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**Analysis of the role of motivation, self-regulation
and procrastination in the language learning
during the Covid-19**

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Desidero dedicare questa tesi interamente a mia nonna Bruna, la quale ha creduto in me sin dall'inizio.

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'Comunque vada, la vita resta sempre la più grande avventura possibile'

(Charley Rama)

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Abstract (italiano)

Il presente studio si propone di esplorare e interpretare, attraverso una ricerca esplorativa, le esperienze degli studenti universitari riguardanti l'apprendimento a distanza durante la pandemia da Covid-19. In particolare, si intende valutare l'impatto dell'apprendimento forzato a distanza sulla motivazione, sull'autoregolazione e sulla procrastinazione degli studenti.

In questo contesto, si confrontano tre fasi distintive: il periodo antecedente all'introduzione dell'apprendimento a distanza, contraddistinto da un modello tradizionale di apprendimento in presenza; il periodo di apprendimento a distanza obbligatorio, caratterizzato da modalità online e ridotte interazioni interpersonali; e infine, il periodo successivo, in cui gli studenti potevano optare tra modalità di apprendimento online, in presenza o ibrida.

Considerando le evidenti differenze tra l'apprendimento tradizionale e quello a distanza, il focus è orientato a valutare se e come motivazione, autoregolazione e procrastinazione nell'apprendimento delle lingue straniere siano variate nel contesto della pandemia da coronavirus.

In aggiunta, si mira a investigare le preferenze degli studenti riguardo alle diverse modalità di apprendimento: online, faccia a faccia o ibrida.

È importante sottolineare che gli studenti universitari sembrano essere un gruppo meno indagato nella letteratura scientifica riguardante la pandemia. Esiste una limitata disponibilità di documentazione e studi, anche nel contesto italiano, con la maggior parte delle ricerche focalizzate sugli studenti dei livelli scolastici inferiori.

Un aspetto distintivo degli studenti universitari è la necessità di preparare esami e elaborati scritti. Questo implica un'organizzazione del tempo e dell'apprendimento, con alcuni studenti che mostrano elevata motivazione e autoregolazione, mentre altri tendono alla procrastinazione. Pertanto, l'obiettivo è comprendere se e in che misura motivazione, autoregolazione e procrastinazione abbiano subito variazioni nell'ambito dell'emergenza sanitaria da Covid-19.

Abstract

The present study aims to investigate and interpret, through exploratory research, university students' experiences of distance learning during the Covid 19 pandemic, in particular the degree to which forced distance learning affected motivation, self-regulation, and procrastination.

In this context, we compare: the period prior to distance learning, characterized by regular face-to-face learning; the period of forced distance learning, characterized by online learning and fewer interpersonal relationships; and the period afterwards, when students had a choice between online, face-to-face and dual learning.

Since there is a significant difference between face-to-face and distance learning, I research whether motivation, self-regulation and procrastination in foreign language learning have changed during the coronavirus.

In addition, I would like to explore whether students prefer online, face-to-face or dual learning. It has been noted that university students seem to be less studied by researchers in the context of the pandemic. There is a cert difficulty in finding documents and studies even in the Italian context. Most researchers focus on students attending lower school levels.

A trait of university students is that they have to prepare exams and term papers, this means that when they study, they organize their time in some way, some are motivated and self-regulate, others sometimes procrastinate. Of course, this happened before the pandemic, but also during distance learning. Therefore, I would like to find out whether motivation, self-regulation and procrastination changed during the Corona pandemic era.

Chapter I: Covid-19 and the distance learning

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, starting in spring 2020, individuals, families, businesses and institutions were faced with the need to use digital services to continue working, studying, keeping informed, and maintaining family and social relationships. The trend of 'moving' one's life online has suddenly become concrete for all people. The disruptive change in the daily lives of millions of people assumed that everyone was prepared, in their homes, for this revolution. Forced distance learning was adopted during the lockdown as an emergency solution, but it could represent a chance to renew university teaching. Schools were the first to close and the last to open: depending on the availability of space and the number of students, the various universities decided in 2021 whether to resume face-to-face classes, continue them online or alternate between the two modes. This inevitably also reinforced the adoption of digital tools, which became complementary to education in the traditional sense. The Internet has been seen as a tool for bringing people together, but we must also look at the other side of the coin, the one that sees it as a tool that 'distances' and increasingly marks the technological, economic and cultural divide. In fact, during the pandemic, the unstoppable spread of the Internet and technology has brought to light the disparity between those who have the concrete possibility of accessing technology and those who are excluded from it, and has made us spectators of a paradox that has brought to light all the shortcomings of an educational system that is still a long way from a digital transformation compared to the most developed educational systems in Europe (Ferri, 2015). Some critical aspects of distance learning were also noted, i.e. an unpreparedness on the part of some teachers, from a methodological point of view, but, at the same time, a desire to keep the educational relationship at the center of the learning process, in a context of disorientation and emotional fragility. It should be considered that the effects of the lockdown were visible not only on a socio-economic level, but also on a much deeper level, in emotional terms. With the irruption of distance learning or its alternation with face-to-face teaching, it has led to levels of anxiety and stress, and the difficulty of keeping students' attention and motivation high, resulting in the procrastination of activities. Since distance learning involved the use of technological tools such as computers, tablets, smartphones, through which students had to connect to the lesson from bedrooms, kitchens, living rooms, but above all from spaces often shared with other family members, in these situations it became really difficult to maintain concentration. Due to the distance, it was also more difficult to

establish and nurture a relationship between teacher and student, in fact teachers were afraid of talking in circles and struggled to interpret non-verbal language, such as their smiles and silences, or sense their fears. Therefore, participating in lessons from home with distance learning could be a source of risks or opportunities: it depended on the students, their character, their ability to organize and self-regulate.

1.2 Distance Learning

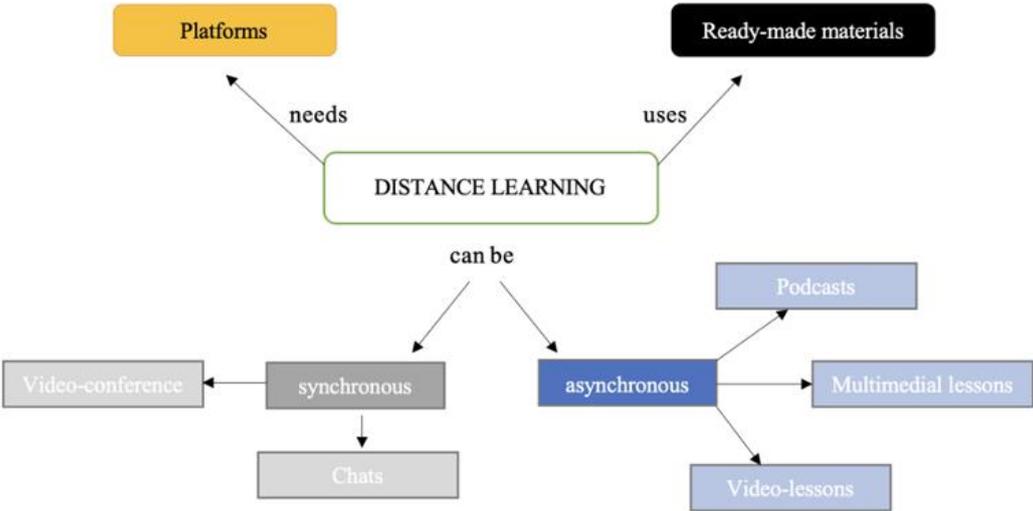
Cambridge Definition of Distance Learning is: *'a way of studying in which you do not attend a school, college, or university, but study from where you live, usually being taught and given work to do over the internet'*.

The rapid development of technologies has made distance learning easier (McBrien et al., 2009). In distance learning, the educational activity is mediated by the computer and the Internet connection, and the teacher becomes a sort of mentor who prepares the material, follows the activities carried out by the student step by step, activating evaluative practices. Thus, roles and commitments are delineated in a different space-time dimension. The teacher's task is to create learning situations that the students can enjoy independently, from their own homes. Students may decide to work independently or collaborate with peers, but in activities without immediate feedback or teacher assistance. It is the teacher who decides whether and when to intervene in this self-learning process in order to assess, guide and create further educational opportunities to stimulate reflection and deepening. The planning of distance learning requires a creative approach that takes into account the complexity of the learning process. The student must be enabled to learn independently, thus exploiting the full potential of multimedia. At the same time, however, the teacher's role must continue to be central in the process of constantly checking the results achieved.

There is one fundamental point that distinguishes distance learning from traditional teaching: the relationship between teachers and students changes significantly. In distance learning, the teacher must be understood as a kind of tutor, must prepare the material, plan the activities and constantly evaluate the activities carried out by the student. The main role of the teacher is to create learning situations in which students can develop skills and competences independently. Of course, this does not mean that contact with the students must disappear. On the contrary, it is of primary importance to think of the scheduling of virtual activities, among other things, as a means of ensuring contact with and between the class group.

Moreover, what changes profoundly is the spatio-temporal dimension of the learning process. It is therefore important to change the approach and go beyond traditional practices. In distance learning, activities in direct (synchronous) connection, such as videoconferences, must be constant because they serve to maintain contact, but they must not be omnipresent. The need to make students feel cared for and supported must not become a suffocating presence. Not least because the students' concentration threshold drops a lot when they are at home. This is why it is useful to diversify the tools and not just focus on videoconferencing and the virtual lesson. Written messages, videos, podcasts, although not involving direct contact with the students, are nevertheless very effective tools for stimulating the attention and interest of the class group. For all these reasons, the mere reproduction of traditional activities should be avoided at all costs. Flexibility and creativity are instead essential in order to make the most of the potential of distance learning and limit its disadvantages at the same time. Distance learning is defined as "a learning experience in a synchronous or asynchronous environment using different devices (e.g. mobile phones, laptops, etc.) with Internet access. In these environments, students can be anywhere (independent) to learn and interact with teachers and other students" (Singh & Thurman, 2019). Distance learning refers to a series of varied and articulated tools that enable education to be continued remotely. (Figure 1)

Figure 1: Distance learning – main tools used



An important distinction to be made is between asynchronous and synchronous classes. The *asynchronous classes* are the easiest but least effective; they may involve recorded video lessons or even be limited to an e-mail in which the teacher assigns the pages to be studied and the tasks to be done. With asynchronous learning, also known as one-way communication, lessons are mostly off-line, recorded and students manage their own time: the teachers provide reading material, recorded lessons, assignments and projects to be completed by a deadline. Common methods of asynchronous online learning include self-guided lesson modules, pre-recorded video content, virtual libraries, lesson notes (slides) and online discussion forums or social media platforms, surveys, and pools.

The benefits of asynchronous learning are:

- Flexibility (place and time);
- Following your own pace (you can read and re-read the material provided by the teacher, you can increase the speed of videotaped lessons, etc.);
- Affordability.

The disadvantages of asynchronous learning are:

- Isolation;
- Risk of apathy.

The synchronous classes (two-way communication) instead can only take place online, when two or more interlocutors are simultaneously connected in a specific virtual location at a fixed time. Teachers usually participate as if they were in a traditional classroom. It allows students to ask their teacher or classmates questions in real time through instant messaging (instant feedback). Common methods of synchronous online learning include video conferencing, teleconferencing, live chat and live lessons that must be viewed in real time. Interaction is important in distance learning because many students need student-teacher interaction for their education.

The benefits of synchronous learning are:

- Interaction between participants
- Exchange of knowledge and experience between participants
- Dynamic learning

- Instant feedback for the teacher

The disadvantages of synchronous learning are:

- Rigid schedule (you cannot decide the time at which you attend the lessons, it is not flexible)
- Technical difficulties (poor internet reception, crashing hard drives or dead batteries in electronic devices)

Studies have shown that courses using asynchronous technology have higher achievement and attitudes than courses using synchronous technology but have lower course completion rates due to low interaction with other people. Although the two forms of learning theoretically meet different needs, it has been established that the best strategy is to combine them.

Table 1: Synchronous/asynchronous learning differences

| Synchronous class | Asynchronous class |
|---|--|
| Traditional class | Registered class |
| Instant messages | E-mail |
| Instant feedback from teachers and students | I send a question and wait for an answer |
| Phone calls | Recorded voice messages |
| In-person learning | Online learning courses (without live video) |
| Live webinar | Recorded webinar |
| At the same time | Different moments |

1.3 Positive and negative aspects of distance learning during the lockdown

As we have seen in the previous section, the pandemic forced schools and universities in all countries to switch from classic face-to-face lectures to distance learning with streaming or recorded lessons. This was done during the first phase of the crisis in a massive manner and later using mixed modes of teaching or using distance learning on an occasional basis in the event of contagion among students. The shift from traditional to distance teaching has entailed not only a change in the mode of teaching, but also a different way of taking exams; it is not easy to distinguish between these different channels, just as it is not easy to understand the role played by the completely new and difficult situation that students were faced with. However, the differentiated impact depending on the propensity to procrastination and self-regulation suggests that the negative effects recorded by the different studies stem above all from the new teaching mode which, taking place in a loosely structured environment, with few constraints and controls and without the appropriate interactions with lecturers and colleagues, tends to disadvantage those who lack sufficient discipline and motivation. Classroom learning typically takes place in a teacher-directed educational context with face-to-face interaction in a live synchronous environment. Although distance learning can increase the flexibility of access, eliminate geographical barriers, and improve the convenience and effectiveness of individualized and collaborative learning, it suffers from certain disadvantages such as the lack of peer contact and social interaction, high initial costs for preparing multimedia materials, substantial costs for maintaining and updating the system, as well as the need for flexible tutorial support (Kinshuk & Yang, 2003; Wu et al., 2008; Yang & Liu, 2007). Table 2 below summarizes the main positive aspects and limitations of distance learning.

Table 2: Positive aspects and limitations distance learning

| BENEFITS | CHALLENGES |
|---|--|
| <p>Accessibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; ○ Log on and study from anywhere that has internet at any time; ○ Possibility of not attending school if you are living far from campus; ○ Lessons enjoyed by a potentially unlimited group of potentially unlimited participants, reduction/cancellation of physical distance- | <p>Technological challenges are often encountered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lack of technical support (computer tablet or smartphone); ○ It is recommended that teachers and students; acquire the appropriate technical; skills (primary school pupils need help from their parents); ○ Low data transmission speed; ○ Lack of network access. |

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Flexibility</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Time (time management according to one's own needs); ○ Place (access to education anytime and anywhere); | <p>Problems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Accuracy ○ Lack of complexity and depth ○ Commercialization of the web ○ Possibility of high distraction, losing control of deadlines |
| <p>Meets the needs of students of various backgrounds and age groups.</p> | <p>Isolation, impact on teamwork and interpersonal skills → Not inclusive.</p> |
| <p>Teachers can enjoy the flexibility of working from home;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Frequent and timely feedback between teachers and students. | <p>Teachers must be extremely organized, dedicated and committed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Less motivational → difficulty in concentrating especially if the lesson is recorded. |
| <p>Multimedia experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Text graphics; ○ Animation; ○ Video; ○ Interactive simulations. | <p>Difficulties in evaluations.</p> |
| <p>Students can revise readings quickly (customization):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Gain more control over their learning; ○ Have more to say about what they want to learn through the feedback system. | <p>No face-to-face interaction, nullifies the dimension of teacher-student interaction.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lacks the gestures, expressions and facets of human contact that make a difference in the learning process, in listening and understanding content. |
| <p>Very cost-effective, lower costs for both students and organizations (teaching materials, transport, accommodation, costs of expenses).</p> | <p>It is complicated for families to manage the teaching and learning of several children, especially if lessons match and few resources are available.</p> |
| <p>Digitalization: opportunities for individual and professional growth.</p> | <p>Not all courses can be offered online.</p> |
| <p>Green' approach: no more paper books but digital, less travel by car and bus 'cleaner air'.</p> | |

SWOT analysis, also called SWOT matrix, is a tool used to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in this case of distance learning.

