

## Social work students' perception towards online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic

Brilanda Lumanaj, Fatbardha Osmanaga

Department of Psychology-Social Work, Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Shkodra, Albania

### Article Info

#### Article history:

Received May 7, 2023

Revised Mar 11, 2024

Accepted Mar 19, 2024

#### Keywords:

Alternative methods in the future  
Effectiveness of the teaching process  
Higher educational institutions  
Social interactions  
Teaching

### ABSTRACT

As a result of the pandemic, Universities in Albania faced this challenge for the first time during the COVID-19 pandemic. This transition created difficulties for both teachers and students. By studying students' perceptions towards online learning, it is possible to identify their specific challenges and needs. It can provide a valuable perspective for improving the online learning experience in the future. The objective of this study is to examine the perceptions of social work students regarding the effectiveness and interaction experiences associated with their online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic at the University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania, compared to classroom learning. This is descriptive research and includes quantitative and qualitative data. A structural questionnaire was distributed and followed by descriptive and thematic analysis. The sample included 84 students in a bachelor's program in social work. Students favored online courses for improving technical skills, dedicating more time to homework, and preferring email for queries. However, social interaction did not rise compared to classrooms. Students suggests blended learning for inclusivity, especially for those with financial, health, or job constraints. Ultimately, students preferred classroom learning for future teaching.

*This is an open access article under the CC BY-SA license.*



### Corresponding Author:

Brilanda Lumanaj

Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi"

Leke Dukagjini, No.2, 4001 Shkoder, Albania

Email: brilanda.lumanaj@unishk.edu.al

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has reshaped daily life, presenting unique health, political, economic, social, and educational challenges [1]. Meanwhile, the COVID-19 pandemic has hastened the expansion of online learning across all levels of education [2]. All educational institutions were required to follow online learning regulations, shifting from conventional face-to-face methods to digital platforms for remote learning [3]. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, higher education institutions (HEIs) were obligated to adapt the way they carry out the educational process for students. This circumstance posed a challenge to the global education system, compelling educators to transition to online teaching immediately. Many academic institutions, initially resistant to altering their traditional pedagogical approach, found themselves with no choice but to completely adopt online teaching and learning [4]. Studies underlined that students faced challenges associated with inadequate internet access, technical skills, and also insufficient time due to other familial issues [5], [6].

Numerous studies investigated students' perspectives on online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. Rivera-Vargas *et al.* [7] examined the positive evaluations related to the assimilation and embrace of technological competencies. They found that online education typically addresses the emergent needs of learners effectively. The research also revealed that students raised substantial concerns regarding the pedagogical approach and institutional support provided in online education. Similarly, Istiqomah *et al.* [8]

revealed that the students had a positive perception of this mode of learning. They highlighted that online learning situation encourages them in the learning process. A study conducted at the University of Thrace, in Kedraka and Kaltsidis [9] discovered that students viewed distance learning as interesting, modern, adequate, and convenient. While, Spears [10] stated that social presence, social interaction, collaborative learning, and satisfaction were highly correlated in online courses. According to Atwa *et al.* [11], the participants favored face-to-face and blended modes of learning. Similarly, Adnan [12] suggested that online learning may not yield effective results in developing countries, citing technical and financial challenges as significant barriers. Some teachers frequently expressed the view that distance education is considered less effective than traditional face-to-face learning [13]. In their study, Wart *et al.* [14] concluded that students often expect that a valuable online class should have essential functionalities in place and that the instructor will maintain a strong presence. Furthermore, the quality and timely interaction between students and professors, the availability of technical support, well-structured online class modules, and adjustments to accommodate practical classes are pivotal factors in ensuring satisfaction for both teachers and students in online classes [15]. Ananga and Biney [16] discovered that although each mode has its strengths and complements the other, it also has weaknesses that can be addressed for maximum benefit in the teaching and learning process.

