Training of Tutors of the Institute of Distance Education in teaching and learning methodologies

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Abstract

This research aims to describe the training of tutors from the Institute of Distance Education in teaching and learning methodologies. This is a descriptive study, of a predominantly qualitative nature. The sample selection was non-probabilistic and intentional, consisting of 128 tutors from the distance education institute of the Catholic University of Mozambique. For data collection, a self-assessment questionnaire was applied, consisting of 10 questions, of which, 6 questions whose objective is to assess the level of tutors' previous knowledge on the subject and describe the expectations of the tutors; 4 questions aimed at analyzing the tutors' opinions regarding strengths, weaknesses, and exploring expectations for future training. For the closed questions, the Lickert scale was used, having been classified from 1 to 4, in order to indicate the degree of disagreement, or agreement, in relation to certain statements. The data analysis was based on a methodological comparison with the information collected through the questionnaire. The main results point to the importance of carrying out systematic training, and the inclusion of assessment tools, which enable permanent training through continuous training. Although the tutors have some experience in the area, they still need this continuous training in order to act with proficiency in technology-mediated education.

Keywords: Training of tutors; pedagogical practices and methodologies in Distance Education

1. Introduction

1.1.   Introduction

Currently, in Mozambique, the use of digital technologies in the teaching-learning process demonstrates a reality with different or no levels of influence of technology in higher education. In this context, it is essential to distinguish the disparity between the use of digital technologies and their interaction in the teaching-learning process, as it would be a mistake to confuse the concepts of technology and pedagogy. In this context, the identification of a technological society must be accompanied by an awareness of the need to include in the school curricula the skills necessary to deal with the new educational dynamics. From the relationship between the digital world and pedagogy, in a perspective that encompasses education, training, school, technology and digital culture, this article was conceived with the aim of describing the training of tutors, from the Distance Education Institute (DEI), about teaching and learning methodologies. The training offered to tutors arises from the need observed by the DEI, during the face-to-face tutoring session, from the difficulties presented by tutors in relation to distance learning methodologies. In this context, given the complexity, dynamism and potential that distance education presents, there is an urgent need to train the respective tutors.

Distance Learning is a type of education that aims to provide study opportunities to a group of individuals who have difficulties in accessing face-to-face education. Therefore, training in distance learning is essential, as it allows tutors to understand and reconvert in order to improve their role in the area in which they work, thus enhancing the use of appropriate tools for the teaching-learning process. When using these tools, according to Malequeta (2016, p. 27-39), the tutor must be very careful, since, normally, the freeware pedagogical tools, available on websites and portals aimed at teaching, still follow the paradigm of instruction assisted by computer, disguised with the use of new hypermedia technologies (sound, image and animations). In this context, distance education (DEA) is facilitated by new technologies that help, with speed and flexibility, the expansion of learning paths. With the popularization of the internet and the large amount of information published online, the need arose to group this data in a single space, in order to facilitate the search for content by users, and then the concept of portal appeared.

In the pedagogical scope, according to the same author, the portals aim to provide tutors and students with a collaborative environment for the exchange of didactic content and educational resources, offering users a large amount of information, facilitating learning.

For tutors, portals allow for the sharing of learning resources, lesson plans and successful teaching experiences. As a result, they can spend more time teaching than performing administrative tasks which are simplified and automated.

According to Costa (2008, p. 34-65), in Higher Education institutions, specialized in distance learning, it is essential to promote the training of tutors, managers and other personnel who deal with this modality directly and indirectly. However, the rapid offer of courses puts on the table a concern regarding the training of those involved with the tutoring activities of the Catholic University of Mozambique's IED. It is necessary to distinguish between functions and competencies, as well as to create strategies different from those used in classroom teaching, which

many tutors use. In view of the challenges posed by the incorporation of technology in the educational context, the training of tutors is one of the pillars in this process.

Studies developed by Delors (1996), Carneiro (2001), Patrocínio (2004), Costa (2008), Nóvoa (2009), Eurydice (2011), Rodrigues (2012), Johnson et al., (2014), Goeman et al., (2015) and OECD (2015), indicated the importance of training tutors as a determining condition for quality assurance and for the integration of information and community technologies (ICT) in the educational context.

In the social context of continuous professional development, it is essential that interpersonal relationships between the various individuals are central to the establishment of a culture in a digital environment (Almeida, 2010, p. 1053-1072).

Rodrigues (2017, p. 199-223) emphasizes that it is not enough to have technology and various training courses, it is essential to know how the training was developed and experienced by the trainers, since it should contribute to the development of skills and to increase confidence in the use of technologies to promote innovation. Training should also allow the pedagogical integration of digital technologies and innovation in the teaching and learning processes, and should also contribute to the professional development of the tutor.