Table 3: SWOT analysis regarding distance Learning

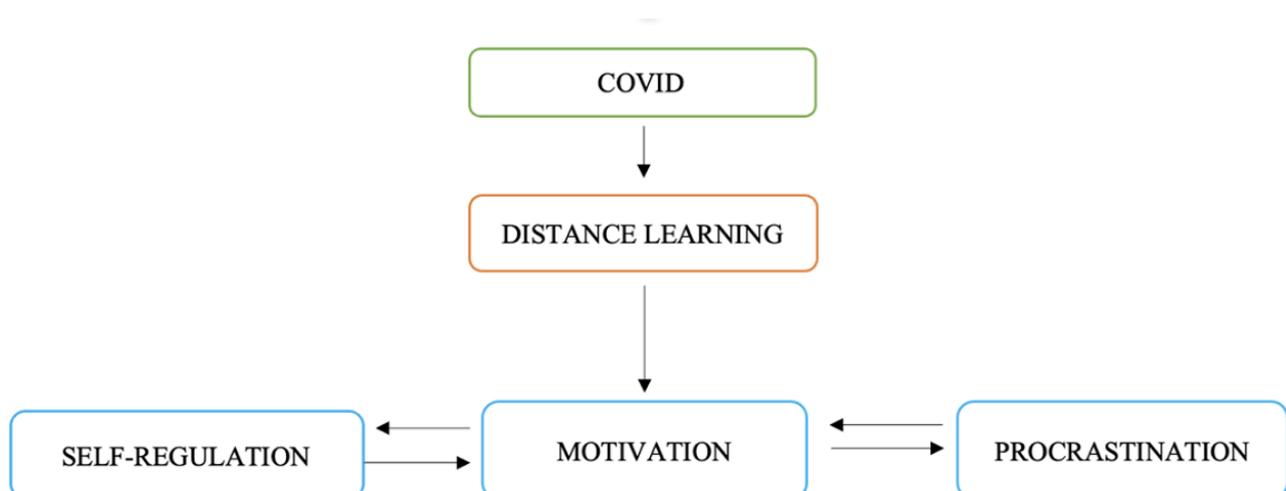
| | |
|---|--|
| <p>STRENGTH</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Temporal flexibility ○ Spatial flexibility ○ Wide audience ○ Wide availability of courses and content ○ Immediate feedback | <p>WEAKNESSES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Technical difficulties ○ Student ability and confidence level ○ Time management ○ Distractions, frustration anxiety and confusion ○ Lack of attention physical and personal |
| <p>OPPORTUNITIES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Field of application for innovation and development digital ○ Designing a flexible program ○ Strengthening skills: problem solving, critical thinking and adaptability ○ Users can be of any age ○ A pedagogical approach innovative (radical transformation in all aspects of education) | <p>○ THREATS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Digital Divide ○ Cost of technology and obsolescence |

Presumably, distance learning will also be with us in the years to come. But as we have seen, one of the weaknesses of this type of teaching is the decrease in motivation and the possible difficulty in organizing study. Of course, it all depends on the personal characteristics of the individual, but it would be useful to understand whether it is possible to improve student learning with tools that allow for a more adequate organisation of study activity, which keeps motivation high and in close contact with the university environment alive. It is possible to observe the valence of the following concepts in the context of distance learning: time management, temporal flexibility, motivation, issues that we will attempt to analyse in this work. For this reason, in the following chapters, the topics of motivation, self-regulation and procrastination will be dealt with more closely, emphasizing the main threats and theories, so that the results of the following research can be properly read.

The schema below more clearly represents how the topics will be discussed. In this first chapter, we have explored the topic of forced distance learning related to the lockdown period starting

in 2020. Distance learning with its own characteristics can naturally influence motivation in some way, for this reason, the arrow from distance learning to motivation is placed. Motivation, is believed to be one of the main determinants of success and failure. In fact, Dörnyei & Ushioda (2011) explained the motivation as follows: *‘why people make a decision about doing something (the reason of the certain choice), how long their willingness to do that activity will go on (persistent), how hard they are going to run after it (effort expended on way of reaching the goal)’*. Then from motivation there is an arrow going to self-regulation, because motivation is able to influence the self-regulation ability. According to Tanya Shuy (2010): *‘self-regulation refers to one’s ability to understand and control one’s learning environment. Self-regulation abilities include goal setting, self-monitoring, self-instruction, and self-reinforcement’*, and it goes together with the motivation can help students maintain consistent learning. On the other side, another arrow from the motivation to procrastination is placed. Procrastination is nothing more than a voluntarily delay of an intended course of action despite expecting to be worse of for the delay” (Steel, 2007), and in case motivation is lacking, it becomes much more difficult to manage the ability to self-regulate and procrastination comes into play. The three constructs will be analyzed in the second chapter and then contextualized through the analysis of the data obtained by the questionnaire.

Figure 2: Topics discussed in the following study



Chapter II: Motivation, self-regulation and procrastination

2.1 Motivation: the definition

The term motivation refers to an internal state that activates and controls an individual's behaviour over the time. It describes why a person does something. It is the driving force behind human actions. This gives behaviour a direction towards a goal, a level of intensity and a sequence of events. It is the crucial element in setting and attaining our objectives. Motivation is that process, that initiates, guides, and maintains goal-oriented behaviours. Its absence can lead to mental illnesses such as depression. Motivation encompasses the desire to continue striving toward meaning, purpose, and a life worth living.

The motivation of a person depends on situational incentives, personal preferences and their interaction. The resulting motivational tendency is composed of the various incentives of the activity, the result of the action, according to the personal motive profile, and both internal consequences concerning self-assessment and external consequences. For this reason, it is necessary to say that motivation is not a single construct but must also be considered in conjunction with various factors. (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Motivation concerns energy, direction, persistence and unity of purpose. All aspects concerning activation and intention. In psychological terms, it has always had a central role. There are many factors and aspects that influence motivation. They often act in combination with each other, such as the external stimulus to obtain a reward or avoid a punishment, the intrinsic pleasantness of the task at hand, the personal value once gives to the result, or the positive idea of what we will be once we have achieved the goal (Cucinotta, 2018).

Motivation plays a fundamental role in education, in particular in the field of language teaching, since through the influence it has on the learning process and the final results, it is able to compensate for considerable deficiencies in both personal language aptitude and learning conditions. For this reason, it is crucial that the language teacher is able to create, strengthen or maintain students' motivation. (Cucinotta, 2018). At the same time naturally, there are factors that undermine motivation, such as deadlines, directives, threats and imposed targets (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

But a significant factor, which has been underestimated for many years is the context. Student's concentration and feelings vary depending on the context in which he/she finds him/herself. If the individual studies in an environment in which he/she feels calm and at ease, it is very likely

that he/she will obtain better results and that he/she will not experience a particular state of anxiety, with the consequence that his/her positive attitude will also cause an increase in motivation. In the opposite case, in which the individual is in an environment that makes him/her feel uncomfortable or in which he/she experiences high anxiety, the student's attitude and results will be negative, with the consequence that motivation will decrease.

A particular type of learning context is that of *distance learning*, which has already been practiced for some time, but it has been used intensively by schools of all levels since 2020 due to the Coronavirus pandemic. This pandemic has created significant challenges in academic instruction, affecting both teaching and learning. This situation has led to the implementation of the distance learning systems, it had to be strengthened, adapting them to the new needs accesses to the platforms. Furthermore, teachers had to and reorganise their teaching methods, especially in terms of learning activities and interaction with their students. Distance learning has had a significant impact on student motivation. On the one hand, some students have found distance learning more convenient and flexible than traditional in-person classes. However, others have struggled to stay motivated and focused during online classes, as the lack of social interaction and the opportunity to work closely with classmates and teachers can be challenging. Moreover, students may have difficulty maintaining a consistent long-term study schedule when it comes to distance learning, as they do not have the same routine as an in-person class, and distractions at home may increase. The lack of a traditional school atmosphere with its events and extracurricular activities can also affect students' motivation. However, it is important to note that the effects on student motivation vary greatly depending on individual situations, needs, and preferences. In any case, teachers and educational institutions have tried to address these issues through various strategies, such as the use of innovative technologies and the organization of online extracurricular activities to keep students motivated and engaged. Motivation has been the focus of interest of numerous researchers, each of whom has analysed it and highlighted the different factors that can increase or decrease it. The main theories that give us a clear overview about motivation, are presented here, starting with those of the best-known scholars, such as Gardner, Dörnyei, Deci and Ryan, and going on to Stimulus Evaluation Theory.

2.1.2 Motivation: theoretical Framework

The motivation represents a very stimulating field of study, in fact the research conducted on the influence of this factor in language education is many and varied.

The history of research on this topic only starts at the end of the 1950s when affective factors began to arouse the interest of researchers. The type of orientation that attracted the most interest was the integrative orientation, i.e. the desire for integration with the community of a particular language. Other researchers, on the other hand, focused more on the dichotomy between integrative and instrumental motivation, i.e. that motivation linked to an orientation whereby language learning is pursued in order to gain a practical advantage.

Exploring the Evolution of Motivation in Language Teaching: Robert Gardner's Impact and the Introduction of Affective Factors

According to Gardner (1985), the motivation plays an important role, as it is the necessary element for the learner to undertake any kind of activity that leads him/her to the achievement of a goal and that during this activity he/she shows a positive attitude, commitment, and willingness to achieve the set goal. In the 1950s, the study of motivation began in the field of language teaching, but what really influenced the study on motivation is the article "Motivational variables in second language acquisition" by Robert C. Gardner and Wallace E. Lambert. Together they began to explore the concept of motivation. Over the next thirty years Gardner's work influenced all research on motivation, which is considered a combination of individual characteristics, prior experiences of the student and factors related to. In fact, until then, studies only considered *cognitive factors*, such as intelligence, memory, predisposition. Gardner and Lambert hypothesized that cognitive factors alone were not sufficient to explain the variability of results, but also other aspects needed to be considered. What distinguished their discovery was the introduction of *non-cognitive elements*, also known as *affective factors* (motivation, anxiety, feeling of self-confidence when speaking a language, personality and learning styles). Gardner places anxiety among the affective factors. Gardner considers it as "the apprehension experienced when a situation requires the use of second language with which the individual is not fully proficient." A way of reacting to speaking, listening, or writing. Other forms of anxiety include self-related cognitions, a sense of dread and an accelerated heartbeat. Subsequently, anxiety will be treated more closely (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993).

Examining the Interplay of Motivational Factors in Language Acquisition: Dörnyei's Model and Teacher's Influence

Dörnyei (2005) argues that, in connection with the need to bring motivation and motivational psychology closer together, there is a need to shift the focus from a macro-perspective, concerning the relationships between communities and the learner's attitude towards them, to a micro-perspective, i.e. an analysis of motivation according to the learning situation. It is also true that predisposition (attitude) is seen as a function of the social context and interpersonal relationships, but motivational psychologists were looking for the real driver of human behaviour in the individual rather than human behaviour influenced by the social relationship traditionally focusing on concepts such as instinct, 'arousal', need, anxiety and the need for good results, failure, self-esteem etc. (Dörnyei, 1994). For this reason, Dörnyei states that learning a second foreign language is much more than mastering new information and knowledge. Based on this, in his model Dörnyei explains the importance of the role of the teacher, the syllabus, teaching material, teaching method, etc. The teacher can motivate the class by increasing the attractiveness of the course content, using authentic and unusual supplementary materials, discussing the choice of teaching materials with the students, arousing and sustaining curiosity and attention, introducing unexpected and unfamiliar events, periodically breaking the static character of the classes, increasing the students' interest and involvement in the assignments, designing or selecting varied and challenging activities, familiarizing the students with the type of assignment and preparing them for the content of the assignment to increase their expectation. Furthermore, the teacher with his/her behaviour, personality and teaching style can motivate the class by trying to be empathetic and assuming the role of facilitator, promoting learner autonomy, modelling student interest in learning, valuing learning as a meaningful experience that produces satisfaction. The teacher can promote the internalization of class norms, he/she can minimize the negative effect of assessment and focus on individual improvement and progress. The teacher can also promote the development of group cohesion and improving relationships between members through times when students can get to know each other, frequently including group work (Dörnyei, 1994).

Internal and External Forces: Understanding the Dynamics of Motivation through Deci and Ryan's Self-Determination Theory

Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory (SDT) is one of the best known in the field of motivational psychology. Deci and Ryan (2000) link personality to motivation and analyse several reasons why an individual is motivated to behave according to various goals. This theory distinguishes different types of motivation that are in turn based on different reasons or goals that drive the 'action'.

Deci and Ryan set two main types of motivation at the basis of their model: intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Both forces, according to the two authors, define who we are and how we behave.

- *Intrinsic motivation* is a motivation that can be linked to one's own satisfaction, personal enjoyment in studying and activities during the acquisition process.

"Intrinsically motivated behaviours are aimed at bringing about certain internally rewarding consequences, namely, feelings of competence and self-determination" (Deci, 1975: 386).

It is therefore a motivation that derives from within, from the individual's interest, from the desire for competence and autonomy, which drive the individual to want to learn from his or her environment. Therefore, according to the two authors, the environment must be stimulating, since in the absence of activities that are in some way interesting to the individual, intrinsic motivation is unlikely to be activated (Deci & Ryan, 2000);

- *Extrinsic motivation*, on the other hand, is motivation linked to instrumental ends, whereby the individual is motivated by the idea of obtaining a reward or avoiding a punishment. It is therefore a motivation derived from an external stimulus to the individual (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

This distinction is not to be understood as an opposition between the two types of motivation, where one excludes the other; on the contrary, Furthermore, they explain that there are different forms of extrinsic motivation, which are distinguished according to the internalization of the goal. Although self-determination is generally the goal, one cannot avoid being motivated by external sources, which is not necessarily a bad thing.

Both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are crucial determinants of an individual's behaviour, and both drive the individual to satisfy the three basic needs identified by the SDT model:

- autonomy (need for autonomy),
- competence (need for competence);
- relatedness (need for relatedness).

People have the need to feel that they are masters of their own destiny and to have at least some control over their lives and especially control over their behavior, and this represents the need for autonomy. The need for competence relates to achievements, knowledge and skills; people need to build their competence and develop mastery of the tasks that are important to them. Finally, people feel the need for a sense of belonging and connection with others and this is the need for relationships with other people.

