

## DISTANCE LEARNING IN THE SYSTEM OF HIGHER EDUCATION: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

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**Abstract:** The article is devoted to the current problem in the field of distance education. The article presents the results of a study of the problem of using distance technologies in the educational process of higher educational institutions. The analysis of the application of forms of distance learning in the education of students at the present stage of development of society in comparison with the classical form of education is presented. The article discusses the forms of distance learning that were used during the coronavirus pandemic, an analysis of the positive and negative aspects of distance learning is carried out. He article specifies the existing difficulties in the use of distance learning technologies in higher education, which teachers faced in the communicative, educational, motivational, organizational and technical process.

The article reveals and substantiates the possibilities and experience of using distance learning for full-time students. The experience of using distance learning technologies is analyzed on the example of some universities. The empirical base of the study was the results of surveys of university teachers on the use of distance learning in higher education institutions.

The study conducted in the article and the results obtained have identified the most relevant criteria that could contribute to the successful implementation of distance learning forms in higher education institutions. The article also discusses the possible potential for the development of distance education. The article concluded that distance education would be more effective if methods and technologies were developed that would take into account the traditions of the country's public education.

**Keywords:** distance learning; distance education; informatization of society; distance educational technologies; Information Technology; sociological research; scientific and technological progress, a panacea

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### INTRODUCTION

Structural changes in the world education system that have occurred since the second half of the twentieth century, due to the development of scientific and technological progress, have affected all aspects of society. The emergence of distance learning is not a sudden event, at all times the need for education has remained at a high level. The emergence of the Internet and the acceleration of the pace of scientific progress only contributed to the spread of this format of education.

Currently, a significant number of different definitions of this concept are given. Thus, according to some professors and teachers, distance learning is considered as a "new stage of education using information technology based on video technology."

According to Professor A.N. Tikhonov, this is "systematic goal-oriented learning, independent of time and space."

In a broader sense, A.A. Andreev: "Distance education is a synthetic, integral humanistic form of education based on the use of a wide range of traditional and new information technologies and their technical means, which are used to deliver educational material, to study it independently, in the general case, it is not critical to their location in space and time, as well as to a specific educational institution.

A more capacious concept of "distance learning" is presented by V.P. Tikhomirov and V.I. Soldatkin. The authors characterize distance learning as "an interactive educational process implemented in a specific didactic system". Distance education is regulated mainly by departmental regulations, that is, acts of ministries and departments. This means that these acts should not contradict the legislation of the state on education, must be subject to state registration with the Ministry of Justice of the state and are accepted only on issues specially delegated to a specific ministry.

(Ministry of Higher and Secondary Education, Ministry of Science and Innovation). According to the resolution of the Cabinets of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan dated 03.10.2022, the Charter on the organization of distance learning in the country's universities was approved with number 559.

Distance education, according to the Decree "On Education", refers to the educational process taking place using special distance educational programs and technical means. A distinctive feature of such training is the indirect interaction between the student and the teacher. This law was adopted in order to fill the gaps in the legislation that were identified in connection with the transition to remote learning during the pandemic.

The purpose of this article is to present a study conducted in order to determine how ready students and teachers are for the introduction of distance learning in higher education.

Main body Modern distance learning is one of the dynamic and rapidly developing sectors of higher education. The rapid development of information technology currently allows distance learning to compete with the traditional learning model. It should be noted that in developed countries, distance learning has long been used for various forms of education and is widespread in our country.

So, according to expert data, in foreign countries distance learning is more popular than in our country, so more than 70% of foreign students choose distance learning, in our country it is much less. After analyzing the pedagogical literature on distance learning, it can be noted that the authors mainly deal with the problem of introducing distance learning into the educational process. There are no studies containing an analysis of the subjective opinion of participants in the educational

process regarding the introduction of a distance learning format in higher education institutions.

In this regard, the conducted survey should be to find out how different participants in the educational process perceive distance learning.

The results of the survey by division in accordance with the structure of the university are presented in tables 1 and 2.

