Sino-US English Teaching, December 2024, Vol. 21, No.12, 547-558
doi:10.17265/1539-8072/2024.12.001

A Framework for Evaluating Research on Distance Chinese Learning in UAE: What Aspects of Distance Learning Can We Study?

Shan Jin
The British University in Dubai, Dubai, UAE

In 2019, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) became the first Arab country to integrate Chinese language education into its national basic education system, employing 172 Chinese language teachers and educating over 54,000 Emirati students by 2022. In response to the global pandemic, the UAE also became the first Arab nation to implement distance learning on a national scale, transitioning public schools to this mode of instruction in March 2020. However, existing research on distance Chinese learning primarily focuses on international students in Chinese universities or countries where Chinese language education is more established, and mainly targets older age groups such as university and high school students. There is currently no research dedicated to distance Chinese learning in the UAE. This paper addresses this research gap by exploring three key aspects. The first section reviews current literature on the key stakeholders and influencing factors in distance learning. The second section examines the development of distance Chinese language education and proposes an initial evaluation framework for this field. The third section analyzes the current state of distance Chinese learning in the UAE, highlighting specific issues that warrant further scholarly attention. This study serves as a valuable reference for researchers interested in advancing research on both distance learning and Chinese language education in the UAE.

Keywords: distance learning, distance Chinese learning, key stakeholders, evaluation framework

Introduction

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on the way people around the world live and work. One of the most significant changes brought about by the pandemic has been the shift from traditional to distance learning. As schools and universities were forced to close, educators and students alike had to adapt to distance learning to continue the learning process. This has led to a rapid expansion of distance learning, covering a wide range of subjects from primary education to higher education.

Similarly, public schools in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) started nationwide distance learning in March 2020 because of COVID. Traditional face-to-face classes were gradually restored nationwide in April 2022 (Khaleej Times, 2022). However, the distance learning platform established during the epidemic has taken shape and has been maintained. At present, schools can still choose whether to move full-day courses to the distance

Shan Jin, Ph.D. Candidate in Education, Faculty of Education, British University in Dubai, Dubai, UAE.

learning platform and conduct whole-school distance learning in the event of environmental reasons, such as heavy rainfall or man-made reasons, such as school construction.

The Rationale for the Study

Distance learning has become the norm in UAE schools over the years, and apart from two evaluations of schools offering distance learning conducted by the UAE Ministry of Education, there is a lack of academic research on the evaluation of this mode of delivery. For example, whether distance learning meets the requirements of the curriculum or the quality of teaching and learning, what factors influence distance learning in UAE schools, what challenges distance learning programs to face, and what recommendations can be made to make distance learning more responsive to the expectations of teachers, students, and parents to achieve the same or better results than traditional classrooms.

In the UAE, there are 172 Chinese language teachers and over 54,000 students learning Chinese by 2022 (Chinese Embassy in the UAE, 2022). The UAE has also become the first Arab country to implement distance Chinese learning nationwide. Research on distance Chinese learning is currently focused on evaluating distance Chinese learning for international students in Chinese universities, while some Chinese teachers in other countries have conducted research on distance Chinese learning in their own countries based on their own experiences, mainly in countries such as South Korea, Thailand, and the United States, etc., which are early adopters of Chinese language teaching. However, there is a lack of research on distance learning in Arab countries, especially in the UAE, and more importantly, there is a lack of a complete framework for evaluating distance learning in the UAE.

This thesis will focus on distance Chinese language learning in the UAE, and by analyzing the various factors that influence distance Chinese language learning, it will attempt to summarise a framework for evaluating distance Chinese language learning in the UAE and provide a range of topics that researchers can examine about Chinese language learning in the UAE.

Research Questions

1. What are the factors that influence distance learning?
2. What is the evaluation framework for distance learning Chinese?
3. In what ways can distance learning Chinese be evaluated?
4. What are the topics that researchers can start to evaluate and study in distance Chinese learning?

Distance Learning

Definition of Distance Learning

There are many definitions of “distance learning” or “distance education”, for example, Perraton (1988) argued that distance learning is characterized by the separation of teacher and learner in space and or time; Garrison and Shale (1987) argued that it is discontinuous communication between student and teacher, mediated by print or some form of technology; Jonassen (1992) argued that distance learning is spontaneous learning by the student, not controlled by the teacher. It is not controlled by the teacher. The above definitions address the physical division of the student and the teacher and also refer to the importance of technology in distance learning.

