



Students' Attitudes in Public Schools in UAE towards Online Homework in the light of Employing the Distance Educational Mode

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ABSTRACT

This article investigated the students' attitudes in public schools in UAE towards online homework in the light of employing the distance educational mode. For determining the nature of such attitudes, a quantitative and descriptive analytical approaches were adopted. The researcher chose a purposive sample consisting from 218 female and male students from two public schools in Dubai, two public schools in Abu Dhabi, and one public school in Sharjah. Questionnaire forms were passed to the students through sending the questionnaire link to students' emails. 212 questionnaire forms were retrieved and analysed. It was found that students' attitudes in public schools in UAE towards online homework in the light of employing the distance educational mode are deemed positive.

Keywords: attitudes, public schools, UAE, online homework, distance educational mode.



1. Introduction

Due to the spread of the Coronavirus in UAE, the Emirati government decided to shift from face-to-face education mode into distance education mode (Madi, 2021). The decision to make this shift was decided due to having many technologies that can be used in the light of this crisis (Alderbashi, 2021), especially in the 21st century (Al-Derbashi & Abed, 2017). Such technologies include: social media (Alderbashi and Khadragy, 2018). The latter decision was decided to the significance of the role of technology in instruction (Al-Derbashi, 2017).

The decision to make this shift was decided in the aim of protecting the health of students and their instructors in schools, colleges, training centres, and universities (Abdallah & Alriyami, 2022). The distance educational mode is a pattern of education that is adopted to deliver education to students with having them spatially separated from their instructors. Education is delivered in this mode through using an interactive telecommunications systems, like the e-learning platform. This system allows students to take tests, upload queries, interact with the instructor, and submit homework (Schlosser and Simonson 2009, p. 1).

Online education may be defined as the education that's provided through the use of the web (Nguyen, 2015). The distance educational mode has several benefits. For instance, it raises the degree to which students retain information (Anunobi et al., 2016). It raises the level of students' achievement (Ercana et al., 2013) It enhances the students' learning outcomes and skills in using computer (Amer, 2020).

Online education plays a vital role in raising the students' motivation to learn and gather information. It plays a vital role in developing 21st century skills of students. Those skills include: the cooperation, problem solving and creative thinking skills. Online education encourages students to carry out self-learning process. It enhances one's comprehension for the course and the lessons being given. It enables learners to save time and effort while acquiring knowledge and learning. That's because the platform allows accessing a variety of databases and libraries. This mode of learning raises the students' level of self-confidence, because it allows them to achieve success in academic aspects through relying on themselves (Al Salman and Bawaneh, 2021).

Due to shifting to online education in Emirati schools, teachers at those schools started assigning online homework to students. The term (online homework) refers to the homework that is done without using pen and paper. It's done and delivered through using the computer and the web. It improves students' academic achievement in tests. It provides them with feedback. It motivates students to do homework due to the usage of computer. It allows instructors to save their time through auto-correction features (Dillard-Eggers et al., 2008).

Online homework increases the time spent by students studying. It also increases the quality of the time spent by students studying. It enhances students' understanding



for the material. It suits students of various abilities, learning styles and skills. It enhances the learning experiences that are acquired by students (Dillard-Eggers et al., 2008). It allows students to acquire more concepts. It increases students' understanding for concepts (Cheng et al., 2004).

Online homework contributes to raising the amount of knowledge possessed by students, because it lets them learn from their mistakes. It contributes to improving the study habits of students. Such habits include: studying more frequently. It allows students to feel prepared for exam. It offers a better understanding for material and raises students' scores in the exams (Richards-Babb et al., 2011). It raises students' satisfaction with their learning processes and experiences (Smolira, 2008)

There are many benefits gained through giving students online homework. However, this way in assigning homework to students is still new. There are also requirements that must be met when assigning online homework to students. Meeting such requirements is challenging. Such requirements include: the need to have internet services of high quality at the homes of students and instructors and the need to have technical support at schools. They include: the need to use advanced systems by schools and the need to provide students with training. They include: the need to deliver feedback to students on the right time and answer their inquiries on the right time. They include: the need to have teachers of excellent skills in using ICTs and the platforms used by the school. . They include: the need to have teachers who possess knowledge about the instructional strategies that fit with online education (Madi, 2022).

In the light of such information, there is a major need for carrying out further investigations about online homework. Hence, the researcher addressed the following research problem: (What are the students' attitudes in public schools in UAE towards online homework in the light of employing the distance educational mode?)

