PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN DISTANCE LEARNING DEGREE: REFLECTIONS ON THE CHALLENGES AND POTENTIAL IN THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the perceptions and experiences of 21 Physical Education students in the distance learning modality, linked to the Vale do Acaraú State University (UVA) through the Brazilian Open University System (UAB). Characterized as exploratory and descriptive research with a qualitative approach, it used a structured questionnaire with closed questions for descriptive analysis of the data. The results highlighted the appreciation of the flexibility and accessibility of distance learning, although difficulties such as access to technology, time management, and limited interaction with tutors and colleagues were pointed out. Despite this, the pedagogical organization of the course and technological resources, such as video classes and forums, were recognized as essential for learning. It is concluded that, although challenging, distance learning offers significant opportunities to democratize teacher training in practical areas, as long as strategies are implemented that integrate theory and practice, promote autonomy, and ensure continuous support.

Keywords: Distance Education. Physical Education. Teacher Training.

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INTRODUCTION

Distance Education (EAD) has been consolidated as a strategic modality to democratize access to higher education in Brazil. The growth of this modality encompasses several areas of knowledge, including undergraduate courses, aimed at training teachers for different educational contexts (Arxer, 2020). This expansion reflects the need to adapt the educational offering to contemporary demands, especially with the use of Digital Information and Communication Technologies (TDICs), which transform teaching and learning processes. In this scenario, teacher training gains relevance, requiring methodologies that promote active and collaborative learning (Moran, 2015). Digital technologies enhance education but also require the teacher to assume the role of mediator and facilitator. In line with this perspective, the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB 9.394/96) highlights the importance of integrating technological resources into the initial and continuing training of education professionals (Brasil, 1996). More recently, Law No. 14,533/2023, which instituted the National Digital Education Policy (PNED), reinforces the commitment to digital inclusion and the pedagogical use of technologies at all levels of education. This policy aims to reduce inequalities, expand teacher training in the use of technological resources, and foster digital skills in students (Brazil, 2023).

In this context, the Brazilian Open University System (UAB) plays a central role, offering undergraduate and continuing education courses in distance learning, especially in regions where access to in-person education is limited. The UAB Campus of the Vale do Acaraú State University (UVA), in Meruoca, Ceará, is an example of this effort. UVA, recognized for its tradition in teacher training, reaffirms its commitment to educational inclusion by offering undergraduate courses in distance learning, such as Pedagogy, Mathematics, and Physical Education. However, the Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education presents specific challenges, as it integrates theoretical knowledge and physical practices, traditionally associated with face-to-face teaching. Adapting this training process to the virtual environment raises questions about the quality of training and the ability of future professionals to meet the demands of the job market (Silva; Costa; Ferreira, 2020).

The relevance of this research lies in the growing demand for Distance Learning Bachelor's Degree courses and the need to improve pedagogical methodologies that meet the specificities of remote teaching, especially in practical areas such as Physical Education. By exploring the experiences and strategies adopted by students, the study

seeks to contribute to the improvement of pedagogical practices in Distance Learning Bachelor's Degree courses and to the training of teachers who are better prepared for contemporary educational challenges (Cunha, 2024).

Thus, the objective is to understand the perceptions and experiences of Physical Education students in the Distance Learning modality, investigating the challenges and potential of this teaching model.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The research, which was exploratory and descriptive in nature, adopted a qualitative approach, considered the most appropriate for investigating meanings and social processes, as it values the subjectivity of the participants and provides an in-depth understanding of their experiences (Minayo, 2014).

The research involved 21 students from the Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education at Universidade Estadual Vale do Acaraú (UVA), offered by Universidade Aberta do Brasil (UAB). The selection was intentional, with the inclusion of students from different stages of the course — beginning, middle, and end — to capture a diversity of perspectives on distance learning.

The initial contact with the participants was made by email, in which the objectives, procedures, and ethical standards of the research were presented. The participants then answered an online questionnaire, made available via Google Forms.

Composed exclusively of closed questions, the questionnaire allowed the collection of quantitative data, which were analyzed descriptively in Excel, to outline the general profile of the participants and their study conditions in the distance learning modality. As Gil (2008) highlights, the use of questionnaires is an effective strategy in social research, as it allows the rapid and accessible collection of data from a large sample. From an ethical point of view, the research strictly followed the guidelines of Resolution No. 510/2016 of the National Health Council (CNS), guaranteeing the voluntariness, anonymity, and confidentiality of the information collected, by the required ethical principles (Brazil, 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research, conducted with 21 students of the Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education in the distance learning modality at UAB/UVA, revealed a diversity of perceptions and experiences related to the teaching and learning process. endization. The

data obtained were analyzed and organized into thematic categories, allowing for an in-depth discussion of the main aspects raised by the participants. These categories are presented below, accompanied by a critical and reflective analysis of the results. The categories were as follows: Knowledge and ICTs; Training and ICTs; and the UAB/UVA Education Course.

