

The Advantages and Challenges of Distance Learning

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Received: 29 Aug 2022,

Received in revised form: 19 Sep 2022,

Accepted: 25 Sep 2022,

Available online: 30 Sep 2022

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Keywords— Advantages. Challenges.
Academics. Distance.

Abstract— This study sought to describe the advantages and challenges of studying at a distance and has a general objective: to report the advantages and challenges of studying at a distance. It adopts as a type of research the quantity-qualitative approach. The methodological procedure took place in the first place to make a theoretical foundation to search in books, websites, magazines, etc., 7 closed and two open, and finally, the results sought to analyze the questions in order to seek the advantages and challenges of distance learning. The data revealed to us as an advantage, the opportunity to study at a time chosen by the academic, be it during the day or any time of the night, and the challenges are the difficulty of answers when there is a question at the time of study that often the time is not conventional. In this study, it showed that studying at a distance gives the possibility for some academics to study who live more than 100km away from the pole and also an opportunity for others who are in the day-to-day, working to support the home.

I. INTRODUCTION

Distance education (EAD) is an educational modality that has been rooted in the western world since the 1980s. In Brazil, the Federal University of Mato Grosso offered UFMT the first distance undergraduate course in 1995. Through Decree nº 5.800, on June 8, 2006, the Open University System of Brazil - UAB was established, aimed at the development of the distance education modality, with the purpose of expanding and internalizing the offer of courses and programs of education top in the country. It was the first major move by the Brazilian State in the search for greater coverage of higher education and the modernization of supply models.

At the Universidade do Estado de Mato Grosso – Unemat, the offer of distance courses began in 1999. As of 2010, the Distance Education Management Board – DEAD/Unemat – began to offer distance education linked to the system UAB.

The increase in vacancies and the availability of hard-to-reach places created opportunities for many people, but, at the same time, the diversification of the offer contributed to deepening a problem that was already affecting education at all levels. This work has as its theme: Distance Education: challenges and possibilities, with the general objective: to discover what are the advantages and challenges of studying at a distance.

In the specific objective: is to analyze what academics say about the Distance Public Administration course at the Vila Rica/MT campus.

To achieve our objectives, we used the quality-quantitative method, which is a research method that includes qualitative and quantitative research, because, even though they are different, they do not exclude each other, thus, the research may have a quantitative part., with data, collection and that can bring results in data becoming quality-quantitative research.

To achieve the results, a questionnaire was applied to the students of the Public Administration course of the Vila Rica/MT campus, to collect the opinion of the academics, to stimulate participation and transmit the opinion about the researched topic in a satisfactory manner. And so, a questionnaire was applied to 37 students, so that each one had the opportunity to report their experiences during these four school years.

This questionnaire was applied through google forms and sent to the 37 enrolled in the Public Administration course, where we obtained 20 answers, which we analyzed individually so that we could answer our objective of the advantages and challenges of studying online.

II. THE HISTORY OF DISTANCE EDUCATION

On a theoretical basis, we made a brief historical overview of EAD, in the world, Brazil, Unemat and in the Middle Araguaia Campus where the Vila Rica/MT hub is located.

2.1 The history of EAD in the world

Distance education dates back to a long history, and it is difficult to define the milestone of its beginning [3].

Some textbooks cite the epistles of São Paulo and the Christian communities of Asia Minor, recorded in the Bible, as the historical origin of Distance Education [2]. These epistles were written for the purpose of teaching people to live within Christian doctrines in unfavorable environments and would have been sent around the middle of the 1st century.

Considering the information above, it is possible to establish some historical landmarks that consider Distance Education in the world from the 18th century onwards [9][2].

The first date taken as the starting point is the year 1728 - this year a course is announced by the Boston Gazette, in the March 20 edition. Professor Caleb Philipps of Short Hand provided material for teaching and tutoring by correspondence. After private initiatives, which took place over a long period, and by several teachers, in the

19th century Distance Education began to exist institutionally (Chart I).