In view of this analysis, technologies lead to multiple possibilities and advantages in the pedagogical field. With their resources and multimedia systems, they allow individualized paths to be drawn for each student, contributing to their progression, according to their learning pace. For tutors, it allows the organization of learning in different homogeneous groups and is also a means to reduce academic failure. In fact, the use of technology facilitates individualized and personalized learning.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Distance learning

The emergence of Distance Learning (DL) has been recognized in several ways worldwide. This fact is related to its generic term, with multiple meaning. Therefore, there are several concepts that we can find to define DL. Depending on the cases, the different authors present a conceptual convergence, by emphasizing certain characteristics of this type of education, which has been revealed as a fundamental tool for promoting opportunities for different individuals.

According to the Strategic Plan for Distance Education (PEED), DL is defined as a teaching model that is distinguished by the separation between student and teacher, by the use of technology to mediate learning, by bidirectional communication, which allows interaction between student, teachers, tutors, as well as the possibility of face-to-face meetings for tutors (PEED, 2014).

From the perspective of Moore and Kearsley (2007, p. 181-199), DL is seen as planned learning, which takes place in a different place from the place of teaching, imposing special techniques on the course design, as well as, in relation to the instruction, communication through technologies,

special organizational and administrative provision. In this definition, the interdependence of information technologies with communication is well-known, since rapid technological development has provided the emergence of new tools that have helped and help to boost this teaching modality.

For Mill (2012, p. 406-411), DL consists of the separation of the student and teacher/tutor, an education modality that is present in the education of the citizen, with great potential for the democratization of knowledge.

In Mozambique, DL is recognized as one of the proven strategies to minimize regional asymmetries. As a result, recognizing that face-to-face education would not be able to offer study opportunities to populations living far from large urban centers, the government adopted distance education as a strategy to operationalize public education policies.

Distance education has characteristics such as the use of autonomy in communication and the technological process (Guarezi and Matos, 2012, p. 67-99). Regarding autonomy, the student must define the best time and place to study, according to his learning pace, using didactic materials that facilitate the systematization of knowledge and promote self-learning. As for communication, it is always mediatized and can happen simultaneously, namely, when students and teacher are connected at the same time, through various instruments (Chats, web conferences, audio conferences, telephones, etc.), or in an unsynchronized way, when students and teachers are not connected at the same time, through the forum and/or electronic messages. These forms of communication allow us to serve the largest number of students from different regions. Regarding the technology, several technologies are made available to students and teachers to facilitate communication and access to content (Guarezi and Matos, 2012).

For Costa (2017, p. 59-74), DL is a teaching modality that has become increasingly common. It is a form of teaching and learning mediated by information and communication technologies. Which means that, instead of everyone meeting in a classroom, with a scheduled day and time, everyone studies at their own different time and wherever they want.

As is well known, DL has provoked several discussions in the academic field, which demonstrates the interest in the subject, with several courses in different areas of knowledge being created and disseminated. Given the complexity of the subject, this type of teaching is fundamental for promoting training aimed at educators, in order to contribute to reflections that lead to rethinking the concepts of education and technology, contributing to the general construction of knowledge.

2.2. Legal aspects and concepts about distance learning

In Mozambique, school education is a right for all, and must offer a quality model in all modalities. To this end, the National Education System (NES) recognizes both face-to-face and DL as valid tools to promote access to education in an autonomous or integrated manner. Therefore, the SNE defends total pedagogical parity between the two.

The legal aspects, regarding the quality certification of DL institutions are regulated by Decree 35/2009, of 7 July, of the Council of Ministers, and by the National Institute of Distance Education (NIDE), created by Decree nº 49/2006, of 26 December, approved by the Council of Ministers, which, in article 3, assigns specific powers for the creation and development of the DL accreditation system.

We understand it is worth distinguishing the expansion of distance learning from distance education. In line with Fujita (2010), the expansion of teaching takes us back to the traditional classroom teaching paradigm, and to the role of the teacher considered as the center of attention, a figure that teaches, and who guides the student in learning. In particular, the term distance education has at its core a broader meaning of teaching, namely from the perspective of a conduit from study to learning, in a collaborative, participatory and meaningful way.

