

وزارة التعليم العالي والبحث العلمي

MINISTÈRE DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPERIEUR ET DE LA RECHERCHE SCIENTIFIQUE

ⵎⵓⵍⵓⵔ ⵎⵎⵎⵔⵉ ⵓⵏⵉⵔⵓⵣⵓⵓ

ⵓⵏⵉⵔⵓⵣⵓⵓ ⵓⵏⵉⵔⵓⵣⵓⵓ ⵓⵏⵉⵔⵓⵣⵓⵓ

ⵓⵏⵉⵔⵓⵣⵓⵓ ⵓⵏⵉⵔⵓⵣⵓⵓ ⵓⵏⵉⵔⵓⵣⵓⵓ

MOULOUD MAMMERI UNIVERSITY OF TIZI-OUZOU

FACULTY OF LETTERS & LANGUAGES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



جامعة مولود معمري - تيزي وزو

كلية الآداب واللغات

قسم الإنجليزية

Item Number:

Serial Number:

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Master in English**

FIELD: Foreign Languages

SUBJECT: English Language

SPECIALITY: Didactics of Foreign Languages

Title

**Students' Self-confidence during the COVID-19
Pandemic: The Case of Third-year EFL Students in the
Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University
of Tizi-Ouzou**

Presented by:

- Mr. Farid BOUHADAD

- Ms. Nawal OUKACI

Supervised by:

Dr. Katia BERBAR

Board of Examiners:

Chairman: Mr. Madjid CHETOUANE, MAA, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou

Supervisor: Dr. Katia BERBAR, MCB, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou

Examiner: Mr. Hakim ZERKA, MAA, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou

Academic Year: 2021/2022

Dedications

This dissertation is dedicated to my beloved family and friends for their endless love, support, and encouragement.

Farid

I dedicate this work to my beloved family.

Nawal

Acknowledgments

We are profoundly indebted to our supervisor, Dr. BERBAR Katia, for her guidance, advice, criticism, help, and support. This work would not have been accomplished without her assistance, comments, and encouragement. It is an immense honour to work under her supervision.

Many thanks are addressed to the teachers and students in the department of English at the University of Tizi-Ouzou who answered the questionnaire and the interview questions. Without their cooperation, this work would have not been completed.

We are grateful to the board of examiners for having accepted to read and examine our work. Their valuable input will be highly appreciated and will help us improve our work.

Abstract

The present dissertation investigates students' self-confidence during the COVID-19 pandemic. It aims to determine whether and how the pandemic of COVID-19 influenced students' self-confidence and find out how students' self-confidence was enhanced during this critical period. In order to reach these aims, a study was conducted in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou that involved seventy-seven third-year students and four teachers. To collect data, a questionnaire was administered to the students and email interviews were conducted with the teachers. The obtained data were analysed relying on quantitative and qualitative methods with reference to Bandura's Self-efficacy Theory (1994). The results showed that the COVID-19 pandemic did not affect students' self-confidence levels. Students' confidence levels were the same as to before the Coronavirus disease outbreak. These results may be explained by the fact that both teachers and students relied on specific techniques to boost students' self-confidence.

Key words: COVID-19, Lockdown, Pandemic, Self-confidence, Self-efficacy.

List of Abbreviations

EFL: English as a Foreign Language

MMUTO: Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou

QCA: Qualitative Content Analysis

SARS-CoV-2: Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Corona virus 2

SCT: Social Cognitive Theory

List of Diagrams

Diagram 01: Students' Age	24
Diagram 02: Students' Gender	25
Diagram 03: Students' Academic Results before the Outbreak of COVID-19.....	26
Diagram 04: Psychological Problems Experienced before the Pandemic.....	27
Diagram 05: Students' Level of Self-confidence before the Pandemic.....	28
Diagram 06: Students' Concentration on their Studies during the Pandemic Lockdown	29
Diagram 07: Students' Comfort with Online Learning during the Pandemic Lockdown	30
Diagram 08: Students' Learning Experience during the Pandemic Lockdown.....	31
Diagram 09: Psychological Problems Experienced during the Lockdown	32
Diagram 10: Difficulties Returning to the University	33
Diagram 11: Students' Inadaptability after the Lockdown Period	33
Diagram 12: Type of Learner Students Turned into after the Lockdown	34
Diagram 13: Students' Academic Results during the COVID-19 Pandemic.....	35
Diagram 14: Students' Confidence when Performing Tasks and Taking Exams in the COVID-19 Pandemic	35
Diagram 15: Students' Level of Self-confidence during the COVID-19 Pandemic	36
Diagram 16: Teachers' Help to Boost Students' Self-confidence.....	37

List of Tables

Table 01: Strategies Used by Teachers to Boost Students' Self-confidence	38
Table 02: Students' Strategies to Enhance their Self-confidence	39

Table of Contents

Dedications.....	I
Acknowledgments.....	II
Abstract.....	III
List of Abbreviations.....	IV
List of Diagrams.....	V
List of Tables.....	VI
Table of Contents.....	VII

General Introduction

Statement of the Problem.....	1
Aims and Significance of the Study.....	2
Research Questions and Hypotheses.....	3
Research Techniques and Methodology.....	3
Structure of the Dissertation.....	4

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

Introduction.....	5
1. Coronavirus/COVID-19.....	5
1.1 Overview of COVID-19.....	5
1.1. Education during the COVID-19 Pandemic.....	6
1.2. Effects of COVID-19 on Students' Psychological State.....	7
1.2.1. Motivation.....	7
1.2.2. Anxiety.....	8
1.2.3. Self-esteem.....	9
1.2.4. Depression.....	9
1.2.5. Self-confidence.....	10
2. Self-confidence.....	10
2.1. Definition of Self-confidence.....	10
2.2. Importance of Self-confidence in the Language Learning Process.....	10
2.3. Causes of lack of Self-confidence.....	11
2.3.1. Excessive Expectation.....	11

2.3.2. Preoccupation with Fear.....	12
2.3.3. Lack of Experience	12
2.3.4. Lack of Skill.....	12
2.4. Self-confidence and Self-efficacy	13
3. Theoretical Framework	13
3.1. Social Learning Theory.....	13
3.2. Social Cognitive Theory	14
3.3. Self-efficacy Theory.....	14
3.3.1. Sources of Self-efficacy.....	15
3.3.1.1. Mastery Experience.....	15
3.3.1.2. Vicarious Experience	15
3.3.1.3. Social Persuasion	15
3.3.1.4. Emotional Arousal	16
3.3.2. Efficacy Activated Process	16
3.3.2.1. Cognitive Process.....	16
3.3.2.2. Motivational Process.....	16
3.3.2.3. Affective Process	17
3.3.2.4. Selection Process.....	17
Conclusion	17

Chapter Two: Research Design

Introduction.....	18
1. Research Method.....	18
2. Context of the Study and Sample Population.....	18
3. Procedures of Data Collection.....	19
3.1. Research Instruments	19
3.1.1 Students' Questionnaire.....	19
3.1.2 Teachers' Interview	20
4. Procedures of Data Analysis	21
4.1. Quantitative Analysis	21
4.2. Qualitative Content Analysis	21
Conclusion	22

Chapter Three: Presentation of the Findings

Introduction	23
1. Presentation of the Results from Students' Questionnaire	23
1.1. Section One: Personal Information	23
1.2. Section Two: Before the Pandemic of COVID-19	24
1.3. Section Three: The COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown	27
1.4. Section Four: Back to the University	31
2. Results of the Teachers' Interview	39
Conclusion	43

Chapter Four: Discussion of the Findings

Introduction	44
1. Students' Academic Results, Problems they Faced, and their Self-confidence before the Pandemic of COVID-19	44
2. Problems Faced by Students during the COVID-19	45
3. Students' Academic Results and Confidence during COVID-19	48
4. Techniques Used to Boost Students' Confidence	50
Conclusion	53
General Conclusion	54
Bibliography	56
Appendices	

General Introduction

Statement of the Problem

By the end of 2019, the world witnessed the appearance of a new and dangerous virus in Wuhan, China. This disease, known as Coronavirus Disease 19 (COVID-19), is a transmissible respiratory syndrome. It quickly spread around the world and became an enormous threat to public health. The outbreak of COVID-19 has changed the social life pattern in the world and had a massive impact on many fields like economics, business, sports, tourism, and education. In order to restrain the rapid spread of the disease, countries around the world adopted strict lockdown measures and social distancing protocols. In the education sector, e-learning platforms like Moodle were implemented to carry on teaching activities (Berbar, 2020). By September 2020, the dangerousness of the virus had started to decrease, allowing the reopening of schools partially. Even after schools reopened and studies continued in waves, students' psychological state has been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Self-confidence is among the emotional factors that were influenced by the COVID-19 virus.

Self-confidence is one of the psychological variables that can influence students' academic performance. Abdullah *et al.* (2019: 153) stated that "Self-confidence is a belief held by a person to express all abilities possessed without fear or doubt, so that the person can face all challenges in his [sic] life." A confident person always focuses on positive outcomes and never on failures (Ibid.). In the teaching-learning process, "self-confidence is very important in supporting students to achieve learning achievement." (Ibid: 155). Confident students trust their own capacities, have the tendency to be independent learners, express themselves freely, and have a positive self-image (Ibid).

Students' self-confidence can be affected by many factors, among these factors the current COVID-19 situation. Some researchers have examined the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students' self-confidence. Choi *et al.* (2020), for instance, delved into the impact

of the COVID-19 pandemic on final-year medical students in the United Kingdom. More specifically, they looked at the effect of COVID-19 on final-year medical students' examinations, and placements and how it might influence their confidence and preparedness going into their first year of training. The results of the 10-item online survey showed that the students felt unprepared to start working as doctors; however, they were confident to join the workplace during the epidemic.

In another study, Torelli *et al.* (2021) investigated the effect of the COVID-19 epidemic on second-year medical students' confidence. The results of the questionnaire revealed that students are not confident in their ability to care for patients but are confident for exams.

The abovementioned studies focused on the influence of the Coronavirus on medical students' self-confidence. However, to our knowledge, no research has studied the effect of the pandemic on EFL students' self-confidence. Among these EFL students, third-year university students witnessed the spread of COVID-19 at different periods, experienced lockdowns, received pedagogical support online, and carried on learning in waves. These COVID-19 related factors may lead students to lose trust in their abilities and experience low self-confidence. In addition, third-year students are going to graduate in a few months; therefore, there is a need to examine their self-confidence during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Aims and Significance of the Study

The overall aim of this research is to investigate the link between two variables: students' self-confidence and the COVID-19 pandemic. More specifically, the study strives to determine whether the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the confidence of third-year students enrolled in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou. In addition, it attempts to examine whether the impact of this pandemic on students' self-confidence is positive or negative. Furthermore, it seeks to find out how students' self-confidence is boosted during the COVID-19 period.

The present study is worth investigating because it contributes to the body of research exploring the impact of COVID-19 on university students. More specifically, it sheds light on the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on students' self-confidence. By answering the raised research questions, the study can help teachers understand the extent to which COVID-19 affects students' self-confidence and raises their awareness of the importance of taking measures to boost their students' confidence.

Research Questions and Hypotheses

In order to reach the aforementioned objectives, this study attempts to answer the following research questions:

1. Has COVID-19 any effect on the self-confidence of third-year EFL students enrolled at the University of Tizi-Ouzou?
2. If yes, how did third-year EFL students' self-confidence change as a result of COVID-19? Did their self-confidence increase or decrease?
3. How was third-year EFL students' self-confidence enhanced during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Aiming to answer these questions, we have set up three hypotheses:

1. The COVID-19 pandemic has affected third-year EFL students' self-confidence.
2. Third-year EFL students' self-confidence decreased as a result of COVID-19.
3. Both teachers and students used specific techniques to enhance self-confidence during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research Techniques and Methodology

This study adopts the mixed-method approach, as it uses both qualitative and quantitative methods for data collection and data analysis. The data are collected using two research instruments, a questionnaire and an interview. The questionnaire is administered to third-year students enrolled in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of

General Introduction

Tizi-Ouzou. It aims to determine the extent to which the COVID-19 pandemic crisis has affected their confidence and how this confidence is enhanced. In order to gain more in-depth data, teachers are interviewed about their perception of students' self-confidence during the outbreak of COVID-19 and how they boost their students' confidence. Quantitative data are analysed using percentages, and the results are displayed in diagrams and tables, whereas qualitative data are treated using Qualitative Content Analysis.

Structure of the Dissertation

The present dissertation follows the traditional simple model, including four chapters along with a General Introduction and a General Conclusion. The General Introduction provides an overview of our topic, the aims and significance of the study, the research questions and hypotheses, and the research method. The first chapter, called "Review of the Literature", defines key concepts, reviews past research on the topic, and introduces the theoretical framework upon which the study is based. The second chapter is entitled "Research Design." It provides information about the research design, the participants, and the tools used to collect and analyse data. The third chapter, "Presentation of the Findings," deals with the analysis of the data collected from the questionnaire and interview. The last chapter, "Discussion of the Findings," is a discussion and interpretation of the results with clear answers to the previously asked research questions. The dissertation ends with a general conclusion that summarises the key findings, highlights the main limitations of the study, and suggests new areas for research.

Review of the Literature

Introduction

This chapter reviews the main concepts and theoretical framework related to this research, which is about students' self-confidence during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is divided into three sections. The first part provides an overview of the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact on students' psychological state. The second part is an overview of self-confidence provided by different researchers in the field, highlighting its importance and characteristics. The final part focuses on presenting Bandura's theory of self-efficacy, which is the theoretical basis of this work.

1. Coronavirus/COVID-19

1.1. Overview of COVID-19

COVID-19 is “an infectious disease caused by a new virus called SARS-CoV-2.” (Lounis, 2020: 1). COVID-19 can spread in two ways. The first one is through droplets when infected people sneeze or cough. The second one is through contact transmission by touching any contaminated object or surface (Chelghoume & Chelghoume, 2020). The Coronavirus is characterised by many clinical manifestations. According to Salahshoori *et al.* (2021), the general symptoms of the Coronavirus are fever, dry cough, and tiredness. In severe cases, the virus can cause shortness of breath and death (Ibid.). This life-threatening virus was first detected in Wuhan, China, in late December 2019, and it quickly spread around the world in early 2020. In Algeria, the first case of COVID-19 was detected on February 25, 2020, in the province of Ouargla (Berbar, 2020), when an Italian citizen was tested positive (Hamidouche, 2021). However, the real outbreak of COVID-19 started on March 1, 2020, in the province of Blida when two Algerian citizens who returned from France were tested positive for COVID-19 (Ibid). The emergence of this virus resulted in a world health crisis that has affected many sectors, including education.

1.2. Education during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an enormous impact on many fields around the globe, especially education. The rapid spread of the virus obliged more than 1.6 billion learners to stay home for months (UNESCO, 2021). To put it in another way, the spread of the Coronavirus prompted the closure of all colleges and universities and the implementation of lockdown and social isolation policies. Schools and universities were struggling to manage and keep teaching balanced and provide suitable conditions for teaching and learning; the rapid move from face-to-face teaching to online teaching has added more problems and stress to students, teachers, and the educational system as a whole (Rapanta *et al.*, 2020). During this sensitive period, e-learning devices had played a massive role in helping schools and universities facilitate learning for students at home (Subedi *et al.*, 2020). Many universities and educational institutions around the world relied on online platforms like Moodle to carry on with the rest of the academic year. Among them, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou used the Moodle platform to publish courses and assignments for students who were stuck at home during the pandemic lockdown imposed by the Algerian government starting from mid-March 2020.