2. Objective

This article investigated the students' attitudes in public schools in UAE towards online homework in the light of employing the distance educational mode

3. Question

This article investigated the answer of this question: (What are the students' attitudes in public schools in UAE towards online homework in the light of employing the distance educational mode?)

4. Significance of the study

This significance of this study manifests in the points below:

- This article provides the Emirati library with a reference about the students' attitudes in public schools in UAE towards online homework in the light of employing the distance educational mode.
- This is the first study to investigate the students' attitudes in public schools in UAE



towards online homework in the light of employing the distance educational mode
-This work offers an instrument that can be used for carrying out similar research papers
-This work contributes to promoting knowledge about the reality of online education.

5. Limits

-Spatial and temporal limits: The researcher obtained data during the academic year 2022/2021/ second semester. He obtained data from two public schools in Dubai, two public schools in Abu Dhabi, and one public school in Sharjah.
-Human limits: The researcher targeted students in public schools in UAE.
-Limitations: Results can't be generalized, because the sample size and characteristics influence the results in any empirical research.

6. Definitions

-Distance education (theoretical definition): It refers to a mode adopted for delivering education. Through this mode, the instructor and his/her teachers are spatially separated from each other. However, they communicate through using an interactive telecommunications system (i.e. e-learning platform) (Amer, 2020).

-Distance education (Operational definition): It refers to a mode adopted for delivering education in public schools in UAE during the academic year 2021-2022. Through this mode, the teachers and students in the latter schools are spatially separated and communicate through using an e-learning platform.

-Online homework (theoretical definition): It refers to the homework that is done without using pen and paper. It's done and delivered through using the computer and the web (Dillard-Eggers et al., 2008).

-Online homework (Operational definition): It refers to the homework that is done without using pen and paper. It's done and delivered by students in public schools in UAE through using the computer and the web.

Public schools in UAE: (Operational definition): They are the schools which are supervised, funded and affiliated with the Emirati government.

7. Theoretical framework about homework and its significance

Homework plays a major role in encouraging students to adopt self-learning practices and rely on themselves for acquiring knowledge learning. That's because it encourages students to use the library and search for knowledge by themselves. Homework raises students' self-trust, and trust in their ability to learn. It develops students' problem solving skills and instils a sense of innovation within them. It instils a love for the learning process. It promotes autonomy in learning and raises students' interest in the learning process (Al-Ahmad and Al-Esbai'y, 2015)



Al-Thumali (2016) adds that homework plays a major role in measuring the amount of knowledge that students have acquired during the lesson. Homework contributes to improving achievement and identifying the degree to which students have mastered skill(s). It allows teachers to identify the concepts that students have acquired (Al-Thumali, 2016).

Dreb (2018) adds that homework provides students with feedback that positively affect their vocational and educational behaviours. Such feedback allows students to acquire concepts, values, and information and develop their skills. It develops students' attitudes towards the process of learning. Furthermore, it contributes to raising the level of students' productivity in various courses and activities. It contributes to improving students' attitudes towards the course. It raises students' motivation to learn (Dreb, 2018).

8. Empirical studies

The works and articles that the researcher reviewed are displayed below:

Bsharat (2015) explored the impact of homework on raising achievement of 8th grade students in math course in Ariha, Palestine and the attitudes of those students towards homework. She sampled 54 students who were chosen purposively from 8th grade in a school in Ariha, Palestine. A survey was used. Pre-test, and post-test were used. It was found that homework positively affect the achievement of 8th grade students in math course in Ariha, Palestine. In addition, students have positive attitudes towards homework in math course. Homework raises students' amount of knowledge, level of understanding the material, and ability to implement knowledge. It improves students' higher thinking skills. It improves students' mathematical skills. It doesn't reflect the degree to which the students have understood the material. Having too many homework negatively affect the students' understanding for the material.

