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Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Development and Research of Students in Kosovo

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Abstract: The object of this research will be to identify and explain the impact that the global pandemic Covid-19 has had on the development and scientific progress of students in the Republic of Kosovo.

To achieve this objective, we will conduct a questionnaire to a sample of 1000 subjects, who will be students of different fields and different Universities in Kosovo, from which we will collect the necessary data.

The collected data will be processed to achieve the overall results and conclusions of the research.

The theoretical basis literature will also be used, which will be more in the field of psychology and scientific practice, to see and interpret more accurately the psychological and personal factors that have developed as a result of the presence of Covid-19, which have the opportunity to directly influence the progress and scientific development of students during this period.

Keywords: Study, pandemic, research progress, students, scientific research
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1 Introduction

In this paper we will highlight the problems and shortcomings that the process of academic and scientific development of students has had during the period of the global pandemic Covid - 19. With the help of theoretical literature, research and considerable materials that refer to this topic, we will be able to make a presentation of the issue in terms of general clichés and external causes that have influenced this development. This paper also aims to analyze and interpret the influence of psychological and mental factors in the realization of scientific works. Therefore, according to us, this short scientific paper is an initial effort to understand the process of scientific development and advancement of students in the Republic of Kosovo during this special period.

2 Methods to be used

The methods that we will use for conducting research, data collection and their interpretation will be mainly quantitative and comparative methods, accompanied and used according to need and appropriateness.

Of course, such processes will also be part of: resources, Literature review, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of results, implication of our study and deriving the meaning of our research.

3 Expected results

We hope that through this article, we will help highlight and understand the difficulties, problems, shortcomings and defects that have been caused by the isolation situation and the existence of the global pandemic, which has greatly changed the approach to knowledge, study and development

of scientific works, but we can say that it has also changed our view of life and the future. We believe that it is a topic of interest for a closer acquaintance with the problems, results and scientific progress of students, so that we can also reflect on possible improvements in the realization of a more qualitative teaching and scientific process. We also believe that its results will drive attention to the importance of online books and literature, but also to the physical presence and practical and bodily experiments in some fields.

4 Theoretical framework

The first measures from the declaration of the world pandemic

The proclamation of the world pandemic, of course, was a blow to all people and to all walks of life, but we can say that the first to react and take over the continuation of their activity, were precisely the universities and schools. After the global closure as a result of the increasing spread of the disease¹ education of all levels shifted to another space and reality, the virtual one.

Then consolidated reactions have been state and institutional international, as we understand from the reaction of the Council of Europe where it states that: "The Council of Europe's Department of Education has developed a special section with valuable information on how the CoE is responding to the crisis, good practices from member states, including new and existing learning resources addressing current challenges, and that can be used by teachers, other education professionals and the general public."² Giving us to understand that the countries of the region such as Albania are included in these sections, making it possible to cope as easily as possible with this new situation of teaching. An argument which is confirmed by the fact that in the same year we see that in Montenegro Uniceff joins to help the progress of teaching³ in schools there. So the whole of Europe took steps to continue teaching and develop it generally online.

Even in the case of Kosovo, despite the presence of a large number of pupils⁴ and students and conditions not comparable to European countries, we also notice that there has been an immediate reaction from MASHT⁵ and private universities.

Thus, according to the Kosovo Education Center, "the educational authorities at the central and local level envisaged the organization of the learning process according to three scenarios: Scenario A - school learning; Scenario B - combined learning and scenario C - distance learning, defined in the general guide of MEST for the organization of the school year 2020/213 in the conditions and circumstances created by the pandemic COVID-19."⁶

Scenarios that are accompanied by the use of the necessary tools that were supposed to be put to work. Therefore, in order to achieve this, the MASHT of Kosovo has given instructions to use different video recordings for the realization of teaching, suitable platforms such as; Zoom, Google Meet, Skype, and Google Classroom, where the latter have had the opportunity to

¹ UNESCO: United nations educational, scientific and cultural organization. COVID19 educational disruption and response. UNESCO, Paris, France (2020) Available at: <https://en.unesco.org/themes/education-emergencies/coronavirus-school-closures>. Accessed 17 Nov 2020.