In the country, education and training institutions, at all levels, have been relying on DL to expand education and training opportunities to citizens, through different programs and courses, which has resulted in the notable increase in this modality. According to the Education Strategic Plan 2012 - 2016, this development brings with it numerous challenges that require the adoption of a common operating platform, thus underlining the role of the State as facilitator and coordinator of DL.
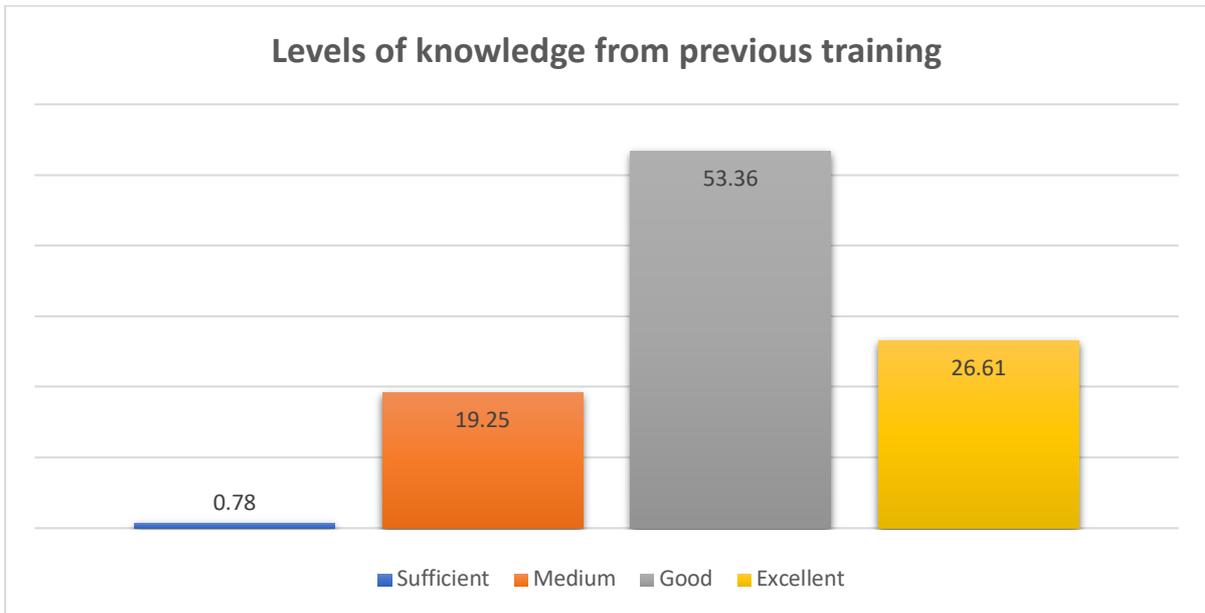
3. Methodology

This is a descriptive study, of a predominantly qualitative nature. The selection of the sample follows a non-probabilistic and intentional model, consisting of 128 tutors from the IED-UCM. In the collection of data, a self-administered questionnaire composed of 10 questions was applied, with 6 closed questions used to assess the level of prior knowledge of tutors on the subject and describing their expectations. The remaining 4 open questions were used to analyze the tutors' opinion regarding the program's strengths and weaknesses and future training, followed by suggestions. For the closed questions, the Lickert scale was used, classified from 1 to 4, in order to indicate the degree of disagreement or agreement in relation to certain statements in the form of comments. The data analysis was based on a methodological comparison with the information collected through the questionnaire. The subjects' opinions were transcribed and classified into categories, subcategory, indicators and observations. The data were first presented in the Microsoft Excel program, version 2010, and subsequently analyzed, in a descriptive way, through the calculation of percentages, having estimated the degree of disagreement, or agreement, according to the established indicators. The results were presented in graphs.

4.   Presentation and Analysis of Results

Graph 1: Global descriptive values of tutors' prior knowledge.

Levels of knowledge from previous training

53.36

26.61

19.25

0.78

■Sufficient ■Medium ■Good ■Excellent

Source: Questionnaire data (2018).

Graph 1 reports global descriptive values of the tutors' prior knowledge level in relation to training. Of all the tutors, 53.36% had previous knowledge regarding training.

Graph 2: Global descriptive values of tutors' expectations of the training

Expectations of the training

50.00

40.39

2.60   7.01

1

■Insufficient ■Medium ■Good ■Excellent

Source: Questionnaire data (2018)

Graph 2 shows the global descriptive values of expectations regarding the training of tutors, where more than 50% considered it good, as evidenced in their responses:

CB: "it will enable the development of skills [sic]"

