

Impact of university E-Learning environment on value orientations of students

Shabden Meruyert^a, al-Farabi Kazakh National University, 050040, Almaty, 71 al-Farabi Ave., Republic of Kazakhstan,

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3491-5340>

Bulatbaeva Aigul^b, al-Farabi Kazakh National University, 050040, Almaty, 71 al-Farabi Ave., Republic of Kazakhstan,

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4991-8539>

Doshybekov Aidyn^c, Kazakh Academy of Sports and Tourism, 050022, Almaty, 85 Abay Ave., Kazakhstan,

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4284-3722>

Shalabayeva Laura^{d1}, Kazakh Academy of Sports and Tourism, 050022, Almaty, 85 Abay Ave., Kazakhstan,

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2231-7888>

Kozhabergenova Gaukhar Esenbaevna^e, M.Kh.Dulaty Taraz Regional University, Taraz, Suleymenov, 7, Kazakhstan,

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4924-9777>

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Abstract

Transferring values to future generations have become one of the important aims of education. This study aims to evaluate students' views on the role of the online learning environment on the value orientations of university students. This study was carried out using the case study method, one of the qualitative research methods. The study group of the research consists of 25 students studying at various universities in Kazakhstan in the fall semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. The researchers created a semi-structured interview form to determine the role of the online learning environment on the value orientations of university students. As a result of the research, students found online learning advantageous in terms of gaining self-confidence, responsibility, a comfortable life, adaptability, respect for others, and acceptance of norms. They stated that the online learning environment is disadvantageous in terms of success, happiness, excitement, friendship, sharing, cultural and universal values.

Keywords: E-Learning Environment; Kazakhstan; university environment; values; value orientations.

* ADDRESS FOR CORRESPONDENCE: Shalabayeva Laurad , Kazakh Academy of Sports and Tourism, 050022, Almaty, 85 Abay Ave., Kazakhstan, E-mail address: lolabany84@mail.ru

1. Introduction

The main purpose of the education and training programs has been to maximize the knowledge and culture level of the individuals who make up the society and to bring certain values to individuals both professionally and socially (Wamsler, 2020). The survival of a society depends on keeping its values alive. For this reason, transferring values to future generations has become one of the important aims of education. For this purpose, national and universal values were included in the curriculum of the courses given in schools, and it was aimed to bring these values to individuals with different methods.

1.1. Theoretical and conceptual framework

The more important the culture is in the study of societies from a sociological point of view, the more important are the values. The values that are lived and kept alive in the culture are one of the most basic dynamics of society. People gain knowledge about what to do and what not to do in society, thanks to values. Values serve as a guiding and guiding life guide for people. They are decisive criteria, starting with our way of thinking, forming our attitudes, and ultimately reflecting on our behaviours. Values have extremely important functions in terms of enabling the individual to hold on to life tightly. Various value studies are carried out in England and Europe on the concept of value, which became famous with Weber. However, there are still different understandings of the term "value" (Halstead and Taylor, 2005).

Values are one of the basic elements of people's life philosophies. It is possible to find a person's view of life and philosophy in the system of values he has. The system of values directs our lives, directs our behaviours, and helps us to form our character integrity (Rokeach, 1973). According to Schwartz (1992), values are criteria that individuals use to characterize other people and events, including themselves, to select and legitimize their actions. In this context, it can be said that values show an orientation both "from the inside/from the individual to the individual" and "from the inside to the outside/from the individual to the society". Because internalized values prepare the ground for evaluating both oneself and others.

In particular, the values of young people are more prone to change depending on environmental conditions (Bardi & Schwartz, 1996). Instilling value judgments begins in the family and continues during the education process. One of the main functions of education is to bring values to individuals (Boehnke, Hadjar, & Baier, 2007). Values education tries to find ways to strengthen the transfer of values in education. This transfer is related to the curriculum and moral atmosphere in the school. Critical thinking aims to develop my thoughts on values and value development through the comparison and analysis of ideas (Veugelers, 2000). Online learning environments, which have been used more intensively with the distance education process, have provided advantages in terms of providing students with spatial flexibility, eliminating time-related problems, and providing interaction and interoperability (Curran, 2002).