Stimulus Evaluation Theory (La teoria della valutazione dello stimolo)

According to Balboni (2014), the stimulus evaluation theory is a fundamental theory to explain how the brain attributes an evaluation to external stimuli and accordingly decides whether to accept them. To evaluate the importance of a stimulus, the brain does not use a logical way such as reasoning, but rather emotions, which play a large role in transforming input into learning. There are five parameters governing the evaluation: novelty, pleasantness, relevance, feasibility and psychological and social safety.

- *Novelty* concerns the variation of teaching techniques in a continuous way and can have positive effects in terms of attracting attention and facilitating brain activation. Some ways of introducing novelty into the lesson are: use of games and challenges, multisensory activities, use of different types of exercises (cloze, multiple choices, mimic transpositions, etc.) and so on;
- *Pleasantness* is an aspect that is not considered in traditional teaching and on which a lot of work can be done, also involving the students. Some of the ways to work on the pleasantness of content, materials, channels, presentation and variety are, for example, sending the material to be printed to the students or using a colour photocopy instead of black and white so that the material looks pleasant, choosing content that reflects the students' tastes and involving them in the choice;
- *Relevance* relates to the interests, needs and goals of students and allows, not only to capture their attention, but also to keep it. The brain only selects what it considers

interesting, so activities must be provided that are educationally and also daily useful, in order to generate a positive reaction and willingness in students to perform an activity;

- *Feasibility*, in addition to the actual ease or difficulty of the task, concerns the positive evaluation of the input. For this to happen, it is necessary to defuse the potential negative reactions of the students, for instance by warning them of the difficulty of the task and the possible complications they will have to face while performing it;
- *Psychological and social safety* concerns the student's perception of his or her own social image and self-esteem. If he or she does not feel at risk, the student is able to interact with others and avoid negative reactions in the event of mistakes.

"Negative emotions, fear and anxiety in this case, cannot be removed in a learning process that presupposes error, but can be defused to provoke psychological reactions of closure and even physiological reactions - sweating, blushing, trembling, decreased muscle control especially on facial features - that are socially even more embarrassing, and therefore emotionally disruptive, than a wrong answer." (Balboni 2014: 177)

This confidence is developed by providing students with real opportunities for success and increasing their sense of ability to achieve a given goal. Therefore, it is necessary to work on goals, which must be realistic and attainable, but also on expectations, which can be disappointing if they are too high. As Balboni (2014) suggests, it is necessary to remind students that making mistakes is normal during the acquisition process, to explain that the teacher is there to help and not to punish, and that "if everyone is at risk, in fact no one is actually at risk: everyone makes mistakes, everyone says nonsense, and laughing about it is not offensive, it is liberating " (Balboni, 2014: 177).

Encouragement and praise can be used, but they must be used for actually challenging activities, otherwise they are false. Furthermore, the activity must be compatible with the students' self-concept, a concept much studied in psychology. A person's self-concept has traditionally been seen as the summary of the individual's self-knowledge in relation to the way the person sees him/herself at that moment. The self-concept is identifiable in the possible selves theory of Markus and Nurius, who in their essay distinguish between three types of representations of an individual in the future: the self-one would like to become, the self-one could become and the self-one fears to become. These representations concern both positive and negative outcomes that the individual can achieve because according to Markus and Ruvolo,

"imaging one's own actions through the construction of elaborated possible selves achieving the desired goal may thus directly facilitate the translation of goals into intentions and instrumental actions" (Dörnyei, 2005: 100).

At the extremes of the possibilities, representing the best- and worst-case scenarios, are the ideal self, which can be successful, creative, rich, admired, and the feared self, which can be lonely, incompetent, unemployed, etc. (Dörnyei, 2005: 100). In this sense, the idea of the self-image can have a strong motivational impact and in order not to undermine psychological and social safety, one can act on the one hand by proposing activities that are compatible with the learners' way of being and on the other hand one can work on the goals and the path, helping to create an image to aim for, showing the path and working on the goals and their feasibility.

2.2.1 Self-regulation: the definition

Learning can be defined as a complex process comprising both cognitive and motivational components, the dynamics of which also concern the ways in which the learner achieves learning goals autonomously. Students who are able to self-regulate their learning are generally able to modulate their motivational processes in such a way as to improve their own academic performance (Biasi, De Vincenzo & Patrizi, 2017). Self-regulation and motivation are two key factors in effective studying. Self-regulation refers to the ability to control and manage one's own behaviour, emotions, and thoughts in order to achieve set goals. Motivation, on the other hand, refers to the energy and enthusiasm that a person has towards a specific goal or activity. Together, self-regulation and motivation can help students maintain consistent studying, persist through difficulties, and achieve their academic goals. For example, a student who self-regulates effectively can identify their weaknesses, set realistic goals, and develop effective studying strategies to improve performance. At the same time, a motivated student will be more likely to engage in studying, find pleasure in learning, and persevere through difficulties.

2.2.2 Self-regulation: theoretical Framework

There are several strategies that students can use to develop self-regulation and motivation in studying. Some of these include:

- Setting specific and realistic goals: Students should identify specific and measurable studying goals and plan how to achieve them. Goals should be specific and measurable, so that the student can monitor their progress.
- Using effective studying strategies: Students should develop a set of effective studying strategies, such as time planning, reviewing studying materials, and practicing problems and activities. These strategies can help improve studying performance and maintain attention.
- Using feedback: Students should use feedback from teachers and peers to identify strengths and weaknesses in their work, and use this information to improve their performance.
- Maintaining motivation: Students should find ways to maintain motivation in studying, such as reading studying materials that interest them, using self-motivation techniques, and working with other students.

Knowledge self-regulation is the result of the set of cognitive and metacognitive strategies that individuals adopt in order to modify their thinking patterns and achieve their learning objectives.

Zimmermann (2010) also focuses on the role of metacognition in students and emphasizes how self-regulated learning depends on metacognitive, motivational and behavioural components. Cognitive processing strategies are defined as those activities implemented to process learning content that directly lead to learning outcomes in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills (Vermunt, 1998). Multiple studies have shown that self-regulation of knowledge positively influences students' academic performance (Pellerey, 2006) and tends to prevent the university dropout phenomenon (De Marco & Albanese, 2009). And beyond, in recent years psychological research has focused on the study habits of university students and has attempted to shed light on the relationships between the way they study and their academic performance in order to describe the strategic, metacognitive and motivational aspects that characterize the successful student.

Successful learners have been shown to be flexible in their choice of strategies (Wood, Motz & Willoughby, 1998), to implement multiple behaviours that facilitate strategic and motivated study, adapting their knowledge and skills to different situations, are more metacognitive, have a good self-regulation of their study activity, and are more able to evaluate their own preparation. They have also shown that they primarily set goals of mastery rather than performance, have high levels of intrinsic motivation and self-efficacy (Mega, Meneghetti & De Beni 2006). The psycho-educationalist Benjamin Samuel Bloom (1976) believes that there is a close relationship linking affectivity and motivation and learning, since affective and motivational variables exert a relevant action in the processes of knowledge, understanding and socialization that take place in the school environment, because the student not only thinks and elaborates, but also 'feels' and participates.

2.3 Procrastination: the definition

The other side of the coin of self-regulation and motivation is precisely procrastination and also this one is a key factor that can significantly influence our behavior, especially when it comes to studying. The etymology of the term procrastination derives from the Latin: *pro- in favor of, crastinus- of tomorrow*. This refers to “a voluntarily delay of an intended course of action despite expecting to be worse off for the delay” (Steel, 2007). In other words, this means consciously postponing the performance of tasks, particularly those that require effort or are not enjoyable or that it would be in the person's interest to do in the immediate future. It is a behavior that leads to deliberately postponing an action that would be better performed immediately. Procrastination can provide immediate relief, but in the long term it can lead to stress, anxiety, and dissatisfaction.

2.3.2 Procrastination: theoretical Framework

Procrastination is often associated with work and academic performances, but it can also affect other areas, even to the point of completely affecting the way of life. What generates the urgency to postpone or divert from the task is the negative perception that we have of that task itself. We tend to substitute what needs to be done, for something else of lesser importance that involves less immediate risk (Salvatori, 2017). Knaus (2010) affirms that it is an articulated process involving a cognitive (interconnected perceptions and thoughts), an emotional (emotions and feelings) and a behavioural (actions) component. By surrendering to

procrastination, one experiences immediate relief, which acts as a reinforcer feeding the tendency to postpone further and the probability of repeating the same behaviour in the future. There are numerous studies in literature that deal with identifying the causes of procrastination. However, task aversion seems to be one of the most common causes of procrastination (Giusti, 2013). Although the unattractiveness of the task is subjectively defined, the lack of incentives and having to perform tasks that repeat themselves can easily lead a person to procrastinate. The problem of procrastination is closely related to time management. Procrastinators always have a difficulty with time management and constantly wage a struggle against it. They have an unrealistic view of time and misjudge the resources available to them. What happens is that they underestimate the time needed to perform a task and do not know how to use the time available, so they easily overload themselves with commitments thinking they have plenty of time, only to fail to manage them, or they alternate between moments of stagnation and moments of intense work, mainly engaging in various activities (Giusti 2013). Knaus (2010) argues that the procrastinator's time is a 'suspension' time that is not fully experienced, during which one is not present to either what one is doing or what one should be doing. Yanping and Dilip (2014) argue that it is the perception of the task in the present moment that determines the initiation of action: if the deadline of a task is close to the present moment then the mental attitude will be inclined towards action, if it is in a time category other than the present it will be easier to postpone action. Time also seems to play a decisive role in assessing the costs that the procrastinator pays. The further away in time and therefore the less concrete and tangible the costs are in the present, the more he or she will tend to underestimate them, aiming his or her actions at immediate gratification (Steel 2011). Furthermore, Ferrari (1989) argues that procrastinators often fear the judgement of others and therefore believe they have to do the work perfectly, which is the reason why Onwuegbuzie (2000) identified a correlation between procrastination and perfectionism mainly in the academic sphere. Therefore, they fail to do the task they are supposed to do because they are overly focused on performance and overly concerned with how others will judge them. The fear of making mistakes and consequently being judged and rejected imposes a high degree of knowledge and reality check (Salvatori, 2017).

The temporal motivation theory (TMT)

The temporal motivation theory (TMT) elaborated by Steel (2007) is used as the main theoretical framework. Steel (2011) tries to explain through an equation the origin of procrastination. The equation consists of three basic factors: expectations, value and time. The equation identified is as follows:

Figure: Procrastination equation

$$\text{Motivation} = \frac{\text{Expectancy} \times \text{Value}}{\text{Impulsiveness} \times \text{Delay}}$$

- *Motivation*: it is the opposite of the procrastination
- *Expectancy*: when we are expecting something bad to happen, we tend to procrastinate;
- *Value*: the less pleasant a task is, the more difficult it is to start it;
- *Time*: the timing of a task is the most crucial factor in deciding whether or not to complete it.
- *Delay*: Immediate rewards are more enjoyable than those that require waiting. The more distant the tasks' reward, the lower the motivation.

The root of this formula can be found in the 'expected utility theory' of Ainslie and Halslam (1992), which states that we make our decisions based on the expectations and value we attach to a given event (Steel 2011). This concept needs to be enriched by adding the concept of present-bias theorized by O'Donoghue and Rabin (1999) in which the time factor plays a decisive role, indicating that the greater the delay, the more motivation decreases. Impulsiveness intensifies the effects of delay: the impulsive person evaluates the effect of time to a lesser degree than others, only carries about the consequences of one's postponement only if they are very close in time. Procrastination can be a barrier to motivation in studying, but there are strategies that can be used to overcome this tendency and increase motivation, i.e. setting motivating goals, planning our time, using motivational techniques, and addressing the causes of procrastination can be helpful in achieving our academic goals.

2.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, on the basis of this it can be considered that the distance learning has had a significant impact on motivation, self- regulation and procrastination in language learning. On the one hand, distance learning has increased the temptation to procrastinate, as students often find themselves studying from home, where distractions such as television, social media abound. Additionally, the lack of direct interaction with teachers and classmates can make students feel more isolated, making it more difficult to maintain motivation and commitment to studying.

On the other hand, distance learning has also created new opportunities for self-regulation in studying and motivation. Students now have greater flexibility to organize their time and can follow their own learning pace. Additionally, many online learning platforms offer useful tools for monitoring one's progress and for immediate feedback on exercises completed. Overall, therefore, distance learning has had an ambivalent impact. Students need to make a greater effort to resist the temptation to procrastinate and to maintain motivation in studying, but at the same time they have the opportunity to develop greater self-regulation skills and organization of their time.

Chapter III: The Methodology

In the previous chapters, three variables of great importance were investigated, explaining their influence on foreign language acquisition, namely Motivation, Procrastination, and Self-regulation. An attempt was made to analyze them within the context of Distance Learning as well. As seen in the previous chapters, numerous significant studies have already been conducted by leading scholars on these variables. However, when the complexities of the existing language learning process are compounded by the factor of distance learning, the role played by these three affective variables becomes even more crucial.

Due to the emergency caused by the pandemic, the Italian school system was forced to completely interrupt traditional face-to-face lessons and, to ensure total safety, proceeded with distance learning. This mode provided students and teachers with the opportunity to interact with each other through electronic devices such as computers, tablets, and phones, overcoming the challenge of not being physically present in the same location. Synchronous lessons were conducted by teachers using video conferencing platforms such as Google Meets or Zoom, which were then recorded and asynchronously accessed by those who needed to catch up on the content.

The history of distance education dates back to the 19th century and continues to evolve. However, in the last decade and a half, the growth of the Internet and related technologies has brought distance teaching and learning into the educational routine of universities, responding to various situations and needs (Keegan, 1986; Harnett et al., 2011). Most of the previous research conducted on motivation, self-regulation, and procrastination in the context of distance language learning has focused on high school students. Due to the rapid change in educational offerings and the complete lack of well-planned design, the mode of distance learning implemented in Italian high schools and lower grades represents a unique emergency mode. Students had to quickly adapt to this mode, which can be somewhat defined as an “educational experiment” (Sarsini, 2020), as they had never experienced distance education before.

Equally significant have been the situations within Italian universities during various academic courses. Certainly, the needs of university-level students differ from those attending lower grades, but academic students have also faced numerous challenges. For this reason, the present research aims to investigate the impact that distance learning has had on the learning of foreign languages during the Covid-19 pandemic. Specifically, it aims to explore whether distance

learning during language education has influenced the motivation, procrastination, and self-regulation of university students, more specifically those enrolled in linguistic degree programs. In particular, for this study, the following research questions were addressed:

RQ1: Did distance learning influence motivation? Are there differences between undergraduate and graduate students? If so, in what way?

RQ2: Did distance learning influence self-regulation and procrastination? Are there variations between undergraduate and graduate students? If so, in what way?

RQ3: Do the subjects believe that Distance Learning has altered their study habits compared to before? Are there differences between undergraduate and graduate's students?

The research hypothesis is that distance learning has brought about a change in linguistic learning and, in turn, has negatively influenced motivation, self-regulation, and procrastination.