Chart I - evolution of Distance Education in the 19th century

| Year | Country | Event |
|------|----------------|--|
| 1829 | Sweden | Líber Hermondes Institute (150,000 students) |
| 1840 | United Kingdom | Sir Isaac Pitman College; first correspondence teaching school. |
| 1892 | United States | University of Chicago – Correspondence Teaching Division for faculty preparation in the Extension Department |
| 1922 | Soviet Union | Correspondence teaching (350,000 students) |
| 1948 | Norway | First legislation for correspondence schools |
| 1969 | United Kingdom | Foundation of Open University (200,000 students) |
| 1977 | Venezuela | Foundation of National Open University |
| 1978 | Costa Rica | Distance State University |
| 1984 | Netherlands | Open University implementation |
| 1985 | Europe | Foundation of the European Association of Distance Teaching Universities (EADTU) |
| 1985 | India | Implementation of the National Open University Indira Gandhi (242,000 students). |
| 1987 | Europe | European Parliament Resolution on Open Universities in the European Community. |
| 1987 | Europe | Foundation of the European Distance Learning University Association. |
| 1988 | Portugal | Foundation of the Open University |
| 1990 | Europe | Implementation of the European Distance Education Network, based on the |

| | | |
|------|--------|--|
| | | Budapest Declaration |
| 1991 | Europe | Commission Report on Open and Distance Education in the European Community |

Source: Prepared by the author based on VASCONCELOS, 2010 and GOLVÊA and OLIVEIRA 2006

These events and institutions were important for the consolidation of Distance Education that was offered all over the world [2]. The five continents began to adopt Distance Education at all levels of education, in formal and non-formal programs, serving millions of students. From this brief account of distance education in the world context, we will see the Brazilian context.

2.2 The history of distance education in Brazil

It is possible that the first experiences in Distance Education in Brazil were not recorded, since the first known data are from the 20th century [1].

Distance Education began in Brazil in the 20th century, due to the industrialization process that generated a demand for educational policies that trained workers to work in industries [3]. And so, in Brazil, distance education appears as an alternative to meet the demand, mainly through radiophonic means, which allowed the training of rural workers without the need to travel to urban centers.

About EAD MACHADO (2015, p. 4) states that:

We show that, in its historical context, distance education has always been focused on professional training in order to train people to perform certain activities or to master some skills required in the market. (MACHADO, 2015, p. 4).

In the chart below we will report remarkable facts about the experiences carried out with distance learning in Brazil.

Chart 2 – some historical facts about distance learning in Brazil

| Year | Event |
|------|---|
| 1904 | In the first edition of the classifieds section, Jornal do Brasil registers an advertisement that offers professionalization by correspondence for typists. |
| 1923 | A group led by Henrique Morize and Edgard Roquette Pinto created the Radio Society of Rio de Janeiro, which offered courses in Portuguese, French, Forestry, French Literature, Esperanto, Radio Telegraphy and Telephony. Thus, Distance Education through |

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| | Brazilian radio began |
| 1934 | Edgard Roquette-Pinto installed the Municipal Radio-School in Rio, a project for the then Municipal Department of Education of the Federal District. Students had prior access to brochures and lesson plans, and correspondence was also used to contact students. |
| 1939 | Emergence, in São Paulo, of the Monitor Institute, the first Brazilian institute to systematically offer distance professional courses by correspondence, at the time still under the name Instituto Rádio – Técnico Monitor. |
| 1941 | The Universal Brazilian Institute appears, the second Brazilian Institute to also systematically offer professional courses. Founded by a former partner of Monitor Institute, it has trained more than 4 million people. The Monitor Institute and the Universal Brazilian Institute were joined by other similar organizations, which were responsible for serving millions of students in distance professionalizing initiation courses. Still in 1941, the first Air University emerged, which lasted until 1944. |
| 1947 | The new University of the Air appears, sponsored by the National Service for Commercial Learning (SENAC), the Social Service of Commerce (SESC) and associated broadcasters. The purpose of this was to offer commercial radio courses. The students studied the handouts and corrected exercises with the help of the monitors. The experience lasted until 1961, however SENAC's experience with Distance Education continues to this day. |
| 1959 | The Diocese of Natal, Rio Grande do Norte, creates some radio schools, giving rise to the Basic Education movement (MEB), a landmark in non-formal Distance Education in Brazil. The MEB, involving the National Conference of Bishops of Brazil and the Federal Government, initially used an educational radio system for the democratization of access to education, promoting literacy for young people and adults. |
| 1962 | The Ocidental School, of American origin, was founded in São Paulo, focused on the field of electronics |