With the transfer of everything to the electronic environment in the distance education process, our perceptions of the classroom have also changed. In his research on virtual classroom management, Can (2020) stated that the classroom environment in distance education is different from face-to-face education, and a classroom environment based on visual, audio, and interaction is created under the management and control of teachers by using virtual software. The four-wall classroom with tables, chairs, boards, and boards has turned into online classes that you can join from wherever you are. The classroom environment has been the house where the students live, the car they travel in, the cafeteria, the workplaces they work, and similar points of life. The classroom environment, where students can't see each other most of the time, has reduced sharing and the sense of community has left its place for individuality. The learner profile has changed in this process and continues to change rapidly.

1.2. Related research

In recent years, the number of research in the field of values education has been increasing in the world, but this research mostly focuses on value teaching methods, classification, and definition of value topics. Research in this area should also be research that will determine how the important values of the society will be transferred to students (Silcock & Duncan, 2001).

Ogelman and Sarikaya (2015) evaluated the views of kindergarten teachers on the values of education in their research. According to the results of the research, it was concluded that the first values that come to the minds of teachers when values education are mentioned are taking responsibility, helping/helpfulness, honesty, cooperation and courtesy, respect, love, and tolerance. According to another result of the research, it was determined that more than half of the teachers did not implement any program for values education.

Thorpe and Loo (2003) tried to determine the life roles of students with different professional preferences in their research to compare the values profile of nursing school students and university students studying in business administration. As a result of this study, the most important values of nursing students are determined as "personal development" and "helpfulness." In addition, significant value differences were determined between the students of the nursing department and the students of the business department.

In the studies of Nosse and Sagiv (2005) to examine the values of physical therapists, it was determined that this occupational group showed the highest value orientation to the value of "helpfulness", and the lowest rate of values related to "power" in the order of values. Elçi and Uzunboyu (2020) developed a scale to measure universal and cultural values in their study. In addition, they underlined in their research that the universal values integrated into primary and secondary education are included in the textbooks and transferred to the students, but that the measurement of students' value gains should be an important part of values education.

Prencipe and Helwig (2002) studied values teaching to children, young people, and young adults in the school and family environment in their study called "Development of reasoning related to teaching values in school and family environment". The values that are wanted to be taught consist of values that reflect social values such as justice, efforts to destroy prejudice and racism, more abstract political moral values, moral values related to character, patriotism, and religious values. These values have been determined as values that represent values in moral education. It has been given information about how the concepts related to the education of values have developed.

1.3. Purpose of the research

This study aims to evaluate students' views on the role of the online learning environment on the value orientations of university students. The sub-objectives determined for this purpose are as follows:

1. What are the opinions of university students on the advantages of the online learning environment in terms of values education?
2. What are the opinions of university students on the disadvantages of the online learning environment in terms of values education?

2. Materials and Method

In this part of the research, there is information about the research model, research group, data collection tools used, data collection method, data collection, and data analysis.

2.1. Research method

A qualitative research method was used in this study, which was conducted to determine the role of the online learning environment on the value orientations of university students. The purpose of this type of research is to reveal the underlying facts or meanings of events and phenomena and to obtain in-depth information about a subject (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This study was carried out using the case study method. In a case study, which is one of the qualitative research designs, factors related to one or more situations are investigated with a holistic approach and in-depth research is conducted on how they affect the relevant situation and how they are affected by the relevant situation. The case study method is a method that allows for examining an event in depth. The most important feature is that it offers the researcher the opportunity to define and explain an aspect of the problem under investigation in a short time by focusing on a special case or event (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

2.2. Participants

The study group of the research consists of students studying at various universities in Kazakhstan in the fall semester of the 2021-2022 academic year. The purposive sampling method was taken as basis while determining the study group of the research. Purposeful sampling is based on the selection of individuals or groups depending on a certain criterion and feature based on the research purpose (Tongco, 2007). While forming the study group of the research, the principle of voluntariness was taken as a criterion. Demographic information about the study group created in this direction is given in Table 1.

2.3. Data collection tools

Before creating a semi-structured interview form to determine the role of the online learning environment on the value orientations of university students, the forms and scales used for values education and students' value orientations were examined in the relevant literature. As a result of this literature review, a semi-structured interview form used in the research was prepared. In the light of the data obtained, the interview form was prepared, and the form was examined by two faculty members who are experts in the field of values education, and it was finalized in line with their opinions and suggestions. Within the scope of the research, two open-ended questions were asked to each student.