After the lockdown period, students returned to universities to continue face-to-face learning under strict measures. Students, teachers, and administrative staff had to follow specific protocols to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The administration of the different faculties had to adopt the system of waves to resume learning; two levels learn for two weeks and stay at home for the following two weeks while the other levels study. For example, first-year and third-year students study for one or two weeks while second-year and Master one students remain at home, then the opposite happens. The administration also had to divide every section and group into half.

Wearing masks and keeping a physical distance were required in and outside of the classrooms. In addition, the duration of sessions was reduced by 30 minutes, as they were an hour and a half before and became just one hour during the pandemic. Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou followed this plan to face the COVID-19 pandemic. After two years, this protocol is still applied, and this can affect students' psychological state.

1.3. Effects of COVID-19 on Students' Psychological state

When people face unknown situations, they generally feel unsafe and anxious (Usher *et al.*, 2020). This is the case with the emergence of new infectious diseases like the Coronavirus. The COVID-19 pandemic has not only affected the physical health of individuals but also their mental health (Fiorillo & Gorwood, 2020). The COVID-19 pandemic has affected people's psychological state around the planet enormously. Among the most vulnerable groups considered to experience high levels of stress, anxiety, and depression are students (Bauman *et al.*, 2021). Indeed, according to Browning *et al.* (2021: 8), "the most common changes in how students felt compared to before the pandemic were increased lack of motivation, anxiety, stress, and isolation."

1.3.1. Motivation

The term motivation is derived from the Latin verb *movere* (to move) (Schunk *et al.*, 2014). Schunk *et al.* (2014: 5) further state that motivation is "the process whereby goal-directed activities are instigated and sustained." To put it more simply, motivation is a process, not a product, where activities are involved to guide you towards the goals you have set. Maehr & Meyer (1997; cited in Brophy, 2004: 3) defines it as "a theoretical construct used to explain the initiation, direction, intensity, persistence, and quality of behaviour, especially goal-directed behaviour". That is to say, motivation is a concept used to measure the readiness and the commitment of a person to work based on their inception, depth, perseverance, and direction toward a given objective.

Motivation plays a significant role in the success or failure of students. Motivation promotes learning and sustains itself for future teaching (Schunk *et al.*, 2014). In other words, when students achieve their learning goals, the motivation they have inside them and the desire to learn make them believe in their capabilities, which motivate them to set future goals to reach.

The change in the way students learn that occurred because of the rise of COVID-19 influenced their learning motivation (Rahardjo, 2020). Indeed, the results of a study conducted on learners' motivation during the lockdown period at a Dutch university showed that their level of motivation dropped because of the effects of the pandemic (Meeter *et al.*, 2020). In addition, learners' motivation for face-to-face learning during the COVID-19 pandemic has decreased. Because they were afraid of the virus and felt less comfortable attending classes, they were stressed thinking about what the pandemic would bring about (Mali & Lim, 2021).

1.3.2. Anxiety

According to Shri (2010: 100), "Anxiety is a subjective feeling of unease, discomfort, apprehension, or fearful concern accompanied by a host of autonomic and somatic manifestations. Anxiety is a normal, emotional, reasonable, and expected response to real or potential danger." To say it differently, anxiety is a state of nervousness, uneasiness, and trepidation accompanied by psychological and physical manifestations and arises in response to an actual or probable unpleasant situation.

The sudden shift from face-to-face learning to online teaching and the annulment of exchange programmes and graduation ceremonies are difficulties created by the COVID-19 pandemic (Jehi *et al.*, 2022). The rapid spread of COVID-19 and these challenges led to an increase in students' levels of anxiety. A study conducted by Wang and Zhao (2020) about the

effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on Chinese university students showed a significant increase in anxiety levels.

1.3.3. Self-esteem

Self-esteem is a person's overall judgement of their worth and value (Richards & Schmidt, 2010). Self-esteem is classified into two categories, high self-esteem and low self-esteem. High self-esteem is characterised by strong beliefs and confidence in oneself, while low self-esteem is characterised by a lack of confidence and a bad feeling towards oneself (Lin & Chen, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has affected students' self-esteem, especially during the lockdown period. According to the results of a study conducted on Indian students' levels of self-esteem during the lockdown, half of the participants' self-esteem was affected by the pandemic and the lockdown; students self-doubted themselves and felt useless (Prabhat *et al.*, 2022).

1.3.4. Depression

Among the effects that COVID-19 has on people is depression. According to Tahir *et al.* (2021: 7407), "Depression is a significant mental illness with serious psychological and physiological consequences; including lack of interest in learning, low academic performance, disturbances in routine work, and sleep disorder." That is to say, depression is a serious mental disorder that affects the learning process and leads to lack of interest and disturbed sleep.

The rise of the COVID-19 pandemic can lead to depression. For instance, a study conducted by Islam *et al.* (2020) about depression and anxiety among university students during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladesh revealed high levels of perceived growing depression and stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic among the students of Bangladesh as they were worried about their future careers.

1.3.5. Self-confidence

Brown (2001: 62) says that “At the heart of all learning is a person’s belief in his or her to accomplish the task.” It means that self-confidence is the engine of learning and the trust in one’s capacity to realize goals.

Coronavirus disease 2019 can damage both; the physical and mental health of individuals (Hannan, et al., 2020). According to a study that investigated final-year dental students' self-confidence level in performing clinical procedures during the confinement, the results demonstrated that learners' level of self-confidence during the lockdown was significantly lower than before COVID-19 (Llic, et al., 2021).

2. Self-confidence

2.1. Definition of Self-confidence

The word confidence means "trust". Indeed, Murry defines it as “firm trust” (2006: 53). He continues, “If you are confident about something, you don’t worry about its outcome; you just take it for granted that it will go well” (ibid). In other terms, a confident person only expects positive results no matter what the encountered difficulties. According to Ballane (2019), self-confidence refers to the belief of individuals that they can realize a specific activity or achieve a wanted goal. It means that a self-confident person is the one who believes that they can reach whatever goal they set. In addition, Tripathy and Srivastava (2012) indicate that self-confident people have realistic expectations and continue to have faith in their own abilities even though some of their expectations are not met. In the teaching-learning process, “self-confidence should be considered as the quality of a student in which the student feels him/herself assured of successfully performing different activities in the class and out of the class for the purpose of learning.” (Akbari & Sahibzada, 2020:1).

2.2. Importance of Self-confidence in the Language Learning Process

Self-confidence is one of the key factors that play an essential role in students' academic success. Al-Hebaish (2012: 60) states that "Self-confidence is a personal factor that plays a supportive role in the achievement of foreign language learning. Some studies claim that no language learning activities will be carried out successfully without it." To put it simply, self-confidence helps learners achieve their goals in foreign language learning.

In the language learning process, self-confidence can be facilitating or debilitating. In a study about self-confidence and its impact on students' learning process, Akbari and Sahibzada (2020) found that students with high self-confidence participate more in the classroom, enjoy the learning process, have a low level of test anxiety, are more comfortable with their teachers and peers, and share their opinions in class. Students with low self-confidence, on the other hand, "are usually found to be extremely fearful and timid, reluctant to express their opinions, and even unable to utter a complete, meaningful sentence in class." (Ni, 2012: 1509). In the same perspective, Dörnyei (2001: 87) states that, "You can employ your most creative motivational ideas, but if students have basic doubts about themselves, they will be unable to 'bloom' as learners." It means that unconfident students have difficulties employing their creative ideas and struggle to grow as learners.

2.3. Causes of Lack of Self-confidence

Self-confidence is essential for students' academic success; it is the fuel they need to achieve their goals. Low self-confidence harms students' academic performance; it affects their attitudes and behaviours towards learning. In his book *The Confidence Gap*, Harris (2011) gives four reasons why people lack confidence.

2.3.1. Excessive Expectations

Harris (2011) argues that some people have minds that strive for perfection. Even if the work is great, the mind keeps asking for more and more. People with such minds become

afraid of committing mistakes; a small mistake can disappoint them and cause them to lose confidence. For example, someone wants to write a novel, but he/she is handicapped by the fact that he/she expects every page, even the draughts, to be great. He/she loses confidence and stops writing since he/she cannot achieve his/her expectations.

2.3.2. Preoccupation with Fear

Fear is one of the main reasons people lack confidence. Harris (2011) claims that all people have private fears; they can be fears of rejection, failure, or embarrassment. He believes that what creates problems for people is when they preoccupy their minds with fear; they think and worry about it all the time. According to Jabor *et al.* (2017), the signs of learners who lack confidence are seen as being afraid and shy, and they avoid expressing their opinions. They are not capable of producing a coherent sentence during a session.

2.3.3. Lack of Experience

Harris (2011) mentions that when people have no experience or just a little in a certain area, they naturally lack confidence in doing any task related to it. Unconfident students struggle to improve their speaking communication abilities because they have been told since they were children not to speak unless the teacher permits it; they lack experience in practising speaking by freely asking questions (Jamila, 2014).

2.3.4. Lack of Skill

Harris (2011) believes that people cannot feel confident in doing any task if they do not have the required skills. To illustrate, Jamila (2014) says that students lose confidence during a conversation when they realise that they cannot understand their partners or fail to transmit their message properly to the other person.

2.4. Self-confidence and Self-efficacy

Self-confidence and self-efficacy are correlated; they are interrelated and share a common focus on the person's abilities and capacities (Dörnyei, 2005). Malureanu *et al.* (2021: 3) define self-confidence as "a person's professed capability to tackle situations effectively on his own without leaning on others and to have constructive self-evolution." That is to say, it is the trust in one's own abilities to face different life circumstances without requiring any sort of help from others. Concerning self-efficacy, it is "the belief of a person in his ability to succeed. People who perceive themselves as efficient attribute success to personal effort, while those with a low level of efficiency attribute it to external factors" (Ibid.: 4). In other words, it is the belief in one's abilities and capacities to succeed in achieving a specific goal. Self-confidence is a term that refers to the trust in one's ability to succeed, whereas self-efficacy is a concept that is used to refer to one's belief in their capacity to succeed. Based on the definitions provided above, we can say that self-efficacy is a subset of self-confidence (Beldjenna, 2019).

3. Theoretical Framework

3.1. Social Learning Theory

The basic assumption of Social Learning Theory is that people acquire knowledge through their interactions with others by observing their behaviours and imitating them. It originated from Bandura's experiment, conducted in 1965 with 66 children aged between 42 and 71 months, called the Bobo doll experiment. The idea of the experiment is to discover if children imitate the behaviour of the people around them. Bandura had shown a video of a model acting aggressively towards the Bobo doll to three groups of children, each group with a different final scene in the video. The children in the control group had not seen anything except a model hitting the Bobo doll, while in another group, the kids observed a model

getting rewards for their actions, and the last group watched the model being punished and was warned not to act aggressively towards the Bobo doll.

After a short period, all these groups of children moved individually into a room with toys and a Bobo doll. Bandura then observed that the children who saw the model receive a punishment were less likely to be aggressive toward the doll. He also noticed something interesting when the researchers asked the kids to act aggressively towards the doll as they saw in the video, and the children did. Bandura's experiment showed that children imitate what others do; it supported his idea that learning can be through observing and imitating – observational learning (Bandura, 1965).

3.2. Social Cognitive Theory

In the 1980s, Bandura expanded his Social Learning Theory to become the Social Cognitive Theory. The latter is an approach that is more related to human behaviour and tries to understand it, predict it, and change it (Nabavi, 2012). The theory focuses on the cognitive aspects, action, motivation, and emotion that claim that people are capable of self-regulation and self-reflection and that people can make a difference in their environments (Maddux, 1995). Another theory derives from the social cognitive theory, which is the self-efficacy theory; it represents a fundamental concept in SCT that deals with people's beliefs in their abilities to execute activities successfully (Nabavi, 2012).

3.3. Self-Efficacy Theory

Perceived self-efficacy comes from the trust in one's capacity to accomplish the required courses of action to manage different life situations (Bandura, 1994). The way people think, feel, or behave is determined by their efficacy beliefs and how they look at themselves. In self-efficacy process, there are four sources to develop these beliefs.

3.3.1. Sources of Self-efficacy

In his theory, Bandura (1994) identified four sources of self-efficacy: mastery experience, vicarious experience, verbal persuasion, and physiological arousal.

3.3.1.1. Mastery Experience

Mastery experience has to do with personal achievements and experiences. Positive achievements reinforce confidence in one's efficiency, and experiences of failure diminish it. It is about gaining the appropriate behaviours to handle different life settings being in constant change. Resilient self-efficacy comes from overcoming challenging obstacles. If people are only used to easy accomplishments, these difficult situations will discourage them and lead them to failure. Once they are convinced that they have all the necessary tools to make significant achievements, they can cope with adversity and challenges (Bandura, 1994).

3.3.1.2. Vicarious Experience

The second source of self-efficacy, vicarious experiences, comes from observing people we consider as role models. Observing people with the same goals and ways of thinking succeed in what they do leads their observers to believe that they can do the same, and watching them fail despite great effort affects those observers negatively and demotivates them. The influence of modelling on personal beliefs is significantly affected by the degree of similarity to the models. To put it in other words, the higher the degree of similarity perceived by observers, the more they are convinced of the success or failure of their models (Bandura, 1994).

3.3.1.3. Social Persuasion

The third source of self-efficacy is social persuasion. It refers to the positive feedback a person receives from influential people such as parents and teachers who convince them about their capacities to complete a given task successfully. If people are convinced and told by

their surrounding environment that they possess the capacity to face adversity and challenges, they are likely to make more effort to do so (Bandura, 1994).

3.3.1.4. Emotional Arousal

Emotional arousal has to do with a person's psychological state, which can influence his/her beliefs about his/her capacity to complete a given task. For example, anxiety and stress can lead people to have negative feelings about their personal capacities. One way to modify self-beliefs of efficacy is by minimising people's stress over their negative emotional reactions towards their physical state and avoiding misinterpretations. People with high self-efficacy control their arousal and take it more as a motivation than a handicap, in contrast to people who self-doubt themselves (Bandura, 1994).

3.3.2. Efficacy Activated Processes

According to Bandura (1994:03), "there are four major psychological processes through which self-efficacy beliefs affect human functioning." In other words, these four processes operate together to determine human behaviour and try to analyze it.

3.3.2.1. Cognitive Process

"The stronger the perceived self-efficacy, the higher the goal challenges people set for themselves and the firmer is their commitment to them." (Bandura 1994:03) People who have high-perceived self-efficacy remain committed to the goals they set for themselves. This criterion manifests itself within the mind. People with an elevated sense of efficacy visualise positive scenarios and immediately think of success, not negative scenarios and failures like those with a low sense of efficacy. It is all about controlling thoughts. (ibid)

3.3.2.2. Motivational Process

Self-efficacy beliefs play a significant role in the self-regulation of motivation. They aid

People determine their objectives, the time they are willing to spend to achieve these tasks, and whether they persevere or abandon when confronted with the first obstacle they meet. People with a high sense of self-efficacy attribute their failure to the effort they put into each of their activities, while those who think they are ineffective attribute it to their low ability.