The AECT (Association for Educational Communications and Technology) gives a more comprehensive explanation: Distance learning refers to the process of communication and learning using technology in a

situation where students and teachers are separated in time and space. Distance learning emphasizes the physical separation of students and teachers in space, while students and teachers may not interact at the same time.

A closely related academic term to "distance learning" is "distance teaching". According to Dr. Boscovich, a professor of education at Webster University and an expert in distance learning, distance teaching refers to the use of technology by teachers to teach at a distance from the students. Distance teaching can be achieved through television, webcam, and online lectures. The role of the teacher in distance learning is emphasized here by placing the teacher at the center of the teaching and learning process.

It is also worth noting that the term "online learning" is often used by many researchers, but the difference between this and "distance learning" is that distance learning refers to a method of teaching and learning that uses electronic media to connect students and teachers, allowing them to learn without the constraints of time and place. In contrast, online learning refers to an entirely internet-based approach to teaching and learning, where students and teachers interact and learn through the internet. In short, distance learning includes all distance learning through electronic media, whereas online learning refers specifically to internet-based distance learning (Moore & Kearsley, 2012).

The website of the UAE Ministry of Education specifies this mode of delivery across the country during COVID-19 as "distance learning" (MOE, 2020). The scenario to be studied in this thesis is the evaluation of distance Chinese learning offered in public schools in the UAE, so this study is defined in such a way as to emphasize that students and teachers are physically separated and that the process of knowledge acquisition by students and teaching by teachers occurs simultaneously, with this form of teaching emerging as an alternative or complement to the traditional classroom. The term "distance learning" will therefore be used throughout the text.

Stakeholders in Distance Learning

Abed H. Almala (2006) summarized the key stakeholders in distance learning as learners, instructors, technical support staff, and leaders. For learners, their satisfaction with distance learning is important, and meeting their learning needs and satisfying them is the main purpose of distance learning, which reflects the "student-centered" approach. Secondly, distance learning requires well-trained teachers, but relies heavily on lead teachers who can consistently provide adequate teaching resources, understood in this case as academic leaders who provide distance learning services and who are obliged to provide distance learning facilities and resources to lecturers and provide state-of-the-art and appropriate curricula and instruction. I believe that in practice, these two roles could be combined into one. Technical support staff act as a bridge between students and teachers, on the one hand, setting up equipment for students, assisting in training, and fixing technical glitches. On the other hand, they can facilitate communication between all participants in the development of the course and even suggest practices for teaching improvement, collecting assignments, and invigilating exams (University of Idaho, 1995). Leaders in distance learning should increase teachers' capacity in distance learning design by directing ongoing teacher training and financial support; ensuring that appropriate technology and teaching resources are available; and, in academic terms, encouraging teachers to share their teaching methods and strengths in instructional design (Beaudoin, 2003; Cintron & Dillon, 1997; University of Idaho, 1995).

Wagner et al. (2008) categorized the stakeholders in distance learning in higher education as: students, instructors, educational institutions, content providers, technology providers, accreditation bodies, and employers (those organizations that will potentially hire graduates of higher education institutions). It is worth noting that

accreditation bodies are also important players in successful distance learning.

The above two classifications are more comprehensive classifications of stakeholders in distance learning, but in practice, the author believes that teachers balance some of the functions of technical support staff and leaders with those of content providers and some of the accreditation bodies. In practice, however, I believe that teachers take on some of the functions of technical support staff and leaders, but also include some of the functions of content providers and some of the accreditation bodies.

Alun Epps (2020) investigated six discrete focus groups in public schools in Dubai during the epidemic and classified stakeholders in distance learning as students, parents, and teachers in his study. This categorization suggested parents, which I believe is very appropriate. This is because the younger distance learning learners need parental supervision and secondly, they need parental support for the learning process of distance learning. Theresa Jeanne Pettyjohn (2012) classified the stakeholders in supplemental online learning as students and staff (teachers). This is the classification of most scholars and although it is not further refined, it generally reflects the majority of scholars' perceptions of the stakeholders in distance learning.

Other scholars have studied stakeholders in distance learning as factors. Qiangfu Yu (2022) classified the factors that influence online learning satisfaction as online learner factors, online instructor factors, and online platform factors. In the next section, we will continue to discuss which factors affect distance learning.

Other Factors Affecting Distance Learning

Most scholars have looked at learner satisfaction with distance learning or the success of distance learning and analyzed its specific factors. The most significant research revolves around the learner.

