The Impact of Online Classes on Student Performance During the Pandemic Period of COVID 19 in Romania

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Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that education staff have not been trained at all to digitize the education process. So they did not know what the challenges were. In addition, it has been shown that although students are digital natives, they do not know how to capitalize on the e-learning side of learning.

The aim of this paper is to analyze the impact that online classes has had on student performance during the Covid-19 pandemic. In order to carry out this research, we started from the fact that during the Covid-19 pandemic, the transition to online classes led to inequities among students in terms of learning from the Romanian education system.

The pandemic education system faced a number of challenges, especially reducing stress among students. In order to reduce the stress level of the students, the intervention of the school psychologist as well as of the teachers was necessary.

Key words: online classes, student performance, performance, Covid-19, pandemic
J.E.L. classification: I21, I25, P17.

1. Introduction

Shortly after the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, a series of radical changes began to occur in the education system, due to social distancing (Bălăcescu and Badea, 2021). The entire education system has moved online, because it was the only way to ensure the safety of students, teachers, but also other education agents (Bali and Liu, 2018).

According to the data provided by Save the Children, it was found that the closure of schools, at the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, a series of negative consequences appeared in terms of children's educational progress, but also in terms of children's emotional health. At the same time, the issue of their online security has been raised.

2. Theoretical background

The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that education staff have not been trained at all to digitize the education process. So they did not know what the challenges were. In addition, it has been shown that although students are digital natives, they do not know how to capitalize on the e-learning side of learning (Bao, 2020).

In Romania, unfortunately, there was a lack of digital infrastructure in rural areas, so learning online was a challenge for them (Bălăcescu and Badea, 2021).

Instead, in Egypt, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Education and Technical Education tried to save the school year by switching to online learning, broadcasting school lessons on national TV, launching a specialized YouTube channel, and providing a library. online. This has demonstrated the effectiveness of the education system, but there are questions about its effectiveness, namely whether students have come to learn what they should have learned (Baradei, 2021).

With the onset of the pandemic in Romania in 2020, the dropout rate has also started to increase. Thus, over 20% of Romanian students dropped out of school in the very first year of the pandemic, when classes began to take place online. The most affected was the rural environment (Edupedu). The same cannot be said for Finland, where the dropout rate is generally less than 1% (Statistics Finland).

In view of these considerations, we further propose to present the research methodology.

3. Research methodology

The aim of this paper is to analyze the impact that online schooling has had on student performance during the Covid-19 pandemic. In order to carry out this research, we started from the fact that during the Covid-19 pandemic, the transition to online schooling led to inequities among students in terms of learning from the Romanian education system (Adilova et al., 2020).

Regarding the research design, we used the quantitative research method, based on an online questionnaire administered to teachers in the Romanian pre-university education system.

As for the questionnaires, they were created through Google Forms, so that the data could be collected and centralized much easier and more efficiently than if it had been distributed face-to-face.

We applied a questionnaire with 41 questions regarding the challenges that the Romanian education system is going through, divided into several topics for debate. For this study, we will analyze only the questions related to the impact of online schooling on student performance.

The online questionnaires were completed by 347 pre-university teachers.

4. Findings

Regarding the question no. 1, how much the online school affected the students during the Covid-19 pandemic, we notice that 48.4% said to a large extent, 31.4% said to a very large extent, 11.2% were neutral, 6.9% said small measure and 2% to a very small extent.

Table no. 1 How online school affected the students during the Covid-19 pandemic

students_affected_pandemic

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	To a very large extent	109	31.4	31.4	31.4
	To a large extent	168	48.4	48.4	79.8
	Neutral	39	11.2	11.2	91.1
	Small measure	24	6.9	6.9	98.0
	To a very small extent	7	2.0	2.0	100.0
	Total	347	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's contribution