Salame, & Hanna (2020) explored the impact of online homework on the attitudes of students towards the learning process. They explored the impact of such homework on the learning process and habits of students in chemistry course. They obtained data from 163 students through the use of a survey that's based on five point Likert scale. It was found that online homework improves the attitudes of students towards the learning process. In addition, online homework improves the learning process and habits of students in chemistry course. It positively affects the students' understanding for the material, raises their engagement in learning, and makes them play an effective role in the learning process. It improves students' learning outcomes, and problem solving skills. It raises the time spent by students in doing tasks. It makes the process of learning a meaningful and goal-oriented process

Al-Sa'di (2021) explored the perceptions of Jordanian secondary school students for online homework in the math course during the Coronavirus pandemic. A purposive sample was selected by the researcher. It involves 350 female and male 11th grade



students. Those students were selected from 6 public secondary schools in Amman. The forms of the questionnaire were passed to the members of the sample in an electronic manner. 341 valid forms were retrieved. . Several results were reached. For instance, online homework promotes a sense of responsibility within students and enhances their academic achievement. It enhances their time management and problem solving skills, and improves their understanding for the material. It assists students in getting ready for exams. It allows students to apply the mathematical rules in an easier manner. It raises their retention for information and engagement in the process of learning. It allows students to detect their weaknesses and expands their knowledge. However, it doesn't reduce the load imposed on teachers. It doesn't allow teachers to identify the degree to which student's understood the material. It plays a moderate role in enhancing students' attitudes towards the course.

Buhais (2021) explored the attitudes of the male and female teachers in the lower basic school stage in Yatta Education Directorate towards the deletion of school duties and the consequences associated with such deletion. He used a random sampling method to choose 100 teachers. Survey forms were passed to those teachers. 98 ones were retrieved. It was found that the respondents' attitudes towards such deletion are neutral. Other results were reached. For instance, there are negative impacts for making this deletion. The negative impacts of such deletion on students include: lower academic achievement level, less amount of knowledge, and weaker planning, and time management skills. They include: lower level of motivation towards engaging in educational, cultural and social activities. In terms of the negative impacts of such deletion on teachers, they include: raise in the load imposed on teachers and management. That's because such deletion forces teachers to focus on extra-curricular activities and raise the time dedicated for the lesson to meet all the goals. Such deletion shall negatively affect the teachers' status.

9. Methodology

9.1. Approach

This article investigated the students' attitudes in public schools in UAE towards online homework in the light of employing the distance educational mode. For determining the nature of such attitudes, a quantitative and descriptive analytical approaches were adopted by the researcher.

9.2. Population and sample

The population involves all the students enrolled in public schools in UAE. The researcher chose a purposive sample consisting from 218 female and male students from two public schools in Dubai, two public schools in Abu Dhabi, and one public school in Sharjah. Questionnaire forms were passed to the students through sending the questionnaire link to students' emails. 212 questionnaire forms were retrieved and



analysed.

Table (1): The distribution of the sampled students in accordance with gender, skills in using computer and Emirate

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	115	54.24528
	Female	97	45.75472
Emirate	Dubai	91	42.92453
	Abu Dhabi	88	41.50943
	Sharjah	33	15.56604
Skills in using computer	Excellent	32	15.09434
	Very good	130	61.32075
	Good	17	8.018868
	Fair	13	6.132075
	Poor	20	9.433962

N= 212

9.3. Instrument

The researcher used a survey. This survey was drafted based on several theses, books and articles. The researcher used the five point Likert scale. He divided the instrument into two parts. Part one obtains demographic data. Part two obtain data about students' attitudes in public schools in UAE towards online homework in the light of employing the distance educational mode. It was drafted based on the articles written by: Dreb (2018), Dillard-Eggers et al. (2008), Al-Sa'di (2021), Smolira (2008), Cheng et al. (2004) and Richards-Babb et al. (2011).

9.4. Validity

The researcher assessed the validity through sending the survey to three individuals who possess much expertise in the field of teaching methods. Those individuals have PhD degree in the latter field. They were asked to assess the instrument and make recommendations and modifications to the instrument. Such assessment should be based on language, and content.



The three experts added that the instrument doesn't include language mistakes, and deemed clear. They added that the survey can meet the goals it was designed for. However, one instructor recommended adding an item about the ability of online homework to raise the student's level of satisfaction with their learning process. Another instructor recommended adding an item identifying whether students preferred online homework over paper-based homework or not.

9.5. Reliability

The Cronbach alpha value is 0.818. Based on this value, the survey used in this research is deemed reliable. That's because the latter value is deemed greater than 0.70 as it's suggested by Salehi & Farhang (2019)

9.6. Data Sources

Primary data was gathered through using a survey (a primary source). It was also obtained through reviewing the relevant theses, books, articles (secondary sources)

9.7. Data analysis

To analyse data, SPSS software was used. The criteria in the following table were adopted (Alderbashi, 2021)

Table: (2): The criteria adopted to categorize means into categories

Range	Level	Attitude
2.33 or less	Low	Negative
2.34-3.66	Moderate	Neutral
3.67 or more	High	Positive

*Source: Alderbashi (2021)

The five point Likert scale involves five categories for rating. Those categories are displayed below (Al-Derbashi and Moussa, 2022)

Table (3): The categories and scores of the five point Likert scale



Category	Score
Strongly agree	5
Agree	4
Neutral	3
Disagree	2
Strongly disagree	1

*Source: Al-Derbashi and Moussa (2022)

10. Discussion and results

(What are the students' attitudes in public schools in UAE towards online homework in the light of employing the distance educational mode?)