The questions are in the semi-structured interview form.

1. What are your views on the advantages of the online learning environment in terms of values education?
2. What are your views on the disadvantages of the online learning environment in terms of values education?

2.4. Data collection process

Interviews with students who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study were conducted face-to-face. In addition, it was stated to the students that the collected data would not be used for any purpose other than research, and they were asked not to mention their names so that they could answer the questions with complete confidence, and they were allowed to express all their opinions as they felt. All of the interviewed students were asked the questions in the same order and there was no limitation in the answers they gave to the interview questions. Thus, students were provided with the opportunity to explain the role of the online learning environment on their value orientations and to describe the interview. The interviews were conducted with the students participating in the research in the university environment, and the interview with each student lasted approximately 20 minutes.

2.5. Data collection analysis

Content analysis is a scientific approach that allows for the objective and systematic examination of oral, written, and other materials. Utilizing content analysis, it is aimed to identify the data and reveal the truths hidden in the data (Kohlbacher, 2006). To ensure the reliability of the research, the researcher and another educational science expert experienced in qualitative research coded the written data separately. Together with the researcher, an educational sciences expert coded the notes taken during the interview independently of each other. These encodings were then compared. For reliability, the reliability calculation formula [Reliability=Consensus/Agreement+Disagreement x 100] developed by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used in the coding made by both researchers. The percentage of agreement between the two encoders was calculated as 97%. Since the percentage of agreement is 70% or higher (Miles & Huberman, 1994), it was concluded that reliability was achieved in terms of data analysis.

The codes that were compatible with the coding made by the researcher and an expert in the field of educational sciences were taken as the basis for reaching the themes. In the research, the processes of data collection, processing, analysis, interpretation, and reaching results within the scope of external reliability study were explained clearly, and within the scope of internal reliability, the collected data were presented directly with a descriptive approach, without adding any comments. To ensure the validity of the research data, the environment in which the study was conducted was not acted upon in the presentation of the findings in the research. Findings were first described with quotations and then interpreted. In order to ensure the consistency of the findings, the consistency of the concepts constituting the themes and each theme with each other was evaluated and it was checked by taking the opinions of an expert in the field whether they formed a meaningful whole.

Data diversity was provided to obtain detailed data and to ensure the confirmation of the data. On the other hand, using the participant confirmation technique, the notes taken were shown to the students at the end of the interviews. At the same time, the "scope validity" of the created interview form was presented to the opinions of two experts, one of whom is a lecturer, and the other is a teacher who is an expert in the field of educational sciences. Before the interview form was applied in the study, a pilot application was conducted on 3 students, and it was tested whether the form was functional or not. Three students who were interviewed were not included in the study. According to the analysis, it was concluded that the interview form is in working condition. Then, the data obtained by applying the semi-structured interview form to the study group were given in tables with frequency and percentage calculations.

3. Results

In this part of the research, the answers given to the semi-structured interview questions presented to the students to determine the role of the online learning environment on the value orientations of university students were evaluated.

In Table 1, demographic information about the gender distribution of the students participating in the research is given.

Table 1

Demographic information regarding the gender distribution of students

Gender	F	%
Male	16	64
Female	9	36
Sum	25	100

In Table 1, the gender distribution of the university students participating in the research is given. 64% of the students participating in the research are male and 36% are female. It is seen that the majority of the students participating in the research are male.

In Table 2, demographic information about the department and faculty distribution of the university students participating in the research is given.

Table 2

Demographic information regarding the department and faculty distribution of students

Class	Law		Health		Engineering		Education		Sum	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1.Class	1	4	2	8	1	4	4	16	8	32
2.Class	3	12	-	-	1	4	2	8	6	24
3.Class	2	8	1	4	-	-	1	4	4	16
4.Class	-	-	-	-	2	8	5	20	7	28
Sum	6	24	3	12	4	16	12	48	25	100

In Table 2, demographic information about the department and class distribution of university students who voluntarily participated in the research are given. 32% of the students participating in the research are studying in the 1st grade, 24% in the 2nd grade, 16% in the 3rd grade, and 28% in the 4th grade. 24% of the students study law, 12% in health, 16% in engineering, and 48% in education faculty. Here, it is seen that the majority of the students participating in the research are first-year students. In addition, the majority of students study in the faculty of education.