KNOWLEDGE AND ICTs

Graph 01 explores the level of knowledge of students about the use of Digital Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) essential in the distance learning modality. This aspect is fundamental, as discussed in the introduction, for teacher training that adapts to current demands (Moran, 2015).

Graph 01: Knowledge regarding the use of technologies
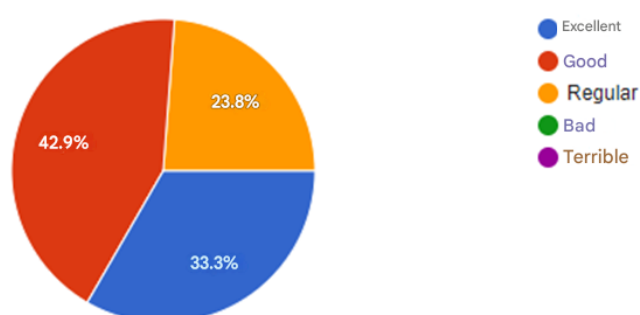
Source: Prepared based on research results (2024).

It was found that 42.9% (9 students) reported having good knowledge of ICTs, while 23.8% (5 students) indicated a regular level, and 33.3% (7 students) declared having advanced knowledge. These data indicate the need for technological training to fully utilize the resources available in the distance learning modality.

Thus, we observed that most students have basic or intermediate familiarity with ICTs, demonstrating potential for adaptation, but also evidencing the need for ongoing technical support. This data reflects the relevance of including technological training modules in Distance Learning Bachelor's Degree courses.

With this, we observe that digital technologies have promoted profound transformations, evidencing the need to restructure schools to meet contemporary demands. This process includes reassessing the role of the teacher and, consequently, the initial training of future teachers. However, preparing teachers for the pedagogical use of

digital technologies has not yet received the same priority as the installation of technological infrastructures in schools (Silveira; Santos, 2023).

Next, graph 02 analyzes students' ability to manage their time to study independently, an essential skill for success in distance learning.

Graph 02: Autonomy in time management for studies in the distance learning course
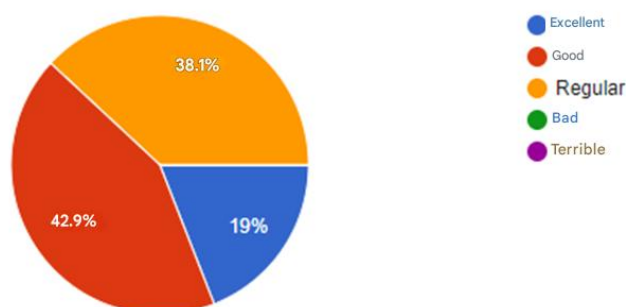
Source: Prepared based on research results (2024).

The results show that only 19% of students rated their autonomy in time management as "excellent", indicating that a minority already had solid self-management skills at the beginning of the course. The majority of students (42.9%) rated their autonomy as "good", suggesting that, although they demonstrated some organizational skills, they may still need support to achieve a level of excellence. In addition, (38.1%) of students considered their autonomy to be "average", which indicates the existence of significant difficulties in time management, preventing them from achieving full autonomy at the beginning of the training process. This result may be associated with the period of adaptation to the specificities of distance learning, such as the need to establish a study routine without direct supervision. However, the results suggest that, as the course progresses, there is a significant increase in the ability to organize study routines, corroborating the idea that practice and accumulated experience improve students' autonomy. According to Montiel et al. (2015), the distance learning modality requires students to have self-management skills, such as time management and discipline to follow the content and carry out the proposed activities, even when faced with other personal or professional responsibilities. In other words, the development of autonomy is central to the formation of active and engaged learners, especially in virtual learning environments.

These findings reinforce the importance of developing specific support strategies for beginners in distance learning, such as initial tutorials and workshops on planning and time

management. Such measures can alleviate the difficulties faced in the first semesters and encourage continuous progress in the course.