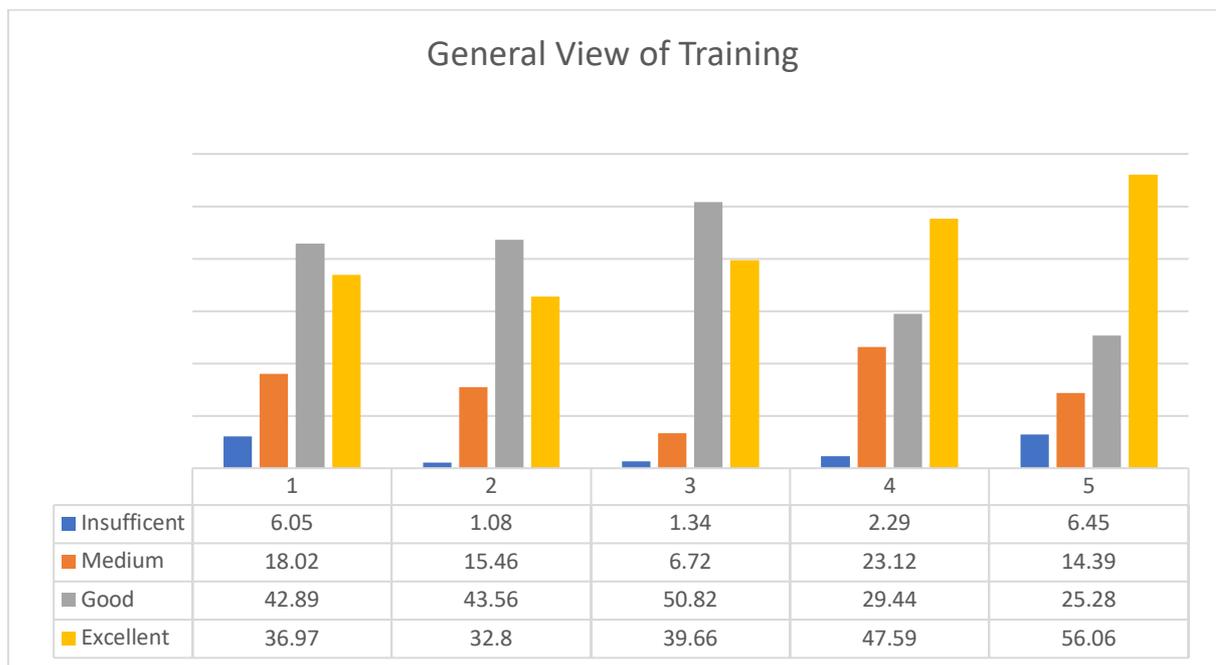C.BZ: "It will allow context and methodology of distance learning; models of distance education."

C.BZ: "It is an asset since it will contribute positively to the improvement of quality, be it personal, as well as at the level of the institution."

C.BZ: "Exam preparation model and methodology."

C.GR:"models of education, exam process, distance learning."

C. MA: "Teaching methodology in distance education pedagogical model of distance learning."

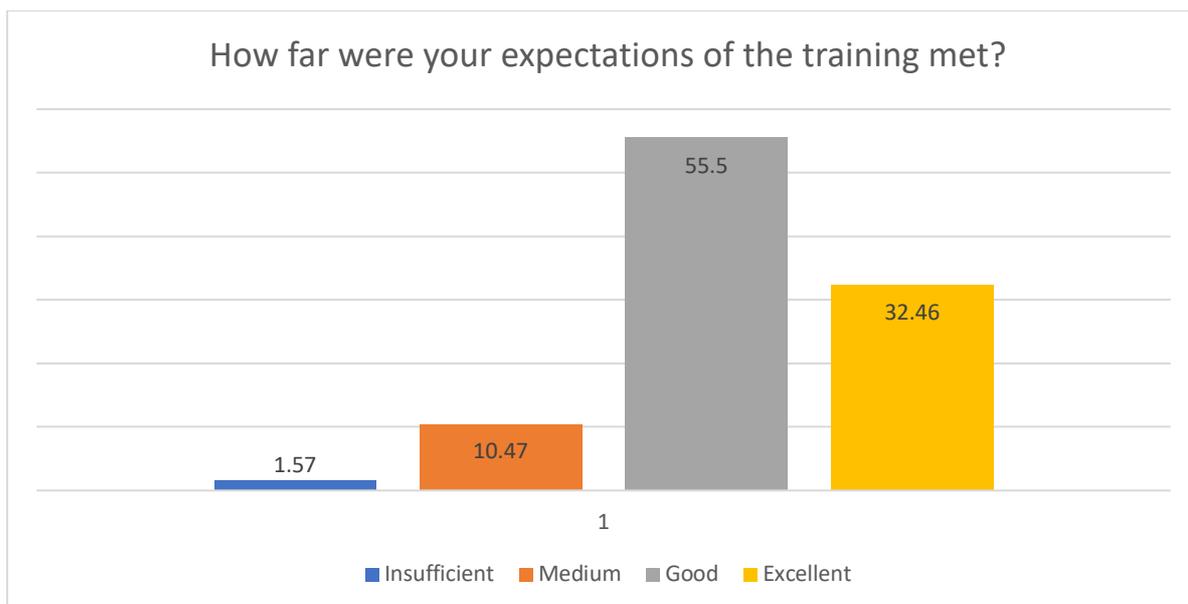**Graph 3: Global descriptive values of General View of Training**

General View of Training

	1	2	3	4	5
■ Insufficent	6.05	1.08	1.34	2.29	6.45
■ Medium	18.02	15.46	6.72	23.12	14.39
■ Good	42.89	43.56	50.82	29.44	25.28
□ Excellent	36.97	32.8	39.66	47.59	56.06

1.Were the training objectives clear?	2.Were the Powerpoint presentations clear?	3.Was the training well organized?	4.Was the training time sufficient?	5.Was the training room appropriate?

