

STUDY ON THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON STUDENT LIFE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ORADEA

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Abstract

The Coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) led to the interruption of university courses in Romania in the classic format, face to face. The sudden and unplanned transition to online education has created a number of challenges for students and teachers, who have had to adapt to the teaching and learning process in the new organizational and communication framework. In order to understand how the students felt during this period, we made a questionnaire-based survey on April 6-10, 2022, addressed to students at the University of Oradea. The results of the study showed that the Covid-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the majority of students who participated in the study, regardless of the specialization they are enrolled in.

Keywords: Covid-19, students, impact, education, online

INTRODUCTION

The entire education system has faced one of the biggest challenges in recent years due to the public health crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Thus, starting with March 2020, all educational institutions at national level had to stop teaching activities in the classic format and adapt to a new online teaching system. (Cotoranu D. et al, 2021)

The beginning of the pandemic has led to a change in human behavior, lifestyle and the reality in which we live. Almost all people were focused on professional activity, on professional, social, family success. With the beginning of the pandemic, they all had to adapt to the new situation, the new rules / laws to survive the SARS-VOC2 virus.

It is difficult to be a teenager in any context, and the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) makes this period of life even more difficult. With closed schools and canceled events, many teenagers miss important activities as well as regular, day-to-day interactions, such as discussions with friends or attending class (Rich M., 2020).

During the pandemic, quarantine was used as a health strategy to reduce the spread of the disease. Quarantine efforts ranged from mass quarantine of large cities to isolation in state-run facilities to self-isolation at home. Most of the administrative, professional, political decisions of the

quarantine period were the responsibility of the leaders in the public health system.

Resuming the lifestyle after such a long absence can be a problem for many people. People are forced to adapt to a new lifestyle for a shorter or longer period of time using a series of protective measures.

The aim of this paper is to assess the impact that the Covid 19 pandemic has had on student life, as well as to identify the main problems caused by the pandemic that students are currently facing. This analysis aims to highlight the main effects of the pandemic on students.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

During the statistical observation phase, we prepared a questionnaire and collected the information that serves to identify the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on student life. The questionnaire was applied online through the Google Forms platform. The data were collected between April 6-10, 2022, and a total of 92 responses were obtained. I addressed this questionnaire to a category of students aged between 18 and 26, from the University of Oradea.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Analyzing the demographic data of the respondents, it is observed that, out of a number of 92 respondents, 7.6% are 18 years old, 7.6 are 19 years old, 13% are 20 years old, 33.7% are students aged of 21 years 9.8% are 22 years old, 12% are 23 years old, 4.3% are 24 years old 3.3% are 25 years old and 8.7% are 26 years old. I calculated the age the average number of students surveyed is 21.5 years. 71.7% are female and 28.3% are male students.

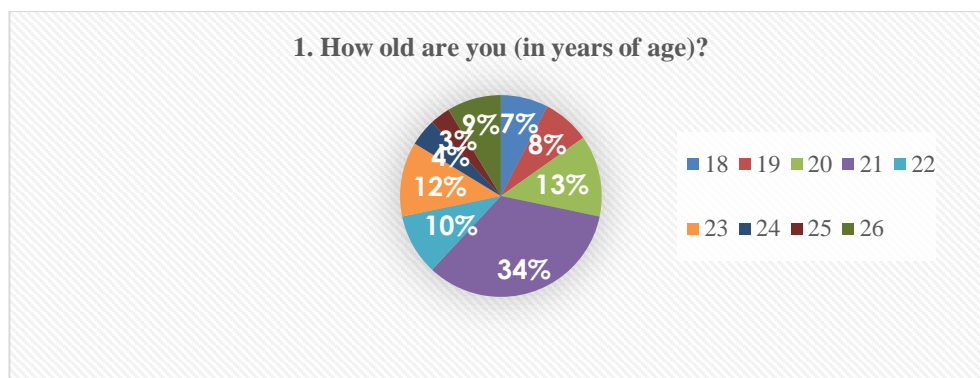


Fig. 1. Age of students (in years)