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| 1967 | The Brazilian Institute of Municipal Administration begins its activities in the area of public education, using correspondence teaching methodology. Also this year, the Padre Landell de Moura Foundation created its Distance Education hub, with a teaching methodology by correspondence and via radio. |
| 1970 | The Minerva Project was born, through an agreement between the Ministry of Education, Padre Landell de Moura foundation and the Padre Anchieta Foundation, whose goals were the use of radio for education and the social inclusion of adults. The project was maintained until the early 1980s. |
| 1974 | The Padre Reus Institute emerges and on Ceará TV, the former 5th to 8th grade courses began, with television, printed material and monitors; 1976 - The National Tele-education System is created, with courses through instructional material. |
| 1976 | The National Tele-education System is created, with courses through instructional material; |
| 1979 | The University of Brasília, a pioneer in the use of Distance Education in higher education in Brazil, created courses published by newspapers and magazines, which in 1989 was transformed into the Center for Open, Continuing, Distance Education (CEAD) and the Brazil EAD was launched. |
| 1981 | The International Center for Regular Studies (CIER) of the Colégio Anglo Americano was founded, which offered Elementary and High School at a distance. CIER's objective is to allow children whose families temporarily move abroad to continue studying through the Brazilian education system. |
| 1983 | SENAC developed a series of radio programs on professional guidance in the area of commerce and services, called "Abrindo Caminhos" that would translate to "Paving the way". |
| 1991 | The program "Jornal da Educação – Edição do professor" (Educational Journal - Professor edition), conceived and produced by Fundação Roquete-Pinto, began and in 1995 with the name "Um Salto para o Futuro", was incorporated into TV Escola (educational channel of the Department of Distance Education from the Ministry of Education) becoming a landmark in national Distance |

| | |
|------|---|
| | Education. It is a program for the continuous training and improvement of teachers, mainly in Elementary School and students of teaching courses. It reaches more than 250 thousand teachers throughout the country per year. |
| 1992 | The Open University of Brasília is created, a very important event in Distance Education in our country. |
| 1995 | The National Distance Education Center is created and in the same year, MultiRio (Rio de Janeiro) is also created at the Municipal Department of Education, which offers courses from the 6th to the 9th grade, through television programs and printed material. Also in 1995, the TV Escola Program was created by the MEC (Ministry of Education) Department of Distance Education |
| 1996 | The Department of Distance Education (SEED) was created by the Ministry of Education, within a policy that privileges the democratization and quality of Brazilian education. It is also in this year that distance education officially appears in Brazil, with the legal bases for this type of education, established by the Law of Directives and Bases of National Education nº 9.394, of December 20, 1996, although only regulated on December 20, 1996. December 2005 by Decree No. 5,622 (BRASIL, 2005) which revoked Decrees No. 2,494 of 02/10/98, and No. 2,561 of 04/27/98, with regulation defined in Ministerial Ordinance No. 4,361 of 2004 (MINISTRY OF EDUCATION PORTAL, 2010). |
| 2000 | UniRede, the Distance Higher Education Network, is formed, a consortium that currently brings together 70 public institutions in Brazil committed to democratizing access to quality education, through Distance Education, offering undergraduate, graduate and extension courses. In that year, the Distance Education Center of the State of Rio de Janeiro (CEDERJ) was also born, with the signing of a document that inaugurated the partnership between the Government of the State of Rio de Janeiro, through the Secretariat of Science and Technology, public universities and city halls of the State of Rio de Janeiro. |
| 2002 | CEDERJ is incorporated into the Distance Higher Education Science Center Foundation |

