

## FACTOR OF INFLUENCE FROM THE PANDEMIC PERIOD IN COMMUNICATION

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RESEARCH ARTICLE -

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### Abstract

*The pandemic was a phase mark for all the world. It was the one who influence all fields of activity in a positive way or even negative. The place in which and made the strongest sense attendance was in the communication. Although we tend to believe that interaction from people have not changed along of time, we will notice in what it follows how different it was interaction compared to the normal period in the political, social and educational development. Even if before the SARS-COV-2 virus we used quite often the internet and social networks to communicate, in the pandemic period were through only solutions interaction permissions. Fear the virus people rejected communication between people face in the face, what led over time to isolation.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Starting from the importance that communication through television/mass media had, we can say that it had a vital role in informing the population about all the necessary information that any citizen must know. The news, speeches, press conferences, statements and interviews of the governors have been unmissable during the pandemic, and most of them have been based on the SARS-COV-2 virus, about how we can protect ourselves, the obligations and rights we have as citizens, as well as the pandemic situation, illustrating statistics on the number of infections in certain periods.

The subjects addressed on the topic of the coronavirus had an amplified and necessary function for the population. Starting from the news releases, what can be observed is that this communication had a double meaning, one of them being the attempt to bring positive attitudes among the people, to de-tension the atmosphere and the intention to combat depressions and collective restlessness. Although this approach seems to have a positive impact, it has not produced a collective de-escalation, but has created states of restlessness and anxiety, doubts about our safety.

It was the media that presented the level of preparedness of politicians and authorities in the state of emergency, with citizens putting pressure on them through

social media. State and government authorities had to come up with timely solutions, inform and ensure collective safety. It was a period with an exaggerated necessity in decision-making, with a significant number of "verdicts" compared to the period of normality. Given the context of the pandemic situation, people were able to observe how government officials behave in critical situations. Behind the speeches held, we can see the typologies of people and the psychological strategies that were approached in the situation of the state of alert. The authorities and political persons were and are aware that any sentence said in the public space will have a positive or negative impact on people, thus they ended up being put in front of the vulnerability of not making mistakes, but also in front of a bridge of power and influence.

Communication through television and mass media has had many controversies that have surfaced on social media platforms

### MATERIAL AND METHOD

The methods used in this study were different: the historical method, the comparative method, the sociological method, the logical method and the analytical one, their aim was the systematic analysis of the information selected from the sources studied

in order to develop personal points of view and conclusions about the stated objectives.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Since the period of normality, people have started to communicate through social media platforms. Since the advent of the Internet, online communication has been encouraged, creating all kinds of platforms that have adapted to the needs of individuals.

If before the Yahoo Messenger platform was favored, now Facebook and Instagram are among the most sought after. In 2021 alone, 2.1 million Facebook app users were registered. Although it was a highly requested platform, it was now the *pièce de résistance* of communication during the pandemic. If until now online interaction was more between acquaintances and family, in the pandemic it ended up being used even for professional purposes. Teachers and students started interacting through social media platforms, other centers and commercial firms communicated with their employees and customers only remotely. More and more online courses began to appear, favoring social media in all fields of activity. Selling and marketing of products has made its biggest advertisement only through this tool and it has taken off for many entrepreneurs.

Social networks had become "the place" where many users began to share their thoughts about the pandemic period. Many of the topics discussed were about the virus, whether it exists or not, topics about restrictions, dissatisfaction with the limitation of freedom and questioning those who lead the state. Among the restrictions imposed by the state was the mandatory wearing of a surgical mask. So all kinds of protests started to appear on Facebook about the mask and the fact that it is uncomfortable and does not protect us, Facebook groups were created, one of them very popular being "Down with the muzzle" to protest against those who I rule the country. School closures and online education have been pretty hot topics of discussion, with everyone voicing their displeasure publicly on their page, Facebook groups, posts or even comments.

Social media became the place where all the students and teachers interacted regarding

the course schedule, other technical difficulties or even personal issues. So-called "doctors" appeared to prescribe the miracle drug against the virus or to claim how harmful the vaccine is to the population. Facebook had become a place full of fake news due to the desire of some individuals to launch propaganda and implement fear in people.

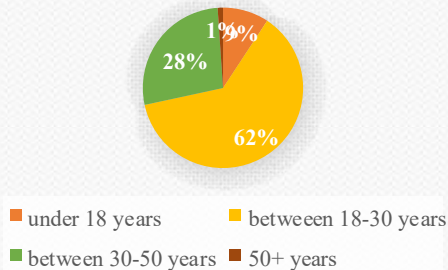
The biggest problem was not that people started communicating much more on social media, but that a very toxic environment had already set in, full of negativity, hate, fear and frustration. All these shared grievances are best reflected at the linguistic level through the very way users express themselves. From the desire of people not to be restricted or to have their account blocked, they became quite ingenious and started using all kinds of non-standard graphs (replacing some phonemes with graphic symbols (\*, @, #) or by inverting the initials of words, truncations or abbreviations of words, antonyms, lexical games, misappropriation of meanings, use of dialectal, popular, familiar forms, imprecations, stylistic register variations, etc.).