As a result of the pandemic, many HEIs worldwide have adopted online teaching as a solution. Unlike other countries that have already implemented high-visibility systems and online secondary platforms, universities in Albania faced this challenge for the first time during the COVID-19. As a result, institutions, professors, and students encountered numerous challenges, both in technical aspects and in the effectiveness of the online learning platform. This transition posed challenges for both teachers and students. Therefore, it is essential to present the perceptions of students from institutions that were among the first to adapt to online platforms in higher education. A comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions of online learning during this global health crisis is imperative, particularly in comparison to traditional classroom learning.

During online learning, Albanian students faced several barriers and difficulties [17], [18]. Students had a more positive attitude towards the classroom learning environment [19], [20]. The pandemic had a profound impact on HEIs in Albania, leading to a complete shift to online teaching for the 2020-2021 academic year. This was the first time that universities in Albania had switched to online teaching. At the University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", all lessons were carried out entirely online during the academic year 2020-2021. However, this process was challenging because teachers and students had to quickly adapt to the transition from the classroom to online learning. The purpose of the study is to explore the perceptions of bachelor social work students towards the effectiveness of online learning, their interaction experiences with other students and instructors, and their preference for online courses after the pandemic, compared to classroom learning. The study is guided by the subsequent research questions: i) what are social work students' perceptions of the effectiveness of online learning compared to classroom learning?; ii) how do students perceive social interactions with other students and instructors during their experience of online learning compared to classroom learning?; and iii) what is the students' approach to the provision of online courses as a part of the teaching process in the future at the University of Shkodra?

## 2. METHOD

This research is a mixed-methods study, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative descriptive approaches. The participants were recruited using a purposive sampling method. The population for the study comprised 152 students from the first year (n=60), second year (n=47), and third year (n=45) of the bachelor's program in social work enrolled during the academic year 2021-2022, at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania as shown in Table 1. The inclusion criterion for the participants was that they had taken online courses. Therefore, first-year students were not included in the sampling as the learning process was conducted entirely in the classroom during the academic year 2021-2022.

Only the students in the second and third years attended online learning during the academic year 2020-2021, and thus, were included in the sampling. The participants in the study constitute a sample of N=84 students from the second (44.8%) and third (51.2%) year of the program. Seven students did not attend classes throughout the year and did not complete the questionnaire. Among them, 6% of students were male and 94% of students were female. Concerning their location, 67.8% of the students live in urban areas.

The instrument used for this study was a self-administered questionnaire consisting of four parts, including one open-ended question. The questionnaire was developed by the researcher based on similar research studies [10], [21], [22]. The initial section of the questionnaire included demographic data such as gender, course, and location. The second part of the questionnaire explored social work students' perceptions of the effectiveness of online learning compared to classroom learning. This section consists of seven statements designed to evaluate how students perceive the effectiveness of online versus classroom learning. Participants were requested to provide ratings in regard to the perceived effectiveness of each mode of learning on a five-point Likert scale continuum, ranging from 1 (less effective) to 5 (more effective). The third part of

the questionnaire aimed to explore students' perceptions of social interactions with both peers and instructors during online versus classroom learning. This section includes four statements, where students were asked to rate perceived interactions on a Likert scale, ranging from 1 during online is decreased, 2- somewhat decreased, 3- no change, 4- somewhat increased, and 5- increased. The concluding section of the questionnaire prompted students to express their approval or disapproval regarding the inclusion of online courses as part of the future learning process.

Table 1. General data of respondents

| General information              | Classification | Percentage (%) |
|----------------------------------|----------------|----------------|
| Gender                           | Female         | 94             |
|                                  | Male           | 6              |
| Location                         | Urban          | 67.8           |
|                                  | Rural          | 32.2           |
| Course - bachelor in social work | Second year    | 44.8           |
|                                  | Third year     | 51.2           |

The study employed both descriptive and thematic analyses. The quantitative data analysis was performed using SPSS 22 for Windows software. The internal consistency was assessed by calculating Cronbach's  $\alpha$ , demonstrating good stability with a value of 0.869. A descriptive approach was employed for data analysis, which involved generating descriptive statistics such as frequencies, percentages, means, and cross-tabulations. Additionally, Friedman's test was utilized to verify if the model is present within the dataset. The qualitative data collected from the open-ended questions were analyzed using an inductive approach to identify thematic categories. The responses were transcribed, encoded, and sorted according to similarities to determine the main themes.

