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**Garegin Karhanyan,
Vanadzor Basic School N27 named after Ghevond Alishan,
«Mkhitar Gosh» Armenian-Russian International University,
Vanadzor, Armenia**

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ANALYSIS OF DISTANCE LEARNING IN FORCE MAJEURE CONDITIONS

АНАЛИЗ ДИСТАНЦИОННОГО ОБУЧЕНИЯ В УСЛОВИЯХ ФОРС-МАЖОРА

Abstract:

Questions about the organization and implementation of distance learning at public schools during force majeure conditions, its pros&cons have been discussed in this article. The effectiveness of distance learning has been enhanced both from the point of social pedagogical expedience and remote learning tools. In the wake of COVID_19 pandemic, during emergencies massive isolation of people is regarded as a force majeure condition in the educational system. And, hence distance learning has been observed as an alternative way of learning. On the basis of research and survey results, made among the parents of RA different school pupils, future perspectives of distance learning have been indicated. Taking into consideration social pedagogical, technical equipment, program-ensuring point of view, the observation of this issue reveals that during the force majeure conditions distance learning is so far the best alternative learning method, but it can never fully replace the traditional classroom learning system. About 97.7 percent of the parents participated in the survey had the same opinion, pointing that distance learning not only obstacles the socialization, but also causes some serious health and psychological problems. Therefore, some elements of distance learning, which refer to obtaining and transmitting the information, can be included in the educational process.

Keywords: Public school, emergencies, alternative learning, educational methodology basis, socialization

Introduction

The rapid change of worldwide economy, as well as the quick development tempo of Information Technology (IT) and its influence on the education, brought the necessity to modernize the educational system and to review the educational paradigms.

In the conditions of open society, education cannot be developed locally, as the global development of science and technique inevitably affects the different levels of education and brings the necessity to change them. A vivid example is the need to use different Information Communication Technology (ICT) in different levels of education and so on [1,page 90].

The investment of digital technologies in the educational system stimulated the creation of new methods, ways and remote learning tools. In the result of this the necessity to improve the process of distance learning in all educational levels was risen, being regarded as an essential component of modern education.

According to UNESCO predictions, the learners will spend only 30-40% of the learning period in the auditoriums, the other 40 % will be spent on the distance learning using modern means of communication, and the rest of the time will be spent on self-education [2, page 8]. In this point, to be fully involved in the distance learning, it is very important to raise the individual responsibility of learners, their skills to self-education and the level of media literacy.

The main advantage of distance learning is its humanistic nature and the attainability for the wide range of society. Having a great use of modern information technology the disabled, adults, specialists who need training, self-educated people, pupils who are left out of education for some reasons can participate in distance learning. The students can study in any higher educational institutions from their homes, thus saving the money they would spend on living and learning abroad. One of distance learning advantages is its flexibility. The learners can manage their time and can study when they want and where they want without spending money on transport and other educational resources.

In the wake of COVID-19 pandemic during emergencies, the role and meaning of distance learning essentially changes and its innovations can differ in different countries.

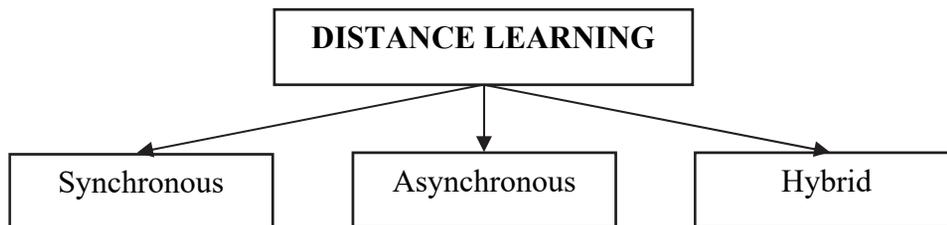
The aim of the work is to study and analyze all the questions and problems of distance learning during the emergencies in the Republic of Armenia. As a basic investigation method, online surveys are chosen.

In RA during the COVID-19 pandemic all, the educational institutions were closed and alternatively distance learning was chosen instead. It provides the existence of remote learning tools, which include not only technical equipment and internet, but also a great number of multifunctional effective websites, educational methodological programs and teaching interactive material. The absence of some of these tools caused some mess at first, which was also because of

teachers' pupils' and parents' negative psychological attitude.