3.3.2.3. Affective Process

One of the factors that help people reduce stress, depression, and anxiety and raise their level of motivation is the belief in their coping capabilities. Nevertheless, those who doubt themselves or think they cannot cope with threatening situations have a low sense of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1994).

3.3.2.4. Selection Process

It is the process of selecting activities and tasks. People with high self-efficacy choose challenging tasks, and they are confident about the results. They take control of the situation rather than being afraid of the obstacle, while people with low self-efficacy avoid difficult tasks since they already think that they will not succeed because of the high sense of doubt they have within themselves (Bandura, 1994).

Conclusion

To summarize, this chapter has reviewed the literature related to the topic under investigation. It has first provided an overview of the COVID-19 pandemic and how it affects the affective side of the learner. It has then introduced one of these affective factors, which is self-confidence. Finally, it has explained the theoretical framework upon which the present study is based. The following chapter is about the research design and methodology of the study.

Research Design

Introduction

This chapter deals with the description of the research design and methodology followed in the present study. It delivers information about the research procedures used to examine the impact of COVID-19 on EFL students' self-confidence. First, it presents the research method used in this study. Second, it provides the necessary information about the context of the study and the sample population. Third, it deals with the data collection instruments, namely the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interviews. Finally, it explains the procedures used to analyse the gathered data.

1. Research Method

To achieve an in-depth and comprehensive exploration of the topic, this research opted for a mixed approach to analyse the collected data in both qualitative and quantitative ways. The mixed-method approach is a research method that combines both qualitative and quantitative methods in one study when collecting and analysing data (Creswell, 2009). Dawadi *et al.* (2001:27) explained the importance of using both quantitative and qualitative approaches in the following assertion:

The quantitative approach helps a researcher to collect the data from a large number of participants; thus, increasing the possibility to generalise the findings to a wider population. The qualitative approach, on the other hand, provides a deeper understanding of the issue being investigated, honouring the voices of its participants.

2. Context of the Study and Sample Population

This study took place in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou (MMUTO). It targeted third-year students because they are about to complete their degree cycle, and they are the class that entered the university just a few months before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The sample selected to answer the designed questionnaire comprised seventy-seven (77) students. According to Alvi (2016: 11), "A sample can be defined as a group of [sic] relatively smaller number of people selected from a

population for investigation purpose [sic].” The number of the selected students was based on the assumption that it is not technically possible to deal with all the students at this academic level, so the number taken was selected randomly. In random sampling, “each and every element of the population has an equal chance of being selected in the sample.” (Ibid: 16). In addition, we interviewed four teachers from the same department about the same subject.

3. Procedures of Data Collection

The data collection procedure for this study was separated into two stages, employing two different research instruments.

3.1. Research Instruments

To complete this research work, two data collection instruments were used. The first research tool was a questionnaire distributed to seventy-seven third-year students in the department of English at MMUTO. The second instrument was an interview conducted with four teachers in the same department and university.

3.1.1. Students’ Questionnaire

The first research tool used to collect data was a questionnaire. A questionnaire is an instrument used to collect data from participants on a specific research topic. According to Roopa and Rani (2017: 273), “A questionnaire is a series of questions asked to individuals to obtain statistically useful information about a given topic.” It is a valuable data collection tool because it allows the researcher to collect a large amount of data from a large number of respondents (Ibid.).

The questionnaire used in this study encompassed eighteen (18) questions and is divided into four (04) sections that are labelled as follows: *Personal Information, Before the Pandemic of COVID-19, the COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown, and Back to the University*. It included both closed-ended questions and open-ended questions (See Appendix 01). In the closed-ended questions, “respondents’ answers are limited to a fixed set of responses.” (Ibid:

274). This encompasses yes/no, multiple choice, and scaled questions (Ibid.). Here, the participants have to select a specific answer from a set of predetermined responses. Concerning the open-ended questions, “The options or predefined categories are not suggested. The respondent replies in their own words without being constrained by a fixed set of possible responses” (Ibid.). This means that the participants are free to formulate their answers in the way they desire. Open-ended questions allow the researcher to gather more in-depth information about the topic.

The designed questionnaire has not been distributed directly to the students, as it has been piloted first with a group of ten (10) students on June 16th 2022. Pre-testing or piloting the questionnaire with a small sample is an important step in questionnaire design because it allows the researcher to identify any issues before administering it to the respondents.

After the piloting stage, we edited and omitted things from the questionnaire. For example, the ninth question says, "Have you experienced any of these problems during the lockdown?" The suggested answers for the question were: anxiety, low motivation, and low self-confidence. During the piloting stage, participants suggested adding another option "none", for those who did not experience any of these problems. Another example is omitting one question from the questionnaire, "Were you confident with online learning during the pandemic lockdown?" as it is similar to another one that goes, "Were you comfortable with online learning during the pandemic lockdown?" The revised questionnaire was administered to the respondents between June 22nd and 28th 2022.

3.1.2. Teachers' Interview

The second research instrument used in this study was an asynchronous online interview directed to teachers. Unlike synchronous online interviews which happen in real time, asynchronous online interviews take place in non-real time and use emails and message boards (Lune & Bruce, 2017). In the present study, an email interview was used to elicit

responses from teachers and gather additional information about the topic. It is a data collection tool where the interviewer sends questions via e-mail, and the interviewee has the freedom to openly respond and express his/her thoughts about the subject. According to Ratislavová and Ratislav (2014: 452), “The asynchronous email interview is a qualitative research method where information is repeatedly exchanged online between [sic] researcher and participant within a particular time-frame.”

The interview contained nine (09) questions aimed to gather additional information about students’ self-confidence during the COVID-19 pandemic. The interview questions were sent via email between June 27th and August 22nd 2022 to seven (07) teachers but only four (04) teachers have answered between June 28th to September 08th 2022. The interviews were conducted via email because the teachers were not free for a face-to-face meeting.

4. Procedures of Data Analysis

The collected data were analysed using both quantitative and qualitative data analysis methods.

4.1. Quantitative Analysis

To analyse the data collected from the closed-ended questions of the questionnaire, the rule of three was used to calculate the percentages. This rule is as follows: $X = Y \times 100 / m$. X is the calculated percentage. Y is the value of the similar answers and M is the total number of participants. The obtained results are presented in diagrams and tables.

4.2. Qualitative Content Analysis

Qualitative Content Analysis was used to analyse the qualitative data collected from the open-ended questions of the questionnaire and the teachers’ responses from the interviews. Quantitative Content Analysis provides a thorough understanding and interpretation of the data collected in this research study. Hsieh and Shannon (2005: 1278) define it as “a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data

through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns.” That is to say, QCA is a procedure used to analyse qualitative data by coding and grouping them into key themes.

Conclusion

This chapter has explained the research design and methodology of the present study. It has introduced the research method and has described the sample population and the context of the study. In addition, it has presented the research instruments used to collect the relevant data to answer the research questions and test the proposed hypotheses, which consist of a questionnaire and an asynchronous email interview. Finally, it has explained the methods used to analyse both qualitative and quantitative data. The upcoming chapter is dedicated to the presentation of the research findings obtained from the two research tools.

Presentation of the Findings

Introduction

This chapter is devoted to the presentation of the results obtained from the data collected from the questionnaire administered to a group of seventy-seven third-year students in the department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou and from the interview conducted with four teachers in the same department. It is divided into two parts; the first one is concerned with the analysis of the students' questionnaire, and the second one with the teachers' interviews. The quantitative results are presented in percentages and displayed in diagrams and tables, and the qualitative findings are demonstrated in paragraph.

I. Presentation of the Results from Students' Questionnaire

I.1. Section One: Personal Information

The first section of the questionnaire aims to gather general personal information about the participants.

Question (1): How old are you?

The first question intends to gather data about students' age. The obtained information is displayed in Diagram 01.

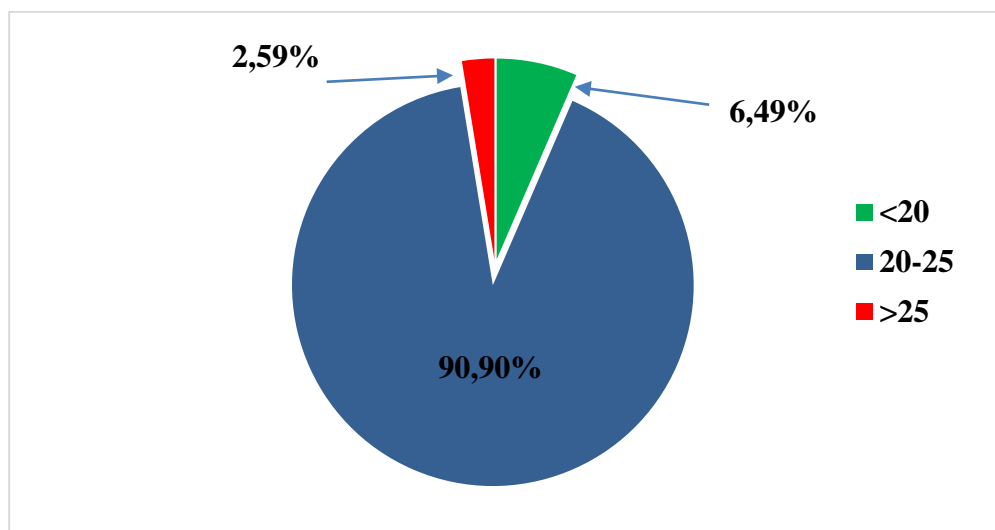


Diagram 01: Students' Age

Presentation of the Findings

Diagram 01 presents information about the students' age. It indicates that most of the participants are between 20 to 25 years of age, representing 90.90% of the total participants. 6.49% represent students above 25 years old, while 2.59% represent the smallest group of participants under the age of 20.

Question (2): Please specify your gender.

The second question asked the students to specify their gender. The results are exhibited in Diagram 02.

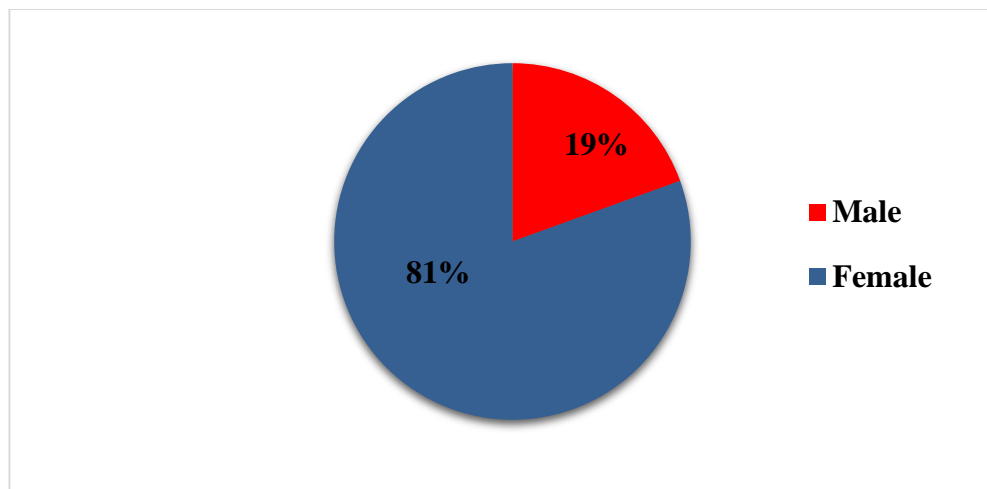


Diagram 02: Students' Gender

As seen in Diagram 02, the majority of the students are female with a percentage of 81%. Only 19% represent male participants.

I.2. Section Two: Before the Pandemic of COVID-19

This section investigates students' academic results and psychological state before the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Question (3): How were your academic results before the outbreak of COVID-19?

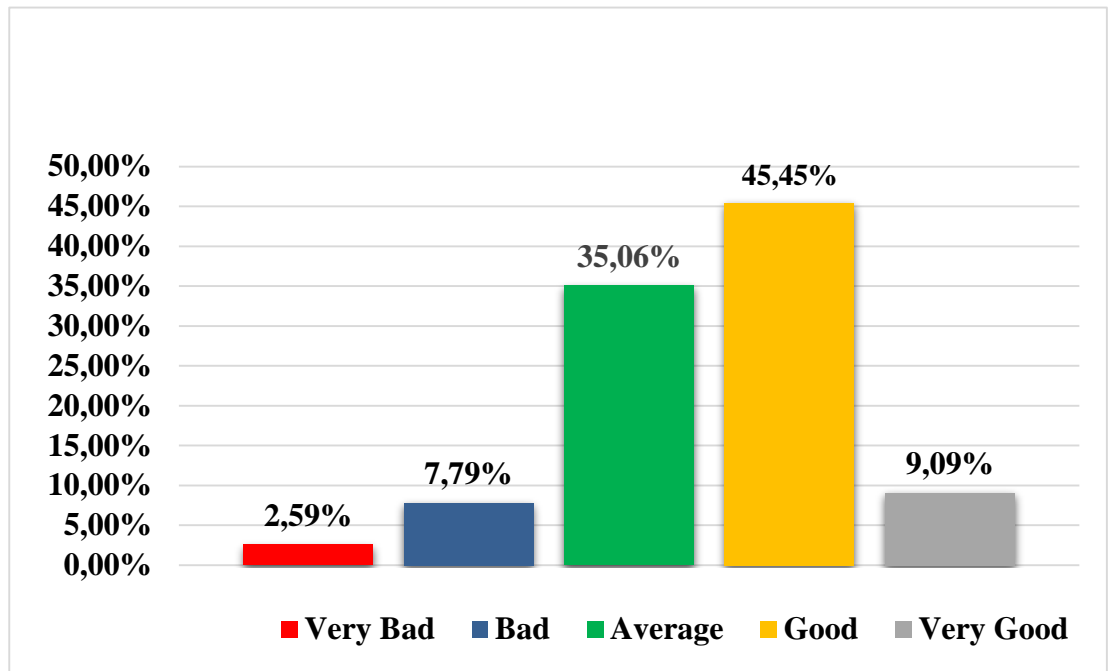


Diagram 03: Students' Academic Results before the Outbreak of COVID-19

Diagram 03 shows the students' academic results before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. 45.45% represent the participants who claimed they had good results, while 35.06% said they were average students. 7.79% and 2.59% of the students stated that they obtained bad and very bad results respectively and only 9.09% had very good results.

Question (04): Have you experienced any of these problems before the Pandemic of COVID-19?