Figure no. 1. How online school affected the students during the Covid-19 pandemic
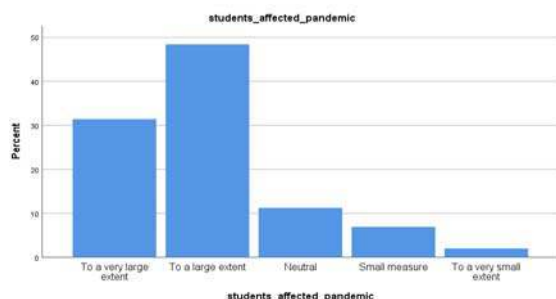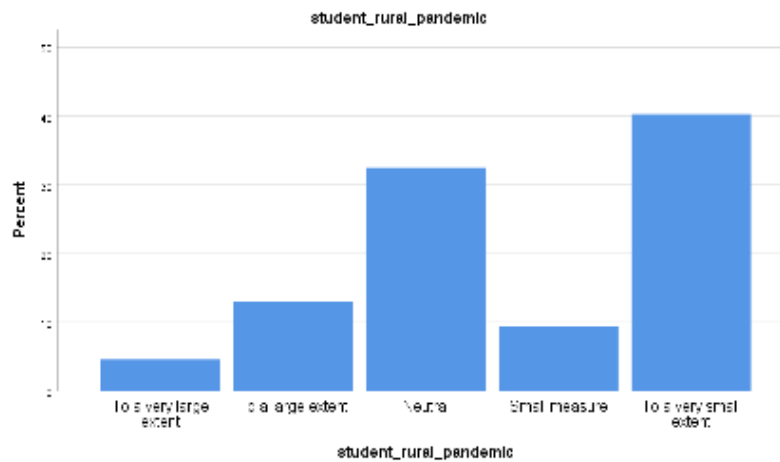

Source: Author's contribution

For question no. 2, how much it helped rural students with limited opportunities, online teaching, 40.3% of teachers said to a very small extent, 32.6% of teachers were neutral, 13% of teachers said to a large extent extent, 9.5% of teachers said small measure, while 4.6% of teachers said to a very large extent.

Table no. 2 Online teaching for rural students

student_rural_pandemic

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	To a very large extent	16	4.6	4.6	4.6
	To a large extent	45	13.0	13.0	17.6
	Neutral	113	32.6	32.6	50.1
	Small measure	33	9.5	9.5	59.7
	To a very small extent	140	40.3	40.3	100.0
	Total	347	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's contribution

Figure no. 2 Online teaching for rural students
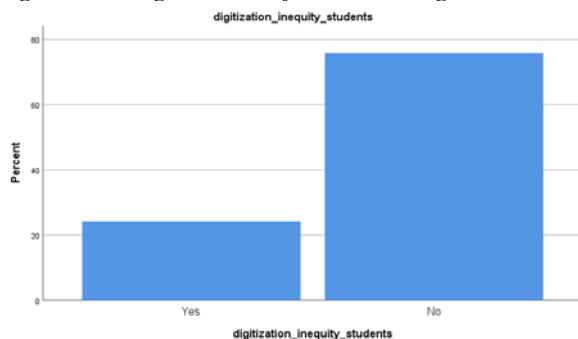

Source: Author's contribution

Regarding question no. 3, considering that the digitalization of schools during the Covid-19 pandemic led to inequities between students who had financial means and those who did not have such financial resources, 75.8% of respondents said no, while 24.2 % of respondents said yes.

Table no. 3 Digitalization of schools during the Covid-19 pandemic

digitization_inequity_students

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	84	24.2	24.2	24.2
	No	263	75.8	75.8	100.0
	Total	347	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's contribution

Figure no. 3 Digitalization of schools during the Covid-19 pandemic
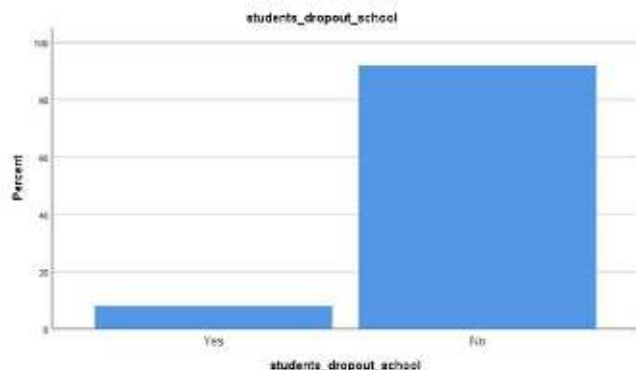

Source: Author's contribution

Regarding question no. 4, following the Covid-19 crisis, you had students who dropped out of school, 91.9% of teachers said they did not have students who dropped out of school, while 8.1% of teachers said they had students who dropped out of school.

Table no. 4 Students who dropped out of school

students_dropout_school

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	28	8.1	8.1	8.1
	No	319	91.9	91.9	100.0
	Total	347	100.0	100.0	

Source: Author's contribution

Figure no. 4 Students who dropped out of school

Source: Author's contribution

5. Discussion

In this study the teachers mentioned that they did not have students to drop out of school, we cannot generalize these data, because even before the Covid period, Romania was on the last places in Europe in terms of dropout rate. school. For example, the dropout rate in 2018-2019 in the case of primary and secondary education was 2% (35.4 thousand students).

