

Mateo Hysa

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Title: The effect that distance learning has on a students ability to perform well in school.

Abstract

Distance learning, which has been introduced at a much greater scale as a result of the ongoing pandemic, impacts the way that students learn simply because they are not in a normal classroom setting. As a result of students not being in a classroom setting, they face issues relating to them being able to concentrate, actually attending lectures(due to internet issues), and taking exams in a fair and timely manner. With a shift to distance learning, many people look for the answer to the question “Do students perform better in school in an online setting?” As a student that was forced into distance learning, I find myself performing better on exams and class assessments in an online environment. This agrees with the results that are demonstrated in the report as students tend to have greater motivation and perform better when utilizing the internet to learn(Abdel-Maksoud 11). Although several studies were conducted and the findings resulted in the acknowledgement of distance learning positively impacting students, some students will find it easier to learn in a physical environment, specifically those in lower grade levels(k-12), as they are more accustomed to learning environments where the teacher is much more involved with them(Loeb 8). By utilizing past research as well as a survey that I conducted asking students in and around the same grade level that I am in, I came to the conclusion that students perform better on assessments that are taken in an online environment, as this idea was represented in the responses of 8 of the 10 students that I surveyed. Distance learning forces

students to become more independent, as they will have to develop time management skills, self study skills, and organizational skills, but it ultimately positively impacts the performance of students.

Introduction

In March of 2020, the World Health Organization declared that the novel coronavirus was a pandemic. The virus changed the lives of many, as schooling fully transitioned into a distance learning format. Having taken classes online for about 6 months now, students can assess their academic performance in an online environment and compare their grades in an online setting to those that they received when they were taught in a physical setting. An important question that this report revolves around relates to how a shift to distance learning impacts a student's ability to perform well in school. If students are able to learn in an online environment then, as a result of my experience with online learning, those that follow all instructions and take responsibility for their schoolwork will perform better because online learning offers more opportunities to learn as lectures can be recorded and tutoring is available around the clock, but the financial stability of most students must be taken into consideration as lack of equity in learning can negatively impact a student's experience (Lederman 22). Previous studies demonstrate statistics that prove that distance learning can have a positive and negative impact on students as grades are not independent of students' financial status and access to the internet. In this report we will be utilizing past studies while also creating our own data as I have surveyed 10 of my friends that have been impacted by the shift to distance learning.

Methods

To answer the question “How does distance learning influence a student's ability to perform well?” we must first research how and when distance learning was first introduced. Distance learning has been around for quite some time, but the recent pandemic has caused a large scale transition to distance learning. As a result, there are many credible professors and students that can offer insight on the situation. This is demonstrated in the interviews conducted by Doug Lederman as he asks professors a series of questions relating to how distance learning impacted them and their students, to which they had mixed responses. After attaining some background information on the subject, we must then search for some physical data or experimentation that can help us determine how online learning influences students. Nahed Abdel-Maksoub offered results on an experiment that he conducted on students attending university in Egypt. Students were separated into a control group(N=57) and an experimental group(N=59) where the experimental group was taught in an online environment and the control group learned in the normal classroom. The experimental group performed better overall as they received higher grades and were more motivated than the control group. After gathering information presented by credible authors and finding past experiments relating to the subject I conducted my own experiment by surveying 10 peers that did not undergo any extremely extraordinary circumstances during the shift and asking how their performance in school changed as a result of the change to distance learning, comparing their grades and motivation in the regular classroom to their grades and motivation in the online classroom.