Questionnaire *Communication during a pandemic* (see Annexes, Questionnaire 1) was prepared with the help of the website <https://docs.google.com/> on 10.03.2022, answers being accepted until 20.04.2022. To date, 183 (one hundred and eighty-three) anonymous responses have been issued, containing 26 (twenty-six) questions. The questions had different response types, divided into multiple choice, check boxes, linear scales with the possibility of scoring from 1 to 10, and short answers. The questionnaire tracked the way individuals communicated during the pandemic compared to the period before.

The questionnaire was aimed at different age groups, both minors between the ages of 11 and 17 and adults. All age groups were tracked because communication in a pandemic context was and is aimed at the entire population, the pandemic being extended globally.

17 people under the age of 18, 114 people between the ages of 18 and 30, 50 people between the ages of 30 and 50, and 2 people over the age of 50 participated. Among these people, 102 are pupils/students, 71 people are employers/entrepreneurs/PFA or employees and 10 people have no occupation.

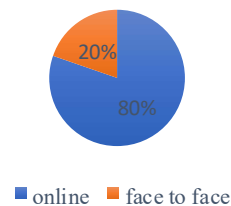
### Age of people participating in the questionnaire (183)



One of the questions in the questionnaire was whether individuals were infected with the SARS-COV-2 virus to find out how they interacted with other people. Among the 71 people who answered the question positively, they stated through the multiple-choice boxes that they used means of online communication, such as social media platforms (54 people), e-mails (10 people), telephone networks (68 people ) or face-to-face interactions (14 people).

To the question: *On a scale of 1 to 10, has your*

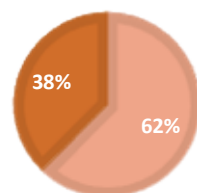
### The way people who were infected with the SARS-COV-2 virus communicated (71 people)



*daily life been affected in a negative way during the pandemic?* (1 being the weakest and 10 being the strongest), 69 people stated with grades between 1 and 5 that the pandemic did not influence their lives in a negative way, and

### THE INFLUENCE OF THE PANDEMIC ON PEOPLE

negative influence no influence



114 people supported with grades between 6 and 10 that they felt a negative change in their lives from the cause of the pandemic.

And to the question: *On a scale from 1 to 10* (1 meaning the weakest, and 10 the strongest) *did you manage to communicate easily with the people around you?*, 31 people stated that they were not able to communicate easily with the people around them, giving grades between 1 and 5. And the other people, in number of 151, supported with grades between 6 and 10 the fact that they were able to communicate easy with other people.

Through the questions *How did you get in touch with your school or work colleagues?* and *How did you get in touch with your teachers/employers?* the questionnaire followed the communication method used by the individuals, having as a choice the type of box with several answer options. Among the subjects/respondents, 140 chose social media platforms as a means of communication with colleagues, respectively 68 with teachers/employers, 109 respectively 73 telephone networks, 67 respectively 53 face-to-face communication, 36 respectively 71 e-mail and 54 respectively 108 educational platforms. Thus, 66% of the participants chose not to interact face-to-face with classmates or workmates and only 34% communicated face-to-face, interaction with employers or teachers face-to-face having a percentage of only 29%, and online communication 71%

Most of the participants in this case study stated that this online communication did not help them to evolve, but neither did it help them to evolve, so 41% of them recorded stagnation, 38.8% progress, and 20.2% regression. By doing a comparative analysis, we were able to see the advantages and disadvantages of online communication, leaving it up to individuals to select the variants that resonate with them and even add others as well.

### CONCLUSIONS

We found that individuals communicated much more online than in person during the pandemic due to the fear of getting sick from COVID-19, the advice given by the authorities,

the speed and geographical unrestrictedness, as well as the convenience.

Individuals reported that they communicated easily, aided by the technology through which they were able to interact. Online communication was helpful and efficient. Given that it was the SARS-COV-2 virus period that brought online interaction to the fore, we can say that this is the favored type of communication during this period.

What we found is that it was technology that helped us survive and not lose interaction with other people, but it was not as effective as it is in the physical environment. People do not manage to relate as effectively, empathy is lacking and there is a certain rigidity, a robotization, which is not typically human, losing the expression of emotions.

Mankind has learned to adapt to the situation and communicate even in difficult times. The communication we are addressing now existed even before the SARS-COV-2 virus but now this interaction has gained momentum. The vast majority of people prefer to stick to the traditional values of communication because only with them can we accurately observe all the elements related to human interaction, every detail of the people we come into contact with, their absence exposes us to alienation, which is not even wanted. If until now we were afraid that technology would take over us by itself, we can be sure that it has already done so because of the pandemic. However, there is a very high probability that we will revert to our old values of communication when we get back to normal.

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