Regarding the dropout rate in primary and secondary education, both in urban and rural areas was 1.9% in urban and 2.7% in rural areas. Boys are the ones who give up more unlike girls. Thus we have 2.4% of boys who drop out of school and 2% of girls who drop out of school. If we refer to high school, the dropout rate has been constant over the last 3 years (2.5%). Those in the vocational

and technological fields are the ones who drop out of their studies. And here we are talking about boys who drop out of high school to a greater extent than girls (INSS).

Regarding school dropout in Romania, it produces a number of undesirable effects for society, such as: poverty, unemployment, health problems and social exclusion. The reasons why students drop out of school are: family problems, poor financial situation, health problems, learning difficulties, school atmosphere and the student-teacher relationship (INSS).

In December 2021, the Government of Romania adopted the "National Program for Reducing School Dropout", with a funding amounting to 543 million euros. This means that more than 3,000 schools, which are at a considerable risk of dropping out of school, will receive money in order to significantly reduce this phenomenon (Ministry of Education).

Romania has one of the best internet speeds in Europe, it seems that we are still the last in terms of online teaching.

As far as rural students are concerned, not everyone is privileged to have access to the internet. There are villages forgotten by the world, where the internet connection is taken from a hill or from a tree.

Although funds have been allocated for the most disadvantaged students to receive tablets, another problem that has arisen is that a teaching methodology has not been established for teachers who have been faced with a new situation, namely that of online teaching.

I created the figure no. 5 entitled: The impact of online classes on student performance during the pandemic period of COVID 19 in Romania, as follow:

Figure no. 5 The impact of online classes on student performance during the pandemic period of COVID 19 in Romania
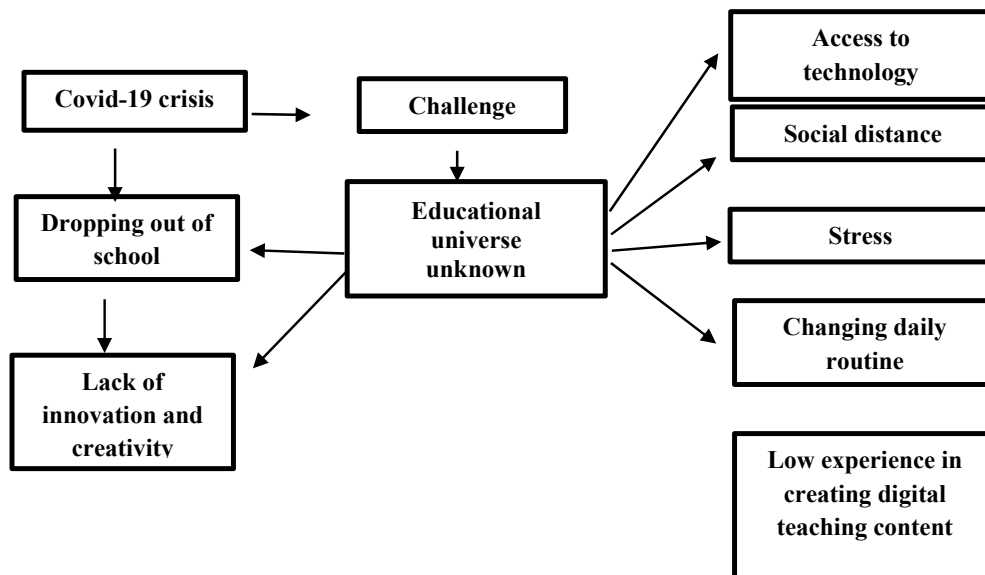
Source: Author's contribution

Romania was not prepared to meet the challenges posed by the pandemic, which led to an even higher dropout rate, and this is due to a lack of innovation and creativity.

Lack of experience in creating digital content and teaching it has had its say.

The pandemic period led to social distancing among students, which meant a very high level of stress because it changed their daily routine.

6. Conclusions

The aim of this paper was to analyze the impact that online classes has had on student performance during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The pandemic education system faced a number of challenges, especially reducing stress among students. In order to reduce the stress level of the students, the intervention of the school psychologist as well as of the teachers was necessary.

Following the results obtained, we find that the Covid-19 pandemic did not cause inequities between rural and urban students. This can be attributed to the fact that among the responding teachers there were richer villages that are technologically equipped. The same cannot be said of poor villages that do not have access to electricity, water, gas and sewage. Where these students were in the position of dropping out of school.

The results cannot be generalized.

This study will be useful to researchers, teachers, school principals, school inspectors, as well as other people interested in the situation of the pre-university education system in Romania.

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