**Table-1**

The structure of the university	Number of respondents (%)
Humanitarian Institute	26,5
Institute of Psychology and Pedagogy	27,8
Faculty of Informatics, Mathematics and Natural Sciences	20,2
Faculty of Technology and Entrepreneurship	14,1
Faculty of Physical Education	11,4

Every fifth full-time student surveyed had experience of distance learning until March 2020 (21.8%), and every third 32.8% of part-time students. To the question, "How do you see the place of distance learning in universities? the majority of teachers and students answered that they see distance learning as an auxiliary education, and not the main one, as 87% of the surveyed teachers and 59.6% of students think so.

**Table 2**

The structure of the university	Number of respondents (%)
Humanitarian Institute	25,5
Institute of Psychology and Pedagogy	24,7
Faculty of Informatics, Mathematics and Natural Sciences	18,9
Faculty of Technology and Entrepreneurship	16,3
Faculty of Physical Education	14,6

However, the position on the question of choosing a specific option for distance learning is changing. If they were offered to transfer to distance learning, 8.1% of students would choose this option. Another 15.7% of the students surveyed have doubts, but generally accept this format for themselves. Thus, almost every fourth of the students who took part in the survey shows interest in distance learning. Distance learning students have a slightly different attitude.

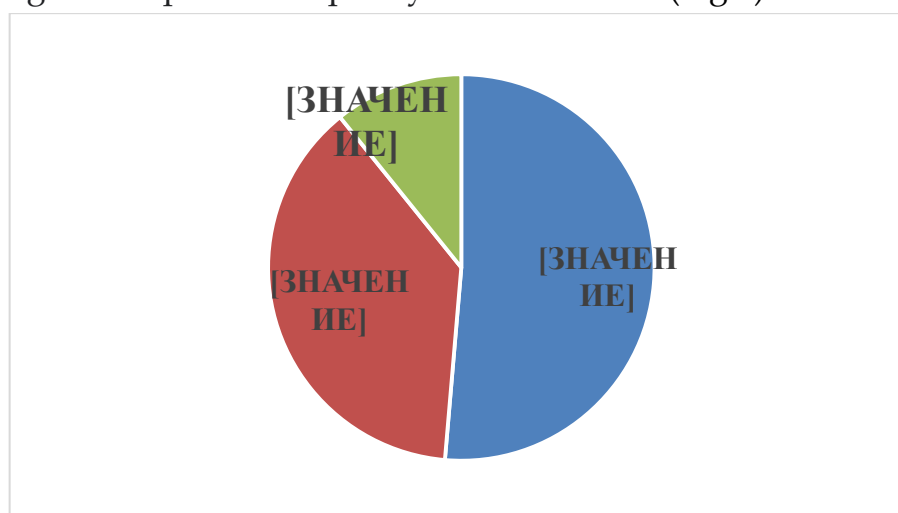
The majority also considers it as an auxiliary teaching method - 53.3% of respondents, negatively - 9.4%, and 14.2% named it as the main teaching method, that is, for this group, the distance format is already more attractive. If students were now offered to change the form of education, then 15.8% would do it, another 29% are inclined to this option, while 47.4% would like to preserve the traditional format to one degree or another.

**Table 2**

**Assessment of the benefits of distance learning (in %) (among students)**

Answer options	Types of training	
	full-time	correspon dence
Allows you to choose the time and pace of learning	66,7	67,2
Opportunity to combine work with study	62	66,8
Allows you to study in a comfortable and familiar environment	61,4	60,8
Equal educational opportunities regardless of place of residence, state of health	50,6	50,6
Use of modern information technologies	49,3	48,2
Does not limit students in choosing an educational institution	32	31,2
Opportunity for lifelong learning	27,6	31,2
Equal opportunities to receive education, regardless of the material well-being of the student	22,6	15,8
Improving the quality of knowledge and practical skills	8,1	11,5

It should be noted that when asked about the advantages of distance learning (Table 3), among the advantages in the first place for the students surveyed is the possibility of greater freedom in organizing a lifestyle and choosing a life trajectory. Almost half attach importance to the use of modern technologies, which are becoming an integral part of the organization of various forms of activity, especially of the younger generation. Moreover, assessments of merits do not differ significantly between full-time and part-time students. The question "Do you think distance learning will improve the quality of education?" (Fig.1)



The majority of surveyed teachers answered "No, it will only get worse" - 48.10% of respondents, "Yes, subject to good methods" - 35.44% of respondents, "No, nothing will change" - 10.12% of respondents.