### 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1. Students' perception of the effectiveness of online learning compared to classroom learning

The study included a total of 84 students who received online lessons during the academic year 2020-2021, while in the subsequent academic year of 2021-2022, lessons were conducted in a traditional classroom setting. The findings, as outlined in Table 2, revealed that students rated online classes as somewhat less effective or less effective in terms of the similarity of the structure (69.1%), understanding of the materials (75%), and communication with their instructors (72.6%) as compared to classroom learning. These findings are consistent with previous studies and theoretical research on the effectiveness of online learning [8], [9], [13], [21].

Table 2. Respondents' perceptions towards the effectiveness of online versus classroom learning

| Statements  | Less effective (%) | Somewhat less effective (%) | Equally effective (%) | Somewhat more effective (%) | More effective (%) | Mean  |
|---|--------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------|-------|
| S1 I prefer my online courses as they are very structured with set due dates similar to face-to-face courses      | 39.3               | 29.8                        | 17.9                  | 9.5                         | 3.6                | 2.083 |
| S2 Online classes help me comprehend the course materials compared to classroom learning                          | 40.5               | 34.5                        | 11.9                  | 7.1                         | 6                  | 2.035 |
| S3 The online environment makes it easier for me to communicate with my instructor than the classroom environment | 64.3               | 8.3                         | 8.3                   | 9.5                         | 9.5                | 1.916 |
| S4 I am more comfortable responding to questions by email than orally   | 23.8               | 14.3                        | 17.9                  | 14.3                        | 29.8               | 3.119 |
| S5 My technical skills (email/internet apps) have increased since attending online classes                        | 7.1                | 19                          | 9.5                   | 31.0                        | 33.3               | 3.642 |
| S6 I spend more time on my homework in comparison with regular classroom learning                                 | 14.3               | 11.9                        | 28.6                  | 23.8                        | 21.4               | 3.261 |
| S7 The instructor understands the online environment and makes it easy to learn whereas continuously              | 11.9               | 23.8                        | 23.8                  | 26.2                        | 14.3               | 3.071 |

The results regarding the effectiveness of the respective statements were further confirmed by using the mean value and its rank for each statement associated with the perceived efficacy of online courses when contrasted with traditional classroom instruction. These statements were ranked first, second, third, and fourth, as shown in Table 3. Moreover, the level of significance demonstrated a high level of significance, indicating substantial differences, as presented in Table 4.

Table 3. Friedman rank test (effectiveness of online compared to classroom learning)

|    | Statements  | Mean rank |
|----|---|-----------|
| S1 | I prefer my online courses as they are very structured with set due dates similar to face-to face courses | 3.01      |
| S2 | Online classes help me comprehend the course materials compared to classroom learning                     | 2.89      |
| S3 | Online environment makes it easier for me to communicate with my instructor than classroom environment    | 2.65      |
| S4 | I am more comfortable responding to questions by email than orally  | 4.71      |
| S5 | My technical skills (email/internet apps) has increased since attending online classes                    | 5.34      |
| S6 | I spend more time on my homework in comparison with regular classroom learning                            | 4.87      |
| S7 | Instructor understands the online environment and makes it easy to learn whereas continuums               | 4.52      |

Table 4. Test statistics for Friedman rank test

|             | N       | 84 |
|-------------|---------|----|
| Chi-square  | 157.311 |    |
| df          | 6       |    |
| Asymp. Sig. | 0.000   |    |