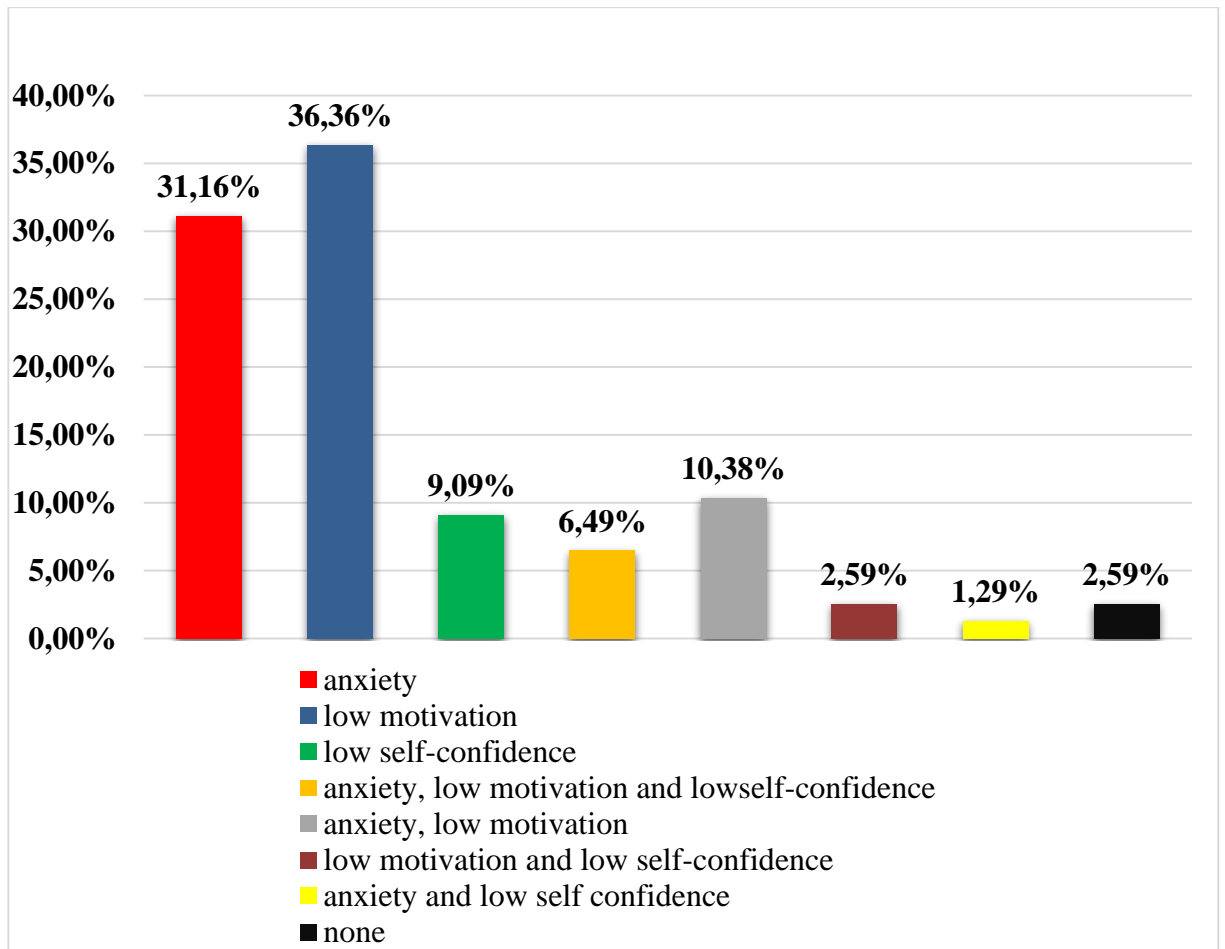


Diagram 04: Psychological Problems Experienced before the Pandemic

Diagram 04 shows the problems experienced by the students before the COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of the students, represented by 36.36%, experienced low motivation and 31.16% declared that they suffered from anxiety. Only 9.09% of the students stated that they had experienced low self-confidence before the pandemic. Some of the students faced more than one psychological problem. Indeed, 6.49% of the students had anxiety, low motivation and low self-confidence, and 10.38% had anxiety and low motivation. Only 2.59% of the participants had not faced any of these problems.

Question (05): How was your level of self-confidence before the pandemic?

Presentation of the Findings

Since the aim of the present study is to determine whether students' self-confidence decreased as a result of COVID-19, it is first important to know their level of confidence before the pandemic.

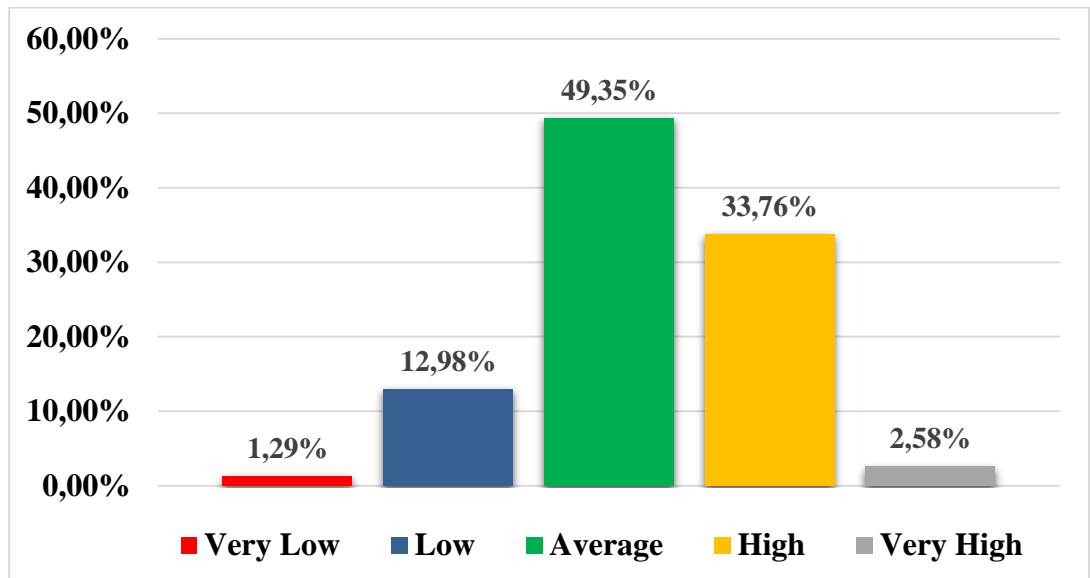


Diagram 05: Students' Level of Self-confidence before the Pandemic

Diagram 05 displays the level of students' self-confidence before the pandemic. It shows that many students had been confident before the pandemic. As the majority answered, they had an average rate of self-confidence represented by 49.35%, while 33.76% had high self-confidence. While 12.89% of the participants stated they had low self-confidence, 2.58% specified that they had very high self-confidence. Only a minority of respondents (1.29%) claimed they had very low self-confidence.

I.3. Section Three: The COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown

This section examines students' concentration, comfort, learning experience and psychological state during COVID-19 lockdown.

Question (6): Were you able to concentrate on your studies during the pandemic lockdown?

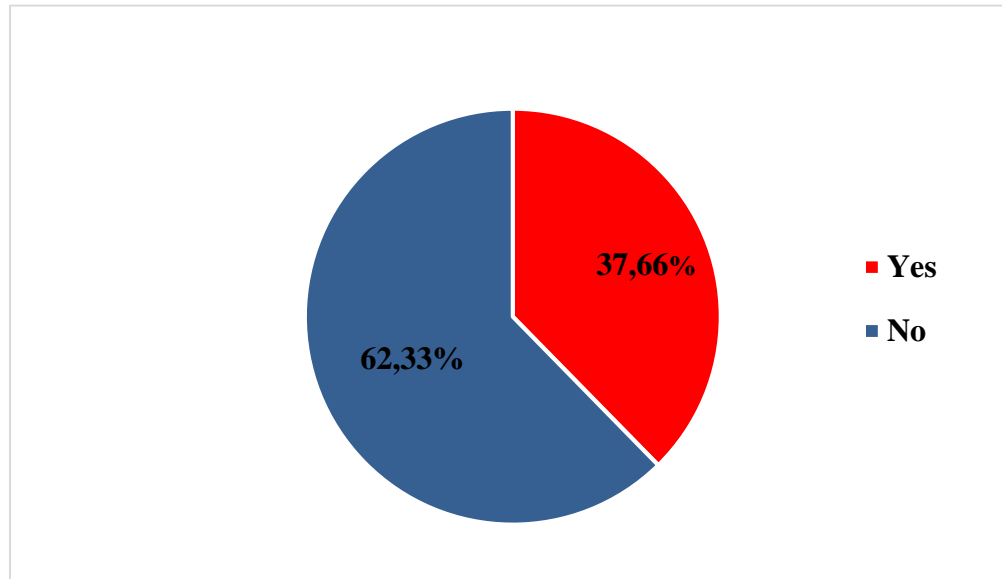


Diagram 06: Students' Concentration on their Studies during the Pandemic Lockdown

Diagram 06 shows if the students were able to concentrate on their studies during the pandemic lockdown or not. 37.66% said yes, while the majority (62.33%) were unable to concentrate.

If no, please justify your answer. This statement completes the question asked above.

When asked to specify why they were not able to concentrate on their studies during the pandemic lockdown, the students provided four main reasons. The first one is that they lost motivation to study. One of the students said: "I have lost the motivation to do anything". The second reason why learners were unable to concentrate on their studies during the pandemic lockdown is the difficulties they faced when accessing the university website. One learner declared, "Lectures are not well provided on the university website." The third reason students gave was being afraid to catch the virus. Catching the Coronavirus can disturb the students' learning process. One of the respondents mentioned, "I was fearful to socialise and catch the virus." The last reason students gave was that they were stressed because of the pandemic. They had other things on their minds that affected their ability to concentrate on

their studies. One respondent confessed, “I was stressed because my family was stuck abroad and couldn’t find a way to come back.”

Question (07): Were you comfortable with online learning during the pandemic lockdown?

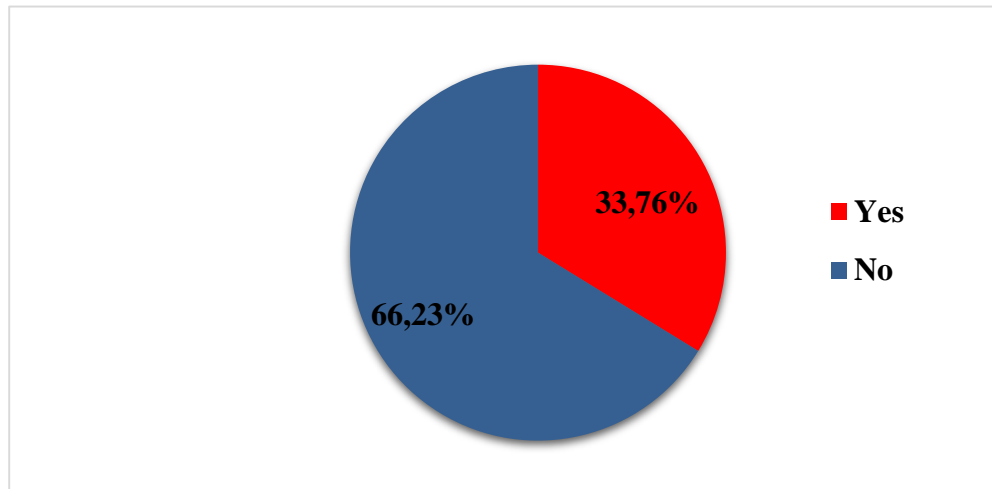


Diagram 07: Students’ Comfort with Online Learning during the Pandemic Lockdown

Diagram 07 shows the students’ comfort with online learning during the lockdown. As it can be seen, 33.76% said yes, and 66.23% answered no. That is to say, more than half of the students were uncomfortable studying remotely during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown.

If the answer is no, please explain why. This statement completes the question above.

Students have reported three main reasons behind their discomfort with online learning. The first reason is the absence of the teacher and the preference for face-to-face teaching rather than online learning. One learner stated, “I dislike online learning, I don’t understand the lectures by myself, and there is no one around me to explain to me.” Another one mentioned, “I become more motivated to learn when I am surrounded by an active learning environment.” The second reason is the unavailability of all lectures on the university website. As one respondent declared, “Teachers didn’t cover up all the necessary lectures on the platform.” The last reason is the students’ struggle with the bad Internet network, which

Presentation of the Findings

makes online learning a difficult place to study. One student said, “The internet connection is bad, and sometimes it is difficult to access the platform.”

Question (08): Please describe your learning experience during the pandemic lockdown.

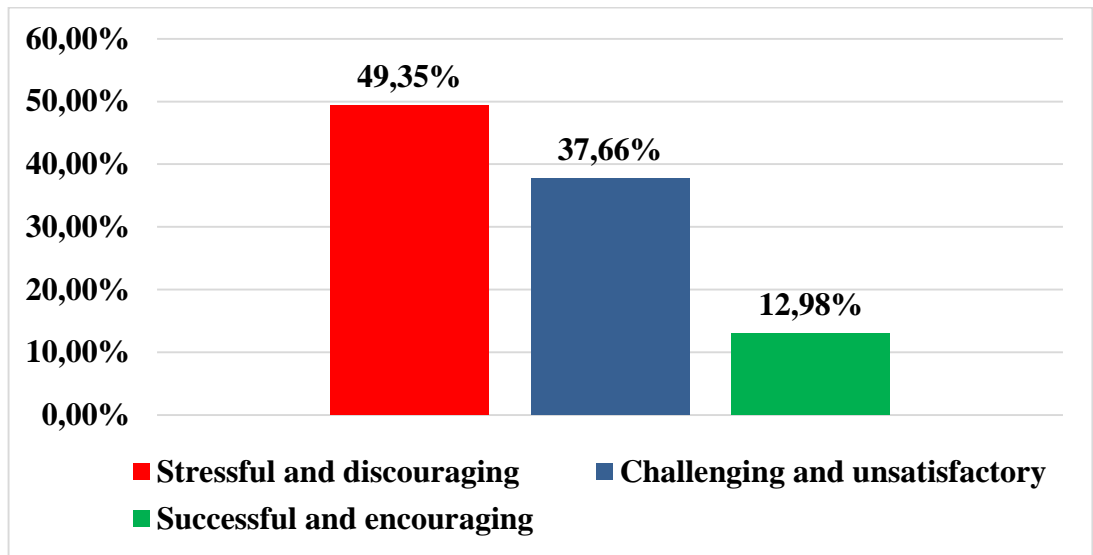


Diagram 08: Students' Learning Experience during the Pandemic Lockdown

Diagram 08 describes the students' learning experience during the pandemic lockdown. The majority of students reported that they had a stressful and discouraging experience with a percentage of 49.35%, while 37.66% had a challenging and unsatisfactory experience. Only 12.98% claimed they had a successful and encouraging experience.

Question (09): Have you experienced any of these problems during the lockdown?