Most teachers do not consider distance learning to be a quality form, there are a number of reasons for this, for areas of training, the largest component of which is practice, distance learning remains much less effective in quality than full-time, distance learning is not suitable for areas of training, an essential aspect which is communication with people and teamwork. In addition, there are no guarantees that the work done by the student is done by him independently, since it is impossible to provide a sufficient level of control, the quality of the education received largely depends on the student himself.

When asked about the impact of distance learning on the quality of education among the surveyed full-time students, they rated it negatively, 40.3% are inclined to this assessment. This influence was called positive by 3.1% of students, another 14.2% are inclined to this point of view, but are not completely sure. It should be noted that every fourth student surveyed could not answer this question - a small experience of distance learning at a university is enough to form their own position.

During the pandemic, all teachers were forced to switch to a remote format of teaching their disciplines. Therefore, teachers had to assess their level of preparation for the use of information technology in the educational process. To the question "How do you assess the level of your use of information technology in the educational process?" the majority of the interviewed teachers rated their level of application of information technologies in the educational process as average - 62% of the respondents. "At an advanced level" used information technology - 22.78% of the respondents, 10.12% of the respondents rated it as "initial level", and only 3.8% of the surveyed teachers answered at the "high level".

Among the forms of educational work that would be acceptable to organize in a remote format for full-time students, lectures are in the first place - 49.8%, in the second - practical classes 32.5% and seminars 30%. Laboratory classes were named by 15.5% (but not all of them have them according to the curriculum).

Among the proposals for improving the organization of distance learning, students note the following:

- taking into account the fact that not everyone has access to high-quality Internet.
- formation of teachers' skills in mastering modern technologies.
- Ensuring operational communication with teachers.
- EIOS improvement.
- More thoughtful distribution of tasks.
- greater involvement of teachers in online learning.
- reduce the time spent at the computer.
- substantiation of marks by teachers, commenting on errors.

In general, contradictory trends are manifested here - there is clearly a demand for greater interactivity of training, on the other hand, not everyone can fully participate in it due to technical problems.

To the question "In your opinion, how suitable is distance learning for a pedagogical university?" the majority of respondents answered that distance learning

"acceptable for teaching certain disciplines" this answer was chosen by 59.49% of the respondents.

"Not suitable for the training of teaching staff" answered 21.51% of the respondents.

"Suitable for teaching students who already have teaching experience" - 17.7%. And only 1.3% of the respondents answered that

"A full transition to a remote format is possible."

Only certain disciplines, according to the interviewed teachers, can be taught remotely, because there are subjects that require the direct full-time participation of students and teachers. To the question "What difficulties, in your opinion, are the most significant in the implementation of distance learning?" multiple answers could be selected. The most popular responses among teachers were: "Lack of personal communication with students and other teachers" - 63.29% of the respondents, "Inconsistency of standards with real time, which is spent on a quality check of work, including repeated ones," noted 59.49% of the respondents. "There are a number of practical skills that can only be obtained by performing real (and not virtual) practical and laboratory work" - 58.22% of the respondents.

"Weakness of the procedure for verifying the authorship of tasks performed" - 45.56% of the respondents. "Limited ability to influence discipline in the classroom, control the degree of student involvement in the educational process" - 44.3% of respondents.

"Information overload: a large number of messages received by e-mail to read, the resulting difficulty in thinking and responding to them" - 37.9% of respondents.

The results obtained during the survey showed that there was no such confrontation between students and teachers regarding the use of distance learning technologies.

Most of the students and teachers surveyed are loyal to this form of education, but still prefer the full-time form of education, rather than distance learning, estimating it not too highly.

The vast majority of the interviewed teachers and students consider distance learning as an auxiliary type of education. Nevertheless, almost every fourth student surveyed shows interest in distance learning. Among the significant

advantages in the first place for the students surveyed is the possibility of greater freedom in organizing a lifestyle and choosing a life trajectory.