### 3.2. Students' perceptions of the interactions, learning experiences, motivation, and familiarity with computer technology during online learning compared to classroom learning

The results, as shown in Table 5, indicated that there were no significant differences in the students' perceptions of the amount of interaction with other students during online learning compared to classroom learning. Concerning the amount of interaction with other students during online classes, 39.3% of the students agreed that it had decreased or somewhat decreased, while the same percentage of students evaluated it as increased or somewhat increased. Similarly, results were observed regarding the quality of interaction with other students, where 35.7% of students agreed that it had decreased or somewhat decreased during online learning, with only a slightly higher percentage of 36.9% of students perceiving it as increased or somewhat increased. Furthermore, the results show that 39.3% and 33.3% of students perceived a decrease or somewhat decrease in the amount and quality of interaction with the instructor during online learning compared to classroom learning. Conversely, a smaller percentage of students reported an increase or somewhat increase in the amount and quality of interaction with the instructor, as reported in previous studies [10], [22].

The results indicate that for the four statements concerning the quantity and quality of interaction with students and instructors during online learning, there was not a high percentage of students who reported an increase or somewhat increase in social interaction. As shown in Table 6, this trend was also confirmed by the mean values and rankings for each statement. The differences between the averages were not significant, as evidenced by the level of significance presented in Table 7.

Table 5. Respondents' perceptions towards social interactions with other students and instructors

|    | Statements                                     | Decreased (%) | Somewhat decreased (%) | No change (%) | Somewhat increased (%) | Increased (%) | Mean |
|----|--|---------------|------------------------|---------------|------------------------|---------------|------|
| S1 | The amount of interaction with other students  | 9.5           | 29.8                   | 21.4          | 27.4                   | 11.9          | 3.02 |
| S2 | The quality of interaction with other students | 13.1          | 22.6                   | 27.4          | 27.4                   | 9.5           | 2.97 |
| S3 | The amount of interaction with the instructor  | 8.3           | 31.0                   | 34.5          | 14.3                   | 11.9          | 2.9  |
| S4 | The quality of interaction with the instructor | 9.5           | 23.8                   | 36.9          | 17.9                   | 11.9          | 2.98 |

Table 6. Friedman rank test (social interaction)

|     | Statements                                     | Mean rank |
|-----|--|-----------|
| S1. | The amount of interaction with other students  | 2.63      |
| S2. | The quality of interaction with other students | 2.51      |
| S3. | The amount of interaction with the instructor  | 2.40      |
| S4. | The quality of interaction with the instructor | 2.46      |

Table 7. Test statistics for Friedman rank test

|             | N     | 84 |
|-------------|-------|----|
| Chi-square  | 2.255 |    |
| df          | 3     |    |
| Asymp. Sig. | 0.521 |    |

### 3.3. Students' approach to the provision of online courses in the future

The results indicate that the majority of students (51.2%) did not agree that online learning should be applied as a teaching method in the future. Nevertheless, it is crucial to acknowledge that a relatively high percentage of students (48.8%) expressed that online courses should be included as part of the learning process in the future, as shown in Table 8. The results presented in Table 9 suggest that there are no significant differences in the student's approach to online learning as part of the teaching process across different courses. However, it is worth noting that students from the third course appear to have a slightly more positive approach towards online courses compared to those from the second course.

Table 8. Frequencies and percentages regarding the use of online courses in the future

| Type of response | Percentage (%) |
|------------------|----------------|
| Yes              | 48.80          |
| No               | 51.20          |
| Total            | 100            |

Table 9. Cross-tabulation for students' approach towards online learning by years

| Course - bachelor in social work | Yes | No | Total |
|----------------------------------|-----|----|-------|
| Second year                      | 18  | 23 | 41    |
| Third year                       | 23  | 20 | 43    |
| Total                            | 41  | 43 | 84    |