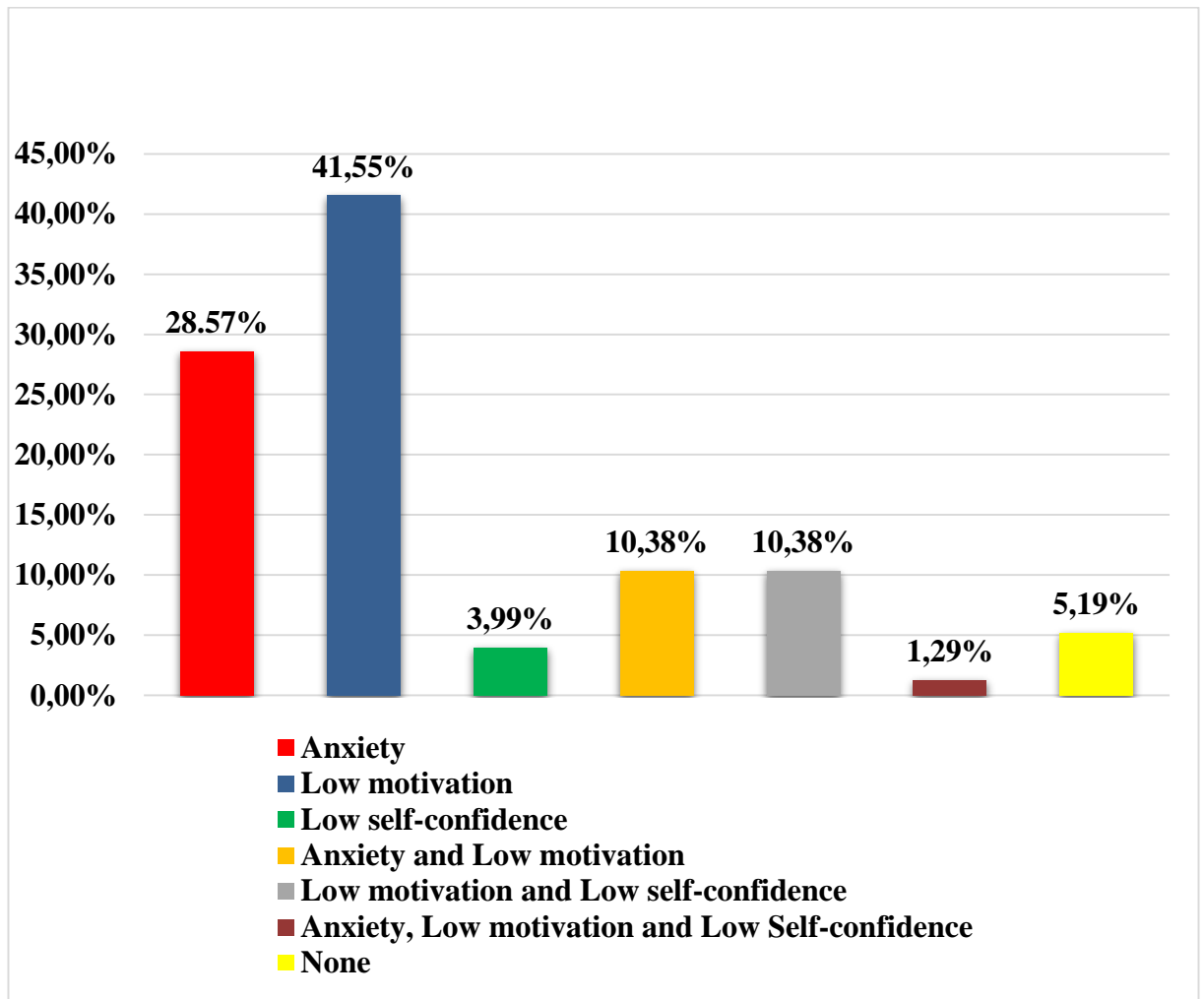


Diagram 09: Psychological Problems Experienced during the Lockdown

Diagram 09 shows the problems experienced by students during the lockdown period. We notice that 28.57% suffered from anxiety, 41.55% suffered from low motivation, and 10.38% experienced both. 3.99% of the participants had low self-confidence, 10.38% had low motivation and low self-confidence, and only 1.29% sustained all of these. 5.19% said they did not suffer from any psychological problem.

I.4. Section Four: Back to the University

This section examines students' academic results and psychological state after the lockdown period and their return to the university.

Question (10): Was it difficult to go back to the university under such circumstances?

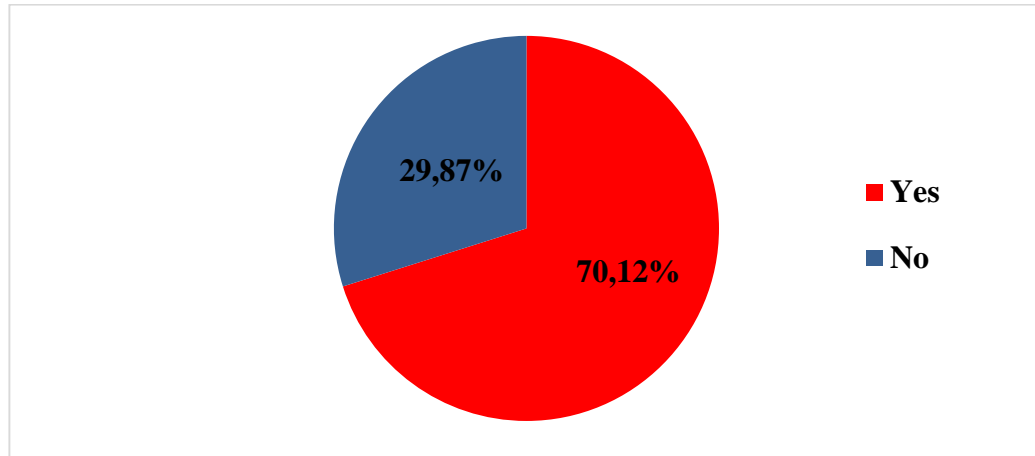


Diagram 10: Difficulties Returning to the University

Diagram 10 indicates whether students had difficulties returning to the university and studying under the challenging circumstances caused by the pandemic of COVID-19. The diagram shows that 70.12%, representing the majority of the participants, responded with yes and 29.87% by no.

Question (11): Did you feel lost after the long break?

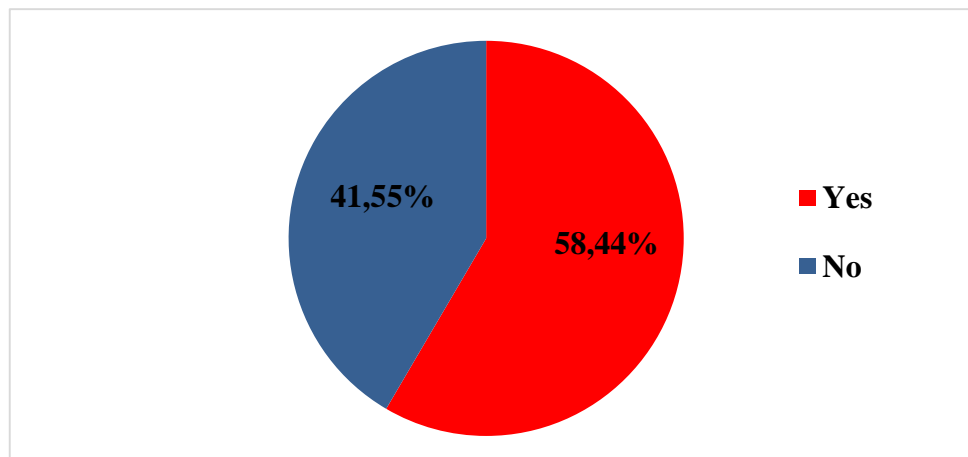


Diagram 11: Students' Inadaptability after the Lockdown Period

Diagram 11 reveals if the students felt lost after the long break of the pandemic lockdown. The majority of the study participants, 58.44%, said yes, meaning that they felt lost and confused. 41.55% of the students said no, indicating that they were alright and not lost.

Presentation of the Findings

If the answer is yes, please explain the reason(s). This statement completes the question above.

Students stated three reasons why they felt lost after returning to the university after the long break. One of the reasons behind feeling lost was the fact they became lazy after getting used to staying at home for a long time. One student declared, “Lot of rest made me a lazy student; I have not opened even one book for more than six months.” Another reason is that students have lost the motivation to learn. One respondent declared, “We have lost motivation to study, all the learning process becomes unfamiliar and strange.” In addition, being afraid of catching the virus made the students feel lost. The assertion “a member of my family died because of COVID-19, which made me stressed and lost” exemplifies this point.

Question (12): What kind of learner have you become after the reopening of the university?

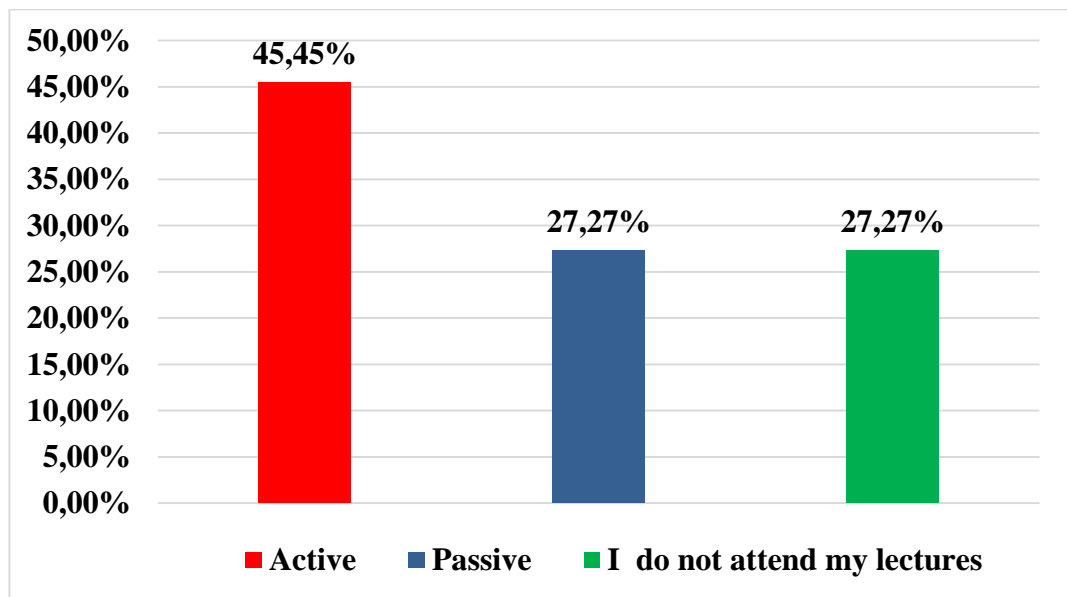


Diagram 12: Type of Learner Students Turned into after the Lockdown

As Diagram 12 shows, 45.45 % of the participants have become active learners, while passive learners and those who do not attend their lessons are equally represented by 27.27%.

Question (13): How are your academic results in the current climate of COVID-19?

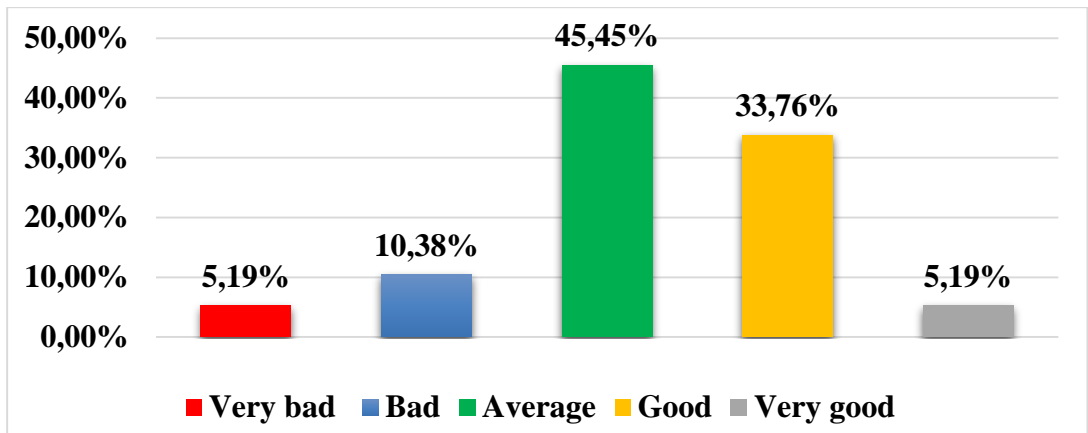


Diagram 13: Students' Academic Results in the of COVID-19 Pandemic

Diagram 13 is about the students' academic results in the current climate of COVID-19. As the diagram indicates, 5.19 % of the students responded that they had very bad results, while 10.38% said they had bad results. Most respondents, representing 45.45%, claimed to have average results. 33.76% of the participants argued they had good results, and only 5.19% of the learners had very good results.

Question (14): To what extent do you agree or disagree with the statement “I usually feel unconfident when I have to perform a given task or take an exam in the current climate of COVID-19.”?

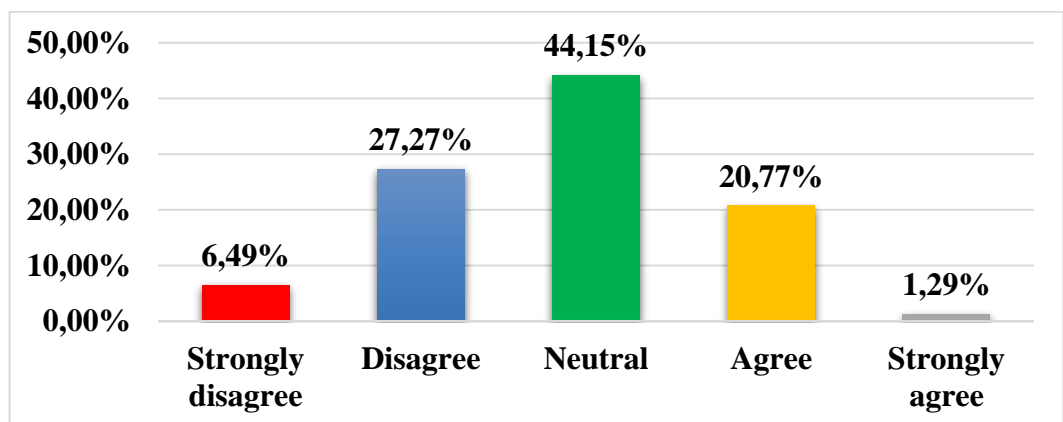


Diagram 14: Students' Confidence when Performing Tasks and Taking Exams in the COVID-19 Pandemic

Presentation of the Findings

Diagram 14 demonstrates if the students were confident while performing tasks and passing exams. According to the results displayed above, 6.49% of the participants strongly disagreed with the statement, whereas 27.27% disagreed. The majority of the answers, represented by 44.15%, were neutral and 20.77% agreed with the statement. The minority of the respondents, representing 1.29%, strongly agreed with the statement.

Question (15): How is your level of self-confidence in the current climate of COVID-19?

The aim of this question is to determine the level of students' self-confidence in the current climate of COVID-19 and compare the obtained results with the findings gained from question 05.