Chart 03: Managing your learning without the need for constant supervision
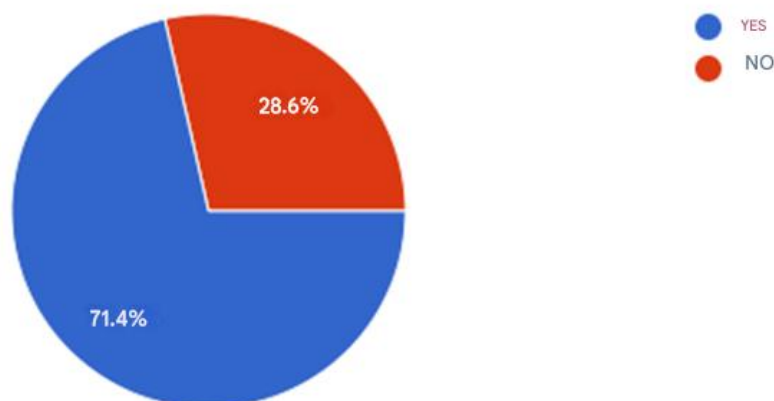
Source: Prepared based on research results (2024).

The results show that most students (71.4%) have the skills to manage their learning independently, which may be related to their previous experience with the distance learning model. As pointed out by Masetto (2016), previous experience in digital learning environments is a determining factor for the development of autonomous skills in students, allowing them to better adapt to the challenges of distance learning and more efficiently manage their time, in addition to contributing to increased engagement with the proposed activities.

On the other hand, the 28.6% who reported difficulties highlight the importance of pedagogical interventions at the beginning of the course, such as specific tutorials and support programs to strengthen students' self-management and discipline. Thus, the graph highlights that, although most students demonstrate satisfactory autonomous skills, there is still room for educational strategies that aim to develop self-management skills, especially for those less experienced in distance learning.

TRAINING AND ICTs

The integration of ICTs in teacher training has been consolidated as one of the fundamental pillars to meet contemporary educational demands. In the context of distance learning, ICTs assume an even more relevant role, acting as indispensable mediators for the construction of knowledge and interaction between teachers and students. From this

perspective, Kenski (2015) states that the use of ICTs in teacher training has become essential, especially in the context of distance learning, as these tools not only enable the teaching-learning process but also favor the interaction between teachers and students, allowing for more dynamic and collaborative learning.

Therefore, in this category, we intend to analyze what training academics already have in the distance learning modality, whether in undergraduate courses or even in short courses.

Graph 04: Other undergraduate courses taken via distance learning
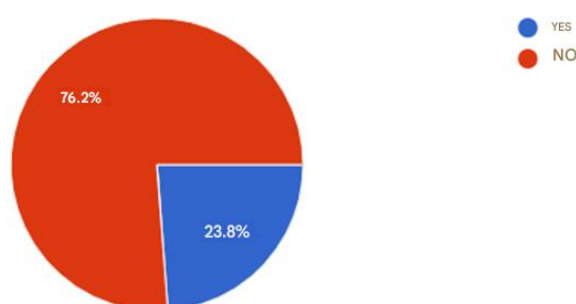
Source: Prepared based on research results (2024).

The data show that 76.2% (16 students) had not taken any undergraduate courses in the distance learning format before enrolling in the Physical Education course, while 23.8% (5 students) reported having experience with another undergraduate course in this format. This disparity reveals that most students were faced with the distance learning format for the first time during their studies, which may have resulted in a longer and more challenging initial adaptation process. On the other hand, the minority who had already taken a distance learning course found it easier to transition into this environment. As highlighted by Kenski (2015), enrolling in distance learning environments requires students to develop new skills, such as adapting to digital technologies, self-managing time, and understanding the dynamics of teaching mediated by virtual platforms. These skills are especially challenging for students who are coming into contact with this teaching model for the first time, requiring greater initial effort to integrate. The data, therefore, highlight the importance of offering specific pedagogical support to students who are entering the distance learning model without previous experience. Strategies such as onboarding programs, initial tutoring, and planning workshops can help students overcome initial challenges and develop the self-management skills necessary for success in the modality.