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| | of Rio de Janeiro (CECIERJ Foundation). |
| 2004 | Several programs for the initial and continuing education of public school teachers, through distance learning, were implemented by MEC. Among them, ProLiteracy and Media in Education. These actions led to the creation of the Open University System of Brazil. |
| 2005 | The Open University of Brazil is created, a partnership between MEC, states and municipalities; integrating courses, research and higher education programs at a distance. |
| 2006 | Decree No. 5,773, of May 9, 2006, comes into force, which provides for the exercise of regulation, supervision and evaluation of higher education institutions and undergraduate and sequential higher education courses in the federal education system, including those of distance modality (BRASIL, 2006). |
| 2007 | Decree No. 6,303, of December 12, 2007, comes into force, amending provisions of Decree No. 5,622, which establishes the Guidelines and Bases for National Education (BRASIL, 2007). Brazilian Association of Distance Education 90 RBAAD – Distance education: concepts and history in Brazil and in the world. |
| 2008 | In São Paulo, a law allows High School distance education, where up to 20% of the workload may be done remotely. |
| 2009 | Ordinance No. 10, of July 2, 2009, enters into force, which sets criteria for the exemption of in loco assessment and gave other measures for Distance Education in Higher Education in Brazil (BRASIL, 2009). |
| 2011 | The Department of Distance Education is extinct. |

Source: prepared by the author based on: (MAIA & MATTAR, 2007; MARCONCIN, 2010; RODRIGUES, 2010; SANTOS, 2010).

It is worth mentioning that between the 1970s and 1980s, private foundations and non-governmental organizations began to disseminate rapid distance courses, along the lines of Tele-education, with classes via satellite, supplemented by printed materials, characterizing the second generation of Education. Distance in Brazil. It was from the 1990s onwards that most Brazilian Higher Education organizations joined together to adopt distance

learning with the use of new information and communication technologies.

In the Brazilian scenario, the more transparent the information about the organization and operation of distance courses and programs, and the students aware of their rights, duties, and attitudes towards study, the greater the credibility of the institutions and more successful will be the experiences in the distance modality [8].

We know that distance education has been growing gradually over the years in Brazil. The courses offered are in several areas of knowledge; these courses have facilitated access to studies for people who live in distant places in Brazil. For all this dynamism to occur, we will see in the next topic the legislation that regulates distance learning in Brazil.

2.3 The history of EAD at UNEMAT

In the State of Mato Grosso, teacher training understood as a public policy, had its expression in the Interinstitutional Program for Teacher Qualification, involving the University of the State of Mato Grosso (Unemat), the Federal University of Mato Grosso (UFMT), the State of Education (SEDUC), the Municipal Departments of Education and, still, the Union of Workers of Public Education of Mato Grosso (SINTEP).

It was from the effective participation in this program that the Distance Education Division (DEAD) of Unemat was created, aiming to implement activities of a distance education program for teachers in practice, to improve productivity rates and the quality of education offered.

Unemat sought, from March 1999, the approval of the merit of the "Administrative Political Project of the Distance Education Division (DEAD)", which defines the decisions for the organization, implementation, and implementation of its infrastructure to offer courses in EAD. This program gave rise to the Full Degree in Basic Education: 1st to 4th series in the distance modality, implemented at Unemat in 1999, an opportunity in which infrastructure was created to provide autonomy in the management of distance courses.

Offered on the university campus of Nova Xavantina/Pedagogical Center of Nova Xavantina and on the Campus of Pontes e Lacerda/Pedagogical Center of Jauru, 424 and 491 places were offered, respectively, in the period 2000-2004, for in-service teachers. The courses offered were both for teacher training: the Pedagogy Course: Degree in Pedagogy - Basic Education - 1st to 4th grade (Resolutions 9 and 10/2005-CONSUNI) and the Full Degree Course in Pedagogy: Teaching in Early Childhood Education (Resolution No. 011/2005-CONSUNI), the

latter offered through the inter-institutional partnership signed by the Pró-Formar consortium.

The courses offered by UAB in 2009 (Physics and Biology) were proposals for distance education projects from other institutions. The first was a proposal developed by the University of the State of Mato Grosso (UFMT) and the second, by the Ministry of Education. In summary, actions in which CEAD/Unemat acts as the executor of the propositions mentioned in the EAD modality. The program of the UAB, like the regions of the UAB and proposed by UFTM, aims at a practical exercise for a modality of education and a reflective formation of the offer in different courses for a state of teachers.

