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Evaluation of Students' Feedbacks on Online Education during COVID-19

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Abstract. COVID-19 started affecting the whole world enormously within a few weeks and is continuing to do so. The primary action taken in order to limit the spread of the virus is social isolation. This process has caused difficulties in all areas, especially in education. Universities were obliged to switch to online education as all institutions closed down without stating an expected opening date. Online education has started to become the new normal in academia, but this new normal may be imposing difficulty to some. Compulsory online education during the pandemic is perceived in different ways by students. In this study students' technology usage, feedbacks about online education were analyzed and evaluated by using descriptive statistics.
Keywords: Online Education, Distance Learning, Technology Usage, COVID-19.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic grew quickly from its first emergence to a truly global phenomenon. COVID-19 infection from New Type Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) emerged in Wuhan, China in late December 2019. The highly contagious virus spread to the whole world, especially Europe, in a short time (WHO, 2020). As a response to reduce the spread of the pandemic countries have decided to temporarily close workplaces, shopping malls, educational institutions (schools, universities, etc), all without discriminating between state and private institutions. Schools and educational institutions in Kosovo were temporarily closed on March 12 as a result of the first COVID-19 case in Kosovo registered on March 11, 2020 (MASHT, 2020).

ICT has a vital role in diverse fields such as: business, medicine, and education. Thus, the temporary closure of educational institutions has increased the importance of information and communication technologies. Educational institutions and universities, made a transition to online education without losing time. E-learning is an substitute of traditional education, but it can also complement it. E-learning can be defined as use of internet technologies to deliver a broad array of solutions that enhance knowledge and performance (Rosenberg, 2000).

UNESCO IESALC has published recommendations for higher education institutions in relation to the COVID-19 health crisis. These include the dissemination of reliable information to avoid alarmism; the use of institutional portals and social networks to inform on the evolution of research; the facilitation of open access courses for a higher quality of health education; the coordination of actions with the recommendations of national authorities and; the preparation of a contingency plan at institutional level (UNESCO IEASAL, 2020). Although distance education is used in most countries, a

structuring called “emergency e-Learning” and adaptations with new solutions specific to the process were needed in this process. The COVID-19 response is not the first time that emergency e-Learning programs have been considered as appropriate crisis-response measures. Emergency structured distance learning involves the use of fully distance learning solutions for education or training, which will be taught face-to-face, returning to its old format once the crisis or emergency disappears (Hodges, Moore, Lockee, Trust, & Bond, 2020). As a quick solution to the crisis caused by COVID-19, universities structured according to formal education have started to work rapidly to continue courses and programs with web-based distance education instead of face-to-face education, transitioning to emergency distance education (Lau, Yang, & Dasgupta, 2020; Gewin, 2020).

With the emergency of e-learning programs, online teaching-learning process is often discriminatory for poor and marginalized students. It has been found that hearing-impaired students face difficulties in online learning (Manzoor, 2020). However, Gonzalez et al. (2020) report a significant positive impact of COVID-19 in learning efficiency and performance as a result of adopting online learning strategies.

Data and methods

1.1 Data collection and procedure

This is an online questionnaire-based study of students in Kosovo. The questionnaire consists of questions such as: demographic characteristics, technology usage and feedbacks about online education during COVID-19. In order to collect information, an online questionnaire was conducted between 25 - 30 August 2020. The sample of this study consists of 65 respondents. A questionnaire link was sent via e-mail, WhatsApp, Facebook and other social networks.

1.2 Data analysis

Descriptive statistics were carried out to understand the distribution of study participants. In this section, participants' feedbacks are evaluated. Demographic characteristics of the participants are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of the participants.

Description	f	%	Description	f	%
Gender			Year of study		
Female	33	50.8%	First year – Bachelor’s	19	29.2%
Male	32	49.2%	Second year – Bachelor’s	17	26.2%
Age			Third year – Bachelor’s	15	23.1%

17-20	49	75.4%	First year – Master	13	20.0%
21-24	14	21.5%	First year – Doctoral	1	1.5%
25-28	1	1.5%	Student status		
32-34	1	1.5%	Full time student	33	50.8%
Marital Status			Work and school at the same time	32	49.2%
Single	62	95.4%			
Married	3	4.6%			

As shown in Table 1, 50.8% of the participants are women and 49.2% are men. When analyzed according to age range it is observed that the majority of the participants belong to the 17-20 age group (75.4%). Most of the participants are single (95.4%) and first year undergraduate students (29.2%). In addition, 50.8% of the participants stated that they were only students (did not work) and the other 49.2% stated that they were conducting both work and school at the same time. Most of the participants stated that they had their own computers (50.8%) and that they have used a computer for at least 3-6 years (24.6%).

When analyzed according to computer and internet usage levels of the participants, it was determined that most of the participants' computer use degree was good (26.2%), and most of the participants' internet usage degree was very good (27.7%). When the participants were asked whether they need training in computer use or internet use or both, 38.5% stated that they do not need it. What should be taken into consideration is that 29.5% of them need training for both.