Graph 05: Course/training/improvement in the distance learning modality before the Physical Education course?
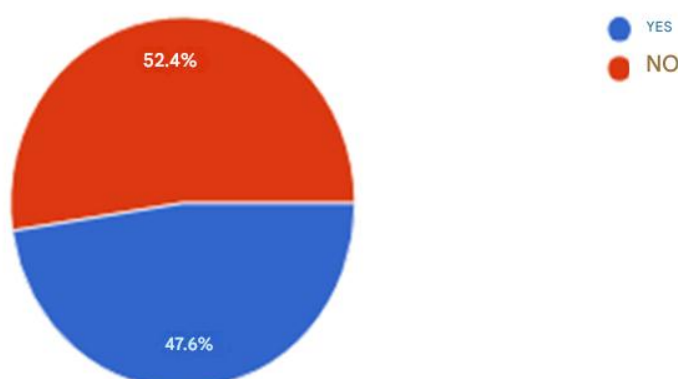
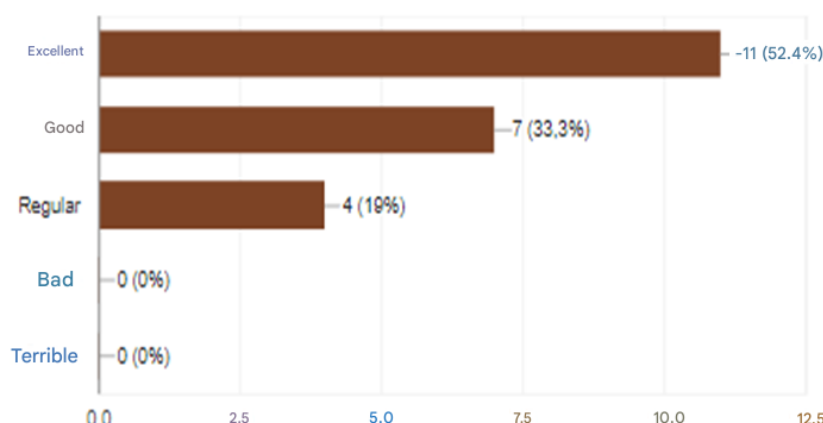

Source: Prepared based on research results (2024).

The results indicate that 47.6% (10 students) participated in distance learning training or improvement courses before enrolling in the Physical Education undergraduate program, while 52.4% (11 students) had no prior experience. This division shows that, although a significant portion of students had already had some contact with distance learning in short-term courses, the majority still faced the challenge of adapting to the distance learning format directly during their undergraduate studies.

Thus, students who had previously taken courses or training reported greater ease in transitioning to the virtual undergraduate environment. From this perspective, Herrera Barzallo et al. (2024) assert that autonomous learning is essential for the development of 21st-century skills, allowing students to plan and evaluate their progress effectively, especially in educational contexts that require greater self-regulation.

Therefore, the data reinforce the importance of encouraging participation in distance learning training courses, especially for students who are entering the undergraduate program without previous experience. These courses can play an essential role in introducing the dynamics of remote teaching, facilitating adaptation, and promoting more efficient learning in the virtual environment.

Chart 06: How do you evaluate the organization of the UAB/UVA Physical Education course in distance learning?

Source: Prepared based on research results (2024).

The evaluation of the organization of the Physical Education course in the distance learning modality presents diverse perceptions among the students. It was found that 52.4% (11 students) evaluated the organization of the course positively, highlighting the clarity of the schedules and materials made available. On the other hand, 47.6% (10 students) indicated limitations, mainly in technical support and communication with tutors.

In this sense, Silva and Paiva (2023) emphasize that the pedagogical organization in distance learning courses requires specific knowledge of this form of teaching and implies strategic decisions, seeking to replace models based on programmed and individualized instruction with a more dynamic approach, which favors a teaching and learning ecology mediated by technologies. In the case of the students investigated, the positive evaluation suggests that UAB/UVA has played a satisfactory role in the management of the Virtual Learning Environment (VLE).

On the other hand, the participants who reported difficulties pointed out problems related to the lack of integration between disciplines and the delay in the return of questions by tutors. These challenges corroborate the findings of Souza (2022), who states that the perception of disorganization in distance learning courses generally results from the absence of a consistent flow of communication between the different actors involved in the pedagogical process.

Another relevant point was the importance of accessible pedagogical planning adapted to the needs of students. Expanding on this reflection, Lima et al. (2020) reinforce that a well-organized course should consider not only the distribution of content but also

strategies that promote greater interaction and support for the student, especially in a teaching model that requires autonomy.