3.1 Setting

The following study was conducted online through the Google Forms. Participants received the questionnaire link and completed it. Once finished, subjects submitted their responses, and the results were immediately recorded.

An online tool was chosen to facilitate the completion of the survey. Due to the online nature of the survey, there was no control over the environmental conditions in which participants filled out the questionnaire. The investigation was conducted in March of the academic year 2021/2022. All individuals who completed the questionnaire were included in the sample because they possessed all the necessary characteristics.

3.2 Participants

The participants of this research were students attending a University, situated in north of Italy. The sample consisted of 38 individuals. All subjects to whom the questionnaire was administered were currently enrolled in language-related degree programs. For this study, the gender of the subjects is not a variable of interest.

From the data, it emerged that the age of the subjects falls within the range of 20-37 years.

3.3 Design

This is survey research, and the approach used is quantitative. All participants were administered the same online questionnaire consisting of closed-ended questions. For the assessment, a 6-point Likert scale was adopted, where 1 corresponds to the lowest approval rating, and 6 represents the highest. A scale with an even number of 6 points was deliberately chosen to avoid the subject's indecision causing the midpoint effect.

3.4 Instrument

The questionnaire was specifically created for this research and was administered in Italian. It was developed using Google Forms, a free, web-based software for survey creation, that allows gathering a significant amount of data in a short time. The questionnaire had to be filled out online through the designated form. The ability to create an online fillable questionnaire allowed us to record responses immediately in a Microsoft Excel file. Another advantage of using this form is the ability to require respondents to complete certain items, under the penalty of being unable to submit the questionnaire. This feature is crucial to avoid obtaining a database with gaps, and in the case of paper-format questionnaires, while it's possible to ask the reader to answer all questions, there is no certainty that they won't overlook or choose not to answer certain items they consider sensitive or on which they feel they do not have a precise opinion. It consisted of closed-ended items Likert scales to allow students to answer easily and quickly. The guiding principle in developing the tool was simplicity and essentiality. In fact, less than ten minutes were needed for the completion of this questionnaire. The goal was to be as concise as possible so as not to bore the respondent and to prevent them from answering without careful consideration. The questionnaire was organized into 8 sections:

1. Consent acknowledgment;
2. General Information;
3. Third Section: Questions on Perception of Performance;
4. Fourth Section: Questions on Motivation;
5. Fifth Section: Question on Well-being;
6. Sixth Section: Questions on Technological Devices and Technical Issues;
7. Seventh Section: Questions on Contact;
8. Eight Section: Questions on Self-regulation and needs.

The questions in the sections related to performance, motivation, well-being, technological devices, contact, and self-regulation are repeated three times, corresponding to each analyzed period. Therefore, they are repeated for each of the following periods:

- Traditional face-to-face learning *before* February 2020.
- Distance learning *during the pandemic* from February 2020.
- Blended learning starting from the academic year *2020/2021*.

This approach allowed for the collection of data that enables a comparison between before and after, leading to meaningful results.

3.4.1 First Section: Consent acknowledgment

The first section of the questionnaire is dedicated to obtaining the subjects' consent and explaining the purposes of the study. The questionnaire was completed anonymously, and the collected data were explicitly used for the stated purposes.

3.4.2 Second Section: General Information

The first section contains eight general questions, useful for obtaining an overview of the subject. The questions pertain to the subjects' age, the academic program they are currently pursuing, the languages they are studying, and their employment status. Questions seven and eight, focusing on their study methods during distance learning and their preference among traditional learning, distance learning and blended learning, are particularly useful for gaining an initial understanding of the participants' perspectives on online education.

3.4.3 Third Section: Questions on Perception of Performance

The first question in this section pertains to academic performance.

The perception of one's own performance can influence motivation. If a student feels challenged or cannot see progress in their language learning, they may become demotivated. Conversely, if they feel successful, motivation could increase. For this reason, we decided to investigate this category because, in addition to providing an index of the subjects' perceived performance in different periods, it is also closely linked to motivation and, in turn, to organization and self-regulation.

3.4.4 Fourth Section: Questions on Motivation

This section contains four questions and are related to the Motivation. Motivation is a key factor in language learning. During distance learning, maintaining high motivation can be a challenge, as students may feel isolated or less engaged. Teachers need to use strategies to keep students motivated, such as using interesting and engaging materials.

3.4.5 Fifth Section: Question on Well-being

This section includes one question about well-being, because the positive emotional well-being can foster learning. Students who feel happy, relaxed, and motivated tend to learn better. Teachers can contribute to promoting emotional well-being during distance learning by providing a positive learning environment, encouraging active participation, and demonstrating empathy towards students. Anxiety can be a barrier to learning, and the online learning environment may exacerbate anxiety for various reasons, such as isolation, concerns about technology, or fear of falling behind.

3.4.6 Sixth Section: Questions on Technological Devices and Technical Issues

As not all students had access to reliable technical devices and a stable internet connection, this section includes four questions related technological devices. Lack of access or intermittent connection can hinder active participation in online classes. It is thanks to teachers who, being aware, seek solutions.

3.4.7 Seventh Section: Questions on Contact

This section comprises three questions and related to two types of:

Contact with teachers: Contact with teachers may be more limited during distance learning. However, it is important that teachers are available to answer students' questions, provide feedback, and offer support. Regular communication with teachers can help students overcome difficulties and feel less isolated.

Contact with coursemates: Interacting with coursemates is important for language learning, as it provides opportunities for oral practice and collaboration. During distance learning, students

may miss some of these opportunities. However, online forums, video conferences, and other platforms can be used to facilitate interaction among students.

It is important to note that the effect of these factors can vary from individual to individual. Some students may thrive in distance learning, while others may find it more challenging. Teachers must be aware of these factors and adopt strategies to support students in language learning during distance learning.

3.4.8 Eight Section: Questions on Self-regulation

Self-regulation is the ability to manage one's own learning, and the last four questions are related to that. During distance learning, students need to be able to organize their time, set learning goals, and monitor their progress. Self-regulation is particularly important in an autonomous learning environment.

The questionnaire will be found in the Appendix.

3.5 Administration

Once the data collection was complete, the Excel database immediately facilitated working on the data and extracting relevant information for the investigation. First, to make the results more readable, the mean and standard deviation were calculated. Subsequently, tables and graphs were created.

Chapter IV: Results

The participants of the study were students at the same university and were asked to respond to a total of 17 questions concerning their perception of performance motivation, well-being, technological devices and technical Issues, contact with teachers and classmates, self-regulation and their needs. This set of seventeen questions is repeated in the same way for the three different periods with different learning method. The collected data have been arranged into tables for a clearer understanding of the results.

4.1 General Information

This paragraph focuses on the results concerning the second section of the questionnaire, that is to say the one dedicated to the 8 items related to the students' 'General information' (See Section 3.4.2). It emerged that the age of the subjects falls within the range of 20-37 years, with an mean age of 24 years. As the number of male attendees in language courses at this University is very low, attempting to research based on the gender of the subjects would not have yielded reliable results. For this reason, gender was not considered as a research variable.

Table 1 - Description of the age of the subjects

| Age | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 30 | 31 | 35 | 37 | Mean |
|-----|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|-------|
| N° | 2 | 2 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 24 |
| % | (5,3%) | (5,3%) | (18,4%) | (15,8%) | (23,7%) | (5,3%) | (5,3%) | (2,6%) | (5,3%) | (2,6%) | (5,3%) | (2,6%) | (2,6%) | years |

The majority of subjects, specifically 65,8%, are pursuing a master's degree at Ca' Foscari, while 34,2% are enrolled in a bachelor's degree program. The majority, specifically 50%, are in the second academic year of the bachelor program.

Table 2 - Description of the academic level

| General Information | | | | |
|---------------------------|--|---------------|---------------|--------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | |
| | Item | Triennale | Magistrale | Master |
| 2 | Che corso di laurea stai frequentando? | 13 (34,3%) | 25 (65,8%) | / |

Table 3 - Description of the academic year

| General Information | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | | | |
| | Item | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3 | Quale anno stai frequentando ? | 9 (23,7%) | 19 (50%) | 8 (21,1%) | 1 (2,6 %) | 1 (2,6%) |

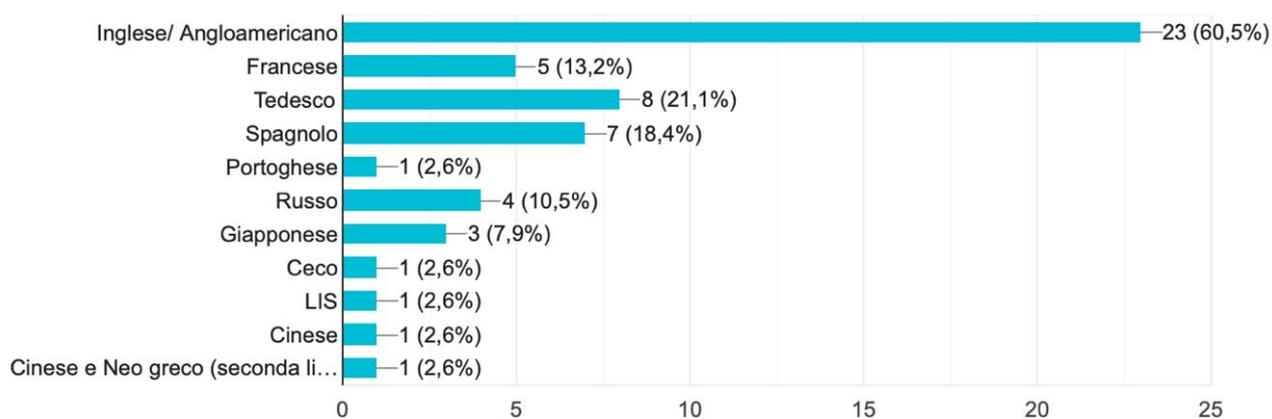
As evidenced by the table 4, the subjects are enrolled in various degree programs related to languages:

Table 4 - Description of the course of study

| Course | N° (%) |
|---|------------|
| Lingue e Letterature Europee, Americane e Postcoloniali (LLEAP) | 18 (47,4%) |
| Lingue, civiltà e scienze del linguaggio | 10 (26,3%) |
| Scienze del linguaggio | 5 (13,2%) |
| Relazioni internazionali comparate | 4 (10,5%) |
| Lingue e Civiltà dell'Asia e dell'Africa Mediterranea (LICAAM) | 1 (2,6%) |

As is evident from the table below, the most commonly studied languages are English/Anglo-American, German, and Spanish

Table 5 - Description of the languages studied



From this question, it was observed that the majority, which is 60,5% of the subjects do not work. The 39,5% is reported to be a worker.

Table 6 - Description of the subjects' work

| General Information | | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | |
| | Item | Si | No |
| 6 | Stai lavorando? | 23 (60,5%) | 15 (39,5%) |

As Table 7 illustrates, item #7 had a mean of 5,1, and its standard deviation (of 1,2) was low. This means that the majority believes that distance learning has had an impact and has modified their way of studying.

Table 7 - Description related to distance learning

| General Information | | | | | | | |
|--|--|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|---------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Triennale: 13 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Magistrale-master 25 | | | | | | | |
| Period: Traditional learning | | | | | | | |
| | Item | Mean Triennale | SD Triennale | Mean Magistrale- Master | DS Magistrale- Master | Tot: Mean | Tot: DS |
| 7 | Ritieni che la dad abbia modificato il tuo modo di studiare rispetto a prima | 5,0 | 1,5 | 5,1 | 1,3 | 5,1 | 1,2 |

Despite the majority of subjects believing that distance learning has changed their study methods, in response to item #8, it is evident from the graph below that 47,4%, (18 subjects) prefer online classes, 28,9% (11 subjects) prefer blended, and a minority, namely 23,7% (9 subjects), prefer traditional face-to-face classes.

Table 8 - Description related to subjects' preferences for the type of lessons

| General Information | | | | |
|----------------------------------|--|--------------|---------------|----------------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | |
| | Item | Presenza | Online | Modalità duale |
| 8 | Come segui i corsi ora che puoi scegliere tra presenza e online? | 9 (23,7%) | 18 (47,4%) | 11 (28,9%) |

4.2 Perception of Performance

This paragraph focuses on the results concerning the third section of the questionnaire, that is to say the one dedicated to the 2 items related to the students' Perception of performance' (See Section 3.4.3). As Table 1 illustrates in Perception of performance, mean item #9 related to the satisfaction levels between subjects in Triennale and Magistrale-Master are quite close. Both groups have a mean item (4,5 and 4,6) that is above the midpoint, suggesting that students in both programs generally felt satisfied with their university journey during the traditional learning period. While the standard deviation is slightly lower for the Magistrale-Master group (of 1,3) compared to the Triennale group (of 1,4). This might suggest that Magistrale-Master students have more consistent responses regarding their satisfaction than Triennale students. The overall mean item (of 4,6) is closely aligning with the individual values from both groups. This indicates that students from both programs are largely in sync with the overall mean. Mean item #10 shows, Triennale students have a slightly higher mean (of 5,2) compared to Magistrale-Master students (of 4,6) regarding attendance to language classes. However, it is noteworthy that the standard deviation for Magistrale-Master is considerably higher (of 1,9) than that of Triennale (of 1,1). This may suggest more variability in the responses of Magistrale-Master students concerning their attendance to language classes. The overall mean item (of 4,8) is more aligned with the feedback from Magistrale-Master students than Triennale students, and the overall standard deviation (of 1,7) is influenced by the greater variability in the Magistrale-Master group.

Data paints a generally positive picture of student perceptions and engagement within the traditional learning environment. Both groups of students express satisfaction with their university experiences, with the mean satisfaction score being 4,6 out of 5. This indicates that the majority of students feel content and satisfied with their academic journeys. While satisfaction levels are high across the board, there is a noticeable difference in attendance patterns for language lessons between Triennale and Magistrale-Master students. Triennale students appear to be more actively engaged in language learning, whereas Magistrale-Master students show more variability in their attendance behaviors. In summary, the data suggests that students, regardless of their academic level, generally hold positive perceptions of their university experiences. However, differences emerge when considering specific aspects like engagement in language lessons. Understanding these nuances can guide educational institutions in tailoring interventions or strategies to further enhance student satisfaction and engagement.