Heather Kauffman (2015) argued that not all students are suitable for distance learning and, after studying the literature, suggests that the main factors influencing the success of distance learning and its satisfaction are the learner characteristics and skills of the learner's personality. Learner characteristics are other scholars who have further analyzed these as learning style, cognitive style, and technology self-efficacy. Skills in which self-regulation skills are an important factor; Yukselturk and Bulut (2007) argued that students with self-regulatory skills are able to control their learning and develop metacognitive strategies that are appropriate for them, such as planning, staying organized, and motivating.

Other scholars have looked directly at the extent to which different characteristics of learners influence distance learning, starting with college students' innovativeness, quality, trust, and knowledge sharing on e-learning acceptance (Salloum et al., 2019).

In addition to research on learners' subjective personalities, objective attributes of learners have also been studied. Mirjeta S. Beqiri et al. (2010) in their study of business students concluded that students who were more satisfied with the delivery of online courses met the following characteristics: graduate students, married, living more than one mile from campus, and male. This is an analysis of the student profile in terms of objective conditions, including student age, gender, marital status, and residence status.

In addition to the learner's perspective, some scholars argue that instructional and course design is also an important factor in distance learning. Blumberg (2009) argued that course design in distance learning should be based on the textbook or reading material with clear learning objectives and that the course designer should ensure that the objectives and teaching methods are aligned with the teaching activities and assessment of the teaching.

Karen Swan et al. (2000), by examining the relationship between student perceptions and course design,

identify three factors that influence the success of distance learning, namely: consistency in course design, interaction with course instructors, and active discussion. We can see that the design of distance learning is also a major concern for researchers, as it is very different from traditional teaching. Another point that can be drawn from distance language teaching is that classroom interaction is also important.

Ji-Hye Park and Hee Jun Choi (2009) looked at three factors about learners: personal characteristics (e.g., age, gender, and education level), external factors (i.e., family and organizational support), and internal factors (i.e., satisfaction and relevance as sub-dimensions of motivation). A qualitative survey was conducted with adult distance learners. Here individual characteristics are summarized as objective conditions of the learner, and this classification lacks recognition of the learner's subjective learning motivation. We can interpret internal factors as learner characteristics as proposed by Kauffman (2015). Other scholars have used student-focused quality indicators directly as the object of study, interaction, and collaboration; instructional design and delivery; student assessment; these indicators have been used to examine which factors influence the quality of distance learning (Markova et al., 2017). This study is still from the student's perspective but introduces some factors in the distance learning classroom as criteria to be examined like interaction and collaboration; it also mentions course design and how delivery is done in distance learning, and finally mentions assessment for the student. From the above factors we can find that some scholars, while focusing on the learner, inevitably address another important factor in distance learning, namely the instructor (or staff).

Manal Ibrahim (2007) studied the students' intentions to withdraw from distance learning programs at the Arab Open University from the perspective of institutional factors and concludes that the quality of instructors and the variety of techniques used to support and deliver distance learning programs were the main factors that influenced students to leave distance learning. In actual teaching, the selection of technology is also largely determined by instructors, so the institutional factors, as presented here, are similar to the role of the instructor in distance learning.

Galusha (1998) suggested that faculty barriers in distance learning include the lack of training in curriculum development and web technologies and their lack of support for distance learning; organizational barriers include the lack of appropriate distance learning technology, problems with course design, and student assessment. The faculty here is like the teachers, instructors, or staff.

In addition to teachers and students, there is another important factor in distance learning, namely technology in distance learning. After summarizing the elements of an idealized online course, Alison Carr-Chellman and Philip Duchastel (2000) suggested two areas that researchers should focus on in networking technologies, both hard and soft; the development of networking technologies profoundly affects the possibilities of interaction between learners and knowledge; in addition, it is the evolving theories of learning and teaching themselves that will also influence how we view online courses. Because the technologies that underpin online courses are constantly evolving, the way people interact with knowledge is constantly changing, like traditional teaching, learning, and teaching theories are constantly being updated and we need to keep up to date with online course research.

Conclusion

In summary, of the studies on stakeholders in distance learning, the main focus has been on students and teachers, with some studies involving parents, as well as analysis of the use of teaching platforms and the people who provide the relevant technology.

Learner satisfaction with distance learning is a concern for most scholars. The learner as an important factor in the evaluation of distance learning can be divided into three parts, namely: individual learner information, which includes: age, gender, and even down to the marital status of the learner, academic qualifications, etc.; secondly, external factors of the learner: family support, support from the educational institution, etc.; and finally, internal factors of the learner, which include: attitude towards distance learning, learner personality, motivation. Finally, the internal factors of the learner include: attitude towards distance learning, learner's personality, motivation, emotions, learning style, cognitive style, and technology self-efficacy.