Means and standard deviations are calculated. They are presented in table No. 4 and classified into high, low and moderate means.

Table (4): The students' attitudes in public schools in UAE towards online homework in the light of employing the distance educational mode

No.	Statement	Mean	Std.	Level	Attitude
1.	I prefer online homework on paper-based homework	4.93	0.56	High	Positive
	Doing online homework				
2.	improves my academic achievement	4.77	0.85	High	Positive
3.	motivates me to do homework	4.73	0.69	High	Positive
4.	allows instructors to save their time	4.39	0.22	High	Positive
5.	increases the time I spend studying	2.11	0.10	Low	Negative
6.	increases the quality of the time spent by students studying	4.63	0.18	High	Positive
7.	enhances my understanding for the material	4.95	0.42	High	Positive
8.	suits students of various learning styles	4.84	0.20	High	Positive



9.	suits students of various performance levels	4.37	0.49	High	Positive
10.	enhances my learning experiences	4.20	0.34	High	Positive
11.	contributes to raising the amount of knowledge I possess	4.91	0.52	High	Positive
12.	Allows me to acquire more concepts	4.29	0.67	High	Positive
13.	allows me to feel prepared for exam	4.58	0.55	High	Positive
14.	raises my satisfaction with their learning processes	4.41	0.29	High	Positive
15.	Increase my retention for information	4.26	0.45	High	Positive
16.	Improves my attitudes towards the instructor	2.10	0.94	Low	Negative
17.	Improves time management skills	4.49	0.91	High	Positive
18.	Improves problem solving skills	4.45	0.83	High	Positive
19.	Improves planning skills	4.30	0.62	High	Negative
20.	Raises my engagement in learning	4.56	0.22	High	Positive
21.	Allows me to identify my weakness and learning needs	4.67	0.37	High	Positive
22.	Improves my attitudes towards the course	1.91	0.89	Low	Negative
	Overall	4.22	0.51	High	Positive

*Source: This instrument was designed based on the articles written by: Dreb (2018), Dillard-Eggers et al. (2008), Al-Sa'di (2021), Smolira (2008), Cheng et al. (2004) and Richards-Babb et al. (2011)

It was found that students' attitudes in public schools in UAE towards online homework in the light of employing the distance educational mode are positive, because the overall mean is 4.22. The latter result is attributed to the fact that online homework can be done and delivered from any place and at any time by student. Thus, online homework offers students flexibility and conveyance.

In addition, it was found that students prefer online homework over paper-based one, because the mean of statement one is 4.93. This result is attributed to the fact that students love using technology in the process of doing homework. It was found that online homework improves students' academic achievement because the mean of statement two is 4.77. This result is attributed to the fact that online homework offers



students opportunity to apply knowledge. It is in agreement with the one concluded by Al-Sa'di (2021)

It was found that online homework motivates students to do homework, because the mean of statement three is 4.73. This result is attributed to the fact that using technology motivates students to learn and do homework. It is in agreement with the one concluded by Dillard-Eggers et al. (2008). It was found that online homework allows instructors to save their time because the mean of statement four is 4.39. This result is attributed to the fact that technology offers instructors auto-correction features. It is in agreement with the one concluded by Dillard-Eggers et al. (2008).

It was found that online homework increases the quality of the time spent by students studying because the mean of statement six is 4.63. This result is attributed to the fact that online homework makes students identify the things that the instructor wants students to learn. It is in agreement with the one concluded by Dillard-Eggers et al. (2008).

It was found that online homework enhances students' understanding for the material because the mean of statement seven is 4.95. This result is attributed to the fact that online homework may shed a light on details that the students overlooked when studying and reading the material. It is in agreement with the one concluded by Richards-Babb et al. (2011).

It was found that online homework suits students of various learning styles and various performance levels because the means of statement eight and statement nine are 4.84 and 4.37 respectively. This result is attributed to the fact that online homework is usually designed in a manner that targets students of all academic achievement levels and learning styles. It is attributed to the fact that online homework include visual elements that suit visual learners. It is attributed to the fact that online homework include auditory elements that suit audio learners. It is in agreement with the one concluded by Dillard-Eggers et al. (2008).