Also in 2008, with the adhesion of Unemat to the Open University System of Brazil (UAB), on 10/1/08, the Coordinator of UAB-Unemat (Ordinance No. 379/2010 UAB-Unemat – 10/1/08) to 10/2/10). This adhesion to the UAB totally re-signified the EAD modality at Unemat, because, by signing the Term of Technical Cooperation and Commitment with UAB/Capes, DEAD had to adapt to the requirements of the Federal Government Program both in terms of the conditions of infrastructure, as well as personnel, so that it could receive the financial resources to invest in equipment and furniture and also in the degree courses in Physics and Biology, which Unemat was authorized to offer within the scope of the UAB in 5 on-site support centers of the UAB (Jauru, Barra do Bugres, Alto Araguaia, Nova Xavantina and Sorriso) – Selection Notice No. 01/2006-SEED/MEC/2006/2007.

In 2009, Unemat adhered to the National Public Administration Plan and, through Public Notice No. 01, of 4/27/09, was able to offer 5 face-to-face support centers (Jauru, Alto Araguaia, Juara, Guarantã do Norte, Cáceres, Tangará da Serra e Pontes e Lacerda) the bachelor's degree in Public Administration and specializations in Municipal Public Management, Public Management, and Health Management. Concomitantly with the work with UAB/Capes, activities related to the degree courses in child pedagogy and pedagogy in basic education - initial grades 1st to 4th grades were also developed, offered by DEAD, which was an agreement signed between 42 consortium municipalities of the nuclei pedagogical practices in Jauru, Nova Xavantina, and São Félix do Araguaia (SILVA, 2010).

In 2010, there was an administrative restructuring, changing CEAD to DEAD – Distance Learning Board. DEAD is a directorate linked to the Dean of Education and Graduation (PROEG) and became responsible for the elaboration of pedagogical projects and for the execution of programs of graduation and post-graduation Lato Sensu courses in the distance modality. In 2021, according to the

website (<https://dead.unemat.br/portal/Polos/>), the number of centers will be 27, with courses being offered in different regions of the state of Mato Grosso.

Then, the methodology used for this research.

III. METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

At this stage, we applied a questionnaire to the students of the Public Administration course at the Vila Rica-MT campus, there was the application of a questionnaire, for data collection, to encourage participation and convey the opinion about the researched topic in a satisfactory way. And so, a questionnaire was applied to 37 students, so that each one had the opportunity to report their experiences during these four school years. This research was carried out in a quantitative-qualitative way and [7] argues that: “the set of quantitative and qualitative data are not opposed, on the contrary, they complement each other, because the reality covered by them interacts, dynamically, excluding any dichotomy”. Therefore, this research sought to identify which were the greatest difficulties and facilities during the course period.

1.1 The history of distance education at the Araguaia Middle Campus “Dom Pedro Casaldáliga”

It was after the Expansion Seminar held by Unemat in 1990 (December 11th to 13th) that the University began its work in the interior of the state, meeting social demand, especially the teacher training. A multi-campus structure was adopted and the philosophy of taking the university where it is needed, at the appropriate time for each community (Mato Grosso: 1999). Representatives from 30 municipalities with similar interests in terms of training their teachers to work in Basic Education participated in this seminar. The first campus was created in Sinop and then in Alta Floresta, Alto Araguaia, Pontes e Lacerda, Nova Xavantina and the Médio Araguaia campus on 9/23/91.

The Middle Araguaia University Campus has its headquarters in the city of Luciara, approximately 1,500 km away from the city of Cáceres, where the University is located. Initially, in 1992, three undergraduate courses were implemented on this campus: Licentiate in Pedagogy, Letters, and Mathematics. And in 1996, the degree courses were in History, Geography, and Biological Sciences. In 2004, with the objective of better serving the North Araguaia Microregion, the Pedagogical Centers of Confresa and Vila Rica were installed. Since then, this campus has been present with a permanent physical and administrative structure in these three locations: Luciara, Confresa, and Vila Rica.

Given this connection between these cities, some courses were brought to the city of Vila Rica, such as Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration, Information System, Degree in Pedagogy.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The data presented here regarding the Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration, Vila Rica/MT, DEAD/Unemat, is the result of a questionnaire applied by the researcher to graduating students, so that, in this way, it is possible to understand the advantages and challenges to study at a distance. To achieve the specific objectives of this research, the questionnaire applied to the subjects participating in this study was organized into two sections.

The first consisted of multiple-choice questions, which aimed to characterize the students graduating from the Public Administration course. For this, the variables are gender, age, marital status, how many members there are in the family if you have internet at home and how is the work to support yourself (the work you earn money) if you have another higher education, how much time you completed high school or your last graduation and how far you live from school.