Almost half attach importance to the use of modern technologies, which are becoming an integral part of the organization of various forms of activity. During the pandemic, the vast majority of teachers were not professionally prepared for distance learning. The students were also not ready to work in this format - difficulties arose due to the individual characteristics of students, learning conditions, the ability to use computer technology and Internet resources. Therefore, many teachers in open responses noted that they would like to take continuing education courses in distance learning.

In this regard, when introducing distance learning technologies into the educational process at a university, it is necessary to prepare teachers so that they can provide their interactive training course with high quality and interact with students. Most of the surveyed teachers noted that distance learning at a pedagogical university is acceptable only for teaching certain disciplines and courses. The most optimal option for distance learning, according to the students and teachers surveyed, are lectures, consultations on abstracts, term papers, WRC, then seminars.

Due to the fact that distance learning in the country's universities during the pandemic was organized at a very good level, as respondents noted, some forms of distance learning can be used in the educational process not only during a pandemic. Such as, for example, advanced training courses, some master's programs, distance learning programs, consultations. One of the biggest shortcomings in online learning, according to respondents, is the lack of social interaction that enhances the effectiveness of the learning process. This problem can be solved by holding webinars, seminars, conferences, online presentations.

Summing up, we highlight the positive and negative aspects of distance learning.

Among the positives are:

- flexible schedule of education (regardless of time factors and location);
- modularity (convenient accumulation of courses in separate blocks, allowing you to independently adjust the program to the success or needs of an individual student);
- financial efficiency (less costs, but in material terms);
- individualization of training (the student is able to independently build his own training plan and complete tasks);
- the practice of developing adaptation skills (distance education is able to provide the practice of a student's ability to be independent and self-study, search for information and adapt to unusual learning conditions);

- a high degree of actualization of the material (due to the significant use of the Internet, software, computer equipment - all this allows you to regulate and adapt both curricula and the process of obtaining knowledge as quickly as possible, following changes in the external environment);

- accessibility (distance learning is able to meet the educational needs of many students not only in a particular country, but throughout the world, moreover, distance learning allows you to receive quality education for both people of age and people suffering from certain diseases that do not allow them to receive education face-to-face format);

- openness (a feature of working with the Internet and computer technology - allows you to create an accessible database that includes all training materials that can be viewed for an unlimited period of time, and this applies not only to dry text or images, but also to the records themselves lectures and other materials necessary for training).

If we consider the world experience in the development of distance learning, we can assume that the advantages that this form of education provides can subsequently make it even more widespread than the classical form of education, due to the relatively lower cost and objectively greater degree of accessibility for consumer.

Despite the highlighted positive aspects of distance education, there are also negative aspects that also need to be taken into account, let's highlight them:

- not suitable for areas of training, an essential aspect of which is communication with people and teamwork (only voice communication is not able to fully compensate for the necessary skills that develop exclusively with live cooperation);

- problems with the control of progress (it is impossible to guarantee that the work done by the student is done by him independently, since it is impossible to provide a sufficient level of control, the quality of the education received largely depends on the student himself);

- the need for computer literacy skills;

- Significant theorizing of learning.

### **CONCLUSION**

From all of the above, we can conclude that there is an absolutely real prospect for the full-fledged universal development of distance learning, but we also need to understand that this is only one of the forms of education, which at the current moment of development of both society and scientific and technological progress is not panacea for any task.

But we also note that this form of education has both its own demand among the consumer and its own niche, in which certain areas of education can show, if



not increased, then identical indicators in comparison with the classical form of education. Distance learning will gain popularity, primarily due to the convenience for working people, those who live in remote parts of the country, those who do not want to leave their hometown to study at their chosen university.

Despite many organizational flaws in the distance learning format, students are more optimistic about the prospects for its further development than teachers. In this regard, I offer the following recommendations:

training teachers for the development and use of distance learning resources in the educational process, to think over new methods of using distance learning forms together with the World of Science.

Pedagogy and psychology in traditional forms, which would include closer contacts between students and teachers. Without a doubt, distance learning cannot become a full-fledged replacement for traditional learning. It is not able to create a student atmosphere and replace live communication with a teacher, but it can really become the most promising form of evening, distance learning, for advanced training courses or retraining courses, for students with disabilities, etc.

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