In addition to the learner, the teacher is also an important factor in distance learning and can be described as a faculty staff or instructor in different scholars' studies. In practice, I believe that the teacher has more autonomy and can therefore assume some of the functions of other roles.

Due to the specificity of distance learning, instructional design and modern technology for distance learning are also important factors. This can be summarized as the providers of distance learning who should carry out the curriculum design and the selection of the teaching platform for successful distance learning and the training of students and teachers.

Distance Chinese Learning

Designers and Providers of Distance Chinese Learning

Song and Tan (2018) classify distance Chinese learning into two broad categories: socially led, generally led by the Ministry of Education and provincial and municipal education authorities, mostly with support from the state treasury, to popularize the idea of online education and make it more widely recognized; and socially capital-led (i.e., company-led), mainly for profit.

This is a classification from the perspective of a distance Chinese learning course developer, and most scholars have taken a similar approach. Zheng Caihua (2019) classified online Chinese language courses into three categories, Chinese learning websites (hosted by government agencies, universities and educational institutions, and commercial integrated training providers), MOOC platforms, and mobile Chinese learning (i.e., small-scale Chinese language learning by learners spontaneously using electronic devices such as mobile phones).

The Implementer and Recipient of the Distance Chinese Learning

Longjun Zhou, Fangmei Li, Shanshan Wu, and Ming Zhou (2020) examined three aspects: For students, online education facilitates a shift in learning patterns; for teachers, the need to reconstruct the structure of the curriculum and rationalize the adoption of digital education resources; and for schools, the new technology makes teaching and learning managed more efficiently, while making the geographical boundaries of the school less important and changing the structure of the school curriculum at the same time. In addition to research in terms of students, teachers, and schools, some scholars have encompassed additional aspects in their research on online courses. Bertin et al. (2010) concluded that online Chinese courses involve elements such as teachers, learners, language, context, and technology. Zheng Yanqun (2013) categorized the environment of Chinese online learning into two categories: content systems and service support systems. Cui Xiliang (2020) argued that language teaching in online environments involves at least eight relevant factors, including four internal factors such as language, learners, teachers, and pedagogy, and four external factors, such as learning process, technical support, teaching environment, and teaching management.

Among the researchers, the internal and external factors of online courses are recognized by most of them, and different studies have been conducted. Hui Wang (2021) attempted to analyze the factors that influence online Chinese language courses at both macro and micro levels. Johnson and Scholes (1999) adopted the PEST analysis, which is often used in strategic management, to analyze the problems brought by changes in the macro external environment to international Chinese language education from four dimensions: politics, economics, society, and technology.

Johnson and Scholes (1999) also selected five micro-level elements (TLMPM) typical of online Chinese language teaching: teacher, learner, mode, platform, and management.

Shuying Shen and Fangming Liu (2020) also mentioned that the online information literacy of teachers, i.e., the ability to use online platforms and resources, is a very important factor in online courses. Di Li (2021) conducted a questionnaire survey of 70 online Chinese language course instructors from several Chinese universities and 68 international students from China who participated in the relevant courses, concluded similarly to several other papers that the acceptance of online Chinese courses was not high among the group of university students and adults. They believe that the ability of online courses to fit into learners' daily learning plans and the quality of online courses influence students' attitudes toward online courses. This survey of teachers also reflects the role of the age of students in online Chinese language courses. In the subsequent interviews, teachers' ability to use the teaching platform and to design instruction in an online environment received the author's attention.

The online Chinese course relies heavily on the school and the teacher in the delivery and implementation of the curriculum. On the teacher's side, the teacher's ability to use online technology and to design and evaluate teaching online is very important. At the same time, students are the main actors in the reception and feedback of the curriculum, and the age groups of students present different levels of challenges to online Chinese courses.

Xuefeng Ying and Yehan Yu (2022) focused on three online Chinese teaching modes, the "one-on-one" mode, the "open classes" mode, and the "record & broadcast" mode. This shows that the kind of teaching mode adopted in online Chinese teaching is also one of the aspects that scholars pay attention to.

Conclusion

A framework for research on distance Chinese learning can be formed by combining the three aspects of the curriculum introduced by Professor Christopher in the class, namely design, implementation, and review.

Firstly, there are the providers and designers of distance Chinese learning, which fall into two categories: socially and financially supported not-for-profit organizations, such as ministries of education, university teaching, and research institutions, and so on, as well as the public school systems of countries that offered online courses to students during the epidemic. These providers, which are not-for-profit in nature, teach content that is mostly based on the national curriculum, suitable for most students to participate in, and the quality of the courses is guaranteed.