² Concil of Europe: Edukimi digjital gjatë pandemisë së Covid-19 – përvojat e shteteve anëtare. (14 / 05/ 2020.) Available: <https://www.coe.int/sq/web/tirana/-/digital-education-under-covid-19-pandemic-experiences-from-member-states>

³ Crna Gora: Ne do të mbështesim tejkalimin e sfidave në arsim gjatë pandemisë COVID-19. (14/11/ 2020) Available at: <https://www.unicef.org/montenegro/sq/histori/ne-do-t%C3%AB-mb%C3%ABshtesim-tejkalimin-e-sfidave-n%C3%AB-arsim-gjat%C3%AB-pandemis%C3%AB-covid-19>

⁴ MASHT: Statistical notes. Data on pre-university education. Education Information Management System. Kosovo. Prishtinë (2020c). p. 2. Available at: <https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2020/02/shenime-statistikore-2019-2020-arsimi-parauniversitar-2.pdf>

⁵ Note: we are referring here to the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology in the Republic of Kosovo.

⁶ KEC: Arsimi në Kosovë gjatë pandemisë Covid – 19. http://kec-ks.org/ep-content/uploads/2021/04/Editorial_Arsimi-n%C3%AB-Kosov%C3%AB-gjat%C3%AB-pandemis%C3%AB-COVID-19-FINAL.pdf, p.1

share homework and other learning materials. We should also say that “during the same period, MASHT in cooperation with donors such as UNICEF and Save the Children launched two online platforms, namely, the platform for early childhood education for the age group 0-6 years and the platform for inclusive education .”⁷

Both of these platforms, the first ⁸ and the second ⁹, mentioned above, together with the general guide of MEST for the organization of the school year 2020/21¹⁰ are the efforts for the realization of an easy transition from reality to virtuality, from physical education with all its conditions and tools, to the online one with brand new and other tools.

5 Hypothesis and development Research and challenges during the pandemic

As we saw from the information presented in the above issue, the conditions were created for a new state and situation. Teaching and knowledge transfer will already be done, in most cases virtually and this will include assignments, seminar papers, conferences, articles and publications, etc. The questions that have arisen for us have to do with the process of accomplishing these tasks and the nature of the many obstacles that students may have faced. One of them is that of fatigue, stress and the problem of adapting to a new change, with a different reality¹¹, such as the virtual one in learning realization. Because, according to researchers, this reality can cause a decrease in the productivity of teachers, but also in their performance and job satisfaction.¹² Since this change, to which each individual, according to researchers, reacts according to his way and his mental ability, so we have different reactions, has a negative impact on the performance and satisfaction of teachers, but what about students? How much does the change of reality, resistance to change, stress and other obstacles affect their scientific progress and their performance?

6 Procedure

In order to discover this problem and answer the questions posed above, but also taking into account all the factors that may affect the process of scientific research in these new conditions, we have built a questionnaire that contains questions of many aspects of student academic and scientific development. The questionnaires were constructed using Google forms and were distributed via email. Students have been informed their data will be confidential. The questionnaires were sent to 7 universities in the Republic of Kosovo, namely in; University of Business and Technology, University of Prizren "Ukshin Hoti", University "Fehmi Agani" -

⁷KEC: Arsimi në Kosovë gjatë pandemisë Covid – 19. http://kec-ks.org/ep-content/uploads/2021/04/Editorial_Arsimi-n%C3%AB-Kosov%C3%AB-gjat%C3%AB-pandemis%C3%AB-COVID-19-FINAL.pdf, p.1

⁸ MASHT: Edukimi në Distançë: Kujdesi, Zhvillimi dhe Edukimi në Fëmijërinë e Hershme për Moshën 0-6 vjeç. Kosovë (Prill 2020.) Available at: <https://edukimihershem.rks-gov.net/>

⁹ MASHT: Mësimi në distance për Fëmijët me Nevoja të Veçanta Arsimore – Arsimi Gjithëpërfshirës. Kosovë (Prill 2020.) Available at: <http://arsimigjithepershires.rks-gov.net/>

¹⁰ MASHT: Udhëzues për Organizimin e Mësimin në Vitin Shkollor 2020/21 në Kushtet e Pandemisë COVID-19. Kosovë (Gusht, 2020.) Available at: https://masht.rks-gov.net/uploads/2020/08/udhezuesi-final-file-10-09-2020_1.pdf

¹¹ Palmer., I., Dunford., R., & Akin., G: Managing organizational change: A multiple perspective approach (3rd ed.). McGraw-Hill, London (2017) 249 – 272.