 Source: (Questionnaire data, 2018, [n.p.]).

Graph 3 presents the global descriptive values of the tutors' overview in relation to the training, where it was found that the objectives were clear, with emphasis on the structuring of the presentations, as well as the conditions created for the same training to take place.

Graph 4: Global descriptive values of evaluation of the training.

How far were your expectations of the training met?

- Insufficient: 1.57
- Medium: 10.47
- Good: 55.5
- Excellent: 32.46

Source: Questionnaire data (2018)

Graph 4 presents the global descriptive values of the training evaluation. According to the results, 55.50% of the trainees declared that their expectations had been met as shown in the responses in Table 1.

Table 1. Summary of the content analysis performed for the categories, subcategories, indicators and tutors' observation, 2018

Category	Sub-category	Indicators	Responses
Strong points	Content	Material didáctico	CB: "examination process" CB: "devising questions" CB: "tutoring model" C.BZ: "Contextualization and methodology of distance learning; models of distance education." C.BZ: "Pedagogical model of distance learning; methodologies; tutor's role." C.BZ: "Exam preparation model and methodology" C.CB: "distance education models, how to teach at a distance" C.CB: "Distance learning methodologies, distance learning, teaching and assessment" C.GR: "education models, exam process, teaching at a distance." C. MA: "Teaching methodology in distance education pedagogical model of distance learning." C. MA: "Types of distance learning assessments." C. MA: "Tips on how to write exam questions." C.MR: "Introduction and implementation of the CED tutors Bimodal model." C.MR: "Procedure of tutors, supervisors in the period of exams." C.MR: "The role of the tutor, model, methodology and evaluation in distance education." C.MR: "Knowledge of tutorial processes and procedures for exams; semi-present, bimodal and virtual teaching methodologies."

			C.MR: "Bloom's Taxonomy; writing exam questions." C.MZ: "Assessments, exams, role of tutor and student, models and methodology." C.NA: "Models of distance education." C.PB: "Consolidation of the contents inherent to the methodology applied by DL." C.PB: "How to write multiple choice questions." C.QL: "Role of the tutor and Distance Education Methodology." C.QL: "Teaching methodology in distance education and the tutor's role in distance education." C.TT: "Writing of questions for evaluation taking into account Bloom's pyramid." C.TT: "Creation of an open space for interaction and exchange of experience between facilitator and tutors."
		UCM Regulations	C.BZ: Examination regulations; UCM general regulation." C.CB: "methods of evaluation." C.GR: "general regulation regarding evaluation" C.MA: "The divulgations of the Catholic University's rules on examination" C.MR: "Solid knowledge in distance education, examination process and general regulation of UCM." C.MR: "The role of the tutor in distance education;" C. QL: "examination process; UCM general regulation." C.QL: "Distance Learning Methodology, divulgation of UCM General Regulations."
	Trainer Profiles		C.B: "Trainer interaction." C.B: "Level of resolution of doubts." CB: "Professional ethics." C.CB: "Trainer was excellent and dynamic." C.G: "resolution of doubts." C.G: "good communication by the tutors." C.G: "Trainer interaction." C.G: "mastery of content." C.GR: "Good communication." C.GR: "Resolution of doubts." C.GR: "Good interaction between trainers." C.GR: "Mastery of the contents." C.MZ: "Good communication between trainers and trainees". C.NA: "Mastery of the contents." C.NA: "Level of resolution of doubts." C.PB: "The dynamics in the presentation of the contents and openness to transversal issues." C.TT: "Good level of knowledge transmission, good interaction between the speaker and the participants."
Weak points	Logistics	Problem	C.B: "tiring schedule." C.B: "lack of availability of training materials." C.B: "lack of water." C.B: "many participants." C.BZ: "Lack of lunch break; short break." C.BZ: "Lack of material in physical format." C.CB: "lack of lunch break, lack of printed documents for trainees that were being discussed in the training" C. CB: "lack of training material in the teaching and learning center." C.CB: "Punctuality and lack of lunch break." C.CB: "insufficient time, lack of per diem." C.CB: "insufficient time." C. MA: "Time management." C.MR: "Insufficient time for training." C.MR: "Lack of water and lunch break."