The other category is for-profit structures dominated by the market economy, some of whom design and deliver online courses based on a specific examination curriculum, or as a supplement to national curriculum courses, and offer them to the community for a fee. They can meet the differentiated needs of students for learning, are market economy-led, lack relevant regulation, and are prone to varying quality.

In some cases, there are also instances where government or university institutions have adopted online courses launched by for-profit institutions, or for-profit institutions set up under official guidance to launch online

courses.

The second is the implementer of the online course, which overlaps slightly with the provider, but focuses mainly on the specific online course instructor.

The teacher delivers the online course, which includes the information literacy of the teacher as mentioned in many papers, i.e., the recognition of online technology, the ability to use online educational technology, and the ability to design instruction on the online platform; and of course, the teacher's ability to teach in a traditional course; under these two competencies, one can go on to subdivide, for example, classroom management of the online course, online teaching assessment and testing, classroom interaction and other issues.

The third, recipient of distance Chinese learning, the student who participates in the online instruction, can also include parents here, as many researchers have found that learners at a younger age are required to be accompanied by their parents in online courses. Among the aspects that could be studied are the age of the learners, their motivation to learn, their ability to undertake online learning, their attitudes towards online courses, the level of satisfaction of learners and parents with online courses, and so on.

As a final point, the author would add the environment. The environment for online courses can be divided into external and internal environments. The external environment includes the social acceptance of online courses, the impact of major social events on online courses, the development of science and technology, etc. The internal environment includes the specific online course environment, such as internet speed, multimedia equipment configuration, mobile phones, tablets, VR devices, and so on.

The author believes that a research framework for distance Chinese learning should be coupled with two other dynamics that need to be considered. Firstly, online technology is constantly evolving, and the way people interact with knowledge is constantly changing. Furthermore, as with traditional teaching, learning and teaching theories are constantly being updated and we need to keep up to date with online courses.

Discussion: Distance Chinese Learning in UAE

In 2020, the UAE Ministry of Education conducted a comprehensive evaluation of distance learning in public schools and some public schools, and evaluation teams at the Ministry of Education visited 29% of public schools and some private schools in the Northern Emirates. In this evaluation, the key strengths included: students' attendance rates, students' knowledge of the concepts of cyberbullying as well as their need to protect their privacy on the internet while working on distance learning programs and platforms. We can see that the current evaluation focuses on students' attendance rates, cyberbullying as a hot topic in recent years has also received the attention of the Ministry of Education, as well as the protection of students' privacy while working on distance learning. Students' online safety is one of the priorities of this evaluation.

In addition, the factor of teachers' planning and implementation of distance learning lessons with learning outcomes that match the curriculum expectations was also included as a key strength. This involved several factors that we have already analyzed above, for example, the teacher's design for distance learning, the teacher's use of modern technology in distance learning, the teacher's assessment of distance learning outcomes, etc.

The final key strength is the investment in different learning resources and platforms, which is an assessment of the providers and designers of distance learning, but in which the teacher also plays an important role. The specification of the learning resources and platforms is firstly determined by the designers and providers of distance learning and provides a framework, and secondly, the choice of specific learning resources and platforms is determined by the teacher in practice, based on his or her own teaching experience and the actual situation of

the students.

Also, in 2020, the UAE Ministry of Education, in conjunction with the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge and the Sharjah Private Education Authority and KHDA, conducted an evaluation of all public schools in Dubai on distance learning. The evaluation resulted in a DLE report (Distance Learning Evaluation) for each of the public schools in Dubai. The evaluation was divided into three main areas.

The first is students' distance learning and well-being, which is divided into attendance and participation, safeguarding, learning opportunities, equity of access, and wellbeing. The second is teaching and monitoring students' learning, which includes planning and delivery, sharing intended learning outcomes, distance learning programs, monitoring, and assessing learning. The third area is leading and managing students' learning, which includes agility, contingency, communication and engagement, and resources management.

The latter two areas overlap, but we can summarize the thinking behind the assessment framework for distance learning. The first is that the main targets of the assessment are students, teachers, and administrative and academic staff; the second is that the assessment is student-centered, with teachers having the responsibility of monitoring the student learning process and administrative staff having the responsibility of leading and managing student learning.

In general, these two evaluations of distance learning by the UAE Ministry of Education generally conform to the framework of evaluation of distance learning summarized above, namely: the providers and designers of distance learning (administrators and managers), the implementers of distance learning (teachers), and the recipients of distance learning (students).