The process was organized with such different media tools, some of which were not even planned for distance learning. Another vivid problem was the teachers' insufficient knowledge level on organizing distance learning and their media literacy. In addition, the parents were not ready for the distance learning, because not all the children were provided with computers or other technical resources. Taking into account all the problems in this sphere The RA government reacted very quickly to all these obstacles. One of the major steps was to start different debates on the organization of distance learning, which aimed to solve numerous problems of further distance learning process.

It is also a problem to create and launch distance learning management multifunctional systems, which will allow implementing the learning process all together in the same environment. Such management systems will give the teacher an opportunity to manage the learning process more effectively and to assess knowledge and potency of learners objectively. The absence of teaching interactive ways makes a teacher-centered learning a dominant one. According to the demand of beneficiaries and problem solving expediency, distance learning can be divided into 3 types-synchronous, asynchronous and hybrid (mixed) (Pic.1)



Picture 1

During normal and force majeure conditions, the above-mentioned 3 types, with appropriate use of each, can help to solve some distance learning problems.

Materials and Methods

The analysis of the situation showed, that there are some obstacles for the full and massive use of distance learning. State governmental bodies, experts, pedagogues and information technology specialists work on the solution of these problems. Among the obstacles for distance learning development we can mention the absence of objective assessment, the lack of distance learning methods and technologies, the lack of computers for both the teachers and the learners, some legislative problems, the absence of digital multifunctional management systems (Virtual university, school and other websites), not using the synchronous and asynchronous models, the low level of teachers' media literacy and the learners individual responsibility.

During force majeure conditions the innovations of distance learning allow to study them from another point of view, leaving aside the previous observations, which are somehow limited and do not fully reflect the whole essence of distance learning [2,page 6; 3; 4,page 236; 5].

In order to evaluate the efficiency of distance learning in the emergencies we have made online surveys among the parents in order to find out all the problems. To be able to evaluate everything right, both city and village high, basic and special schools, more than 5000 parents (respondents) participated in the survey. In particular, its purpose was to find out the existence and types of technical means, used during the distance learning, internet availability, the online websites used for the teaching, the period spent on the distance learning, as well as some questions about teacher-pupil, teacher-parent relations. The results of the survey showed that distance learning is so far the best alternative way of education during force majeure conditions. However, from the social pedagogical, psychological and technically equipped point of view, the existing educational and technical resources are not fully used in the distance learning, plus the low level of beneficiaries' media literacy.

One of main goals of the survey was to reveal some distance learning elements, which can be used in normal conditions taking into consideration the learners' psychological characteristics and the social-pedagogical demands presented to them.

Considering education as a united system of teaching and upbringing, we can say, that distance learning with its current learning tools is not able to provide pupils with comprehensive education. First, we have to speak about the upbringing component. Even if it is possible to realize the share of knowledge and to develop some skills, the socialization and valuing of the learners fall behind. The online hours, which the learners spend according to the school curriculum and timetable, have increased the permissible health limit. In addition to it, during the online process the learners are busy and stressed all the time. Taking this into account, also the fact that parents are employed in non-emergency situations, it is not convenient to make full transition to distance learning. This point of view is expressed in the parents' answers; about 77.7% want their children to continue their education in classrooms, 20% of them wants partially. The survey results showed that 31.5 % of the distance learners sit 5-6 hours a day in front of computers, about 41.3%-3or 4 hours, which is very harmful for health.

Conclusion

In our opinion, some elements of education can be realized through distance learning, thus stimulating the learners to develop their working skills and to self-educate.

The modern teaching methods, multimedia technologies in the teaching process, use of distance methods and finally the aim of having continuous education tend to find new approaches. They prompt those ideological directions, on which the next paradigmatic model of education should be based [6, page 662].

To sum it up, during force majeure conditions distance learning is regarded as the best alternative way of general education, but in non-emergency situations it cannot fully substitute the traditional classroom learning system, as it causes socialization obstacles, health and psychological problems for the learners.

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Information about the author:

Karhanyan Garegin Gagik (Vanadzor (Lori Province), Armenia) - Lecturer in "Mkhitar Gosh" Armenian-Russian International University (Ra Lori Province, Vanadzor Tigran Metsi Ave., 30a building. Director of Vanadzor Basic School N27 named after Ghevond Alishan (RA Lori Province, Vanadzor Taron 4 Zeytuni st., 3-/4 building).
gkarhanyan@gmail.com mobil/Whatsapp: +37499002280

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