			C.MR: "Training time too short." C.PB: "Absence of training material, e.g. notepads, pens, etc." C.PB: "The training should take place before the beginning of the first session, in order to guarantee that tutors have the tools for the teaching process from the first day of classes." C.PB: "There was less discussion about the contents discussed in relation to the time and duration of training." C.QL: "No participation certificates awarded to participants and no training per diem" C.TT: "We were not given any material (notebooks, pens) but the rest was all in order" C.TT: "The time was not enough for approaching the training content and for the interaction between working groups."
	Content	Didactic Material	C.B: "the training did not include content related to the online modality." C.BZ: "lack of documents that can accompany the training process" C.MR: "The training time; lack of printed manuals provided by tutors". C.MZ: "Weak participation of tutors." C.PB: "Time was not enough in delivering the training content and in the interaction between working groups" C.PB: "A lot of content given in a short time."
	Trainer Profiles		C.CB: "excessive lecturing during training made it difficult to interact in training." C.CB: "excessive use of the lecture method by the trainer." C.G: "lack of interaction." C.GR: "Unconvincing clarification." C.GR: "weak interaction." C.GR: "unsatisfactory answers." C.QL: "Late start of training, exaggerated explanation by the trainer."
Future training	Psychopedagogy		C.B: "online tutor training." C.B: "use of online system." C.B: "online modality training." C.BZ: "Use of new technologies in the distance learning process." C.CB: "distance learning methodologies." C.GR: "exam preparation training." C.MA: "MSR, Platform, Online Education." C.MA: "Training in teaching methodology." C.MA: "Training tutors and students online." C.MA: "Psychopedagogy with the focus on teaching methodology." C.MR: "Virtual teaching-learning process." C.MR: "Use of the Moodle platform." C.NA: "Training on exam preparation" C.PB: "In the digital migration component, I would like there to be training in order to understand the use of the platform." C.QL: "Training related to distance education in what concerns student/tutor interaction." C.QL: "E-learning." C.QL: "Curriculum development."
	(Methodology of Scientific Research) MSR		C.B: "Improvement methodologies." C.B: "Teaching methodologies." C.B: "Interaction about MSR." C.BZ: "Scientific research methodology."

		C.BZ: "Writing a monograph." C.BZ: "Teaching methodology in distance education." C.CB: "supervision of monographs, how to evaluate, and self-evaluation." C.CB: "TCC and MSR supervision area." C.G: "teaching methodologies." C.MA: "About teaching methodologies." C.MA: "Methodology for scientific research." C.MA: "Training for writing a monograph." C.MZ: "Supervision of monographs." C.PB: "All related to distance education, research methodologies, since each one comes from different schools." C.PB: "Opponents [sic] in *viva voce* examinations at the end of the course" C.QL: "Supervision of monographs, exchange with tutors from other centers." C.TT: "Tutoring in monograph *viva voce* examinations in parallel with the research methodology." C.TT: "Scientific methodologies, supervision of monographs, arguments during *viva voce* examinations."
	Others	C.CB: "professional ethics and deontology, in exam surveillance techniques." C.CB: "Mentoring training in the preparation of activities, preparation of teaching material and questions." C.MR: "Exchange of experience with teachers from other UCM distance learning resource centers." C.MZ: "Exchange with other institutions of Distance Education."

Suggestions	C.B: "Increase in training days." C.B: "enough time for training." C.B: "constant training." C.B: "travel allowance." C.B: "improved food." C.B: "use of larger slides." C.B: "more communication." C.B: "previous information." C.BZ: "Conduct more training, at least twice a year." C.BZ: "Organize training regularly at the beginning of the academic year." C.CB: "I suggest that the topics to be addressed in this training should be afterwards distributed by the participants." C.CB: "More seminars of this nature." C.G: "Provide printed material before training." C.G: "More training, at least 2 trainings for tutors." C.GR: "Travel allowance." C.MR: "May this training not be the last; that students get involved in future training." C.MR: "Continuing training of tutors, increase training time." C.MZ: "Increase training days and have it given before sessions." "Scientific methodologies, supervision of monographs." C.PB: "The seminar should take place in two days to improve the assimilation of the contents." C.QL: "Presence of management, awarding of certificates of participation" C.QL: "Award certificate of participation." C.TT: "I suggest that training in matters of virtual and distance learning platforms be planned."

Source: Questionnaire data (2018)

Observing table 1, the opinions of tutors were analyzed, and led to the creation of categories, subcategories, as well as indicators and observations. Thus, the data presented represent the contributions expressed by tutors and indicates what would satisfy them in relation to training.

In the content subcategory, tutors, at the level of resource centers, highlighted the following topics as strengths:

CB: "Mentoring model at UCM-CED."