There is no relevant research on distance Chinese learning in the UAE. However, we can discuss and summarize it through the above analysis. Firstly, the providers and designers of distance learning Chinese in the UAE.

Chinese is currently a Category B subject in the UAE public school syllabus, and all Chinese language teachers are managed by Emirates Schools Establishment (ESE). The Emirates Schools Establishment was established as an independent entity to manage and operate public schools to advance the education sector in line with UAE objectives. It oversees the implementation of policies, strategies, and standards related to the education sector (MOE, 2020).

In addition, regarding the Chinese language curriculum, specific teaching guidance and training functions belong to the UAE Chinese Language Teaching Expert Group, which is composed of Chinese experts hired by the UAE Ministry of Education, an organization that belongs to the UAE Ministry of Education.

The researcher can approach the study from the following perspectives:

1. For the curriculum: whether distance Chinese learning can meet the requirements of the curriculum, how to design distance Chinese learning from the perspective of the curriculum, and whether new requirements are placed on the original curriculum for the traditional classroom in distance Chinese learning.

2. For specific distance Chinese learning: the teaching design of distance Chinese learning, the choice of teaching platform, the use of teaching modes, the management of teaching resources, etc.

3. From the perspective of network security: how to avoid cyber-bullying, how to protect students' privacy, etc.

It can also be refined to the study of educational leadership in the context of distance learning, such as agility, contingency, communication, and engagement as mentioned above.

Secondly, the implementers of Chinese language learning in the UAE: Chinese language teachers. The researcher's perspective on the teachers of distance Chinese learning in the UAE can be studied in the following ways.

Firstly, the attitudes and evaluations of Chinese language teachers towards distance Chinese learning, which includes what challenges and limitations are currently encountered, as well as suggestions for distance Chinese learning from a macro perspective. This includes learning about modern educational technology and how to design teaching on existing teaching platforms; training on plan, design, delivery, and assessment for distance Chinese classes; and how to differentiate teaching for different distance Chinese learners. Lastly, Ayman Hefnawi (2022) mentioned in his study the importance of teacher leadership in distance learning in public schools in the UAE.

Finally, the recipients of distance Chinese learning in the UAE are students, and parents. The researcher can look at the following aspects of the study.

The first is the influence of the learner's circumstances on distance learning, such as the learner's age, gender, and other objective information, and also, internal factors of the learner, such as, as mentioned above, students' attitudes towards distance Chinese learning, and perspectives, satisfaction with distance Chinese learning, learners' learning styles, personal emotions, or personal views on specific issues. The next is the external factor of the learner, like parental support, the training the learner has received on modern technology, proficiency in using the teaching platform, etc. Parents occupy a relatively important factor in the distance Chinese learning of younger learners, and researchers can start to study their attitudes towards distance Chinese learning, their support or lack of support for distance Chinese learning, and their expectations of their children's learning, etc.

Conclusion

This thesis summarizes the stakeholders in distance learning and some important factors affecting distance learning through a literature analysis approach in the first part.

The second part summarizes a preliminary evaluation framework for distance Chinese learning by analyzing the current research on distance Chinese learning. This evaluation framework includes the designers and providers of distance Chinese learning; the implementers of distance Chinese learning: Chinese teachers; the receivers of distance Chinese learning: students (and parents); and the hardware and software environment of distance Chinese learning, and the researcher should look at the evaluation of distance Chinese learning from a dynamic perspective.

The third part of the thesis focuses on the current evaluation practices and key considerations of distance Chinese learning in the UAE and suggests topics and perspectives that researchers can develop about the focus of different evaluation frameworks in the second part of the article. This paper will serve as a reference for researchers interested in distance Chinese language learning.

References

Al-Arimi, A. M. A. K. (2014). Distance learning. *Procedia—Social and Behavioral Sciences, 152*, 82-88.

Almala, A. H. (2006). Who are the key stakeholders in a quality e-learning environment? *Distance Learning, 3*(4), 1-7.

Alzain, M., & Alsheikhidris, A. (1993). Challenges for moving Chinese language courses online. *Education Quarterly Reviews, 3*(3), 300-312.

Ashley, H., & Mathew, J. (2018). Investigating different options in course delivery—Traditional *vs.* online: Is there another option? *International Journal of Information and Learning Technology, 35*(4), 230-239.

Beaudoin, M. F. (2003). Distance education leadership for the new century. *Online Journal of Distance Learning Administration, 6*(2), 1.