The second section consisted of two open questions, intending to collect the subjects' perceptions about the positive and negative aspects of the course. The choice of open questions was intended to deepen the analysis of the advantages and challenges of studying at a distance.

In the following tables and graphs, we will see the multiple choice questions answered by students through google forms. It is worth mentioning that, before answering the questionnaire, the academics were able to read the informed consent form, and after reading about the research, choose the option of participating or not in the google forms questionnaire thus we obtained 20 academics who answered our questionnaire, a total of 37 who are currently enrolled in the course.

4.1 Sex

Considering that the object of study is the students who are enrolled in the 8th academic semester 2020/2, in the Bachelor's Degree in Public Administration, at the Vila Rica/MT campus, and who answered the researcher's questionnaire, it was found, that in the respondents relating to sex, that among the 20 who answered the questionnaire, 75% (15 academics) are female and 25% (05 academics) are male, as shown in Figure 1.

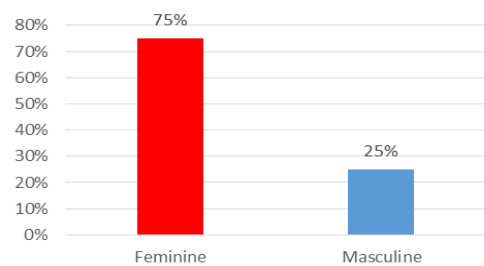


Fig.1 – Percentage of female and male students in the DEAD/Unemat Public Administration course, in Vila Rica/MT.

Source: prepared by the author according to research data.

In the graph above, it is possible to observe that the presence of females is predominant among the respondents.

4.2 Age

When analyzing the age variable of the respondents as shown in Figure 2, we found that the respondents with the highest percentage are between 31 and 40 years old, 9 respondents corresponding to 45%, and the age between 51 and 60 years old were chosen by two respondents, aged 61 or older was not chosen by any respondent as well as those under 20 years old who had no choice.

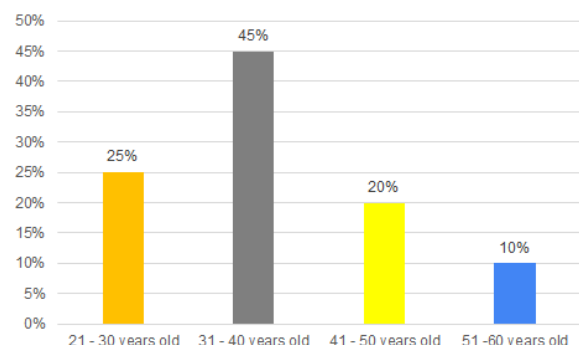


Fig.2 - Age of respondents

Source: prepared by the author according to research data.

According to the Census of Higher Education 2016, the average enrollment age of on-site students is 21 years old, while distance education students are 28 years old. The entry age for face-to-face students is 18 years old, while for distance education it is 27 years old. As for those graduating from face-to-face education, they are on average 23 years old, in distance education, they are 34 years old.

Data from the Vila Rica/MT hub correspond to data from the 2016 Higher Education Census in which the highest percentage of respondents from the distance Public Administration course chose the option of being between 31 and 40 years old.

4.3 Marital Status

Regarding marital status, 55% said they were married, another 40% said they were single and 5% chose the option that they are separated, as can be seen in Figure 3.

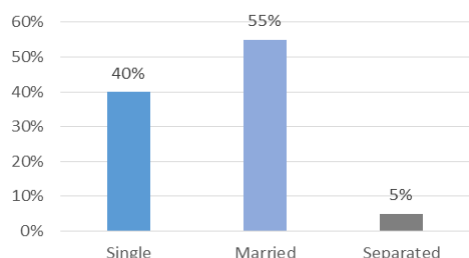


Fig.3. Marital Status of Respondents.

Source: prepared by the author based on research data.

It is possible to observe according to the chart that we do not have academics who are widowed.