C.BZ: "Contextualization and methodology of distance learning; models of distance education."

C.BZ: "Pedagogical model of distance learning; methodologies; tutor's role."

C.BZ: "Exam preparation model and methodology."

C.GR: "Education models, exam process, teaching at a distance."

C. MA: "Teaching methodology in distance education, pedagogical model of distance learning."

C. MA: "Types of distance learning assessments."

C.MR: "Procedure of tutors, supervisors, during the period of exams."

C.MR: "The role of the tutor, model, methodology and evaluation in distance education;"

C.MR: "Bloom's Taxonomy; exam questions."
C.MZ: "Assessments, exams, role of tutor and student, models and methodology"
C.TT: "Writing exam questions for evaluation taking into account Bloom's pyramid."
(Questionnaire data 2018, [n.p.]).

In the Evaluation Regulation indicator, based on the results of content analysis, the tutors emphasized areas of significant contribution, as illustrated by the following quotes:

C.BZ: "Examination regulations; UCM general regulation."
C.CB: "Forms of evaluation."
C.GR: "General regulation regarding evaluation."
C.MA: "The disclosure of the Catholic University's regulations regarding exams."
C.MR: "Solid knowledge in distance education, examination process and general regulation of UCM."
C.MR: "The role of the tutor in distance education."
C.QL: "Examination process; UCM general regulation."
C.QL: "Distance Learning Methodology, divulgation of Regulations."
(Questionnaire data, 2018, [n.p.]).

As for the profile of the trainers, the tutors stated that during the training they had observed:

C.B: "Trainer interaction."
C.B: "High level of resolution of doubts."
CB: "Professional ethics on the part of trainers"
C.CB: "Trainer was excellent and dynamic."
C.G: "Resolution of doubts."
C.G: "Good communication by tutors."
C.G: "Mastery of the contents."
C.GR: "Good communication."
C.GR: "Resolution of doubts."
C.GR: "Good interaction between trainers."
C.GR: "Mastery of the contents."
C.MZ: "Good communication between trainers and trainees."
C.NA: "Mastery of the contents."
C.PB: "Good dynamics in the presentation of contents and openness to cross-cutting issues."
C.TT: "Good level of knowledge transmission, good interaction between the speaker and the participants."
(Questionnaire data 2018, [n.p.]).

In light of the trainees' statements, the tutors suggested participating in future training in the following areas of psychopedagogic and scientific research methodologies, as shown below:
Psychopedagogil:

C.GR: "Exam preparation training."
C.MA: "Training in teaching methodology."
C.MA: "Training for online tutors and students."
C.MA: "Psychopedagogy oriented towards teaching methodology."
C.MR: "Use of the Moodle platform."

C.NA: "Training in exam preparation."
C.QL: "Training related to distance education in what concerns student/ tutor interaction."
C.QL: "Curriculum development."

(Questionnaire data 2018, [n.p.]).

Methodology of Scientific Research:
C.B: "Scientific methodologies."
C.B: "Teaching methodologies."
C.B: "Interaction about MSR."
C.BZ: "Scientific research methodology."
C.BZ: "Writing a monograph."
C.BZ: "Teaching methodology in distance education."
C.CB: "Supervision of monographs, how to evaluate and self-evaluation."
C.G: "Teaching methodologies."
C.MA: "About teaching methodologies."
C.MA: "Methodology of scientific investigation."
C.MA: "Training for the preparation of the monograph."
C.MZ: "Supervision of monographs."

C.PB: "All related to distance education, research methodologies, since each one comes from different schools."
C.PB: "Arguments at the *viva voce* examinations "
C.QL: "Supervision of monographs, exchange with tutors from other centers."
C.TT: "Tutoring in the work of defending a monograph in parallel with the research methodology."
C.TT: "Scientific methodologies, supervision of monographs, *viva voce* examinations."
(Questionnaire data 2018, [n.p.]).

The content analysis permitted verification that each category represents the idea associated with satisfaction and/or dissatisfaction, linked to weaknesses, which can be considered as significant for a later analysis of initiatives directed to other training sessions, according to the suggestions listed below:
C.B: "In the next training sessions, you should take into account the period and days for training."
C.B: "Enough time for training."
C.B: "Must have constant training."
C.BZ: "Conduct more training, at least twice a year."
C.BZ: "Organize training regularly, at the beginning of the academic year."
C.CB: "More seminars of this nature."
C.G: "Ensure provision of printed material before training."
C.G: "More training, at least 2 trainings for tutors."
C.GR: "Travel allowance"
C.MR: "May this training not be the last; to involve students in future training."
C.MR: "Continuing training of tutors, increase training time."
C.MZ: "Increase training days and have it given before sessions."