Before COVID -19, 29.2% of the participants stated that they used the internet for less than 1-2 hours, but during COVID -19, 33.8% of them used the internet for more than 4 hours. It was determined that before and during COVID -19, participants mostly used their mobile phones (before 58.5%-30.8% after). Most of the participants stated that they spent 1-3 hours (33.8%) to study on digital tools before COVID -19, while most of the participants spent 6-9 hours (27.7%) during the COVID -19. Most of the participants stated that they did not always use digital tools before COVID -19 (35.4%) to study, and that they used digital tools (30.8%) to study during COVID -19. Instagram is the most widely used social media application by the participants both before and during COVID -19 (before 35.4% - 23.1% after).

When analyzed according to participants' opinions about their individual academic performance, it was determined that 26.2% of the participants definitely agree that the use of digital tools in teaching results in low academic success; 23.1% of the participants are confused about the volume of tasks given through online learning, they are unsure whether it annoys and reduces their performance; 26.2% of the participants agree that classroom lessons significantly contribute to the increase of students' academic success; 24.6% of the participants stated that online midterms and exams were not comfortable. Most of the participants think that using the e-learning platform is not fun (66.7%).

Most of the participants: strongly disagree (32.3%) that distance learning (online) is as effective as face-to-face training; disagree (32.3%) that distance learning (online) is an alternative choice; strongly agree (24.6%) that distance learning (online) applications should become more common (available); disagree (29.2%) that

mainstreaming distance learning (online) is beneficial to the society; disagree (29.2%) that widespread use of distance learning (online) enables lifelong learning; agree (33.8%) that distance learning (online) will be inevitable in the future; agree (24.6%) that distance learning (online) has developed a sense of responsibility; agree (24.6%) that distance learning (online) allows them to program every day; strongly agree (23.1%) that distance learning (online) enables them to get information in a timely manner; neither agree nor disagree (33.8%) that distance learning (online) increases their self-confidence; neither agree nor disagree (24.6%) that they can easily communicate with lecturers and assistants in distance learning (online); (29.2%) agree that they can freely express their opinions in distance learning (online); (26.2%) disagree because distance learning (online) encourages research; (30.8%) disagree that distance learning (online) decreases workload; (27.7%) agree that they quickly forget the lessons they learned in distance learning (online); (24.6%) strongly agree that they experienced technical problems during distance learning (online).

When analyzed according to contribution of distance learning (online) to participants' theoretical knowledge, general cultural level and professional application skills, it was determined that: 30.8% of the participants do not agree that there is a contribution of theoretical knowledge; 23.1% of the participants were neither agree nor disagree about distance learning's contributions to their general cultural level; 26.2% of the participants did not agree online learning contributed to their professional practice skills.

Most of the participants stated that they did not study at the same pace during the pandemic as they did before (55.4%). Most of the participants stated that they used their own tools during online lessons (35.4%).

When analyzed according to the problems faced by the participants in online education during the pandemic it was determined that 15% of the participants had internet related problems, 15.4% of the participants stated that the academic staff was not paying enough attention to students during the classes, 11.1% of the participants felt sad and anxious, 5.6% of the participants had the necessary tools for online education and 5.6% had problems with classes scheduled to be early in the morning.

Most of the participants stated that they fear that employers will not give same preferences to graduates from online education as to those who have graduated from traditional education (53.8%).

Finally, looking at which training participants preferred more, it can be seen that 55.6% of the participants are more satisfied with face-to-face learning than online learning, 33.3% of them prefer the combination of both online education and face-to-face education, whereas 11.1% of the participants do not prefer online education.

Conclusion and recommendations

In any way, the unexpected COVID-19 epidemic, whether in terms of spiritual or financial terms, is too high to be ignored. Like many institutions, educational institutions have also had their share of this. University students, especially first-year students, got more share than this. Students who completed their first semester in a normal environment were exposed to different difficulties in their education in the second semester. As a result of the study, it was determined that students adopted online

education and saw online education as problematic in their negative personal academic performance. Although most of the students stated that they do not need support for using technology (computer and internet), the number of students who need training in both is not too small. As a result, besides the online education manual prepared for students, providing additional technology usage training to students positively affects students' self-confidence and their opinions towards online education, even if a little.

Providing additional anonymous psychological support in this period for relieving problems faced by students may increase the likelihood of decreasing stress and reluctance experienced. Also, as it can be seen from the obtained results, students who graduated from online education are more anxious about finding a job, in other words, these students think that their colleagues who graduated from face-to-face education are more likely to find a job than themselves. Educational institutions and organizations should cooperate and inform students that the process of finding a job does not depend on the type of education taken.

Results of the study cannot be generalized. It is limited to a small sample and the participants' emotional thoughts at specific moments.

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