagogical University and Tashkent State Law University.

According to the presidential decree on implementation of the Actions Strategy in the Year of Development of Science and Digital Economy, the Ministry of Information Technologies and Communications Development, the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialized Education and the Ministry of Justice should ensure by April 1,2020 that conditions are created for organizing distance learning at the universities mentioned above. It is necessary to define the order to create software-hardware complex and provide all necessary equipment for introduction of distance learning in educational process of specified higher educational institutions. The Cabinet of Ministers submitted proposals on the introduction of distance learning in Uzbekistan's higher education system by January 1,2021, with a timetable for its implementation.

Qualified staff will be required to work with students online. This staff should not only understand the material presented, but also students must have computer skills and super knowledge of Internet technologies. Online education is developing rapidly, and doctoral programs have even been developed at leading research institutes, covering features e-learning related electronic textbooks, educational services and technologies. A wide range of distance learning methods allows students to choose a method, which will take into account the individual requirements and preferences of the student and e-learning does not exclude face-to-face communication with the teacher.

The shock to the global economy from COVID-19 has been faster and more severe than the 2008 global financial crisis and even the Great Depression. The 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic has affected educational systems worldwide, leading to the near-total closures of schools, universities and colleges.

As the coronavirus 19 pandemic prompts countries to close their borders and quarantine people, a new education system is taken shape around the globe. Besides Uzbekistan, in the branches of foreign universities and in some national universities, lessons are being taught online. For example, professors of the Tashkent Branch of Moscow State University named after M. Lomonosov use ZOOM cloud video conferencing platform for lectures and seminars. In addition to conducting educational courses, student attendance is also monitored. Many other countries have already started a distance learning system, with students taking lessons and appearing in tests while staying at home.

To sum up, based on the analysis of distance learning, we came to the conclusion that at this stage of modern education development it is expedient to apply a mixed training model combining the elements of distance education with the traditional learning process in different proportions. This model is widely applied in the higher educational establishments at the present stage of the social development. It is believed that the bane of the virus may prove an ultimate boon to help to bridge the much-needed digital divide, as it is coming with innovations bringing new solutions for the education system.

For conclusion, in a few words, we can say that the current situation allows us to answer the question of how much we possess one of the main competencies of modern man — the ability to be flexible and adaptive!

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