Table 1 – *Descriptive Statistics of Perception of Performance during the traditional learning*

| Perception of Performance | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Triennale: 13 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Magistrale-master 25 | | | | | | | |
| Period: Traditional learning | | | | | | | |
| | Item | Mean Triennale | SD Triennale | Mean Magistrale- Master | SD Magistrale- Master | Tot: Mean | Tot: SD |
| 9 | Ti ritenevi soddisfatto del tuo percorso universitario | 4,5 | 1,4 | 4,6 | 1,3 | 4,6 | 1,3 |
| 10 | Frequentavi le lezioni di lingua | 5,2 | 1,1 | 4,6 | 1,9 | 4,8 | 1,7 |

Table 2 shows, comparing these two groups in the context of distance learning, in item #26 Magistrale-Master students have a slightly higher mean satisfaction level (of 4,2) than Triennale students (of 3,9). However, the standard deviation for both groups is relatively close, indicating that there is a somewhat consistent response within each group, but the Magistrale-Master group

might have slightly more variability. The overall mean satisfaction for both groups combined during distance learning is 4,1 with an standard deviation of 1,4. This indicates that, on average, students from both programs are reasonably satisfied with their university experience during this period, but with some variability in responses. In item #27, both groups show similar mean when it comes to attending language classes during distance learning. However, it is worth noting that the standard deviation for both groups is notably high at 2,0. This suggests that there's a significant variability or dispersion in responses within each group regarding attendance to language classes. The overall mean attendance for both groups is 4,2 with an standard deviation of 2,0. This suggests that, collectively, students from both Triennale and Magistrale-Master programs have similar levels of attendance to language classes during distance learning, but with a significant spread of variability in individual responses. Both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students demonstrate very similar satisfaction levels with their university journey based on the mean. However, there's greater variability, especially concerning attendance to language classes. Overall, both student groups appear generally satisfied with their university experiences, with some distinctions in language class participation.

Table 2 – *Descriptive Statistics of Perception of Performance during the distance learning*

| Perception of Performance | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Triennale: 13 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Magistrale-master 25 | | | | | | | |
| Period: Distance learning | | | | | | | |
| | Item | Mean Triennale | SD Triennale | Mean Magistrale- Master | SD Magistrale- Master | Tot: Mean | Tot: SD |
| 26 | Ti ritenevi soddisfatto del tuo percorso universitario | 3,9 | 1,4 | 4,2 | 1,5 | 4,1 | 1,4 |
| 27 | Frequentavi le lezioni di lingua | 4,3 | 2,0 | 4,2 | 2,0 | 4,2 | 2,0 |

As item #43 in table 3 demonstrates, comparing the satisfaction levels between these two groups during blended learning, Magistrale-Master students appear to have a slightly higher mean satisfaction level (of 4,8) than Triennale students (of 4,5). Additionally, the standard deviation for Magistrale-Master is lower (of 1,2) compared to Triennale (of 1,5), indicating a slightly more consistent response among Magistrale-Master students. The overall mean satisfaction for both groups combined during blended learning is 4,7 with a standard deviation of 1,3. This suggests that students from both Triennale and Magistrale-Master programs, on average, are quite satisfied with their university experiences during this period. Item #44 related to the attendance to language classes during blended learning, shows Triennale students have a slightly higher mean (of 4,8) than Magistrale-Master students (of 4,6). However, it is important to note that the standard deviation is higher for Magistrale-Master (of 1,8) than for Triennale (of 1,2), indicating more variability in attendance responses among Magistrale-Master students. The overall mean attendance for both groups combined is 4,7 with an standard deviation of 1,6. This indicates that, collectively, students from both Triennale and Magistrale-Master programs have relatively similar levels of attendance to language classes during blended learning, but with a notable variability in individual responses, especially within the Magistrale-Master group. During the blended learning period, Magistrale-Master students generally show a slightly higher satisfaction level with their university journey compared to Triennale students. However, when it comes to attendance to language classes, both groups are relatively close in terms of mean attendance, though there's more variability in responses among Magistrale-Master students. Overall, students from both programs appear satisfied with their experiences, with some variations in specific aspects like attendance.

Table 3 – *Descriptive Statistics of Perception of Performance during the blended learning*

| Perception of Performance | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Triennale: 13 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Magistrale-master 25 | | | | | | | |
| Period: Blended- learning | | | | | | | |
| | Item | Mean Triennale | SD Triennale | Mean Magistrale- Master | SD Magistrale- Master | Tot: Mean | Tot: SD |
| 43 | Ti ritieni soddisfatto del tuo percorso universitario | 4,5 | 1,5 | 4,8 | 1,2 | 4,7 | 1,3 |
| 44 | Frequenti le lezioni di lingua | 4,8 | 1,2 | 4,6 | 1,8 | 4,7 | 1,6 |

4.3 Motivation

This paragraph focuses on the results concerning the fourth section of the questionnaire, that is to say the one dedicated to the 3 items related to the students' Motivation (See Section 3.4.4). As table 4 illustrates, in item #11 both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students have the same mean of 3,0 when it comes to asking questions in class during traditional learning. The overall mean also aligns with both groups, indicating a consistent perception across the respondents. In item #12, Triennale students report a higher mean (of 4,2) indicating that they are more aware of time passing compared to Magistrale-Master students (of 3,2). The overall mean (of 3,6) suggests a general perception of time passage across both groups, but Triennale students seem to be more conscious of it in the traditional learning setting. Both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students in item #13 report a high mean, indicating they put significant effort into university-related tasks. The slight difference (5,2 for Triennale and 5,0 for Magistrale-Master) suggests that Triennale students perceive themselves as putting slightly more effort than Magistrale-Master students. However, the overall mean (of 5,1) reflects a general perception of effort across all respondents. Magistrale students tend to be more aware of time passing. Triennale students feel they put slightly more effort into their university-related tasks compared to Magistrale-Master students during traditional learning. When it comes to asking questions in

class, both groups have a similar perception, which aligns with the overall mean. Variability, as indicated by the standard deviations, is relatively consistent across both groups for each item, suggesting similar levels of variability in responses. In summary, while both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students generally perceive themselves as motivated and invested in their university experience, there are nuanced differences in their perceptions of time and effort during traditional learning.

Table 4 – *Descriptive Statistics of Motivation during the traditional learning*

| Motivation | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Triennale: 13 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Magistrale-master 25 | | | | | | | |
| Period: Traditional learning | | | | | | | |
| | Item | Mean Triennale | SD Triennale | Mean Magistrale- Master | SD Magistrale- Master | Tot: Mean | Tot: SD |
| 11 | Intervenivi in classe con delle domande | 3,0 | 1,4 | 3,0 | 1,9 | 3,0 | 1,7 |
| 12 | Non ti accorgevi di come volava il tempo | 4,2 | 1,2 | 3,2 | 1,5 | 3,6 | 1,5 |
| 13 | Mettevi impegno nelle cose che facevi per l'università | 5,2 | 1,1 | 5,0 | 1,7 | 5,1 | 1,5 |

As table 5 shows, Triennale students in item #28 have a notably lower mean (1,6) compared to Magistrale-Master students (2,9), indicating that Triennale students are less likely to ask questions in class during distance learning. The higher standard deviation (of 1,9) for Magistrale-Master suggests more variability in their willingness to ask questions compared to Triennale students, indicating more variability in their responses about asking questions. The overall mean (2,5) also reflects a higher tendency for Magistrale-Master students to ask questions. In item #29, Triennale students have a slightly lower mean (2,0) than Magistrale-Master students (2,7), suggesting that Triennale students are somewhat more aware of time

passing during distance learning. The consistent standard deviation for Triennale students (of 1,0), indicating a uniform response about their awareness of time. Instead the higher standard deviation (of 1,5) for Magistrale-Master students indicates that their responses are more spread out or varied compared to Triennale students. The overall mean (2, 5) aligns with this trend, indicating a moderate perception of time passing across both groups. In item #30 both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students have high mean, indicating significant effort in university-related tasks during distance learning. Triennale students have a slightly higher mean (4,5) than Magistrale-Master students (4,2). This higher standard deviation for Magistrale-Master (of 1,7) suggests more variability in the perceived effort, with some students showing significantly higher or lower levels of effort compared to the majority. The overall mean (4,3) suggests a consistent perception of effort across all respondents. When analyzing the data in relation to the standard deviations, it becomes evident that Magistrale-Master students tend to have more variability in their perceptions and behaviors during distance learning compared to Triennale students. Triennale students, on the other hand, display more consistent responses, especially in areas like asking questions and perceiving time, as indicated by their tighter standard deviations. In essence, while both groups generally display slightly less motivation and effort during distance learning, the variability in responses is more pronounced among Magistrale-Master students, suggesting a broader range of experiences or opinions within this group. Triennale students appear to be less inclined to ask questions in class compared to Magistrale-Master students during distance learning. Triennale students are slightly more conscious of time passing than Magistrale-Master students in the same setting. Both groups demonstrate a strong commitment and effort toward their university-related tasks, with a slightly higher perception from Triennale students. In summary during distance learning Triennale and Magistrale-Master students generally demonstrate slightly less motivation and effort.

Table 5 – *Descriptive Statistics of Motivation during the distance learning*

| Motivation | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Triennale: 13 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Magistrale-master 25 | | | | | | | |
| Period: Distance learning | | | | | | | |
| | Item | Mean Triennale | SD Triennale | Mean Magistrale- Master | SD Magistrale- Master | Tot: Mean | Tot: SD |
| 28 | Intervenivi in classe con delle domande | 1,6 | 0,8 | 2,9 | 1,9 | 2,5 | 1,7 |
| 29 | Non ti accorgevi di come volava il tempo | 2,0 | 1,0 | 2,7 | 1,5 | 2,5 | 1,4 |
| 30 | Mettevi impegno nelle cose che facevi per l'università | 4,5 | 1,2 | 4,2 | 1,7 | 4,3 | 1,5 |

As table 6 demonstrates, both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students in item #45 have mean close to the overall mean. Magistrale-Master students show a slightly higher mean (3,3) compared to Triennale students (3,1). However, there is a wider spread or variability in the Magistrale-Master group, as indicated by the higher standard deviation of 1,8, compared to Triennale's standard deviation of 1,3. In item #46, Triennale students seem more engrossed or less aware of time passing with a higher mean of 4,2 compared to 3,2 for Magistrale-Master students. Interestingly, while the means show a noticeable difference, the standard deviations for both groups are quite close, indicating similar variability in how both groups perceive time. In item #47, both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students display almost identical mean of 4,9 in terms of effort, indicating a strong dedication from both groups. The standard deviations are close, but Magistrale-Master students have a slightly higher standard deviation (of 1, 1) compared to Triennale (of 1,0), suggesting a touch more variability in the effort levels among the Magistrale-Master students. When comparing Triennale and Magistrale-Master students in the context of blended learning, there are some subtle differences in perceptions and behaviors. Generally, both groups display higher level of motivation and effort in university-related tasks

than the period before, the variability in responses, as indicated by the standard deviation, is a bit more pronounced among the Magistrale-Master students, especially in class participation. Triennale students appear more consistent in their perceptions and behaviors, as evidenced by tighter standard deviations across most metrics.

Table 6 – *Descriptive Statistics of Motivation during the blended learning*

| Motivation | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Triennale: 13 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Magistrale-master 25 | | | | | | | |
| Period: Blended learning | | | | | | | |
| | Item | Mean Triennale | SD Triennale | Mean Magistrale- Master | SD Magistrale- Master | Tot: Mean | Tot: SD |
| 45 | Intervieni in classe con delle domande | 3,1 | 1,3 | 3,3 | 1,8 | 3,2 | 1,7 |
| 46 | Non ti accorgi di come vola il tempo | 4,2 | 1,3 | 3,2 | 1,4 | 3,5 | 1,4 |
| 47 | Metti impegno nelle cose che fai per l'università | 4,9 | 1,0 | 4,9 | 1,1 | 4,9 | 1,0 |

4.4 Well-being

This paragraph focuses on the results concerning the fifth section of the questionnaire, that is to say the one dedicated to one item related to the students' well-being. (See Section 3.4.5).

As table 7 illustrates with item #14, the Triennale students have a higher mean (of 4,8), indicating a generally better sense of well-being compared to the Magistrale-Master students, who have a mean of 3,8. The standard deviation for both Triennale (of 1,7) and Magistrale-Master (of 1,6) is relatively close, suggesting a similar level of variability in responses within both groups. This means that while Triennale students report a higher level of well-being on average, there is a broad range of responses within both groups. The total mean lies in between, at 4,1, indicating that, on average, students from both groups report a moderate level of well-

being. In the context of traditional learning, Triennale students seem to have a slightly better sense of well-being compared to their Magistrale-Master counterparts. However, it's essential to note that there's variability within both groups, as indicated by the standard deviations. This suggests that while the means provide a general picture, individual experiences within each group can vary significantly.

The overall mean provides a midpoint, indicating a moderate level of well-being across both groups during the traditional learning period.

Table 7 – *Descriptive Statistics of well-being during the traditional learning*

| Well-being | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Triennale: 13 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Magistrale-master 25 | | | | | | | |
| Period: Traditional learning | | | | | | | |
| | Item | Mean Triennale | SD Triennale | Mean Magistrale- Master | SD Magistrale- Master | Tot: Mean | Tot: SD |
| 14 | Come ti sentivi | 4,8 | 1,7 | 3,8 | 1,6 | 4,1 | 1,7 |

As table 8 shows, the students of both group in item #31 have a similar mean (3,3 for Triennale students and 3,2 for Magistrale-Master students), indicating a moderate sense of well-being, Triennale students seem to have a slightly better sense of well-being compared to their Magistrale-Master counterparts. The standard deviation for both Triennale (of 1,8) and Magistrale-Master (of 1,7) is relatively close, suggesting a similar level of variability in responses within both groups, this means that there is a broad range of responses within both groups. The total mean score (of 3,2), indicating that, on average, students from both groups report a moderate level of well-being and with standard deviation of 1,7. This suggests that while the mean provide a general picture, individual experiences within each group can vary significantly.

In the context of distance learning, it is essential to note as the sense of well-being decreased compared with the period before.

Table 8 – Descriptive Statistics of well-being during the distance learning

| Well-being | | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Triennale: 13 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Magistrale-master 25 | | | | | | | |
| Period: Distance learning | | | | | | | |
| | Item | Mean Triennale | SD Triennale | Mean Magistrale- Master | SD Magistrale- Master | Tot: Mean | Tot: SD |
| 31 | Come ti sentivi | 3,3 | 1,8 | 3,2 | 1,7 | 3,2 | 1,7 |

Table 9 demonstrates, both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students have identical mean (of 3,9), suggesting that during the blended learning period, both groups perceive their well-being similarly. The standard deviation for Triennale is 1,4, while for Magistrale-Master, it's slightly higher at 1,6. This indicates a slightly broader range of responses or more variability among Magistrale-Master students compared to Triennale students in their perceptions of well-being during blended learning. The total mean is also 3,9, consistent with the individual means for both Triennale and Magistrale-Master. This reinforces the idea that, on average, students across both groups report a consistent level of well-being during blended learning. The total standard deviation is 1,5, which lies between the individual standard deviations for Triennale and Magistrale-Master. This suggests that the variability in responses during blended learning is somewhat consistent between the two groups but slightly skewed towards the Magistrale-Master group. During the blended learning period, both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students report an identical mean score for well-being, indicating a similar overall perception of their well-being. However, there's a slightly broader range of perceptions or experiences among Magistrale-Master students, as evidenced by their higher standard deviation compared to Triennale students. Overall, the mean suggest that students from both groups, on average, navigate the challenges or experiences of blended learning with a consistent sense of well-being.