Graph 07: What were the main difficulties encountered in the course so far?
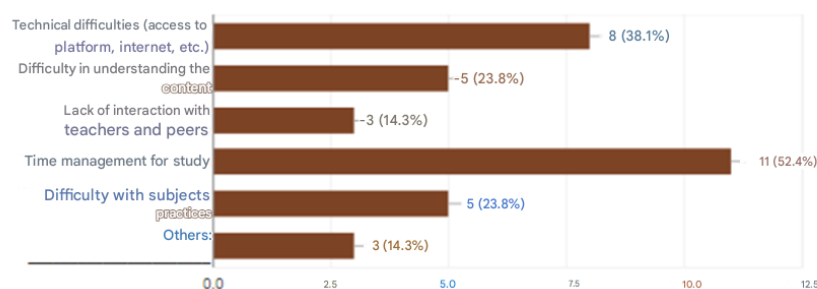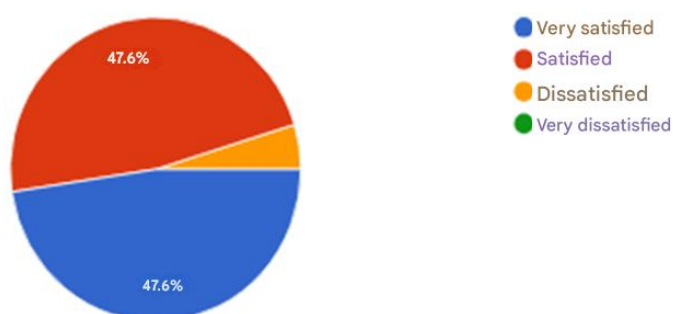

Source: Prepared based on research results (2024).

The students pointed out that the most common challenges in the course are related to limited internet access, time management, and difficulties in maintaining discipline in their studies. These factors reflect common problems in distance learning, as highlighted by Silva and Paiva (2023), the study context, the specificities of the EAD modality, the availability of digital tools, the functionality of the environment, the form of communication, and appropriate media.

Their testimonies address the challenge of reconciling the course with other demands, such as work and family responsibilities. This overload directly impacts academic performance and requires a high degree of organization and discipline from students. According to Mello and Meriño (2023), EAD offers flexibility and accessibility, being a powerful tool for educational inclusion. However, this modality demands greater autonomy from students, especially in time management and in completing the proposed activities, aspects that can represent significant challenges for the teaching-learning process.

Graph 08: Are you satisfied with the distance learning Physical Education course?

Source: Prepared based on research results (2024).

The results indicate that 95.2% (20 students) are satisfied or very satisfied with the Physical Education course in the distance learning modality, with 47.6% being very satisfied and 47.6% satisfied. Only 4.8% (1 student) expressed dissatisfaction with the course. Among the aspects highlighted by the students as positive, the flexibility of schedules and the quality of teaching materials stand out. These factors are essential in the context of distance learning, as pointed out by Melo et al. (2020), who emphasize the flexibility and inclusion that distance learning can provide, in addition to the importance of quality teaching materials for successful learning. Despite the high level of satisfaction, 4.8% of the students reported dissatisfaction, mainly due to difficulties in accessing technological resources and limited communication with tutors and teachers. These issues are in line with the known challenges in the distance learning modality, as discussed by Rybalko et al. (2023), highlighting the need for investments in infrastructure, teacher training, and technical support to improve the quality of teaching in this modality.

The data reinforce that, although the Physical Education course in the distance learning modality presents specific challenges, the general perception of students is largely positive. This satisfaction can be attributed to the flexibility offered, the quality of the content, and the pedagogical planning of the institution.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

This research allowed us to explore the perceptions and experiences of students with a Bachelor's Degree in Physical Education in the distance learning modality, highlighting the challenges and potentialities of this form of teaching. The results indicated that, although students recognize flexibility and accessibility as positive aspects of distance learning, they still face significant difficulties, such as limited access to technological resources, time management, and communication with tutors. These aspects highlight the need for institutional actions that guarantee continuous technical, pedagogical, and emotional support to students. Among the positive points, the organization of teaching materials, the relevance of video classes, and the use of forums to promote interaction and collaboration among participants stood out. These resources, when well structured, have proven to be essential tools for active and meaningful learning, reinforcing the importance of pedagogical practices that integrate technology and social interaction. Finally, the research reinforces that the success of undergraduate courses in the distance learning modality depends on a combination of factors, including the provision of adequate support,

teacher qualification for the use of technologies, and the creation of strategies that articulate theory and practice. By understanding the experiences of academics, it is hoped to contribute to the improvement of educational policies and practices in teacher training courses, especially in areas such as Physical Education, where the challenges of distance learning are even more evident.

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