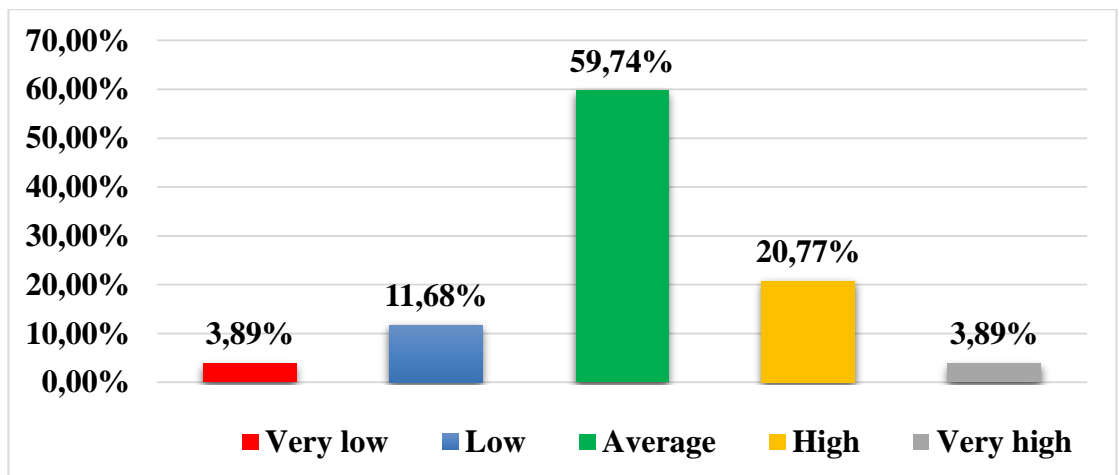


Diagram 15: Students' Level of Self-confidence in the COVID-19 Pandemic

Diagram 15 exhibits the level of students' self-confidence during the COVID-19 pandemic. As it can be seen, 3.89% of the participants stated that they had very low self-confidence, while 11.68% had low self-confidence. The majority of the respondents represented by 59.74% claimed that their self-confidence level was average, whereas 20.77% of the learners had high self-confidence. Only 3.89% of the participants had very high self-confidence.

Question (16): If the level of your self-confidence is very low or low, please state the factor(s) that caused a decrease in your self-confidence during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Presentation of the Findings

Students stated two factors that caused a decrease in their self-confidence in the COVID-19 pandemic. The first factor is fear of the virus and overthinking the situation. One student confessed, “The long period of confinement and overthinking the danger of the pandemic has affected my self-confidence negatively.” The second factor is suffering from social isolation and a lack of activity. One respondent declared, “Staying at home and the lack of interaction with outsiders had a bad influence on my self-confidence.”

Question (17): Do your teachers help you to boost your self-confidence in the current climate of COVID-19?

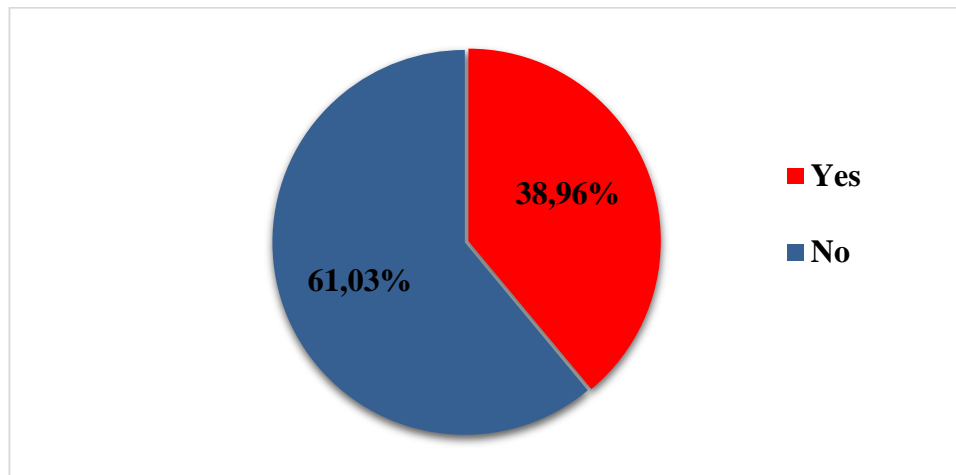


Diagram 16: Teachers' Help to Boost Students' Self-confidence

Diagram 16 shows that 38.96% of the participants answered the question positively and indicated that their teachers help them to increase their self-confidence in the current climate of COVID-19. 61.09% of the students answered by no meaning that their teachers did not help them to enhance their self-confidence.

Presentation of the Findings

If the answer is yes, please indicate how. This statement completes the question above.

Suggestions	Percentage	Suggestions	Percentage
A) Advise you to believe in your own abilities.	16.66%	D) & E)	3.33%
B) Praise your efforts and accomplishments.	3.33 %	A)& E)	3.33%
C) Encourage you to ask questions.	3.33 %	A)& B)	3.33%
D) Provide positive feedback.	3.33 %	B), C), & D)	3.33%
E) Set a favourable climate for learning.	3.33 %	A,) C), & E)	6.66%
A) & D)	10 %	A), C), & D)	10 %
A)&C)	13.33%	A), B), C), & D)	3.33%
C)& E)	6.66 %	A), B), C), & E)	3.33%
B)&C)	3.33 %		

Table 01: Strategies Used by Teachers to Boost Self-confidence

As seen in Table 01, most learners (16.33%) stated that their teachers helped them boost their self-confidence during this period by advising them to believe in their abilities. Other participants, represented by 3.33%, stated that their teachers praised their efforts and achievements, encouraged them to ask questions in the classroom, provided them with positive feedback, and set a favourable climate for learning to enhance their level of confidence. It can also be noticed that some students selected more than one option, meaning that their teachers use more than one strategy to boost their self-confidence. For example, 13.33% of the students indicated that their teachers advise them to believe in their own abilities and encourage them to ask questions during class, and 10% specified that their

Presentation of the Findings

teachers use the two aforementioned strategies in addition to providing them with positive feedback.

Question (18): How do you enhance your self-confidence during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Suggestions	Percentage	Suggestions	%Percentage
A) I do not boost my self-confidence.	16.88%	B) and C	3.89%
B) I use my previous successful learning experiences as a source of self-confidence.	23.37%	B) and D)	14.28%
C) I take successful students with the same abilities as mine as role models.	5%	C) and D)	5.19%
D) I try to manage my anxiety levels and calm myself down before performing any task.	23.37%	B), C), and D)	7.79%

Table 02: Students' Strategies to Enhance their Self-Confidence

Table 02 shows the strategies students use to boost their self-confidence. It can be noticed from the respondents' answers that a rate of 23.37% use their previous successful learning experiences as a source of self-confidence. The same percentage of students (23.37%) said they try to manage their anxiety levels and calm themselves down before doing anything. 5% claimed that they take successful students with the same abilities as them as role models. Some students selected more than one answer. For example, 14.28% of the respondents stated that they both use their previous successful learning experiences as a source of self-confidence and try to manage their anxiety levels and calm themselves down before performing any task. It is worth noting that 16.88% of the students indicated that they do not boost their self-confidence.

II. Results of the Teachers' Interview

In order to collect further information about the topic, an asynchronous online interview was used as a second data-gathering tool. Nine interview questions were sent via email to seven teachers in the department of English at the University of Tizi-Ouzou. Only four teachers sent back answers to the questions. The interview questions were about students' self-confidence during the COVID-19 pandemic. The results were interpreted using Qualitative Content Analysis.

Question (01): What is your gender?

The first three interview questions aim to gather background information about the interviewed teachers. The first question asked the teachers to specify their gender. According to the gathered data, three teachers are female and only one teacher is a male.

Question (02): What type of academic degree do you hold?

The second interview question asked the teachers to specify the type of academic degree they hold. Two main types emerged from the data. To be more specific, three teachers stated that they have a magister degree and one teacher holds a master degree.

Question (03): How long have you been teaching in the department of English?

The third question from the interview invited the teachers to state their teaching experience in the department of English. The answers to this question differ from one teacher to another. Two out of four teachers have been teaching in the department of English for ten years. One teacher has a teaching experience of four years. The fourth teacher said that she has been teaching for three years. It can be concluded that the interviewed participants are experienced teachers. This also means that all the teachers are able to describe any change in their students' level of self-confidence.

Question (04): What did you notice about your students' psychological state (Motivation and anxiety levels, self-esteem, self-confidence...) after the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown?

The purpose of the question is to investigate the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown on students' psychological state, whether positive or negative. The content analysis of the collected data revealed that two of the interviewed teachers indicated that they did not notice any changes in students' psychological state. For instance, one of them said that "Students' behaviour after covid-19 was the same but they were lazy." Two out of four teachers, on the other hand, noticed a change in students' psychological state. They indicated that the lockdown and the months students spent away from the university highly affected their self-esteem, motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety levels. The following declarations exemplify this point:

Covid-19 pandemic lockdown has seriously affected the learning process. Months of confinement and serious social distancing measures have prevented many students from acquiring the necessary skills in language learning which, in many ways, have undermined their self-esteem and increased the level of their anxiety.

I could notice that during the post COVID-19 pandemic lockdown the students' psychological state went extremely either up or down. The weak students got less motivated in working hard and to some extent lost self-confidence; while the more brilliant ones came with a huge ball of motivation and their self-esteem levels improved.

Question (05): Can you please describe your students' current attendance and participation rates as compared to before the pandemic?

This question aims to examine students' attendance and participation during the pandemic and to compare it to before the outbreak of COVID-19. The results showed that one teacher did not notice any change in students' attendance and participation rates as compared to before the pandemic. For another teacher, students' attendance and participation depend on the module taught in class. She indicated that when the module is boring or complicated, students' attendance and participation reduce. Two teachers, on the other hand, noted a

difference in students' attendance and participation in the classroom. One of them declared, "Classroom attendance has dramatically decreased following COVID-19 pandemic." The second teacher stated that "Regarding the attendance of students, only a minority were attending and participating."

Question (06): Can you please describe your students' current academic results as compared to before the pandemic?

This question seeks to determine if the students' academic results were affected by the pandemic of COVID-19. Based on the results, three teachers reported no change in students' academic achievements. Teachers' declarations "There is no big difference between students' current academic results compared to before the pandemic" and "The results are always satisfactory" illustrate this point. One teacher, on the other hand, indicated that students' achievements were influenced negatively by the pandemic in the assertion "Many students are struggling to assimilate the lessons and their results are seriously compromised by the Covid-19 measures."

Question (07): Did your students' self-confidence decrease as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? If yes, please report the signs you have noticed that indicated that your students became unconfident.

This question aims to determine if students' self-confidence decreased due to the pandemic. Two of the interviewed teachers did not observe any change in the levels of their students' self-confidence. For example, one of the teachers indicated, "My students had no self-confidence issue. One of the reasons is that I talk to them and listen to everyone's perspective about the pandemic before starting the lecture". Two teachers, on the other hand, detected a decrease in students' self-confidence. They related this decline in students' self-confidence to a decrease in their attendance and participation in the classroom. For example,

one of the teachers claimed that “Yes. It decreased. The signs I would mention are the decrease in attendance and participation.” The second teacher asserted that:

Yes. As it is already mentioned, some students’ self-confidence decreased and it can be noticed when asked to participate orally or express their own opinion. This category of students tends to say less and avoid discussing new points to avoid debates with other students and the teachers themselves.

Question (08): In your opinion, what are the factors that caused a decrease in your students’ self-confidence in the COVID-19 pandemic?

This question intends to gather information about the factors that caused a decrease in students’ self-confidence. Only the two teachers who noticed a decrease in students’ confidence answered the question. In their view, the confidence of students was influenced by the long break from their studies, and the lack of communication and guidance during the lockdown. One of the teachers said, “One of the facts is that they had spent too much time away from university and had not spoken English during that long while.” Another teacher stated that “the lack of communication and the lack of guidance, the students’ lose control, that is, they do not know how to learn without a teacher.”

Question (09): How do you boost your students’ self-confidence during the climate of COVID-19?

The objective of the question is to reveal the strategies used by teachers to enhance students’ self-confidence. Two of the interviewed teachers indicated that they do not use any specific strategy to enhance students’ self-confidence. For example, one of them said that “I did not change my teaching method as well as to my behaviour with them”. Only two teachers mentioned how they improve the confidence of their students. The first teacher indicated that she helps increase students’ self-confidence by “relying on some coping strategies that would help them confront their stress”. The second teacher acknowledged that she increases her students’ self-confidence by encouraging them to speak and express themselves freely in the classroom.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented the findings collected from the two tools used in the current research, the questionnaire distributed to seventy-seven students, and the interview answered by four teachers from the department of English at the University of Tizi-Ouzou. The following chapter discusses and interprets the results presented in this chapter.

Discussion of the Findings

Introduction

This chapter discusses the results obtained in this study from the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interviews conducted in the department of English at the University of Tizi-Ouzou. It intends to answer the questions formulated in the general introduction and confirm or refute the hypotheses suggested. The answers to these questions are examined and discussed in line with the questionnaire and interview findings.

The chapter is divided into four parts. The first section is about students' academic results, their self-confidence, and the problems they encountered before the emergence of COVID-19. The second section discusses the problems faced by students during the COVID-19 period. The third section deals with the changes in students' self-confidence during the COVID-19 period, both during and after the lockdown. The fourth part is concerned with relevant strategies applied by teachers and students to improve the level of self-confidence. This examination was made by referring to the theoretical framework proposed in the first chapter.

1. Students' Academic Results, Problems they Faced, and their Self-confidence before the Pandemic of COVID-19

From the respondents' answers, we found that more than 80% of the problems learners experienced before the outbreak of the COVID-19 situation were anxiety and low motivation (See Diagram 04). We also noticed that students did not have any issues with self-confidence during their learning process. We understand from the results that the main psychological problems that students may encounter in a standard learning environment are anxiety and low motivation. From the learners' responses to the fourth question, it is apparent that students' self-confidence before the COVID-19 situation was good; the results in Diagram 05 show that 85.69% of the total number of the participants' confidence ranged from average to very high. This follows Anwar's (2016: 224) statement that "Self-confidence is built because the

Discussion of the Findings

students have natural experience in the process of achieving learning goals and learning processes.” In other words, learning objectives and processes are attained via natural experience, which builds learners’ self-confidence.

As for the fifth question concerning the students’ academic results, more than 80% of the participants’ outcomes before the outbreak of COVID-19 fluctuated between average and very good (See Diagram 03). Indeed, these results mean that students with a high level of self-confidence perform well; the higher their level of confidence, the better their grades. This aligns with what Lone (2021:563) said that “Self-confidence was found as a predictor of academic performance. Better the self-confidence, better the academic performance.” In other words, self-confidence plays an influential role in academic achievements, and students who possess high self-confidence earn good academic results.

We can conclude from the results obtained from questions three, four, and five that in the absence of an overwhelming situation like the Coronavirus, learners possess high self-confidence, which helps them perform well in their learning process. The findings are compatible with Perry’s (2011: 224) statement that “Self-efficacy is the belief in one’s capability to execute the actions required to attain a goal, and, as such, is an attribute of confidence/self-confidence.” It means that when a person thinks they are capable of doing something and is confident about it, they will do it.

2. Problems Faced by Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The results of the ninth question revealed that the main psychological problems students faced during lockdown were low motivation with a percentage of 41.55% and anxiety with a percentage of 28.57%. We noticed that students’ motivation level decreased during the COVID-19 period, especially during the lockdown when students experienced a new and challenging situation that affected their motivation. This goes in accordance with Rahardjo and Pertiwi’s (2020) observation that students’ motivation was influenced by the sudden

Discussion of the Findings

change in their learning process. The learners also experienced anxiety as they were quarantined for more than five months. This is supported by Jehi et al.'s (2022) statement that the COVID-19 pandemic has touched the students' psychological state and increased their level of anxiety. This is a demonstration of the negative impact the quarantine had on students' psychological state.