In Table 3, the views of the students participating in the research on the advantages of the online learning environment in terms of values of education are given.

Table 3

The student's views on the advantages of the online learning environment in terms of values of education

Categories	Subcategories	Teacher Opinions	F	%
Individual Values	Confidence	S1: In terms of acquiring values in the online education process, self-confidence comes to the fore the most in individual values. Since online is an area where individual skills are also needed, I think it is very effective in the development of self-confidence. S13: I feel that my self-confidence has increased the most in online education.	16	64
	Responsibility	S2: A new education style for me is online education. Unlike the education we are used to, it imposes more responsibilities on the student. In other words, I find online education effective in terms of gaining the value of responsibility. S7: I think the responsibility of students in online education has increased. The student has to take responsibility for himself.	13	52
	A Comfortable Life	S10: I think the comfort of teaching at home and the opportunities it provides to spend more quality time can be counted among the important values. S11: I believe that an education isolated from the place increases the quality of life. I think this is very valuable.	8	32
Group Values	Being Compatible	S2: You have to adapt to the dynamics of the group for the lessons to be carried out in a healthy way. It teaches harmony. S25: Online education gives a different perspective on being compatible with the group.	18	72
Social Values	Respect for Others	S19: I learned more about the value of asking for a voice, not interrupting, and respecting others in online education. S24: I can say that the understanding of online education reminds me to respect others.	19	76
	Acceptance of norms	S8: There are different rules in online education. Accepting these rules can be considered a social value in my opinion. S23: Although it requires more individual dedication, some norms in online education are unfamiliar. Some of these norms are written and some are verbal. I think this type of education gives us these norms.	6	24

In Table 3, the views of the students participating in the research on the advantages of the online learning environment in terms of values education are categorized together with the student responses. The answers of the students were evaluated in 3 categories as individual values, group

values, and social values. 64% of the students stated that the online learning environment provides an advantage in values education in terms of self-confidence, 52% responsibility, and 32% a comfortable life value in terms of individual values. 72% of the students stated that the value of being compatible was gained in the category of group values and defined this as an advantage. 76% of the students expressed respect for others and 24% the acceptance of norms as social values gained.

In Table 4, the views of the students participating in the research on the disadvantages of the online learning environment in terms of values education are given.

Table 4

Students' views on the disadvantages of the online learning environment in terms of values of education

Categories	Subcategories	Teacher Opinions	F	%
Individual Values	Success	S22: I believe that success is an important individual value. I believe that the online education system also reduces student success. S23: It makes me feel like a failure. I think I can have more of this value in the classroom environment.	22	88
	Happiness	S3: I don't feel happy. Teaching at university is much more enjoyable. S21: The university needs to provide students with versatile gains. This system does not make me happy.	18	72
	Excitement	S9: I am not excited to attend classes. My motivation is very low. I think it is a very important value to be excited while doing a job and I can say that this system has not given me this value. S11: Classes are very boring. I don't know if it's just for me. I'm not excited at all. I wouldn't feel this way if it was face-to-face training.	6	24
Group Values	Friendship	S12: I just started college and I don't have any friends. I don't think I will be able to make friends as long as this system continues. S4: It is very difficult to develop friendships with other students in online education.	21	84
	Sharing	S5: I did not develop a bond with the other students I was in the same class with. I have nothing to share with them. S25: I think one of the most important disadvantages of online education is not being able to share with other students.	14	56
Social Values	Cultural values	S18: I think that universities have an important role in conveying the social culture to the students. It is not possible to achieve this by sitting in front of a computer. S22: I believe that the school environment has a distinct culture. We are lacking in acquiring this culture right now.	11	44
	Universal values	S7: When I think of university, a more international platform comes to my mind. It is an environment where people from all cultures are present and different cultures can be learned. We are not in such an environment in online education. S13: I find online education quite inadequate in terms of gaining a universal perspective.	5	20

In Table 4, the views of the students participating in the research on the disadvantages of the online learning environment in terms of values education are categorized together with the student responses. The answers of the students were evaluated in 3 categories as individual values, group values, and social values. 88% of the students defined success, 72% happiness, and 24% excitement as individual values that are difficult to gain in online education. 84% of the students stated that it is difficult to acquire the value of friendship and 56% of sharing in the group values category in online education. In addition, 44% of the students emphasized that it is a disadvantage to learn cultural values, and 20% universal values through online education in terms of social values.