Table 9 – Descriptive Statistics of well-being during the blended

| Well-being | | | | | | | |
|--|---------------|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Triennale: 13 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Magistrale-master 25 | | | | | | | |
| Period: Blended learning | | | | | | | |
| | Item | Mean Triennale | SD Triennale | Mean Magistrale- Master | SD Magistrale- Master | Tot: Mean | Tot: DS |
| 48 | Come ti senti | 3,9 | 1,4 | 3,9 | 1,6 | 3,9 | 1,5 |

4.5 Technological Devices and Technical Issues

This paragraph focuses on the results concerning the sixth section of the questionnaire, that is to say the one dedicated to the 4 items related to the students' technological devices and technical issues. (See Section 3.4.6).

As table 10 illustrates, both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students in item #15 have close scores, with Triennale students at a mean of 4,9 and Magistrale-Master students at 5,0. The standard deviations (1,8 for Triennale and 1,6 for Magistrale-Master) indicate a moderate level of variability in the data for both groups. Combining both groups, the overall mean is 5 with a standard deviation of 1, 7. This suggests that, overall, students feel they have adequate access to necessary technological devices for their studies. In item #16, both groups have a similar perception about the ease of resolving tasks with their technological tools, with both means at 5,1. The standard deviations are also close (0,9 for Triennale and 1,2 for Magistrale-Master), suggesting consistent responses but with slightly more variability in the Magistrale-Master group. The overall mean is 5,1 with a standard deviation of 1,1. This indicates that students find their technological tools effective and suitable for their academic tasks. In item #17, Triennale students reported a mean of 2,8, slightly higher than the 2.6 reported by Magistrale-Master students. The standard deviations (1,3 for Triennale and 1,4 for Magistrale-Master) suggest a moderate level of variability in experiences across both groups. Overall, the combined mean is 2,7 with a standard deviation of 1,3 and this suggests that while some students face technical challenges, it's not a pervasive issue for the majority. In item #18, Triennale students felt slightly clearer about their assignment expectations with a mean of 4,3 compared to 4,1 for Magistrale-

Master students. Both groups reported similar variability with standard deviations of 0,8 and 1,1, respectively. The overall mean is 4,2 with a standard deviation of 1. This indicates that while most students feel they know what's expected of them, there's a slight variance in clarity levels between the two groups. During the traditional learning period, both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students reported relatively good access to technological devices and felt confident in solving tasks with them. Triennale students reported slightly more technical study difficulties compared to Magistrale-Master students but felt clearer about their assignment expectations. Overall, there is a close alignment in perceptions between the two groups, with minor variations in means and standard deviations across different aspects of technological use and challenges.

Table 10 – *Descriptive Statistics of Technological Devices and Technical Issues during the traditional learning*

| Technological Devices and Technical Issues | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Triennale: 13 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Magistrale-master 25 | | | | | | | |
| Period: Traditional learning | | | | | | | |
| | Item | Mean Triennale | SD Triennale | Mean Magistrale- Master | SD Magistrale- Master | Tot: Mean | Tot: SD |
| 15 | Disponevi di un computer/tablet | 4,9 | 1,8 | 5 | 1,6 | 5 | 1,7 |
| 16 | I compiti che ricevevi erano facilmente risolvibili con gli strumenti tecnologici di cui disponevi | 5,1 | 0,9 | 5 | 1,2 | 5,1 | 1,1 |
| 17 | Hai avuto difficoltà a studiare a causa di alcuni problemi tecnici | 2,8 | 1,3 | 2,6 | 1,4 | 2,7 | 1,3 |
| 18 | Quando ricevevi delle consegne, sapevi esattamente cosa dovevi fare | 4,3 | 0,8 | 4,1 | 1,1 | 4,2 | 1,0 |

Table 11 shows, both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students in item #32 have the same mean of 6,0, but there is a slight difference in the standard deviation (0 for Triennale vs. 0,2 for Magistrale-Master). This suggests that almost all students in both groups had access to a computer or tablet, with a minimal difference in consistency among Magistrale-Master students. In item #33, Magistrale-Master students (mean of 5,3) felt slightly more equipped to handle tasks technologically than Triennale students (mean of 4,8). The total mean is 5,1, indicating that on average, students felt reasonably competent with their technological tools. In item #34, Magistrale-Master students (mean of 3,8) encountered more technical study difficulties than Triennale students (mean of 3,1). The total mean is 3,5, suggesting that students from both groups faced some challenges but were moderately affected by technical issues. In item #35, Magistrale-Master students (mean of 4,0) felt slightly more informed about their assignments than Triennale students (mean of 3,5). The total mean is 4,1, indicating that,

on average, students had a moderate understanding of their assignment expectations. Both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students generally had good access to technological devices, with almost all students having a computer or tablet. Magistrale-Master students felt marginally more equipped to handle tasks with their technological tools and were more likely to face technical study difficulties than Triennale students. While students from both groups faced challenges, the overall perception is that they had a moderate understanding of their assignment requirements during the distance learning period.

Table 11 – *Descriptive Statistics of Technological Devices and Technical Issues during the distance learning*

| Technological Devices and Technical Issues | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Triennale: 13 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Magistrale-master 25 | | | | | | | |
| Period: Distance learning | | | | | | | |
| | Item | Mean Triennale | SD Triennale | Mean Magistrale- Master | SD Magistrale- Master | Tot: Mean | Tot: SD |
| 32 | Disponevi di un computer/tablet | 6,0 | 0 | 6,0 | 0,2 | 6,0 | 0,2 |
| 33 | I compiti che ricevevi erano facilmente risolvibili con gli strumenti tecnologici di cui disponevi | 4,8 | 1,3 | 5,3 | 1,3 | 5,1 | 1,3 |
| 34 | Hai avuto difficoltà a studiare a causa di alcuni problemi tecnici | 3,1 | 1,6 | 3,8 | 1,6 | 3,5 | 1,6 |
| 35 | Quando ricevevi delle consegne, sapevi esattamente cosa dovevi fare | 3,5 | 1,1 | 4,0 | 1,3 | 4,1 | 1,2 |

As table 12 demonstrates, both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students in item #49 have identical mean of 5,9, indicating a high level of access to computers/tablets. The standard deviations (0,3 for Triennale and 0,4 for Magistrale-Master) show that the responses are closely

clustered around the mean for both groups. The overall mean remains consistent at 5,9, with a very low standard deviation of 0,4. This indicates that students in blended learning feel extremely well-equipped with the necessary technological devices. In item #50, both groups have a mean above 4,9, indicating that they generally find it easy to solve tasks with their technological tools. The standard deviations for both groups are similar at 1,1, suggesting a consistent perception among respondents but with a moderate level of variability. The overall mean is 5,1 with a consistent standard deviation of 1,1. This suggests that while students generally find tasks manageable with their tools, there's a slight difference in perception between the two groups. In item #51, the Triennale group reported a significantly lower mean of 2,1 compared to 3,1 for the Magistrale-Master group, indicating fewer technical challenges faced by Triennale students during blended learning. The standard deviations (1,4 for Triennale and 1,5 for Magistrale-Master) show moderate variability in experiences across both groups. The overall mean stands at 2,7 with a standard deviation of 1,5. This suggests that while technical issues are a concern, especially for Magistrale-Master students, it is not a predominant issue for the entire group. In item #52, Triennale students reported a slightly higher mean of 4,6 compared to 4,4 for Magistrale-Master students. The standard deviations for both groups (1,0 for Triennale and 1,4 for Magistrale-Master) indicate a moderate variability in clarity regarding assignment expectations. The overall mean is 4,5 with a standard deviation of 1,3. This indicates that while students generally understand their assignments, there is a slight variance in clarity levels between the two academic levels. During the blended learning period, both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students reported high levels of access to technological devices and generally felt confident in their ability to use them effectively. Triennale students faced fewer technical challenges compared to Magistrale-Master students, as evidenced by their lower mean score in this category. Overall, there is a close alignment in perceptions between the two groups, with minor variations in means and standard deviations across different aspects of technological use and challenges.

Table 12 – *Descriptive Statistics of Technological Devices and Technical Issues during the blended learning*

| Technological Devices and Technical Issues | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Triennale: 13 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Magistrale-master 25 | | | | | | | |
| Period: Blended learning | | | | | | | |
| | Item | Mean Triennale | SD Triennale | Mean Magistrale- Master | SD Magistrale- Master | Tot: Mean | Tot: SD |
| 49 | Disponi di un computer/tablet | 5,9 | 0,3 | 5,9 | 0,4 | 5,9 | 0,4 |
| 50 | I compiti che ricevi sono facilmente risolvibili con gli strumenti tecnologici di cui disponi | 4,9 | 1,1 | 5,2 | 1,1 | 5,1 | 1,1 |
| 51 | Hai difficoltà a studiare a causa di alcuni problemi tecnici | 2,1 | 1,4 | 3,1 | 1,5 | 2,7 | 1,5 |
| 52 | Quando ricevi delle consegne, sai esattamente cosa devi fare | 4,6 | 1 | 4,4 | 1,4 | 4,5 | 1,3 |

4.6 Contact

This paragraph focuses on the results concerning the seventh section of the questionnaire, that is to say the one dedicated to the 3 items related to the students' contact with teachers and coursemates. (See Section 3.4.7).

As table 13 illustrates, in item #19 Triennale students reported a mean of 3,7, while Magistrale-Master students had a slightly lower mean of 3,4. The standard deviations (1,7 for Triennale and 1,5 for Magistrale-Master) indicate a moderate level of variability in the students' experiences with contact with their language teachers. The overall mean is 3,5 with a standard deviation of 1,5. This suggests that there is room for improvement in facilitating more consistent contact between students and language teachers across both academic levels. In item #20, both Triennale and Magistrale-Master groups reported high mean (4,8 and 5, respectively) regarding their contact with course colleagues. The standard deviations (1,5 for Triennale and 1,2 for Magistrale-Master) suggest that there's some variability, but generally, students from both groups felt connected with their peers. The overall mean stands at 4,9 with a standard deviation of 1,3. This suggests that students generally feel connected and engaged with their course colleagues, with Magistrale-Master students slightly more so than Triennale students.

In item #21, both groups had a high mean (5 for Triennale and 4,9 for Magistrale-Master) indicating that they felt that their language teachers were available for clarifications. The standard deviations (1,1 for Triennale and 0,9 for Magistrale-Master) are relatively close, indicating consistent perceptions with minor variability. The overall mean is 4,9 with a consistent standard deviation of 0,9. This indicates that students generally perceive their language teachers as accessible and willing to provide clarifications when needed. During the traditional learning period, both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students generally felt connected with their language teachers and course colleagues, though there were slight differences in mean scores. The availability of language teachers for clarifications was perceived positively by both groups, with minimal variations in their perceptions. Overall, the data suggests that both student groups had positive experiences regarding contact with teachers and peers during the traditional learning period, with some minor differences in their perceptions.

Table 13 – *Descriptive Statistics of the level of contact with teachers and coursemates during the traditional learning*

| Contact | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Triennale: 13 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Magistrale-master 25 | | | | | | | |
| Period: Traditional learning | | | | | | | |
| | Item | Mean Triennale | SD Triennale | Mean Magistrale- Master | SD Magistrale- Master | Tot: Mean | Tot: SD |
| 19 | Eri in contatto con i tuoi insegnanti di lingue | 3,7 | 1,7 | 3,4 | 1,5 | 3,5 | 1,5 |
| 20 | Eri in contatto con i tuoi colleghi di corso | 4,8 | 1,5 | 5 | 1,2 | 4,9 | 1,3 |
| 21 | Gli insegnanti di lingue erano disponibili a dare chiarimenti | 5 | 1,1 | 4,9 | 0,9 | 4,9 | 0,9 |

As table 14 shows, in the distance learning setting , both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students in item #36, reported relatively similar mean, with Triennale at 3,5 and Magistrale-Master slightly higher at 3,7. The standard deviations are 1,8 for Triennale and 1,6 for Magistrale-Master, indicating a moderate level of variability in their experiences.

The overall mean stands at 3,6, with a standard deviation of 1,6. This suggests that there is room for improvement in enhancing communication and interaction between students and language teachers in a distance learning environment. In item #37, there is a noticeable difference in perceptions between the two groups. Triennale students reported a mean of 3,8, while Magistrale-Master students had a notably higher mean of 4,7. The standard deviations (1,5 for Triennale and 1,3 for Magistrale-Master) suggest some variability, but generally, Magistrale-Master students felt more connected to their course colleagues during distance learning.

The overall mean is 4,4 with a standard deviation of 1,4. This suggests that while students generally feel connected with their course colleagues, there's a noticeable difference in the level of interaction between the two academic levels. In item #38, both groups had positive perceptions regarding the availability of language teachers for clarifications. Triennale students

reported a mean of 4,8, and Magistrale-Master students reported a mean of 4,6. The standard deviations (1,1 for Triennale and 1,3 for Magistrale-Master) indicate a consistent positive perception with minor variations. The overall mean is 4,7, with a standard deviation of 1,2. This indicates that students generally perceive their language teachers as accessible and willing to provide clarifications during distance learning. But during the distance learning period, while both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students generally felt they were in contact with their language teachers, there was a slightly higher perception among Magistrale-Master also felt more connected to their course colleagues compared to Triennale students during the same period. Both groups perceived their language teachers as available for clarifications, with Triennale students having a slightly more positive perception than Magistrale-Master students, though the difference was minimal. However, both groups reported a slightly lower level of availability from language teachers during distance learning compared to traditional learning.

Table 14 – *Descriptive Statistics of the level of contact with teachers and coursemates during the distance learning*

| Contact | | | | | | | |
|--|---|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Triennale: 13 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Magistrale-master 25 | | | | | | | |
| Period: Distance learning | | | | | | | |
| | Item | Mean Triennale | SD Triennale | Mean Magistrale- Master | SD Magistrale- Master | Tot: Mean | Tot: SD |
| 36 | Eri in contatto con i tuoi insegnanti di lingue | 3,5 | 1,8 | 3,7 | 1,6 | 3,6 | 1,6 |
| 37 | Eri in contatto con i tuoi colleghi di corso | 3,8 | 1,5 | 4,7 | 1,3 | 4,4 | 1,4 |
| 38 | Gli insegnanti di lingue erano disponibili a dare chiarimenti | 4,8 | 1,1 | 4,6 | 1,3 | 4,7 | 1,2 |

As table 15 demonstrates, in the blended learning setting, Triennale students in item # 53 reported a mean of 3,8, while Magistrale-Master students had a notably higher mean of 4,6. The standard deviations are 1,4 for both Triennale and Magistrale-Master, indicating a moderate level of variability in their experiences. The overall mean is 3,9 with a standard deviation of 1,5. This suggests a moderate level of interaction with language teachers, with Magistrale-Master students indicating higher satisfaction or more frequent contact. In item #54, both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students had identical mean of 4,6, suggesting that both groups felt similarly connected to their course colleagues during the blended learning period. The standard deviations were slightly different, with 1,4 for Triennale and 1,7 for Magistrale-Master, though these differences are not substantial. The overall mean remains consistent at 4,6 with a standard deviation of 1,4. This suggests that both groups feel adequately connected with their course colleagues during blended learning. In item #55, Triennale students had a mean score of 4,8, slightly higher than Magistrale-Master students' mean of 4,6. The combined total mean was 4,7. The standard deviations were 1,4 for Triennale and 1,2 for Magistrale-Master, indicating consistent positive perceptions with minor variations.