¹² Hyseni Duraku., Zamira: Ndikimi i COVID-19 në arsim, mirëqenien e mësimdhënësve, prindërve dhe nxënësve: Sfidat e ndërlidhura me mësimin në distancë (online) dhe mundësitë për përmirësimin e cilësisë së arsimit. Prishtinë (April, 2020) p. 21 Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353038765_Ndikimi_i_pandemise_COVID19_ne_arsim_dhe_mirëqenie_Implikime_praktike_dhe_mesime_per_te_ardhmen

Gjakova, University "Kadri Zeka" - Gjilan, University "Haxhi Zeka" - Peja and the University "Isa Boletini" - Mitrovica. This questionnaire was attended by a total of 500 students from various fields such as; Albanian language and literature, Journalism, Nursing, Business Management and Economics, Nutrition, Food Sciences and biotechnology, Law, etc. Also from different levels of studies, mainly Bachelor and Master. The data were collected after the end of the exam period in July - August 2021, the time at which we undertook and conducted this study and which was appropriate because the students had no other commitments and were able to respond to our questionnaire. The completion of this questionnaire was done online and through it we have collected data which we will present below.

7 Discussion and interpretation

From the variables that we have raised we have managed to obtain results for various aspects of the research process, as we have raised them in accordance with our investigative interests. Therefore, we have managed to have data on the process of academic development, concrete obstacles and external aspects of this process, such as the mental, emotional and psychological state of students during this process.

We have taken the data and compiled it into tables to make it more accessible and easier to understand, so we can see each of them below.

Questions	Not at all	Only a little	Rather much	Vary much
Question 1 - Have you had seminar works and conferences?	5 %	11 %	49 %	35 %
Question 3 - Has the internet helped you in your research?	5%	16%	61 %	21%
Question 4 - What hindered you the most in your research during the pandemic?	<i>Lack of literature</i>	<i>Impossibility of conducting experiments</i>	<i>Lack of discussion with others</i>	<i>Lack of tools and inability to move</i>
	12 %	18%	24 %	46 %

Questions	Not at all	Only a little	Rather much	Vary much
Question 5 - How much has the lack of materials affected your work?	7 %	42 %	46 %	5 %
P Question 6 - Did you have the will to carry out your work during the pandemic?	7 %	55%	29 %	9 %
Question 7 - How much has the fear of the pandemic affected your concentration and research work?	26 %	47 %	23%	4 %
Question 8 - How much has the closure (physical isolation) affected your scientific development and work?	10 %	44 %	42 %	4 %

Question 9 - How much has online learning affected your academic and scientific progress?	10 %	35 %	50 %	5%
Question 10 - How much has the pandemic affected the results and evaluation of your research?	8 %	44 %	43 %	5 %

Therefore, as we notice from these results, the students during this period have been busy with papers, activities and conferences, as the largest percentage of them say that they have had many and extremely.

We have also come to realize that the internet has been the main helper for conducting research. So, despite the new conditions, students have managed to adapt and use the accessible resources they have had.

In terms of obstacles for students and their research process, however, a higher percentage remains "lack of tools and inability to move", a factor that is important for the realization of works of an experimental, practical nature and those which requires physical presence for their realization.

During the analysis of the answers we notice that despite the fact that the Internet has been a major helper in the realization of works or research of students they have been most hindered in this process by the lack of materials, of course including the theoretical literature.

The other group of variables raised focuses on aspects related to the volition, preparedness and condition of students to work in these completely new conditions and which moreover are unexpectedly installed. The results tell us that students have had very little willpower to work during this period, although more time has been available.