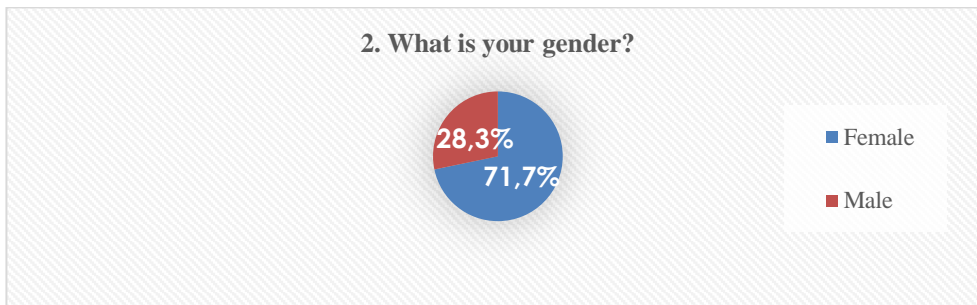


Fig. 2. Gender of students surveyed

When it comes to the question of background, 75% are students living in rural areas and only 25% are from urban areas.

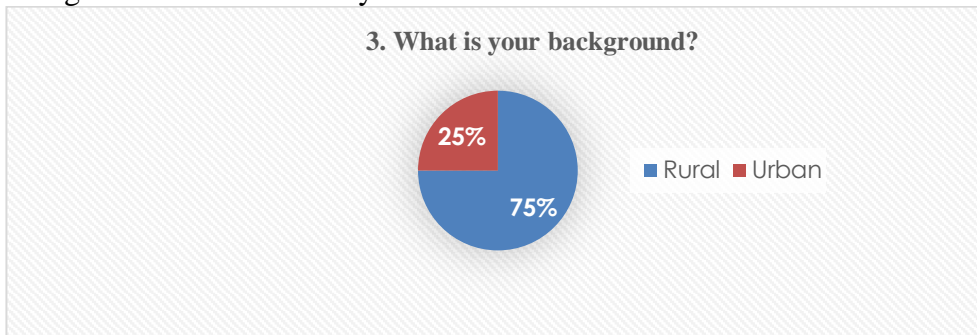


Fig. 3. The origin (area)

Asked if they moved from the student hostels, family home or others due to the Covid-19 pandemic, 60.9% say they did not move and 39.1% moved.

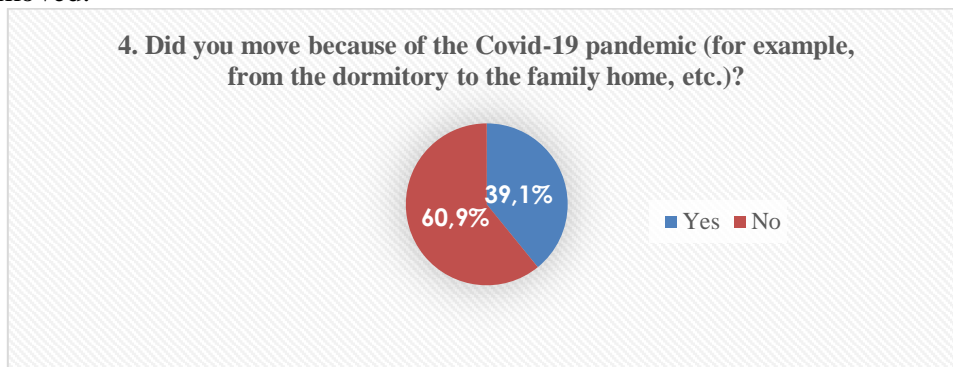


Fig. 4. Movement due to the pandemic

The interest rate for education during the pandemic changed in 58.7% of students, and for the rest 41.3% of the students, the interest rate remained the same.