The overall mean is 4,7 with a standard deviation of 1,6. This indicates that students generally perceive their language teachers as accessible and responsive, with minor variability between the two academic levels. During the blended learning period, Magistrale-Master students generally felt more in contact with their language teachers compared to Triennale students.

Both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students reported feeling equally connected to their course colleagues. There is a consistent positive perception across both groups regarding the availability of language teachers for clarifications, with Triennale students having a slightly higher mean score.

Table 15 – *Descriptive Statistics of the level of contact with teachers and coursemates during blended learning*

| Contact | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Triennale: 13 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Magistrale-master 25 | | | | | | | |
| Period: Blended learning | | | | | | | |
| | Item | Mean Triennale | SD Triennale | Mean Magistrale- Master | SD Magistrale- Master | Tot: Mean | Tot: SD |
| 53 | Sei in contatto con i tuoi insegnanti di lingue | 3,8 | 1,4 | 4,6 | 1,4 | 3,9 | 1,5 |
| 54 | Sei in contatto con i tuoi colleghi di corso | 4,6 | 1,4 | 4,6 | 1,7 | 4,6 | 1,4 |
| 55 | Gli insegnanti di lingue sono disponibili a dare chiarimenti | 4,8 | 1,4 | 4,6 | 1,2 | 4,7 | 1,6 |

4.7 Self-regulation and needs

This paragraph focuses on the results concerning the eighth section of the questionnaire, that is to say the one dedicated to the 4 items related to the students' self-regulation and needs. (See Section 3.4.8). As table 16 illustrates, Triennale students in item #22 reported a higher mean of 5,1 compared to Magistrale-Master students' 4,6. Both groups have similar standard deviations (1,3 for Triennale and 1,2 for Magistrale-Master), suggesting moderate variability in responses within each group. The total mean is 4,8, suggesting a relatively strong agreement across both groups regarding studying in line with their learning styles and strategies. The standard deviation of 1,2 suggests moderate variability in these perceptions across the entire sample. In item #23, both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students reported an identical mean of 3,8, indicating that both groups adhered to a specific study program with a moderate level of consistency. However the Triennale group had a slightly higher standard deviation, (1,6) compared to the Magistrale-Master group (1,4), suggesting a broader range or more variability in responses among Triennale students. The standard deviation of 1,4 indicates a moderate amount of variability in the degree to which students felt they followed a particular study

program. The overall mean remains consistent at 3,8 with its standard deviation of 1,4. This indicates that students, irrespective of their academic level, feel moderately aligned with a specific study program. In item #24, Triennale students had a slightly higher mean of 4,8, while Magistrale-Master students reported a mean of 4,3. Triennale students felt more capable than Magistrale-Master students in dedicating sufficient time to language courses. Both groups had an identical standard deviation of 1,3, indicating similar variability in their responses. The total mean was 4,5, indicating that both groups felt they could dedicate adequate time to language courses. With an standard deviation of 1,3, there's moderate variability in this perception across the sample. Both groups Triennale and Magistrale-Master in item #25, had identical mean of 3,8, suggesting similar levels of focus during their study periods. The Triennale group had a slightly higher standard deviation (1,5) compared to the Magistrale-Master group (1,2), implying more variability or a broader range of responses within the Triennale cohort regarding distractions. The standard deviation of 1,3 suggests a moderate level of variability in how students felt about their ability to study without distractions. The overall mean remains consistent at 3,8 and its standard deviation at 1,3. This suggests that both groups of students face challenges in maintaining focus during their studies. Triennale students seem to have a slightly stronger sense of studying in alignment with their learning styles compared to Magistrale-Master students. Both groups largely adhere to their study programs, with no significant difference between them. While both groups feel they can dedicate sufficient time to their language courses, Triennale students report a slightly higher satisfaction level. Both groups exhibit similar tendencies to get distracted while studying, with no significant difference observed. Overall, while there are nuanced differences between the groups, both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students share some commonalities in their experiences and perceptions during traditional learning, as evidenced by similar mean scores and standard deviations.

Table 16 – *Descriptive Statistics of self-regulation and needs during traditional learning*

| Self-regulation and needs | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Triennale: 13 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Magistrale-master 25 | | | | | | | |
| Period: Traditional learning | | | | | | | |
| | Item | Mean Triennale | SD Triennale | Mean Magistrale- Master | SD Magistrale- Master | Tot: Mean | Tot: SD |
| 22 | Studiavi rispettando i tuoi stili e strategie di apprendimento | 5,1 | 1,3 | 4,6 | 1,2 | 4,8 | 1,2 |
| 23 | Ti attenevi ad un programma di studi specifico | 3,8 | 1,6 | 3,8 | 1,4 | 3,8 | 1,4 |
| 24 | Riuscivi a dedicare sufficiente tempo di studio ai corsi di lingue | 4,8 | 1,3 | 4,3 | 1,3 | 4,5 | 1,3 |
| 25 | Quando studiavi, riuscivi a non distrarti | 3,8 | 1,5 | 3,8 | 1,2 | 3,8 | 1,3 |

As table 17 shows, both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students in item #39 have similar mean, with 4,2 and 4,1, respectively. This suggests that both groups, on average, believe they align their study habits with their learning styles. The standard deviation are identical at 1,4, indicating similar variability within both groups and overall. The overall mean is 4,2, indicating a consistent level of self-regulation in terms of studying according to individual learning styles and strategies across both groups. Also the overall standard deviation is 1,4 and suggests that there is a moderate variability in responses when considering the overall mean for this item. In item #40 there is a slight difference here. Triennale students reported a mean of 3,2, while Magistrale-Master students reported 3,7, suggesting that the latter group felt more aligned or disciplined with a specific study program. The standard deviations show a moderate level of variability in both groups, with 1,3 for Triennale and 1,5 for Magistrale-Master. The overall mean is 3,5, suggesting that both groups generally adhere to their study programs but with some

variation. The standard deviation of 1,4 again indicates a moderate level of variability in responses regarding adherence to a specific study program across both groups. In item #41, Triennale students felt slightly more confident in dedicating time to language courses with a mean of 4,3, compared to Magistrale-Master students who reported a mean of 3,8, suggesting they felt more capable of dedicating adequate time to language courses compared to the Magistrale-Master group's mean of 3,8. The overall mean is 4,0. There's a slightly higher variability (standard deviation of 1,7) in the Magistrale-Master group compared to the Triennale group (standard deviation of 1,3). The overall mean is 4,0, suggesting both groups generally felt they could allocate sufficient time to language studies. With an standard deviation of 1,5, there is a moderate level of variability in how students from both groups feel about dedicating adequate time to language courses. Both groups in item #42 indicated that they faced distractions while studying. Triennale students had a mean of 2,6, and Magistrale-Master students had a slightly higher mean of 2,9, indicating that, on average, students had challenges studying without distractions. The Triennale group's mean is 2,6, while the Magistrale-Master group's mean is 2,9. There is a notably higher standard deviation for the Magistrale-Master group at 1,6, indicating greater variability in their responses compared to the Triennale group's standard deviation of 1,0. The overall mean is 2,8, indicating a moderate level of distraction for both groups. The standard deviation of 1,4 indicates that there is a moderate variability in perceptions about avoiding distractions while studying, reflecting the diversity in experiences and challenges faced by students. The self-regulation in terms of studying in alignment with individual learning styles is consistent across both Triennale and Magistrale-Master groups. Adherence to a specific study program shows some variation, with Magistrale-Master students indicating slightly stronger adherence than Triennale students. Both groups generally felt they could allocate sufficient time to language studies, though Triennale students felt slightly more confident. Both groups reported facing distractions while studying, with Magistrale-Master students feeling slightly more distracted than Triennale students.

Table 17 – *Descriptive Statistics of self-regulation and needs during distance learning*

| Self-regulation and needs | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Triennale: 13 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Magistrale-master 25 | | | | | | | |
| Period: Distance learning | | | | | | | |
| | Item | Mean Triennale | SD Triennale | Mean Magistrale- Master | DS Magistrale- Master | Tot: Mean | Tot: SD |
| 39 | Studiavi rispettando i tuoi stili e strategie di apprendimento | 4,2 | 1,4 | 4,1 | 1,4 | 4,2 | 1,4 |
| 40 | Ti attenevi ad un programma di studi specifico | 3,2 | 1,3 | 3,7 | 1,5 | 3,5 | 1,4 |
| 41 | Riuscivi a dedicare sufficiente tempo di studio ai corsi di lingue | 4,3 | 1,3 | 3,8 | 1,7 | 4,0 | 1,5 |
| 42 | Quando studiavi, riuscivi a non distrarti | 2,6 | 1,0 | 2,9 | 1,6 | 2,8 | 1,4 |

As table 18 shows, both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students in item #56 reported similar mean of 4,5 and 4,6, respectively, with the Magistrale-Master group having a slightly lower standard deviation, suggesting slightly less variability in responses compared to the Triennale group. (1,4 for Triennale and 1,2 for magistrale-master). The overall mean is consistent at 4,6, indicating that both groups are generally adept at studying according to their learning styles and strategies during the blended period. The standard deviation (of 1,2) indicates significant consistency in students' responses. In item #57, Magistrale-Master students reported a slightly higher mean of 3,9 compared to 3,5 from Triennale students, and a slightly lower standard deviation (1,6 for Triennale and 1,4 for Magistrale-master), indicating that they may adhere more to a specific study program with less variability compared to the Triennale group. The overall mean is 3,7, suggesting that both groups generally adhere to their study programs but with some variation. With an standard deviation of 1,5, there is a moderate level of variability in how students from both groups feel about dedicating adequate time to language courses. In

item #58, Triennale students felt slightly more confident in allocating time for language courses with a mean of 4,5, whereas Magistrale-Master students had a mean of 4,2. Both groups have a similar standard deviation, indicating consistent variability in responses across both groups (of 1,5). The overall mean is 4,3, indicating that both groups felt they could allocate sufficient time to language studies during the blended learning. With an standard deviation of 1,5, there is a moderate level of variability in how students from both groups feel about dedicating adequate time to language courses. In item #59, both groups indicated that distractions were present during their study sessions. Triennale students had a mean of 3,9, and Magistrale-Master students reported a mean of 3,6. The standard deviation is quite similar, suggesting comparable variability in perceptions about distractions between the two groups (1,4 for Triennale and 1,3 for Magistral- Master) . The overall mean is 3,5, suggesting that distractions are a moderate concern for both groups during their blended learning sessions. The standard deviation of 1,4 indicates that there is a moderate variability in perceptions about distractions.Both Triennale and Magistrale-Master students show a strong inclination to study in alignment with their individual learning styles and strategies during blended learning.While both groups generally adhere to their study programs, Magistrale-Master students appear slightly more committed. Both groups feel they can allocate sufficient time to language studies, with Triennale students feeling marginally more confident.Distractions are a concern for both groups, with Triennale students slightly more prone to distractions than Magistrale-Master students during blended learning.

Table 18 – *Descriptive Statistics of self-regulation and needs during blended learning*

| Self-regulation and needs | | | | | | | |
|--|--|---------------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| Number of respondents: 38 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Triennale: 13 | | | | | | | |
| Numero rispondenti Magistrale-master 25 | | | | | | | |
| Period: Blended learning | | | | | | | |
| | Item | Mean Triennale | SD Triennale | Mean Magistrale- Master | DS Magistrale- Master | Tot: Mean | Tot: SD |
| 56 | Studi rispettando i tuoi stili e strategie di apprendimento | 4,5 | 1,4 | 4,6 | 1,2 | 4,6 | 1,2 |
| 57 | Ti attieni ad un programma di studi specifico | 3,5 | 1,6 | 3,9 | 1,4 | 3,7 | 1,5 |
| 58 | Riesci a dedicare sufficiente tempo di studio ai corsi di lingue | 4,5 | 1,5 | 4,2 | 1,5 | 4,3 | 1,5 |
| 59 | Quando studi, riesci a non distrarti | 3,9 | 1,4 | 3,6 | 1,3 | 3,5 | 1,4 |

Chapter V: Discussion

In the following chapter, the data will be discussed concerning the research questions posed in this study. The two primary categories to be discussed hereafter will be undergraduate students (student della Triennale) and graduate students (studenti della magistrale). Master's course (Master per il Sistema scolastico italiano) students will not be mentioned since, as previously observed in the data analysis, no students attending master's programs were recorded.

5.1.1 Did distance learning influence motivation? Are there differences between undergraduate and graduate students? If so, in what way?

During traditional learning, concerning the item 'Intervenivi in classe con delle domande' both undergraduate and graduate students had similar means. However, in distance learning, there is a significant difference. The motivation of undergraduate students plummeted drastically (to 1,6), whereas for graduate students, it remained relatively higher (at 2,9). This suggests that distance learning might have negatively impacted undergraduate students' motivation to ask questions, indicating a substantial decrease in motivation to participate during distance learning, particularly for undergraduates.

Regarding the question related to time perception, during traditional learning, both groups had similar means. However, during distance learning, there is a decrease in time perception among undergraduate students compared to their graduate counterparts, indicating a difference in time perception between the two groups. Although there are slight variations across the three learning periods, during the pre-pandemic period, there is a minor difference between the two groups in the commitment they showed to university studies, with undergraduates mean 5,2 and graduates 5,0. However, it is notable that during distance learning, both groups exhibited decreased commitment, with undergraduates at 4,5 and graduates at 4,2.

Perceived well-being decreased during distance learning compared to the traditional learning period, for both undergraduates and graduates. This is evident from the lower means during the distance learning period. Interestingly, while during traditional learning tasks requiring the use of technological tools seemed solvable, during distance learning, response percentages indicate that both groups faced increased difficulties due to technical issues compared to traditional learning, with higher values for graduates.

During distance learning, graduate students seemed keep in touch with course colleagues. However, during distance learning, undergraduate students appeared slightly less in contact with their language teachers compared to graduates. Nonetheless, both groups reported a certain availability from language teachers also during distance learning.

In summary, based on the data presented, referring to the specific university where the study was conducted, distance learning appears to have significantly influenced both students' motivation and well-being. The differences between undergraduate and graduate students suggest that both groups exhibited signs of decreased motivation and well-being. Undergraduates might have faced greater challenges in terms of motivation and contact with teachers during distance learning. These differences could stem from various factors, including maturity levels, academic expectations, and support provided by their respective study programs, suggesting the need for varied pedagogical strategies or specific additional support for students during distance learning. Moreover, differences seem to exist especially in how they experienced and reacted to distance learning. This analysis could serve as a starting point for further studies investigating the diverse needs of pedagogical strategies.

5.1.2 Did distance learning influence self-regulation and procrastination?

Are there variations between undergraduate and graduate students? If so, in what way?

In reference to the item 'Studiavi rispettando i tuoi stili e strategie di apprendimento' during traditional learning," the mean for undergraduate students was of 5,1, whereas for graduate students, it was of 4,6. This suggests that, under traditional learning conditions, undergraduate students tended to study more in line with their personal styles and strategies compared to their graduate counterparts. However, during distance learning, both groups showed a decrease: undergraduates at 4,2 and graduates at 4,1. This decline indicates a challenge in adapting traditional learning styles to the distance learning environment.