It was found that online homework enhances students' learning experiences because the mean of statement ten is 4.20. This result is attributed to the fact that online homework sometimes allows students to have automatic feedback. Such feedback makes the learning process more beneficial and raises its quality. It is in agreement with the one concluded by Smolira (2008)

It was found that online homework contributes to raising the amount of knowledge that students possess because the mean of statement eleven is 4.91. This result is attributed to the fact that online homework may force students to search for knowledge in books, and articles and surf the e-library and e-databases. It is in agreement with the one concluded by Richards-Babb et al. (2011).

It was found that online homework allows students to acquire more concepts because the mean of statement twelve is 4.29. This result is attributed to the fact that online



homework may include concepts that students didn't pay attention to or forgot. It is in agreement with the one concluded by Cheng et al. (2004).

It was found that online homework allows students to feel prepared for exams because the mean of statement thirteen is 4.58. This result is attributed to the fact that online homework allows students to apply the knowledge they have acquired. For instance, students can apply their grammatical knowledge to a fill in the blank question. The latter result is in agreement with the one concluded by Richards-Babb et al. (2011).

It was found that online homework raises students' satisfaction with their learning processes because the mean of statement fourteen is 4.41. This result is attributed to the fact that students feel that they are keeping up with the latest technologies when using technology for doing and delivering online homework. It is in agreement with the one concluded by Smolira (2008)

It was found that online homework Increase students' retention for information because the mean of statement 15 is 4.26. This result is attributed to the fact that applying knowledge through online homework makes students save knowledge in their long term memory. It's attributed to the fact that online homework allows students to see the applications of knowledge in a visual or auditory manner. That allows students to save knowledge for a longer duration of time. The latter result is in agreement with the one concluded by Al-Sa'di (2021)

It was found that online homework improves students' time management, and problem solving skills because the means of statements No. 17, and 18 are 4.49, and 4.45 respectively. This result is attributed to the fact that online homework requires managing the time dedicated for doing it. It is attributed to the fact that students may face problems while doing online homework. Thus, online homework provides students with opportunities to do homework. The latter result is in agreement with the one concluded by Al-Sa'di (2021).

It was found that online homework raises students' engagement in learning because the mean of statement 20 is 4.56. This result is attributed to the fact that online homework allows students to learn through applying knowledge by themselves. It was found that online homework allows students to identify students' weakness and learning needs because the mean of statement 21 is 4.67. This result is attributed to the fact that online homework sometimes include auto correction features. Such features allows students to identify the mistakes they have committed. It is in agreement with the one concluded by Al-Sa'di (2021).

However, it was found that online homework doesn't increases the time that students spend studying because the mean of statement five is 2.11. This result is attributed to the fact that the time spent by students studying is affected by the student's IQ level and the way in which the instructor explained the material. It is not in agreement with the one concluded by Dillard-Eggers et al. (2008).



It was found that online homework doesn't improve students' attitudes towards the instructor because the mean of statement 16 is 2.10. This result is attributed to the fact that such attitudes are affected by the personality and behaviours of the instructor. It was found that online homework doesn't improve students' attitudes towards the course because the mean of statement 22 is 1.91. This result is attributed to the fact that such attitudes are affected by the students' interests, achievement in the course, and personality of the instructor. It is not in agreement with the one concluded by Dreb (2018). It was found that online homework doesn't improve students' planning skills, because the mean of statement nineteen is 4.30.

11. Conclusion

It was found that students' attitudes in public schools in UAE towards online homework in the light of employing the distance educational mode are positive. In addition, other results were reached. For instance, online homework contributes to improving the students' academic achievement, understanding for the material, learning experiences, and retention for information. It contributes to improving the students' satisfaction with their learning processes, and their time management skills. It improves their problem solving skills. It allows students to acquire concepts and suits students of various learning styles and academic achievement. However, it doesn't improve students' planning skills nor students' attitudes towards the course. That's because the latter attitudes are affected by instructor's personality and behaviours.

12. Recommendation

The researcher recommends:

- Conducting similar studies with identifying the impact of computer skills, and gender on attitudes towards online homework
- Conducting studies about the obstacles which might be faced when doing online homework by students.
- Encouraging the developers of curricula to add online homework to curricula
- Using an advanced systems for doing online homework by students in UAE.



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