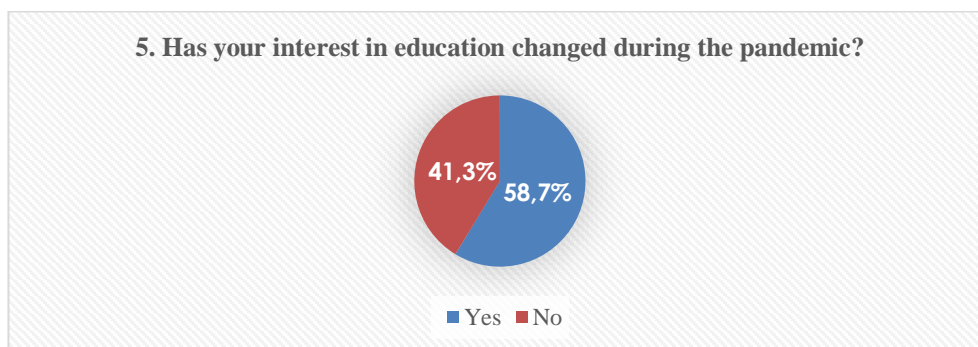


Fig. 5. Rate of interest in education

The activity carried out online was approved by 77.25% of the students, while 22.8% did not agree with the activity online.

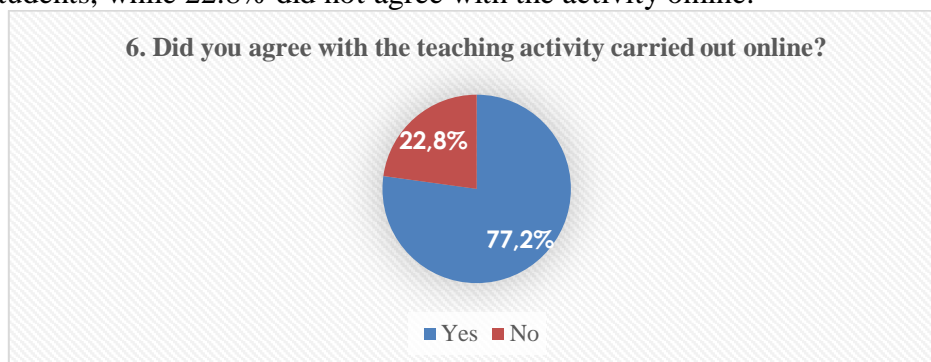


Fig. 6. The agreement on online teaching activity

To the question “What are the advantages / disadvantages of online activity. How was the evaluation conducted?” most of the answers were about the advantage, 58% say that it is much easier and more flexible to carry out the personal program, due to online classes, 40% are disadvantaged by the lack of meetings and explanations of teachers face to face and only 2% wrote about the evaluation. through reports, on the zoom platform or teams.

Table nr.1

Advantages / disadvantages of online activity and how the evaluation was conducted

Advantages	- much more flexible and easier to carry out the personal program thanks to the online classes, courses at a click away	58%
Disadvantages	- lack of face-to-face meetings and teacher explanations, lack of practical tests	40%
Evaluation	- it took place through reports, on the zoom platform or teams, some were online, others physically	2%

To the question "How often did you meet during the pandemic?" 70.7% of students met once every 2-3 months or even less often, 13% met once a week, 9.8% met 2-3 times a week, and only 6.5% of students met daily.

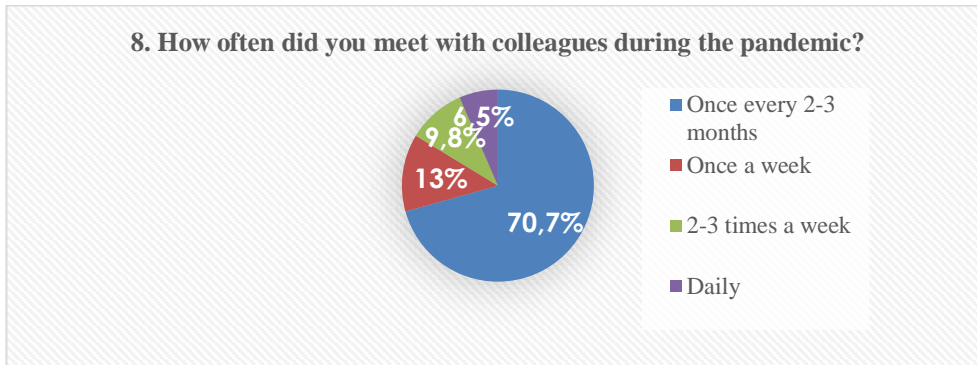


Fig. 8. Frequency of meetings during the pandemic

Student spendings during pandemic was mostly low, with 64.1% of students, 31.5% saying they had high expenses and 4.3% had very high expenses.