Analyzing the response to the question 'Ti attenevi ad un programma di studi specifico', it is evident that during traditional learning, both groups were fairly consistent in following a specific study program. However, in distance learning, a slightly decrease in this aspect is observed for undergraduate group. The mean for undergraduates was 3,2, while for graduates, it was 3,7. This suggests increased difficulty for both groups in maintaining structure and order in distance learning. Overall, it indicates that students might have perceived their study habits

as not being as rigorously maintained as in the past. Although both groups showed a decline in their study habits during distance learning, specific differences between undergraduate and graduate students are noteworthy. For instance, in response to the question about adherence to a specific study program, graduate students had a slightly higher mean than undergraduates during distance learning. This might suggest that, despite the challenges of distance learning, graduate students might have retained some structure or adherence to the program compared to their undergraduate peers. During traditional learning, however, undergraduates had a slightly higher mean than graduates in terms of self-regulation and adherence to specific study programs.

A detailed analysis of the tables suggests that distance learning impacted slightly students' self-regulation, with both groups showing a decrease in adherence to their learning styles and strategies during this period. Based on the data provided, a common perception emerges among students belonging to both undergraduate and graduate study groups: both groups recognize a significant impact of distance learning on their study habits. However, it is crucial to note that, despite the similarities, there are specific differences between the two groups that warrant further analysis. Both groups exhibited a slight tendency for decreased self-regulation and adherence to a study program. This decline might indicate that transitioning to distance learning posed a challenge for students at both study levels, regardless of their prior experience or individual characteristics. However, the specific differences observed between the undergraduate and graduate groups might suggest that the impact of distance learning was not uniform. These differences seem to have been primarily influenced by the learning period and circumstances associated with adopting distance learning, rather than intrinsic differences between the two groups.

In summary, while both undergraduate and graduate students recognized a small impact of distance learning on their study habits, delving deeper is essential to understand the specific dynamics and reasons behind the observed differences. This could provide valuable insights into enhancing learning and support strategies for students in a distance learning environment, considering the specific needs and challenges associated with different study levels.

5.1.3 Do the subjects believe that Distance Learning has altered their study habits compared to before? Are there differences between undergraduate and graduate's students?

From the tables provided, a clear set of significant trends emerges regarding students' perceptions and experiences during various modes of learning.

Firstly, there is a distinct indication that overall student satisfaction, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels, decreases with the transition from traditional to distance learning. This can be attributed to several factors, including the lack of direct interaction with teachers and classmates, technical challenges encountered, and a decrease in personal motivation due to feelings of isolation and the challenges of self-directed learning. Motivation, as highlighted by the item concerning active participation in class, shows a clear trend towards a decrease during distance learning. Students appear to be less inclined to ask questions or actively engage during distance learning lessons compared to traditional ones. This could be related to the perception of reduced accessibility of teachers or challenges in establishing emotional and motivational connections through digital platforms. Regarding students' emotional and psychological well-being, the figures are even more telling. While traditional learning showed higher ratings in terms of well-being, distance learning led to a decline in this indicator. This suggests that students might feel more isolated, stressed, or unsupported when engaged in a purely distance learning environment.

Technical difficulties represent another critical aspect. Both undergraduate and graduate students reported a slight increase in technical issues during distance learning. This could include connectivity issues, access to educational materials, or simple challenges in adapting to new digital platforms and tools.

Lastly, the dimension of self-regulation explored through the provided tables offers valuable insight into students' ability to autonomously manage and regulate their learning processes, irrespective of the learning context. In traditional learning, the data suggests a certain capability among students, both undergraduate and graduate, to study cohesively in line with their learning strategies and styles. However, with the introduction of distance learning, a slight decrease in this area is observed. This might indicate that without the structure and support traditionally provided in physical classrooms, students might find it more challenging to maintain a high level of self-regulation. This decline in self-regulation during distance learning might have repercussions on their ability to dedicate adequate time to language studies or avoid distractions.

In summary, while distance learning offers flexibility, it also demands increased individual responsibility from students to self-regulate their learning, a facet that might not always be easily achieved. Certainly, the dimension of self-regulation adds another layer of understanding to students' experiences across different learning contexts. While students may benefit from the flexibility provided by distance learning, they might also require additional support to effectively develop and maintain their self-regulation skills in such environments. In the context of blended learning, trends might vary, but it would be essential to examine how students behave concerning motivation and self-regulation in an environment that combines elements of both traditional and distance learning. Both undergraduate and graduate students seem to believe that distance learning has altered their study habits compared to traditional learning. Overall, there is a noted decrease in satisfaction, motivation, well-being, and self-regulation during distance learning compared to traditional methods. Moreover, both groups encountered more technical difficulties during distance learning. However, specific repercussions and differences between the two groups can be observed in slight variations in means across different items, suggesting that, despite similar trends, subtle differences exist between undergraduate and graduate students.

In essence, while motivation is crucial for fostering self-regulation, changes in the learning context and mode can negatively impact students' motivation, potentially affecting their ability to self-regulate effectively. Identifying and understanding these challenges are vital for educators and institutions in adopting strategies that support students in ways that enhance both their motivation and self-regulation, optimizing their learning experiences in an increasingly digitized world. While distance learning undoubtedly offers flexibility and accessibility, the tables suggest it also presents significant challenges for students, affecting their satisfaction, motivation, well-being, and technical experiences.

5.2 Limitations of the study and future research

The paragraph provides an in-depth reflection on the limitations of a specific research study and suggests possible directions for future research.

In this research, a quantitative analysis was conducted, providing a broad overview based on numerical data. However, the absence of qualitative analysis limited our understanding of students' motivations, feelings, and personal experiences. Qualitative responses could reveal nuances and details that quantitative data may not capture. Therefore, for future studies, it

would be beneficial to integrate closed-ended questions with open-ended ones, allowing participants to express their motivations and reasoning.

It is essential to recognize that the realm of learning is inherently complex, with multiple variables interacting with one another. For instance, while distance learning may impact student motivation, it is crucial to consider other factors such as available technological resources, teacher support, and students' autonomy levels. Thus, future research should carefully examine the interactions among these variables.

Another consideration is the limited sample size of this study, which restricts the generalizability of the findings. The observations and conclusions may only apply to students enrolled in language courses at the specific university where the research was conducted.

In conclusion, while the presented data and tables are valuable, it is critical to interpret them within the context of the discussed limitations. Understanding the challenges and constraints of the current research is vital for guiding future studies and developing more targeted and accurate interventions. This analysis serves as a starting point for further research, such as focusing on developing specific pedagogical strategies to support students in distance learning environments, taking into account the various needs and challenges associated with different educational levels.

5.3 Educational implications

To conclude, based on the analyzed data and the drawn conclusions, a series of educational implications are proposed to enhance conditions related to students' motivation and self-regulation during potential distance learning:

- Offering personalized learning paths that take into account individual student needs can increase motivation and engagement. Utilizing interactive educational platforms and data analysis tools to monitor students' progress and adjust learning resources accordingly is crucial.
- Actively incorporating the development of self-regulation skills in distance learning is beneficial. Students can benefit from learning planning, monitoring, and self-evaluation strategies (Zimmerman, 2002), contributing to increased intrinsic motivation and learning effectiveness.

- Assisting students in establishing clear and realistic learning goals is essential. Vroom's expectancy theory (1964) suggests that motivation is influenced by individuals' perception of goal achievement. Providing clarity on goals and supporting students in defining achievable objectives can enhance their motivation.
- Maintaining clear and consistent communication with students is fundamental. Providing timely and constructive feedback can help students understand their strengths and areas for improvement, fostering a sense of accomplishment and motivation. Feedback oriented towards development, highlighting progress and suggesting future improvements, is crucial for the self-regulation process.
- Implementing tools that allow students to monitor their own progress is essential. The behavioral control theory (Carver & Scheier, 1982) suggests that perceived control over one's actions is linked to motivation. Personal monitoring tools, such as distance learning logs, can support awareness and learning regulation.
- Creating opportunities for collaboration and social interaction among students, even in a distance learning context, can promote a sense of community and belonging. Using technological tools like discussion forums, chat, and collaborative platforms can facilitate collaboration and idea exchange. Encouraging mutual understanding and empathy among students is important for building an inclusive classroom environment.
- Providing teachers with specific training and support for distance teaching is crucial. Teachers need to be prepared to effectively use educational technologies, adapt pedagogical strategies, and manage virtual class dynamics to foster a stimulating and motivating learning environment.
- Supporting mental health, recognizing and addressing challenges related to students' mental health, is essential. Providing resources and psychological support, promoting emotional well-being, and creating an inclusive and supportive environment can contribute to improving students' motivation and attitudes toward learning.
- Using formative assessment techniques that encourage reflection and continuous learning is recommended. Promoting fair and transparent assessment that provides meaningful feedback on students' performance and encourages the development of self-regulative skills is important.
- Teaching time management and planning strategies is essential. University students often need to balance study plans with other commitments, and effective time

management is crucial for self-regulation (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005). Tools such as structured study plans can be helpful.

In summary, to enhance motivation and learning effectiveness during distance learning, it is crucial to adopt a holistic approach that integrates innovative pedagogical strategies, advanced educational technologies, and strong emotional and psychological support for students. Integrating these practices into the context of distance learning can not only improve student motivation but also promote the development of their self-regulation skills, contributing to more effective and sustainable learning.

Appendix

Student's questionnaire

1. Quanti anni hai?

2. Che corso di laurea stai frequentando?

- triennale
- magistrale
- master
- Altro:

3. Quale anno stai frequentando?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- Altro:

4. Quale corso di laurea stai frequentando?

5. Quali lingue stai studiando?

- Inglese/ Angloamericano
- Francese
- Tedesco
- Spagnolo
- Portoghese
- Russo
- Altro:

6. Stai lavorando?

- Sì
- No

7. Ritieni che la DaD abbia modificato il tuo modo di studiare rispetto a prima?.

Non sono d'accordo 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sono d'accordo

8. Come segui i corsi ora che puoi scegliere tra presenza e online?

- presenza
- online
- modalità duale

LEZIONI IN PRESENZA

Le domande di questa prima parte del questionario sono relative al periodo precedente al covid.

9. Ti ritenevi soddisfatto del tuo percorso universitario?

Per niente d'accordo 1 2 3 4 5 6 Del tutto d'accordo

10. Frequentavi le lezioni di lingua?

Saltuarimanete 1 2 3 4 5 6 Regolarmente

11. Intervenivi in classe con delle domande?.

Raramente 1 2 3 4 5 6 Spesso

12. Non ti accorgevi di come volava il tempo?

Raramente 1 2 3 4 5 6 Spesso

13. Mettevi impegno nelle cose che facevi per l'università?

Poco 1 2 3 4 5 6 Tanto

14. Come ti sentivi?

Ansioso 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sereno

15. Disponevi di un tuo computer/tablet?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

16. I compiti che ricevevi erano facilmente risolvibili con gli strumenti tecnologici di cui disponevi (smartphone, laptop, ...)?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

17. Hai avuto difficoltà a studiare a causa di alcuni problemi tecnici (ad esempio, internet lento, problemi con il computer, ...)?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

18. Quando ricevevi delle consegne, sapevi esattamente cosa dovevi fare?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

19. Eri in contatto con i tuoi insegnanti di lingue?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

20. Eri in contatto con i tuoi colleghi di corso?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

21. Gli insegnanti di lingue erano disponibili a dare chiarimenti?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

22. Studiavi rispettando i tuoi stili e strategie di apprendimento?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

23. Ti attenevi ad un programma di studio specifico?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

24. Riuscivi a dedicare sufficiente tempo di studio ai corsi di lingue?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

25. Quando studiavi, riuscivi a non distrarti?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

LEZIONI IN DAD

Le domande in questa seconda parte sono riferite al periodo emergenziale svolto esclusivamente con didattica a distanza.

26. Ti ritenevi soddisfatto del tuo percorso universitario?

Per niente d'accordo 1 2 3 4 5 6 Del tutto d'accordo

27. Frequentavi le lezioni di lingua?

Saltuarimanete 1 2 3 4 5 6 Regolarmente

28. Intervenivi in classe con delle domande?.

Raramente 1 2 3 4 5 6 Spesso

29. Non ti accorgevi di come volava il tempo?

Raramente 1 2 3 4 5 6 Spesso

30. Mettevi impegno nelle cose che facevi per l'università?

Poco 1 2 3 4 5 6 Tanto

31. Come ti sentivi?

Ansioso 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sereno

32. Disponevi di un tuo computer/tablet?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

33. I compiti che ricevevi erano facilmente risolvibili con gli strumenti tecnologici di cui disponevi (smartphone, laptop, ...)?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

34. Hai avuto difficoltà a studiare a causa di alcuni problemi tecnici (ad esempio, internet lento, problemi con il computer, ...)?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

35. Quando ricevevi delle consegne, sapevi esattamente cosa dovevi fare?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

36. Eri in contatto con i tuoi insegnanti di lingue?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

37. Eri in contatto con i tuoi colleghi di corso?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

38. Gli insegnanti di lingue erano disponibili a dare chiarimenti?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

39. Studiavi rispettando i tuoi stili e strategie di apprendimento?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

40. Ti attenevi ad un programma di studio specifico?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

41. Riuscivi a dedicare sufficiente tempo di studio ai corsi di lingue?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

42. Quando studiavi, riuscivi a non distrarti?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

PERIODO ATTUALE

Le domande di quest'ultima parte fanno riferimento al periodo attuale, nel quale c'è la possibilità seguire le lezioni in presenza, online o in modalità duale.

43. Ti ritieni soddisfatto del tuo percorso universitario?

Per niente d'accordo 1 2 3 4 5 6 Del tutto d'accordo

44. Frequenti le lezioni di lingua?

Saltuarimanete 1 2 3 4 5 6 Regolarmente

45. Intervieni in classe con delle domande?

Raramente 1 2 3 4 5 6 Spesso

46. Non ti accorgi di come vola il tempo?

Raramente 1 2 3 4 5 6 Spesso

47. Metti impegno nelle cose che fai per l'università?

Poco 1 2 3 4 5 6 Tanto

48. Come ti senti?

Ansioso 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sereno

49. Disponi di un tuo computer/tablet?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

50. I compiti che ricevi sono facilmente risolvibili con gli strumenti tecnologici di cui disponi (smartphone, laptop, ...)?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

51. Hai difficoltà a studiare a causa di alcuni problemi tecnici (ad esempio, internet lento, problemi con il computer, ...)?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

52. Quando ricevi delle consegne, sai esattamente cosa devi fare?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

53. Sei in contatto con i tuoi insegnanti di lingue?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

54. Sei in contatto con i tuoi colleghi di corso?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

55. Gli insegnanti di lingue sono disponibili a dare chiarimenti?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

56. Studi rispettando i tuoi stili e strategie di apprendimento?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

57. Ti attieni ad un programma di studio specifico?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

58. Riesci a dedicare sufficiente tempo di studio ai corsi di lingue?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

59. Quando studi, riesci a non distrarti?

Mai 1 2 3 4 5 6 Sempre

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