Students, on the other hand, say that fear has had little effect on their concentration and academic performance. So we are dealing with a state of laziness and lack of willpower to walk normally within this reality, not a feeling of fear towards it.

Meanwhile, in terms of their academic results and progress, they think that online teaching has greatly influenced their evaluation and development, an issue which has been addressed in more detail in the free questions addressed to students.

Question 11 - Do you think that some scientific research can be better done only online without the need for physical presence?	Online only	Physicccally
	40 %	60 %
Question 13 - If you had the opportunity to choose, for your academic and research progress, would you choose teaching and research online or physically and why?	20 %	80 %

Pyetjet	Not at all	Only a little	Rather much	Vary much
Question 12 - Do you think that the pandemic has also affected the work of professors and the seriousness of the evaluation of your work?	20 %	40 %	30 %	10 %

Question 14 - How much do you think you have gained from the research experiences you have had during this period?	2 %	34 %	52 %	12 %
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Their familiarity with research processes and types of studies has led students to express that some research cannot be fully accomplished well without physical presence.

And likewise in terms of academic progress and teaching development if they would have the choice to determine how to do it online or physically, 80% of them said they would choose the physical one as more practical, comfortable, easy, understandable and feasible.

As for the evaluation and seriousness by the professors in these new conditions, the students answered that the pandemic has had little effect and that the impartiality and seriousness of the professors is not questioned regardless of the conditions.

As for the acquisition from this period of studies realized in a new reality, the students show that they have benefited a lot from the research experiences. So, focusing only on online tools and the internet has made them know in more detail the programs, ways and techniques of conducting research that they had not previously tried.

Question 2: Question with comments	-	-	-	-
How did you find the materials you needed?				
Question 15 - Questions with comments				
What personal comment do you have about individual research and the impact of the pandemic?				

In the completed questionnaire we also directed questions with comments, longer, in which students were able to give their opinion. The first thing that stands out in these types of questions is that not everyone likes to answer or give a comment about the question posed, but from those who answered (60 %) we noticed that the most used tool for finding the materials you needed has been the internet, online libraries and less libraries.

While the personal comments on the topics covered by the entire research questionnaire have been very different, some of them even very opposite to each other, a fact which is understood because each person has seen the adaptation to a new reality. and experienced in his own way. However, most of them think that there have been more negative effects and consequences than the positive ones, of the pandemic in their scientific development and their academic progress.

In some it has influenced motivation, in some in the great lack of materials, in some in the non-realization of experiments, in others lack of will and concentration and many other consequences,

but the general thing is that the comments that define it prevail. as a period that despite its positive sides, has had a more negative impact on them as individuals and on their academic and professional development.

8 Implication of the study

The data collected in this study were of a transverse nature due to which it is difficult to establish the causal relationship between the variables. Any future research can do a more detailed study and capture information that due to the online survey may have escaped. Then another factor is that the data were collected only by one type of respondents, i.e. students. Therefore, the results of the study can not be used to generalize in relation to other subjects. Future research may also include the perspectives of teachers and professors and thus we may have the opportunity for a broader generalization of results. Our study is only for students in the Republic of Kosovo; thus, if in the future data will be collected from different countries in the region or the world, we could achieve an even more general and valuable study. This study is limited to highlighting the academic development and advancement of students, so in the future, the scientific advancement and career of teachers can be studied in similar ways.

9 Conclusions

From this scientific research undertaken to understand the factors that have influenced the academic development and scientific and professional progress of students during the period of the global pandemic Covid - 19 we have reached some conclusions that we will present as follows:

Students have used the internet as their main source for conducting research and finding literature, although it has not always been enough.

Their main and most important obstacle is the inability to move and the lack of tools.

The pandemic period was accompanied by a lack of willingness on the part of students to carry out research work and assignments. Fear has not been a disturbing element.

Students' academic results and progress has been greatly influenced by online teaching.

Students think that a large part of research can only be done physically. Also in terms of teaching most choose physically realized teaching and not online.

The pandemic has not affected the evaluation of their work by professors, but has had a very negative impact on them as individuals and on their academic and professional development.

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