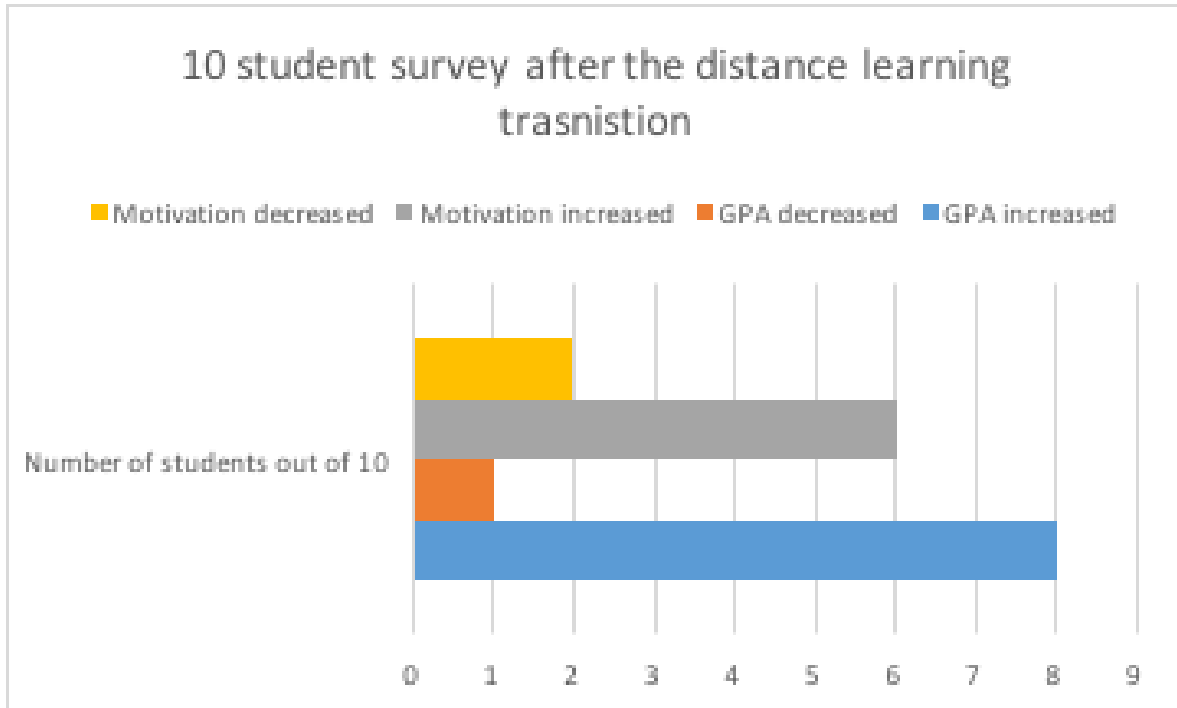
Results

It is demonstrated that students of higher grade levels are able to perform better in an online setting. The table below demonstrates that 80% of the students surveyed performed better and 60% of students surveyed were more motivated while taking classes online. The results support

the hypothesis, but the sample size is too small and not diverse enough. There are many factors that can put students at a disadvantage when learning online such as vision impairment, which is demonstrated in a 2011 study that shows that students with the impairment performed worse in an online test as opposed to a paper test(Terada 13).

Student Survey relating to GPA and Motivation in online school

Student	Did Your GPA increase by at least a letter grade(ie. B to B+)?	Did your GPA decrease by at least a letter grade(ie. B+ to B)?	Did your motivation increase with the transition to distance learning?	Did your motivation decrease with the transition to distance learning?
1	yes	no	yes	no
2	yes	no	yes	no
3	yes	no	yes	no
4	no	yes	no	yes
5	yes	no	yes	no
6	yes	no	yes	no
7	yes	no	yes	no
8	no	no	no	yes
9	yes	no	no	no
10	yes	no	no	no



Discussion

The results of the survey demonstrate the idea that students tend to perform better in an online environment. However, this survey is mostly representative of college level students. 8 of the 10 students surveyed were in college at the time and 1 of the 2 students that reported a decrease in performance during the transition was in highschool. This may relate to the idea that students in K-12 may perform better in a run of the mill classroom environment as they are more accustomed to the teacher being more involved and are not used to having to be fully responsible for their own work. It is known that in-person classes, on average, are more effective in teaching students that are younger and less able to take care of themselves(Loeb 8). There are many factors that must be considered when determining whether a shift to online learning positively or negatively impacts a student's performance, and these factors can't be controlled on a large scale, so a student's change in performance can't be traced back to a particular reason.

Conclusion

_____ Although the results of the report demonstrate that distance learning positively influences students' performance, there may be some limitations relating to what other factors influence student performance. The limitations include but aren't limited to financial ability, internet connection, and computer savviness. Since grades generally depend on assessments, and assessments in an online environment are very different from those given in a physical setting, students react differently when being monitored while taking tests online(Rago 3). This reaction could result in a positive or negative impact on students' grades overall.

References

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