Beqiri, M. S., Chase, N. M., & Bishka, A. (2010). Online course delivery: An empirical investigation of factors affecting student satisfaction. *Journal of Education for Business, 85*(2), 95-100.

Bertin, J. C., Gravé, P., & Narcy-Combes, J. P. (2010). *Second language distance learning and teaching: Theoretical perspectives and didactic ergonomics*. Hershey, PA: IGI Global.

Blumberg, P. (2009). *Developing learner-centered teaching: A practical guide for faculty*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Bosco-Whitney, E. (2009). Distance teaching and learning: What it is and what it is not. *Interdisciplinary Journal of E-Learning and Learning Objects, 5*, 235-243.

Carr-Chellman, A., & Duchastel, P. (2000). The ideal online course. *British Journal of Educational Technology, 31*(30), 229-241.

Davis, T. S. (2006). Assessing online readiness: Perceptions of distance learning stakeholders in three Oklahoma community colleges (Ph.D. thesis, Oklahoma State University).

Chinese Embassy in the UAE. (2022). Chinese Ambassador Zhang Yiming: China-UAE friendship enters a new era. *Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United Arab Emirates*, 23 March. Retrieved December 8, 2024, from http://ae.china-embassy.gov.cn/eng/zagx_1/202203/t20220323_10654630.htm

Dillon, C. L., & Cintrón, R. (1997). Building a working policy for distance education. In *New Directions for Community Colleges* (Vol. 99). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Epps, A., Brown, M., Nijjar, B., & Hyland, L. (2021). Paradigms lost and gained: Stakeholder experiences of crisis distance learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Digital Learning in Teacher Education, 37*(3), 167-182.

Galusha, J. M. (1998). Barriers to learning in distance education. *Interpersonal Computing and Technology: An Electronic Journal for the 21st Century, 5*(3/4), 6-14.

Garrison, D. R., & Shale, D. (1987). Mapping the boundaries of distance education: Problems in defining the field. *American Journal of Distance Education, 1*(1), 7-13.

Hefnawi, A. (2022). Teacher leadership in the context of distance learning. *Management in Education, 36*(2), 94-96.

Ibrahim, M. (2007). Predicting student intention to withdraw from e-learning: The case of the Arab Open University in Kuwait. *The International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning, 8*(2), 1-15.

Jonassen, D. H. (1992). What are cognitive tools? In *Cognitive tools for learning* (pp. 1-6). Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

Khaleej Times. (2022). All UAE schools to resume in-person learning from April: Official. *Khaleej Times*, 24 March. Retrieved December 8, 2024, from https://www.khaleejtimes.com/uae/all-uae-schools-to-resume-in-person-learning-from-april

Knowledge and Human Development Authority. (n.d.). Distance learning profiles of Dubai private schools evaluation results 2020. Retrieved March 10, 2023, from https://www.khda.gov.ae/DLEreport/DLEReports.aspx

Jin, S. (2023). Chinese language policy in the UAE: present & future. In T. Charles, S. AlAleeli, & H. Al Jebawy (Eds.), *Teaching and learning in the UAE: Contemporary issues and trends* (pp. 158-185). Scholars' Press.

Jin. S, & Abukari, A. (2024). *Intercultural competence assessment: Insights and recommendations for current Chinese language teaching in public schools of the UAE*. Edu. Dev. in Var. fields EDIVF-121 Deardorff (Ed.). The Sage Handbook of Intercultural.

Li, D. (2021). Investigation and analysis of international Chinese online teaching under COVID-19—Take the intermediate language class online teaching in many colleges and universities as an example (Thesis, Liaoning Normal University).

Lin, F. (2020). The current situation and suggestions of maize high school novice level in Chinese interactive distance learning (Thesis, Central China Normal University).

Lu, Y., Cai, Y., Jin, S., & Wang, Y. (2022). Practice and reflections on online Chinese teaching in the new situation—An empirical research based on the teaching in the spring semester of 2020 at the school of Chinese as a second language, Peking University. *International Chinese Language Education, 7*(2), 55-66.

Markova, T., Glazkova, I., & Zaborova, E. (2017). Quality issues of online distance learning. *Procedia—Social and Behavioral Sciences, 237*, 685-691.

Means, B., Toyama, Y., Murphy, R., Bakia, M., & Jones, K. (2009). *Evaluation of evidence-based practices in online learning: A meta-analysis and review of online learning studies.* Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of Education.

Ministry of Education. (2020). *Ministry of Education concludes the evaluation of the Distance Learning Program in public and private schools.* Retrieved March 10, 2023, from https://www.moe.gov.ae/En/MediaCenter/News/Pages/DLSE20.aspx

Moore, M. G., & Kearsley, G. (2012). *Distance education: A systems view of online learning*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth, Cengage Learning.