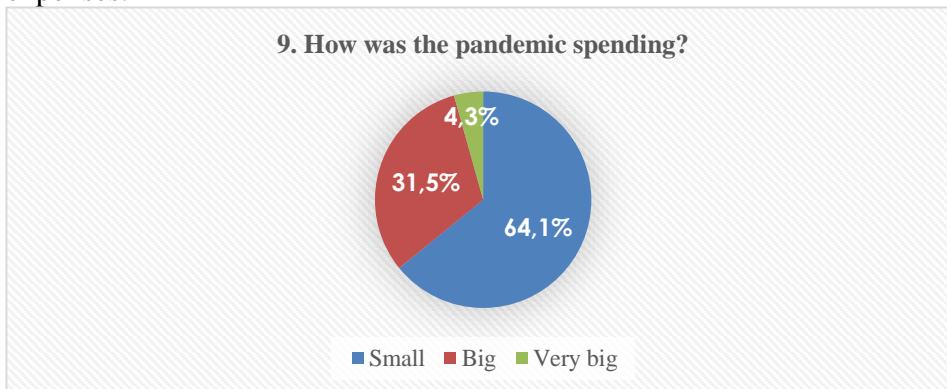


Fig. 9. Spendings during the pandemic

To the question "What are the activities you gave up / started during the pandemic?", 50% of the students answered that they gave up during the pandemic walking / walking in the city, at parties. 24% started playing more sports, spending more time with family, and the remaining 18% did not give up / start any activity.

Table nr.2

Activities that were abandoned / started during the pandemic	
They gave up walking in the city, going out with friends, parties	53%
They started doing more sports at home, outdoors, spending time with family	27%
They did not give up / start any activity	20%

During the pandemic, 53.3% of students did not change their mood, 39.1% had anxiety, depression and stress, and 7.6% of students had a more positive mood.

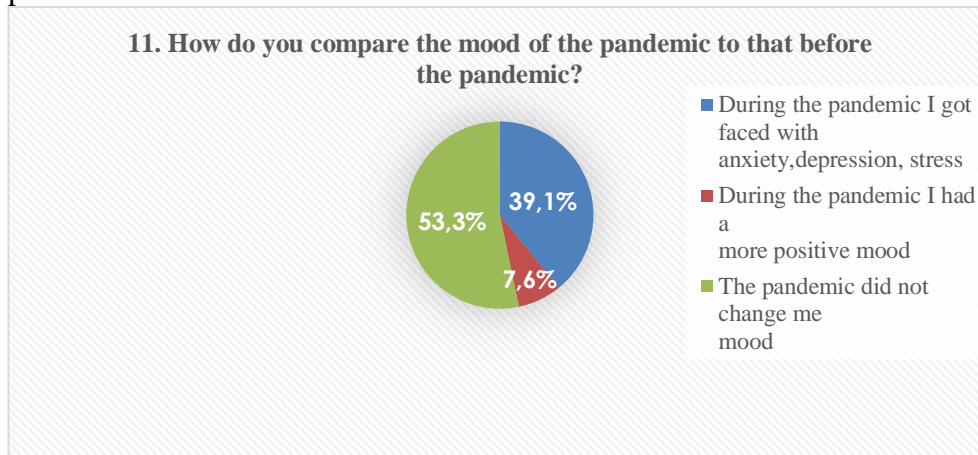


Fig. 11. Comparison - the mood of the pandemic with the one before the pandemic

Asked, "What were the pandemic eating habits?", for 54.3% of students the pandemic did not change their eating habits, 23.9% started eating healthier, and 21.7% started eating un healthy.