This finding was supported by two out of the four interviewed teachers who were questioned about the possible changes in students' psychological state. They thought that the experience of a prolonged period away from the university strongly affected learners' self-esteem, motivation, self-confidence, and anxiety levels. In fact, not being able to attend university and lectures for six months under such stressful events influenced students' psychological state, and their desire and willingness to learn slowly faded from their minds. One of the interviewees claimed that the lockdown has affected the learning process and prevented many students from acquiring the necessary skills in language learning; the lockdown has affected their self-esteem and increased their anxiety levels. Another lecturer said that when learners returned to face-to-face learning, the weak ones became less motivated, while the brilliant ones did not change and were full of motivation.

The results also revealed that the students were not able to concentrate on their lessons and lost motivation to learn remotely. Indeed, when asked whether they were able to concentrate on their studies during the lockdown period, 62.33% of the respondents said no (See Diagram 06). Students were not able to concentrate because they lost motivation to learn; as the lockdown period took too long, they were distracted by other things but learning. This goes in direct line with what Prowse *et al.* (2021: 7) stated that:

Students have reported that the experience of online learning has resulted in significantly higher levels of stress and isolation as well as negative mood, and significantly lower levels of relatedness, concentration, focus, motivation, and performance compared to traditional face to face learning.

Discussion of the Findings

That is to say, the changes in the learning system during the pandemic lockdown affected students' motivation negatively and increased their isolation level. Indeed, students' level of motivation during the lockdown was influenced by the quality of their online learning.

We have asked another question to obtain more valid answers. We asked the participants about their comfort with online learning during the lockdown period. According to the data obtained, we deduce that a large number of respondents, representing 66.23%, were uncomfortable with the electronic learning system. This was mainly due to the lack of contact and interaction with teachers, unavailability of some of lectures on the university website, and lack of Internet access. These answers prove the failure of the learning techniques adopted by the university during this overwhelming situation. This was a new teaching technique, which means that students were more comfortable with the traditional way of learning than with this new temporary learning solution.

The results of question 07 about students' comfortableness with online learning were supported by the results obtained from question 08. Indeed, when asked about their learning experience during the pandemic lockdown, 49.35% of the students indicated that it was stressful and discouraging and 37.66% reported that it was challenging and unsatisfactory (See Diagram 08). This supports the findings obtained by Maqableh and Alia (2021) that many online learners were unsatisfied with their learning experience, especially during the first stage of the lockdown after the emergency shift to online learning.

After the lockdown period, students returned to the university environment to resume face-to-face learning. However, 70.12% of the students found it difficult to return to the university and learn under such difficult circumstances (See Diagram 10) and 58.44% felt lost after staying at home for so long (See Diagram 11). The students explained that they lost motivation to study and this can be observed in the percentage of their class participation and attendance. Indeed, the findings showed that 27.27% of the students became passive

recipients of teachers' input and 27.27% decided to skip their lectures (See Diagram 12). In the same vein, two out of the interviewed teachers noticed that students' attendance and participation decreased after the reopening of the university.

To sum up, the results revealed that students were uncomfortable and displeased with their online learning experience during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown. This discomfort and discontentment affected their motivation and anxiety levels. Indeed, students indicated that it was stressful and demotivating to learn under such conditions. However, the results showed that students' self-confidence was not affected as only 3.99% reported problems with self-confidence (See Diagram 09). This result is discussed in the next section of this chapter.

3. Students' Academic Results and Confidence during COVID-19

From question 13, which deals with students' academic results in the current climate of COVID-19, the diagram shows that 84.4% of the total number of students had average or above-average results during COVID-19. This indicates that the pandemic had not affected students' academic performance. The findings of the interviews also confirmed students' statements that teachers had not observed any changes regarding their students' academic performance or results. Three teachers stated that there were no changes in learners' academic achievements. Only one teacher noticed that students' results were affected by the pandemic. In fact, learners who possess high confidence perform well even during stressful situations. This goes hand in hand with Bandura's (1994:02) view:

“A strong sense of efficacy enhances human accomplishment and well-being in many ways. People with high assurance in their capabilities approach difficult tasks as challenges to be mastered rather than as threats to be avoided.”

In other words, people with high self-confidence maintain their performance through complex situations such as COVID-19 and consider these sensitive situations as obstacles to overcome, which boost their confidence automatically.

Discussion of the Findings

This is supported by the results obtained from Question 15. Indeed, as seen in Diagram 15, the participants' level of confidence during the COVID-19 pandemic is average and above average, with a combined percentage of 84.40%. Comparing the results before (See Diagram 05) and after the COVID-19 situation shows that COVID-19 has not affected students' self-confidence. According to the results obtained from question seven of the interview, teachers confirm the same thing, as two teachers did not observe any change in the levels of their students' self-confidence. This goes in accordance with Dornyei's (2001:87) statement that:

Strong sense of self efficacy enhances people's achievement behaviour by helping them to approach threatening situations with confidence, to maintain a task rather than self diagnostic focus during task involvement, and to heighten and sustain effort in the face of failure.

This means that learners who possess a high sense of self-efficacy deal with dangerous situations with confidence and efficiency. They put more focus and effort into completing challenging tasks instead of only diagnosing the obstacles. On the other hand, two teachers detected a decrease in students' self-confidence. Among the signs teachers reported regarding the change in the learners' confidence is a diminution in attendance and participation. This supports the results of question 12, as 27.27% of the students did not attend their lectures, and the same percentage (27.27%) became passive learners.

These teachers' declarations regarding the decrease in students' self-confidence are supported by the questionnaire results, as 22.06% of the students felt unconfident when they had to perform a given task or take an exam in the current climate of COVID-19 (See Diagram 14), and 15.57% had low and very low self-confidence (See Diagram 15). Both teachers and students mentioned the causes that affected the learners' self-confidence. The students reported that one of the causes is overthinking the danger of the situation since they kept thinking about it all the time instead of putting their attention into useful things such as their studies. Another reason is the lack of activity during the lockdown, during which learners had plenty of time to think negatively instead of performing tasks to develop their

Discussion of the Findings

social skills, and this threatened their self-confidence. The data collected from the teachers' interviews revealed that the factors influencing students' confidence are the long break from their studies and the lack of communication and guidance during the lockdown. In other words, spending too much time away from an environment conducive to learning and the absence of a teacher to explain the lessons well have impacted students' learning confidence. This aligns with the results of a study that compared Swiss students' social networks and mental health before and during the COVID-19 crisis and showing that students experienced worries about COVID-19, isolation in social networks, lack of interaction, emotional support, and physical isolation (Elmer *et al.*, 2020).

In conclusion, students' levels of self-confidence remained the same as before the pandemic. It did not diminish, which means that the COVID-19 pandemic did not affect students' confidence. The high level of self-confidence made students more robust in the face of the crisis. Therefore, the first hypothesis, which stipulates that the COVID-19 pandemic has affected third-year EFL students' self-confidence, and the second hypothesis, which suggests that third-year EFL students' self-confidence decreased as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, are both invalid.

4. Techniques Used to Boost Students' Confidence

When students were asked if their teachers helped them boost their self-confidence in the current climate of COVID-19, 38.96% answered the question positively, whereas 61.09% replied to the same question negatively (See Diagram 17). This indicates that most teachers did not help their learners or failed to boost their confidence. Learners need teachers' help to overcome difficult situations, such as COVID-19, and to succeed academically; students need to have high self-confidence and increase it by relying on specific techniques and strategies. It is critical to consider how the students' environment influences their self-confidence.

Discussion of the Findings

Those students who answered the question positively explained the strategies their teachers had used. The majority of the respondents (16.66%) stated that teachers advised them to believe in their abilities. Teachers also employed supportive strategies such as complimenting students' efforts and successes, encouraging them to ask questions, offering positive feedback, and creating a supportive learning environment. This is consistent with **one** Bandura's (1994) self-efficacy theory sources, social persuasion, which states that the encouragement a person receives from the surrounding people helps them to believe in their capacity to succeed. This means that strengthening people's beliefs by convincing them that they have what it takes to succeed and helping them with positive talk increase their confidence.

We asked the teachers the same question in the interview. From the results, we observed that only half of the interviewees (Two out of four) mentioned their methods. One teacher argued that he relied on some coping strategies that helped students confront their stress. This follows one of Bandura's self-efficacy theory sources, emotional arousal. Emotional arousal deals with a person's psychological state that can influence their beliefs about their capacities to complete a given task (Bandura, 1994). It helps to minimise people's stress because of their negative emotional reactions to certain situations. Another lecturer said that she encouraged her learners to speak and express themselves freely in the classroom. This proves that communication between teachers and students is important to make them feel safe to express themselves and not be afraid of making mistakes. This goes with what Dornyei (2001) discovered that one of the most direct ways to help students increase their confidence is by encouraging them to do things. He said, "Build your learners' confidence by providing regular encouragement." (ibid: 91). He further explained, "Encouragement can either explicitly make the learner aware of personal strength and abilities, or it can indirectly communicate that we trust the person" (ibid). It means that encouragement opens students' minds to believe in

Discussion of the Findings

themselves and their abilities to achieve things, and it builds a trusting relationship between them and their teachers, which boosts their confidence.

In the same context, when students were asked about the strategies they adopted to reinforce their self-confidence, some learners (23.37%) acknowledged that they try to manage their anxiety levels and calm themselves down before doing anything. This goes hand in hand with one of Bandura's self-efficacy theory sources, which is emotional arousal, previously mentioned in the theoretical chapter of this work. Other respondents (23.37%) stated that they use their previous successful learning experiences as a source of self-confidence. This also aligns with one of Bandura's (1994) self-efficacy theory sources, mastery experience, which says that personal achievements and experiences influence an individual's sense of confidence, as positive achievements increase it and failure experiences decrease it. Some participants (5%) declared that they take successful students with the same abilities as their own as role models. Bandura (1994:03) believes that "Seeing people similar to oneself succeed by sustained effort raises observers' beliefs that they too possess the capabilities to master comparable activities required to succeed." In other words, when people see others with the same capacities succeed, they develop the confidence and strength to achieve success and reach the same goals; they motivate themselves by observing others. Other participants (16.88%) declared that they did not boost their self-confidence. If learners' confidence is high, they do not need to improve it. This goes directly with what Perry (2011:224) declared, "Self-efficacy includes an individualised ability within the contextual condition to change or adapt through psychological, emotional, or physiological changes." That is to say, efficacy beliefs help to maintain self-confidence even in the presence of problems by coping with and adapting to them. Like in the case of COVID-19, efficacy beliefs helped students maintain and strengthen their confidence.

Discussion of the Findings

To conclude, teachers and students employed strategies to maintain and increase self-confidence during the COVID-19 pandemic, which confirms the third hypothesis proposed in this dissertation, which stipulates that teachers and students use specific techniques to enhance students' self-confidence in the COVID-19 pandemic.

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the results obtained from the students' questionnaire and the teachers' interviews conducted in the department of English at the University of Tizi-Ouzou. Based on the self-efficacy theory proposed by Bandura in 1994, this discussion has provided clear answers to the proposed questions and tested the hypotheses presented in the general introduction, showing that third-year EFL students' self-confidence did not change during the COVID-19 pandemic. Thus, from the students' responses, it can be seen that this period was not pleasant for them, as it caused different difficulties. Yet, none of these challenges affected their academic performance or their self-confidence. Since the results obtained before and during this period are similar, it shows that students use different strategies to enhance their self-confidence with the help of some of their teachers.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

The present dissertation investigated EFL learners' self-confidence during the COVID-19 pandemic. More specifically, it attempted to find out whether the pandemic of COVID-19 affected students' level of self-confidence. In addition, the study tried to determine the techniques used by teachers and students to increase the level of students' self-confidence.

To achieve these research objectives, a case study was conducted in the department of English at the University of Tizi-Ouzou and involved a group of seventy-seven third-year students and four teachers. In order to collect data to answer the formulated research questions and check the validity of the set hypotheses, two research instruments were used. A questionnaire that comprised eighteen questions was administered to the students, and nine interview questions were sent via email to the teachers. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected making the research method a mixed-method one.

The mixed method approach was used to analyse the gathered data. More specifically, quantitative data were analysed using the Rule of Three in order to obtain percentages. The obtained findings were presented in tables and diagrams that were generated using Microsoft Office Excel. Qualitative data were treated using Qualitative Content Analysis. The discussion of the findings was made by reference to Bandura's (1994) Self-efficacy Theory, which constituted the theoretical framework of the study.

The findings revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic did not influence the level of students' self-confidence. This disconfirms the first research hypothesis that states that "The COVID-19 pandemic has affected third-year EFL students' self-confidence." This means that students' self-confidence did not decrease as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The different challenges that students faced during and after the lockdown did not influence their self-confidence level. The results indicated that most of the students were confident before, during, and after the lockdown. Therefore, the second study hypothesis is also rejected. The stability of students' self-confidence level might be due to the fact that both teachers and

General Conclusion

students employ some self-confidence boosting techniques. Indeed, the results of the questionnaire and interview demonstrated that teachers and students use specific techniques to enhance self-confidence during COVID-19 pandemic. This validates the third hypothesis listed in the general introduction of this dissertation.

Like any other research study, this dissertation has some limitations. The first limitation concerns the way the interviews were conducted. Due to teachers' unavailability to conduct face-to-face interviews, we were obliged to rely on asynchronous email interviewing. Email interviews prevented us from obtaining detailed answers and clarifying ambiguities for the teachers. Another limitation lies in the number of interviewed teachers. Only four teachers answered the interview questions, making the generalization of the findings difficult. The obtained findings also cannot be generalized to all third-year students in the department of English at the University of Tizi-Ouzou, as the study only involved seventy-seven students.

The aim of the study was to determine whether the COVID-19 pandemic influenced students' self-confidence. However, the results revealed that COVID-19 affected students' motivation and not their self-confidence. Therefore, upcoming research should investigate the link between students' motivation and the pandemic of COVID-19 and involve a larger sample. Future researchers can also examine the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic on students' anxiety levels.

Bibliography

Bibliography

- Abdullah, G., Isnanto & Vidiyanti, N. P. Y. (2019). Student's Self-Confidence and their Learning Achievement on Elementary Schools. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*,382, pp. 152-155.
- Akbari, O. & Sahibzada, J.(2020). Students' Self-confidence and its Impact on their Learning Process. *American International Journal of Social Science Research*, 5(1), pp. 1-15.
- Al-Hebaish, S. M.(2012). The Correlation between General Self-Confidence and Academic Achievement in the Oral Presentation Course. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2, pp. 60-65.
- Alvi, M. (2016). *A Manual for Selecting Sampling Techniques in Research*. [Online] Availabale at: <https://mpira.ub.uni-muenchen.de/70218/> [Accessed 26 July 2022].
- Anwar, K. (2016). Panel Discussion and the Development of Students' Self Confidence. *English Language Teaching*, 9(4), pp. 224-229.
- Ballane, G. (2019). *Understanding of Self-confidence in High School Students*. Doctoral Thesis. Walden University, United States.
- Bandura, A.(1965). Influence of Models' Reinforcement Contingencies of the Acquisition of Imitative Responses. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* , 1(6), pp. 1-7.
- Bandura, A.(1994). Self-Efficacy. *Encyclopedia of Human Behaviour*, 4, pp. 71-81.
- Bauman, C., Rousseau, H., Tarquinio, C., Batt., M., Tarquinio, B., Lebreuilly., R. & Sorsano, C. (2021). Effect of the COVID-19 Outbreak and Lockdown on Mental Health among Post-secondary Students in the Grand East Region of France: Results of the PIMS-CoV19 Study. *Health and Quality of Life Outcome*, pp. 1-10.
- Beldjenna,T.(2019). *Investigating the Role of Students' Self Confidence in Enhacing their Speaking Skill: The Case of First Year LMD Students in the Department of English at Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou*. Master Dissertation. Mouloud Mammeri Univerity of Tizi-Ouzou, Algeria.