1.2 How many family members do you live with?

According to the respondents, 40% say they live with 03 people, 20% say they live with 04 people, as you can see in figure 4 below:

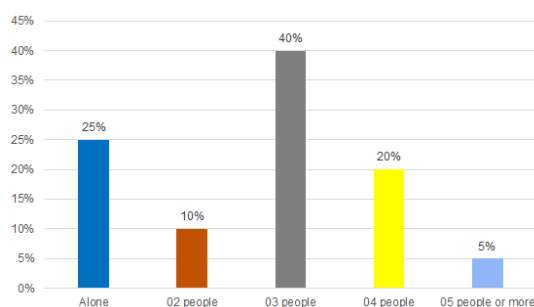


Fig.4- number of family members

Source: prepared by the author based on research data.

It is possible to note according to figure 4, that academics who live with 05 or more are the minority, 5%, accompanied by 2 people 10%.

4.4 Do you have internet at home?

In this question, 100% of respondents said they have internet at home. Although 100% say they have internet at home, the internet is slow and often makes it difficult to attend a class and post activities (emphasis added).

4.5 What do you do for a living?

About work, it is possible to see in figure 6 that 60% of the respondents are civil servants, and 25% work in a private company, and 15% are self-employed working on their own.

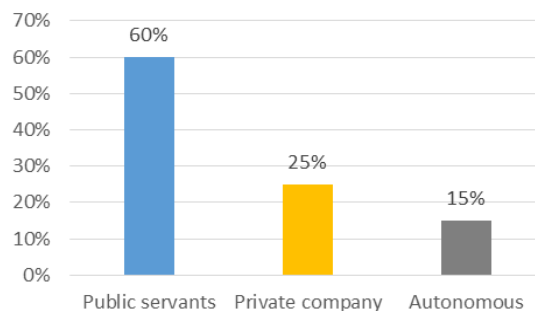


Fig.6 - Paid activity performed.

Source: prepared by the author based on research data.

It is possible to see in figure 6 that public servants are the largest number of respondents, corresponding to 60%.

4.6 Do you have a college degree? If yes, which one?

To this question, 50% said they did not have a college, and 50% answered that they had a college or more, to contemplate the answers of the respondents, a table was created, so that it is possible to understand the research data.

Table 1- Demonstration of answers regarding whether you already have a higher education course, if the answer is yes, which course

| | Number of responses | Percentage | Which course | Percentage |
|-----|---------------------|------------|--|------------|
| Yes | 10 | 50% | Physical Education | 5% |
| | | | Veterinary Medicine | 10% |
| | | | Accounting Sciences | 5% |
| | | | Degree in computing | 5% |
| | | | Degree in Pedagogy | 5% |
| | | | Degree in Pedagogy and Physical Education | 5% |
| | | | Three answered yes but did not describe the name of the course | 15% |

| | | | |
|----|----|-----|---|
| No | 10 | 50% | 50% Does not have another higher level course |
|----|----|-----|---|

Source: prepared by the author based on research data.

Chart I shows that 50% of respondents do not have a higher education course, and another 50% say they do. The courses are very varied, among the variations 10% say they have veterinary medicine, the other courses only 5%. It is also possible to notice that among the respondents 5% (corresponding to 01 academic) have two higher courses, namely, Licentiate in Pedagogy and the Course of Physical Education.

4.7 How long ago did you complete high school or last graduation?

About the time they completed high school or the last graduation, those who answered up to 05 years old were 30%, and those who completed high school or the last graduation at 16 years old or more corresponds to 35%.

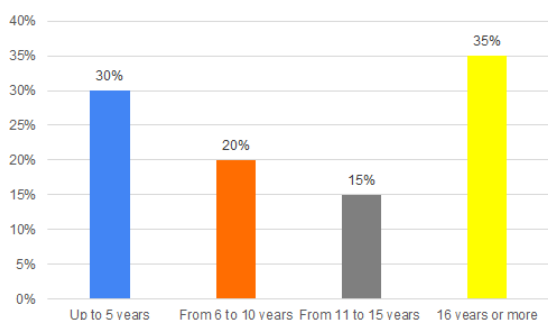


Fig.7 – Time to complete high school or last graduation.

Source: prepared by the author based on research data.

In Figure 7, it is possible to understand that most respondents stayed away from the classroom benches before starting the Public Administration course.

4.8 The distance you live from the campus.

In addition to the multiple-choice, because it understands that the Vila Rica/MT location covers a large dimension, it left the other option so that the respondent could say how far they live from the pole, so the answers were grouped according to the answers obtained from the subjects.