C.PB: "Due to the high quantity of content, the next seminars should take place in two days to improve trainees' assimilation of the content."
(Questionnaire data, 2018, [n.p.]).

5. Discussion of Results

According to the literature, pedagogic mediators deal with varied situations in different sectors in order to achieve the success of the teaching-learning process (TLP). Teaching staff is shown to be of vital importance to universities and, if staff is not well organized, there will be no success in their activity. When an institution hires a professor, or tutor, it must ensure that the professional understands the university's mission, values, line of thought, and methodology. This is the first function of professional training, as a trained teacher triggers a development of skills to improve the teaching-learning process that occurs within the educational institution every day. Thus, a trained teacher will give greater performance, since he is less likely to make mistakes because he already knows how to proceed. Teaching activities will be carried out with greater security and agility. From the perspective of Malequeta et al., (2018, p. 9-24), the training of tutors enables the use of adequate resources in the TLP, especially in those where mediation requires the use of technology. Thus, technology creates profound transformations in the educational and social fabric, as long as it is used appropriately, and is consistent with the theoretical perspective that guides the tutor's pedagogical work.

The tutor-student relationship, traditionally vertical - with the tutor positioned as the holder of the monopoly of knowledge, has evolved into a more horizontal model, in which the tutor becomes a partner, showing the path and guiding the student, through the multiple possibilities and forms to achieve knowledge, and to relate to it, making the student naturally active. For this reason, when training tutors in the field of distance education, it constitutes one of the essential mechanisms for the creation of a cohesive team, adapted to the institution's mission and vision, avoiding the so-called turnover (Rodrigues, 2016)

It can be noted that the quality pedagogic exercise is directly related to the consistent theoretical training of professionals, aiming at a continuous articulation between theory and practice. Thus, through continuous training, the institution's tutors and managers become better able to ponder on all pedagogical aspects, proposing strategies with the purpose of remedying the different difficulties and driving changes in the entire academic community (Rodrigues, 2017, p 199-223).

Due to the results obtained, the training of tutors in the subject of Distance Education becomes a fundamental tool, contributing to the improvement of teaching work and strengthening links between teachers and scientific-pedagogic knowledge. It also favors the creation of new learning environments, which lead both teachers and students, towards pedagogic practices capable of returning esteem for learning and enabling students to design and develop projects that will re dimension their schooling and their role in society.

According to Sepúlveda, Calderón, Ruiz, & Beltrán (2008, p.101-112), coaching or training generates a responsible professional, capable of overcoming routines, established habits and providing an adequate professional practice, with the possibility of a change in the way of

approaching the questions, thinking and expressing their experiences that will influence the answers, based on a vision of education as an autonomous and responsible research process.

Elliott (2010, p.28-38) considers that training, in terms of distance education, must be constituted as an ethical accomplishment associated with the educational good, and must be supported by a practical intentionality for change, generating skills that enable people to coordinate their actions professionally.

According to Anderson and Herr (2016, p. 4-24), tutors are aware that training enables their professional development, however, they must distinguish themselves by reflecting on their own practice. This distinction can be made taking into account the degree of intentionality and the systematization of reflection.

For this study, the results focused on the tutors' practices, from a perspective of professional and personal training and development, on the joint construction of skills, on the innovation of the methodology and pedagogical strategies that stimulate the experiences and activities carried out by the tutors with their students, through the development, in the context of work, in a specific learning community.

6.   Conclusion

The continuous training of tutors is an indispensable component for the development of successful work, given that a considerable number of tutors, inserted in the DL, did not participate in any initial training aimed at DL. Even those who have had some experience show that they need to review knowledge and skills that will make them abler to act in this new context of education mediated by technology. It becomes categorical for higher education institutions, which offer distance learning courses, to encourage tutors to seek solid and continuous training, considering the complexity involved in the teaching and learning processes. It is understood, therefore, that the process of knowledge production in distance courses, which take place through pedagogic mediation, involving interactive processes that are established in the relationship between teacher and or tutor/student/knowledge, require efficient technological support.

In view of the findings, the tutors realized the importance of training and suggested periodic accomplishments of it, having also suggested the following psychopedagogic areas, which include exam preparation, teaching methodology and scientific research methodologies (MSR), likewise, they highlighted the training in scientific methodologies, creating an interaction between MSR and the supervision of monographs. The highlighted areas aim to improve the pedagogic practice, as well as the development of knowledge focused on the context in which they are inserted, providing them with innovative methodologies that enable the exchange of experiences, and the sharing of new learning, boosting the tutor in the full exercise of their pedagogic practice.

Therefore, the new teaching technologies and techniques, as well as the innovative methodologies, if well applied, positively affect the process of training tutors, providing them with better means to assist and motivate students in the teaching and learning process.

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