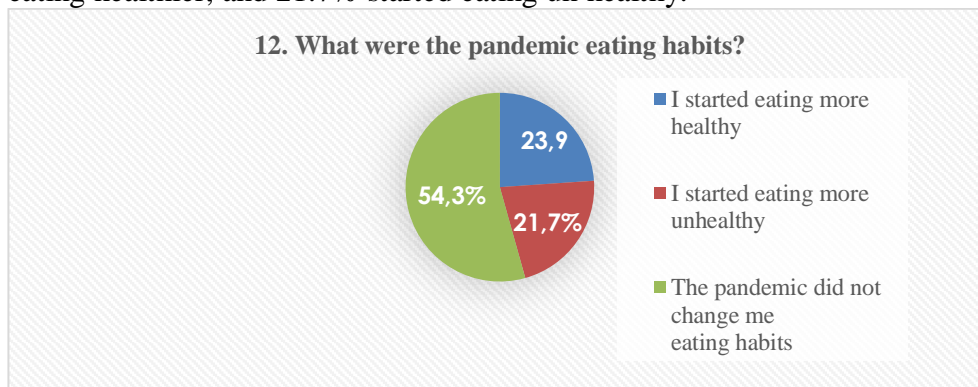


Fig. 12. Pandemic eating habits

As in other university systems in Romania, the COVID-19 pandemic, which began in the spring of 2020, forced the sudden transition, against the background of a state of insecurity, to online courses.

Following the interpretation of the results based on the 12 questions in the questionnaire, with a number of respondents of 92, 70.7% of them claim that the coronavirus pandemic greatly affected their face-to-face socialization, due to the restrictions encountered a given at 2-3 months or even less often, and 39.1% experienced anxiety, depression and stress.

A study, coordinated by Adrian Otovescu, Ph.D. from Department of communication, journalism and education science, Faculty of Letters

Craiova had an aim of knowing the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on the life of the students of the University of Craiova. Almost 56% of the students of the University of Craiova claim that the Covid-19 pandemic affected their lives to a great extent, and the most affected areas of life were relationships with friends, mental state and training as a student. These are the results of a sociological study conducted by the Institute of Public Opinion Polling (ISOP), during the period 18 dec. 2020 - May 20, 2021. The surveys were applied to a representative sample of 518 students. (Adrian Otovescu,2020)

In order to find out directly from the students what the situation is and how they self-assess their pandemic transition, Ioana Maria Hăulică created a questionnaire answered by 44 people, from 7 universities, two of whom are studying abroad. In terms of academic performance, many students have noticed that compared to the pre-pandemic period, they now have more difficulty concentrating, are more bored, less attentive to class, and are more likely to experience sleep problems and emotional disturbances. Given the fact that the school has switched to an online-only system, I learned from several people that switching to the comfort of their own home distracts them the most because there is always something more interesting to do. So here's how the simple change of class environment has changed the perception of many students. From where the classrooms or seminars offered them an environment that forced them to pay attention, their own rooms offered them the exact opposite, an environment of distraction. (Ioana-Maria Hăulică, 2021).

It is obvious that both at the beginning of the pandemic and after a period of two years, the students were largely affected by the lack of socialization.

CONCLUSION

The pandemic also left its mark on the lives of students at the University of Oradea:

- The online activity reduced the interest for the educational act to over 50% of those surveyed.
- 77.25% of students liked the online activity because it gave them more lightness and flexibility in organizing time.
- The main disadvantage of the educational activity in the pandemic is related to the reduction of interaction, access to the practical aspects of the theoretical parts taught.
- Restrictions on the COVID-19 pandemic also affected student interaction: 2/3 of students drastically reduced meetings with colleagues / friends (once every 2-3 months). Reducing the

frequency of out-goings in the city also brought with it a reduction in expenses.

- The social distance represented for 27% of the students, the centralization of the attention towards the family and towards the activities that can be carried out inside the house.
- Half of those surveyed did not feel a change in mood induced by the pandemic. However, almost 40% of those surveyed experienced anxiety or depression.
- Eating habits changed for 45.6% of those surveyed
- The pandemic has been a challenge for everyone, including students. Some saw benefits, others felt the negative impact of the changes associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Today, when the pandemic is considered over, we try to go back to what it was before COVID-19, following in the footsteps and teachings of the last 2 years.

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Today, when the pandemic is considered over we try to go back to what it was before COVID-19 following in the footsteps and teachings of the last 2 years.

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