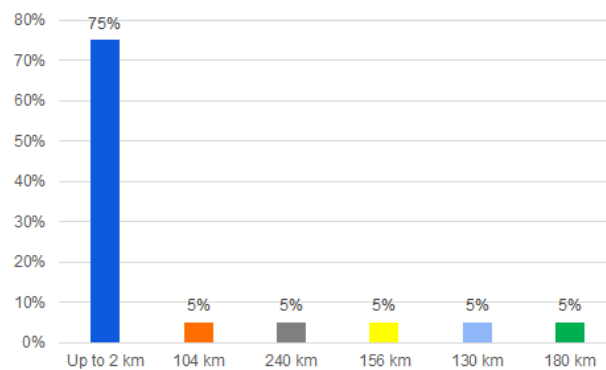


Fig.8 - Distance from the campus in kilometers.

Source: prepared by the author based on research data

According to the responses visible in the figure, it can be concluded that 25% of the students of the Public Administration Course at the Vila Rica/MT location travel more than 100 km to reach the face-to-face support center.

The following two questions were open so that the students could express their opinions about the course. The analyzes of the responses collected from the research subjects were first systematized and then read and grouped by proximity, which I highlight. The first open question was about the negative aspects of the course. And the answers of the academics were:

Problems with the internet. Answers from two academics.

Delay in service when questions arise. Faster responses in AVA.

Reports of the difficulty in the internship because of the pandemic.

Doubt clearing sessions to be more comprehensive.

There are also reports of difficulties by some academics regarding the discipline to study alone.

The second open question, I wanted to know from academics about the "good" things, the advantages of studying at a distance, these answers are about the possibility of being able to choose a study schedule according to the academic's needs, the material offered is good, most of the time the professors are committed to the academics, which collaborates in the learning process, it is possible to build friendships with other people throughout the course, and in the middle of the tasks, it is possible to fulfill my dream, which is to graduate.

Given the information above, flexibility in study hours is highlighted, and the answers collected demonstrate that students of the distance public administration course, in addition to academic commitment, are concerned with being with their family and with the job market, whether

him in the public service, in the private company or the self-employed service, and the flexibility of being able to study at home, the practicality of access to the AVA - the virtual learning environment, makes it possible to complete the undergraduate course.

V. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study aimed to analyze the advantages and challenges of studying at a distance, to achieve this objective, we sought to know the socioeconomic profile of the academics of the Public Administration course of the Vila Rica / MT campus, through a questionnaire applied by the author and answered through google forms.

In the analysis of the questions answered by the subjects, it was observed that, concerning gender, 75% are female and 25% are male.

Regarding age, the highest percentage is between 31 and 40 years old, 45%, and there are no people under 20 years of age who answered the questionnaire.

Regarding paid activity, 60% are civil servants, and only 15% are self-employed.

Regarding the number of family members, 40% say they have 3 people and 55% say they are married.

A relevant fact that caught our attention is the distance that some academics live from the campus, with 25% living above 100 km from it, the furthest being 240 km from the support unit.

Regarding the aspects of studying at a distance, positive and negative points can be observed. About the difficulties of studying at a distance, the subjects reported problems with the internet, it is worth mentioning that they all responded that they had internet at home, but when it comes to the quality it is possible to see that the internet leaves something to be desired. Another aspect is the delay in answering questions. The problem seems to be caused by the distance education academic being able to study at any time and often this time found for studying is only at night, at unconventional times, which ends up causing doubts that will often be answered only during business hours.

On the advantages of studying at a distance, these answers are about the possibility of being able to choose a study time according to the student's need, the material offered is good, most of the time the professors are committed to the academics, which collaborates in the learning process. It is possible to build friendships with other people throughout the course, and during daily tasks, it is possible to fulfill my dream, which is to graduate.

Considering the above, it is worth mentioning that despite some problems, it can be said that the result in the researchers' view is quite positive because, despite the difficulties, academics are ending 04 years of challenges faced daily to obtain the degree of Bachelor in Public Administration.

Throughout this study, we understand the need to develop research in order to understand what should be done in the view of academics to make the course better and gather suggestions on how to implement improvements in the distance course.

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