Bibliography

- Berber, K. (2020). EFL Teachers' Perception and Experiences with the Moodle Platform during COVID-19 Pandemic: A Case Study at the University of Tizi-Ouzou, Algeria. *Journal of Studies in Language, Culture, and Society (JSLCS)*, 3 (3), pp. 11-23.
- Brophy, J. (2004). *Motivating Students to Learn*. 2nd ed. Mahwah, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Brown, D. H. (2001). *Teaching by Principles an Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. 2nd ed. New York: Pearson ESL.
- Browning, M. H. E. M. et al. (2021). Psychological Impacts from COVID-19 among University Students: Risk Factors across Seven States in the United States. *PLoS ONE*, 16(01), pp. 1-27.
- Chelghoume, A. & Chelghoume, H., (2020). The Covid-19 Pandemic and Education: Big Changes ahead for Teaching in Algeria. *ALTRALANG Journal*, 02(02), pp. 118-132.
- Choi, B., Jegatheeswaran, L., Minocha, A., Alhilani, M., Nakhoul, M. & Mutengesa, E. (2020). The Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Final Year Medical Students in the United Kingdom: A National Survey. *BMC Medical Education*, 20, pp. 1-11.
- Creswell, J. W. (2009). *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Methods Approaches*. 3rd ed. Los Angeles: SAGE.
- Dawadi, S., Shrestha, S. & Giri, A. R. (2021). Mixed-methods Research: A Discussion on its Types, Challenges, and Criticisms. *Journal of Practical Studies in Education*, 2(2), pp. 25-36.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2001). *Motivational Strategies in the Language Classroom*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2005). *The Psychology of the Language Learner: Individual Differences in Second Language Acquisition*. 1st ed. Mahwah, New Jersey : Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

- Elmer, T., Mepham, K. & Stadtfeld, C. (2020.) Students under Lockdown: Comparisons of Students' Social Networks and Mental Health before and during the COVID-19 Crisis in Switzerland. *PLoS ONE*, 15(7), pp. 1-22.
- Fiorillo, A. & Gorwood, P. (2020). The Consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Mental Health and Implications for Clinical Practice. *European Psychiatry*, 63(1), pp. 1-2.
- Hamidouche, M. (2021). COVID-19 Epidemic in Algeria: Assessment of the Implemented Preventive Strategy. *Journal of Contemporary Studies Epidemiology and Public Health*, 02(01), pp. 1-7.
- Hannan, A., Islam, N. & Uddin, J. (2020). Self-confidence as an Immune-modifying Psychotherapeutic Intervention for COVID-19 Patients and Understanding of its Connection to CNS-endocrine-immune Axis. *Journal of Advanced Biotechnology and Experimental Therapeutics*, 3(4), pp. 14-17.
- Harris, R.(2011). *The Confidence Gap*. London: Robinson.
- Hsieh, H.-F. & Shannon, S. E.(2005). Three Approches to Qualitative Content Analysis. *Qualitative Health Research*, 15(9), pp. 1277-1288.
- Islam, M.A., Barna, S.D., Raihan, H., Khan, M.N.A. & Hossain, M.T. (2020). Depression and Anxiety among University Students during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Bangladesh: A Web-based Cross-sectional Survey. *PLOS ONE*, 15(8), pp. 1-12.
- Jabor, I. A., Ghani, A. A. & Abdulhussain, H. A. (2017). The Role of Self-confidence Effectiveness for English Language Learners. *Mustansiriyah Journal of Arts* , 41 (77), pp. 1-21.
- Jamila, M. (2014). Lack of Confidence – A Psychological Factor Affecting Spoken English of University Level Adult Learners in Bangladesh. *Language in India*, 14 (10), pp. 156-168.

- Jehi, T., Khan, R., Dos Santos, H. & Majzoub, N. (2022). Effect of COVID 19 Outbreak on Anxiety among Students of Higher Education; A Review of Literature. *Current Psychology*, pp. 1-15.
- Lin, H. C. & Chen, C. C. (2021). Disease Prevention Behaviour during the COVID-19 Pandemic and the Role of Self-Esteem: An Extended Parallel Process Model. *Psychology Research and Behavior Management*, 14, pp. 123-135.
- Llic, J., Radovic , K., Savic-Stankovic, T., Popovac, A., Miletic, V., Lemic, A. M. (2021). The Effect of COVID-19 Pandemic on Final Year Dental Students' Self-confidence Level in Performing Clinical Procedures. *PloS ONE*, 16(10), pp. 1-15.
- Lone, R. A. (2021). Self-confidence among Students and its Impact on their Academic Performance: A Systematic Review. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts (IJCRT)*, 09(05), pp. 561-565.
- Lounis, M. (2020). COVID-19 in Algeria: Chronology and Evaluation of Preventive Actions. *European Journal of Medical and Educational Technologies*, 13(1), pp. 1-4.
- Lune, H. & Bruce, L. B. (2017). *Qualitative Research Methods for the Social Sciences*. 9th ed. Edinburgh Gate Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Maddux, J. E.(1995). *Self-efficacy, Adaptation, and Adjustment: Theory, Research, and Application*. 1st ed. New York: Plenum Press.
- Mali, D. & Lim, H. (2021) How do Students Perceive Face-to-Face Learning/Blended Learning as Results of COVID-19 Pandemic? *The International of Management Education*. 19(03), pp. 1-17.
- Malureanu, A., Panisoara, G. & Lazar, I. (2021). The Relationship between Self-Confidence, Self-Efficacy, Grit, Usefulness, and Ease of Use of e-Learning Platforms in Corporate Learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic.*Sustainability*, 13(12), pp. 1-20.

Bibliography

- Maqableh, M. & Alia, M. (2021). Evaluation Online Learning of Undergraduate Students under Lockdown amidst COVID-19 Pandemic: The Online Learning Experience and Students' Satisfaction. *Children and Youth Services Review*, 128, pp. 1-11.
- Meeter, M., Bele, T., Den Hartogh, C.F., Bakker, T., De Vries, R.E. & Plak, S. (2020). *College Students' Motivation and Study Results after COVID-19 Stay-at-home Orders*. [Online]. Available at: <https://psyarxiv.com/kn6v9/> [Accessed 21 May 2022].
- Murry, D. (2006). *Coming out Asperger Diagnosis, Disclosure and Self-confidence*. 1st ed. London & Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Nabavi, R. T. (2012). *Social Learning*. [Online]. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/267750204_Bandura%27s_Social_Learning_Theory_Social_Cognitive_Learning_Theory. [Accessed 22 May 2022].
- Ni, H.(2012). The Effects of Affective Factors in SLA and Pedagogical Implications. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2(7), pp. 1509-1513.
- Perry, P. (2011). Concept Analysis:Confidence/Self-confidence. *Nursing Forum*, 46(4), pp. 218-230.
- Prabhat, A., Kumar, A. & Bhardwaj, S. K. (2022). Prolonged Lockdown due to COVID-19 Alters Sleep–Wake Timings and Negatively Affects Self-esteem, Personality, Depression and Anxiety in College-Going Indian Students. *Sleep and Vigilance*, 6(1), pp. 199-210.
- Prowse, R., Sherratt, F., Abizaid, A., Gabrys, R.L., Hellemans, K.G.C., Patterson, Z.R. & McQuaid R.J. (2021). Coping with the COVID-19 Pandemic: Examining Gender Differences in Stress and Mental Health among University Students. *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 12, pp. 1-11.
- Rahardjo, A. (2020). Learning Motivation and Students' Achievements in Learning English: A Case Study at Secondary School Students in the Covid-19 Pandemic Situation. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Literature*. 1(2), pp. 54-64.

- Rapanta, C., Botturi, L., Goodyear, P., Guàrdia, L. & Koole, M. (2020). Online University Teaching during and after the Covid-19 Crisis: Refocusing Teacher Presence and Learning Activity. *Postdigital Science and education*, 2, pp. 923-945.
- Ratislavová, K. & Ratislav, J. (2014). Asynchronous Email Interview as a Qualitative Research Method in the Humanities. *Human Affaire*, 24 (4), pp. 452-460.
- Richards, J. C. & Schmidt, R. (2010). *Longman Dictionary of Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*. 4th ed. London: Pearson ESL.
- Roopa, S. M. R. (2017). Questionnaire Designing for a Survey. *The Journal of Indian Orthodontic Society*, 46(2), pp. 277-273.
- Salahshoori, I. et al. (2021). Overview of COVID-19 Disease: Virology, Epidemiology, Prevention Diagnosis, Treatment, and Vaccines. *Biologics*, 1, pp. 2-40.
- Schunk, D., Meece, J. & Pintrich, P. (2014). *Motivation in Education: Theory, Research and Applications*. 4th ed. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited.
- Shri, R. (2010). Anxiety: Causes and Management. *The Journal of Behavioral Science*, 5(1), pp. 100-118.
- Subedi, S., Nayaju, S., Subedi, S., Shah, S. K. & Shah, J.S. (2020). Impact of E-Learning during COVID-19 Pandemic among Nursing Students and Teachers of Nepal. *International Journal of Science and Health Care Research*, 05(03), pp. 68-76.
- Tahir, T., Ahmed, Q. W., Batool, S., Ishfaq, U., Zaman, A. & Minaz, M. (2021). Effects of Depression on the Academic Learning of Students at University Level. *Linguistica Antverpiensia*, 3, pp. 7407- 7420.
- Torelli, V., Tran, E. T. & Lomiguen, C. (2021). The Effect of COVID-19 on Medical Student Confidence. *The FASEB Journal*, 35(21).

Bibliography

Tripathy, M. & Srivastava, S. K. (2012). To Study the Effect of Academic Achievement on the Level of Self-confidence. *International Journal of Yoga and Allied Sciences*, 1(1), pp. 33-45.

UNESCO. (2021). *UNESCO Support: Education Response to COVID-19*. [Online] Available at: <https://en.unesco.org/covid19/educationresponse/support>. [Accessed 17 April 2022].

Usher, K., Durkin, J. & Bhullar, N. (2020). The COVID-19 Pandemic and Mental Health Impacts. *International Journal of Mental Health Nursing*, 29(3), pp. 315-318.

Wang, C. & Zhao, H. (2020). The Impact of COVID-19 on Anxiety in Chinese University Students. *Frontiers in Psychology*, pp. 1-8.

Appendices

Appendix 01: Students' Questionnaire

Dear students,

This questionnaire aims to collect data about your self-confidence during the COVID-19 pandemic. We will be extremely grateful if you could answer the following questions as honestly as possible. Your answers will be treated with confidentiality and will be used for research purposes only.

Self-confidence is a feeling of trust in yourself and in your own abilities to succeed.

Instructions: Tick (✓) the right answer(s) or give full answers when necessary.

Section One : Personal Information

1. How old are you?
2. Please specify your gender Male Female

Section Two: Before the Pandemic of COVID-19

3. How were your academic results before the outbreak of COVID-19?
 Very bad Bad Average Good Very good
4. Have you experienced any of these problems before the outbreak of COVID-19?
 Anxiety Low motivation Low self-esteem Low self-confidence
5. How was your level of self-confidence before the pandemic?
 Very low Low Average High Very high

Section Three: The COVID-19 Pandemic Lockdown

6. Were you able to concentrate on your studies during the pandemic lockdown?
 Yes No

If no, please justify your answer

.....

7. Were you comfortable with online learning during the pandemic lockdown?

- Yes No

If the answer is no, please explain why.....

.....

.....

8. Please describe your learning experience during the pandemic lockdown

- Stressful and discouraging Challenging and unsatisfactory Successful and encouraging

9. Have you experienced any of these problems during the lockdown?

- Anxiety Low motivation Low self-confidence None

Section Four: Back to the University

10. Was it difficult to go back to the university under such circumstances?

- Yes No

11. Did you feel lost after the long break?

- Yes No

If the answer is yes, please explain the reason(s).....

.....

12. What kind of learner have you become after the reopening of the university?

- Active Passive I do not attend my lectures

13. How are your academic results in the current climate of COVID-19?

- Very bad Bad Average Good Very good

14. To what extent do you agree or disagree with this statement “I usually feel unconfident when I have to perform a given task or take an exam in the current climate of COVID-19”.

- Strongly disagree Disagree neither agree nor disagree (Neutral) agree
 strongly agree.

15. How is your level of self-confidence in the current climate of COVID-19?

- Very low Low Average High Very high

16. If the level of your self-confidence is very low; or low, please specify the factor (s) that caused a decrease in your self-confidence in the COVID-19 pandemic?

.....
.....

17. Do your teachers help you to boost your self-confidence in the current climate of COVID-19?

- Yes No

If the answer is yes, please indicate how.

Advise you to believe in your own abilities.

Praise your efforts and accomplishments.

Encourage you to ask questions.

Provide positive feedback.

set a favourable climate for learning.

Others, please specify.....

Appendices

18. How do you enhance your self-confidence during the COVID-19 pandemic?

- I do not boost my self-confidence.
- I use my previous successful learning experiences as a source of self-confidence.
- I take successful students with the same abilities as mine as role models.
- I try to manage my anxiety levels and calm myself down before performing any task.
- Others, please specify.....

Thank you for your cooperation.

Mr. Farid BOUHADAD

Ms. Nawal OUKACI

Master II Students (Didactics of Foreign Languages)

Mouloud Mammeri University, Tizi-Ouzou

Appendix 02: Teachers' Interview Questions

Dear teachers,

The interview questions provided below, aim to collect data about students' self-confidence during the COVID-19 pandemic. Your answers will be anonymous and used for academic purposes; therefore, we will really appreciate it if you could answer the questions.

1. What is your gender?
2. What type of academic degree do you hold?
3. How long have you been teaching in the department?
4. What did you notice about your students' psychological state (Motivation and anxiety levels, self-esteem, self-confidence ...) after the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

5. Can you please describe your students' current attendance and participation rates as compared to before the pandemic?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

6. Can you please describe your students' current academic results as compared to before the pandemic?

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Appendices

7. Did your students' self-confidence decrease as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic? If the answer is yes, please report the signs you have noticed that indicated that your students became unconfident.

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

8. According to you, what are the factors that caused a decrease in your students' self-confidence in the COVID-19 pandemic?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

9. How do you boost your students' self-confidence during the COVID-19 pandemic?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Thank you for your cooperation.

Mr. Farid BOUHADAD

Ms. Nawal OUKACI

Master II Students (Didactics of Foreign Languages)

Mouloud Mammeri University, Tizi-Ouzou