4. Discussions

In this study, in which the students participating in the research evaluated the advantages and disadvantages of the online learning environment in terms of values education, value gains were evaluated in the categories of individual values, group values, and social values. In his study, Kara (2018) discussed the value classifications that are frequently used in research on values education. In his research, he stated that according to Nelson, value classification is categorized as individual values, group values, and social values. In the category of individual values, self-confidence, responsibility, and comfortable life were expressed as values that can be transferred through online education by the students. In Akin's (2007) study, it is stated that teacher candidates who receive education in the electronic classroom environment are more advanced in terms of participation and sharing in both practical and theoretical lessons than those who do not benefit from this application.

In the study, it is also understood that internet-based lectures and applications increase the self-confidence of teacher candidates and gain the ability to use materials in terms of permanent learning. Beatty et al. (1985) stated in their research that Rokeach value classification consists of goal values and instrumental values. In the research, objective values are defined as values that point to the final states of idealized existence, while instrumental values are defined as values that point to idealized behavior styles. In addition, while a comfortable life was defined as a goal value in the research, responsibility was defined as a means value. The students participating in the research showed the value of being compatible as a value that can be transferred through online education in the group values category. Chang and Tung (2008) examined students' tendency to use online distance learning environments, and students' computer self-efficacy perceptions and their views on the compatibility of the course's website with their preferences, its usefulness, ease of use, and quality were found to be important factors in choosing online distance learning environments. has been revealed.

The values of respect for others and acceptance of norms are determined as values that online education can transfer to students within the scope of social values. Firat (2007) in his study stated that the needs of the individual play an important role in the emergence of organizational culture. It has been emphasized that the individual's social needs such as recognition, belonging to a group, participation, and the desire for self-actualization require the creation of certain values, thoughts, and norms that are accepted by the group and believed to be important.

The views of the students participating in the research on the disadvantages of the online learning environment in terms of values education were also discussed in terms of individual values, group values, and social values. Students emphasized that online learning in the category of individual values is disadvantageous in terms of creating the values of success, happiness, and excitement. Williams (2003) investigated the effect of the distance education system on the success of higher education institutions with his study at the university. In the study, the effectiveness of the leadership role of administrators in student success was emphasized.

In addition, university students found friendship and sharing values weak in online education in terms of acquiring group values. Şen and Kızılcalıoğlu (2020) evaluated the views of university students and academicians on distance education during the COVID-19 pandemic. In the research, when asked whether you are happy to spend more time with your family and friends in the distance education process, some of the students expressed their happiness at being able to spend more time with their family and friends, while the other part mentioned the disadvantages of not being able to meet with their friends face to face. University students participating in the research stated that the acquisition of cultural and universal values in the category of social values is more difficult with online education. Karagöl (2021) also evaluated the suitability of textbooks for online cultural influence in his study. In the study, some of the teachers stated that cultural interaction could not be established in online learning.

5. Conclusion

As a result of the rapid spread of online learning all over the world, especially during the Covid-19 pandemic, there has been a significant increase in the studies on student achievements in the online learning environment. This study, it was aimed to evaluate the role of the online learning environment on the value orientations of university students with student opinions. In this direction, the opinions of university students on the advantages and disadvantages of the online learning environment in terms of values education were revealed in the research.

Students found online learning advantageous in terms of gaining self-confidence, responsibility, a comfortable life, adaptability, respect for others, and acceptance of norms. They stated that the online learning environment is disadvantageous in terms of success, happiness, excitement, friendship, sharing, cultural and universal values.

6. Recommendations

In this study, the effect of the online learning environment on value acquisition was evaluated in line with the opinions of university students, and the following suggestions were presented in line with the research result.

1. Additional education services should be planned to help students gain the values that they see as a disadvantage in the online learning environment and that they identify as difficult to gain.
2. Online activities should be organized in addition to educational programs to improve interaction, sharing, and friendly relations among students.
3. Applications should be planned to bring cultural and universal values into online education programs.
4. In-service training programs should be established to expand the knowledge of academics on values education and to enable them to provide values education within the scope of the hidden program in an online learning environment.

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