Park, J. H., & Choi, H. J. (2009). Factors influencing adult learners' decision to drop out or persist in online learning. *Educational Technology & Society, 12*(4), 207-217.

Perraton, H. (2012). *Open and distance learning in the developing world*. Routledge.

Pettyjohn, T. J. (2012). Implementation of a supplemental online learning program in a rural high school: A qualitative case study (Ed.D. thesis, University of Phoenix). Retrieved December 8, 2024, from https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED551876

Pettyjohn, T. J., & LaFrance, J. (2012). Stakeholder's perceptions of supplemental online learning for credit recovery (Thesis, Georgia Southern University).

Qi, H. F., & Ding, A. Q. (2021). A survey on TCFL teachers' online teaching. *Journal of Tianjin Normal University (Social Sciences), 48*(5), 42-47.

Salloum, S. A., Al-Emran, M., Shaalan, K., & Tarhini, A. (2019). Factors affecting the e-learning acceptance: A case study from the UAE. *Education and Information Technologies, 24*(1), 509-530. Retrieved December 8, 2024, from https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10639-018-9786-3

Shen, S. Y., & Liu, F. M. (2020). Reflections on teaching Chinese international education online during the epidemic. *China Higher Education, 56*(9), 54-56.

Sherry, L. (1995). Issues in distance learning. *International Journal of Educational Telecommunications, 1*(4), 337-365.

Simonson, M. R., Smaldino, S. E., & Zvacek, S. (2019). *Teaching and learning at a distance: Foundations of distance education.* Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing, Inc.

Song, H., & Tan, Z. (2018). The "Three Concerns" about teaching Chinese as a second language in online teaching. *International Chinese Language Education, 3*(2), 4-10.

Sun, Z. X. (2021). A study on online Chinese language course at Sejong Cyber University in Korea (Thesis, Tianjin Normal University).

Swan, K., Shea, P., Fredericksen, E., Pickett, A., Pelz, W., & Maher, G. (2000). Building knowledge building communities: Consistency, contact and communication in the virtual classroom. *Journal of Asynchronous Learning Networks, 4*(1), 59-82. Retrieved December 8, 2024, from https://olj.onlinelearningconsortium.org/index.php/olj/article/view/1878/699

Tsimaras, D. O., Mystakidis, S., Christopoulos, A., Zoulias, E., & Hatzilygeroudis, I. (2022). E-learning course evaluation based on trainees' feedback on open questions text analysis. *Education Sciences, 12*(9), 633.

University of Idaho. (1995). *Distance Education at a Glance: Guide #2—Instructional Development for Distance Education*. Retrieved December 8, 2024, from https://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/ele/scholars/Results/Miscellaneous/DistanceEd/guide2.pdf

Wagner, N., Hassanein, K., & Head, M. (2008). Who is responsible for e-learning success in higher education? A stakeholders' analysis. *Educational Technology & Society, 11*(3), 26-36. Retrieved December 8, 2024, from http://www.ifets.info/journals/11_3/3.pdf

Wang, H. (2021). International Chinese teaching under the influence of COVID-19: Problems and strategies. *Language Teaching and Linguistic Studies, 43*(4), 11-22.

Wen, S. L. (2021). A survey on the classroom management of online Chinese teaching for international students in Yunnan University (Thesis, Yunnan University).

Wu, M. (2020). Research on the effectiveness of online teaching of Chinese as a foreign language—A case study of Bracu University in Bangladesh (Thesis, Sichuan Normal University).

Yu, Q., Wen, J., & Xu, G. (2022). Development and validation of a MOOC success model for higher education: Perspectives from learner, instructor, and platform. *Frontiers in Psychology, 13*(96), 53-56. Retrieved December 8, 2024, from https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.965356/full

Yukselturk, E., & Bulut, S. (2007). Predictors for student success in an online course. *Educational Technology & Society, 10*(2), 71-83. Retrieved December 8, 2024, from http://www.ifets.info/journals/10_2/8.pdf

Zheng, C. (2019). Analysis of the current situation and countermeasures of online Chinese education for foreigners. *News Dissemination*, April.

Zhou, L., Li, F., Wu, S., & Zhou, M. (2020). "School's out, But Class's on", The Largest Online Education in the world today: Taking China's practical exploration during the COVID-19 epidemic prevention and control as an example. *Best Evid Chin Edu, 4*(2), 501-519.