The students were asked one open-ended question to better understand their perspective on the adoption of online learning in the future. The viewpoints on the application of online learning in the future were categorized into two sub-themes: positive opinions (yes) and negative opinions (no). Upon transcription, the negative opinions were grouped into three themes: i) physical and psychological consequences for students; ii) lack of effectiveness; and iii) insufficient technical conditions. The analysis of the negative sub-theme regarding the adoption of online learning in the future resulted in a total of five codes for the first theme, six codes for the second, and three codes for the third theme as shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Codes related to negative opinions

| Theme  | Codes   | Percentage (%) |
|--|---|----------------|
| Physical and psychological consequences on students (n=19) | Lack of attention and concentration                 | 36.84          |
|  | Stress  | 15.79          |
|  | Psychological fatigue                               | 15.79          |
|  | Physical fatigue                                    | 10.52          |
|  | Psychological addiction to technology               | 10.52          |
| Lack of effectiveness (n=17)                               | Boredom   | 10.52          |
|  | Lack of interaction                                 | 52.95          |
|  | No progress and productivity in learning            | 11.76          |
|  | Low level of preparation and engagement of students | 11.76          |
|  | Difficulty expressing oneself online                | 11.76          |
| Lack of technical conditions (n=7)                         | Neglecting the learning process                     | 11.76          |
|  | Problems with the app and system                    | 42.86          |
|  | Poor network connectivity                           | 28.57          |
|  | Power cuts  | 28.57          |

A significant portion of students expressed negative views toward the adoption of online learning in the future, with a focus on the physical and psychological consequences for students (n=19, 44.18%). Here are some students' opinions on this topic, S2 stated:

*"In my opinion, online learning does not have any positive qualities. It is very difficult and tiring. Additionally, it makes students more antisocial and dependent on technology."*

In addition, S11 expressed:

*“Online courses should be offered as an opportunity outside the regular educational process, as an additional option. However, not during the educational process because, for me, it has been very psychologically tiring.”*

The main issues raised regarding this statement were mostly related to the lack of attention and concentration (36.84%) and the presence of stress and psychological fatigue (15.79%) during online learning. Additionally, students reported feelings of boredom, physical fatigue, and psychological addiction to technology associated with online learning, each accounting for 10.52%. One student (S22) expressed his view on this issue:

*“I believe that the concentration is not very high, and it does not allow me to focus on the lesson.”*

The analysis of students' views revealed that the lack of effectiveness (n=17) is a significant issue that makes them unsupportive of online courses. Most students who expressed their views on this theme identified the lack of interaction (52.95%) as a major concern. Additionally, the lack of progress and productivity in learning, as well as the low level of preparation and engagement of students, were identified as factors that disadvantage the use of online learning, each accounting for 11.76%. Neglect of the educational process was also considered a factor (11.76%). Some students expressed their views on this subject. For example, S13 stated:

*“Online courses are not more effective; we have less interaction.”*

Additionally, S3 expressed:

*“No, because I believe that students need face-to-face interaction with their teachers as well as with other students. Online learning is entirely closed and does not offer significant skill development in student training.”*

Another factor that some students perceive as a reason for their negative attitude toward online courses is the lack of technical conditions (n=7). They reported facing difficulties with applications and the system, often accompanied by poor or absent network connections and, in some cases, power outages. Several students expressed their views on this issue. For example, student S7 stated:

*“No, because we encounter many typical problems such as a weak network, system issues, power outages, and technical problems.”*

Further, S44 expressed their view:

*“Our country is not sufficiently prepared to offer the technical conditions needed for the development of online learning.”*

Many of these statements are consistent with the results of other previous studies [23]–[26]. On the other hand, positive opinions regarding the use of online learning in the future were gathered under four themes: i) the effectiveness of the educational process; ii) inclusiveness; iii) technological skills; and iv) alternative methods as presented in Table 11. According to the analysis of students' views, the two most important factors that make them support online courses are the effectiveness of the educational process (43.90%) and the ease of communication or comfort (33.33%). Some students also believe that online courses provide greater access to information (16.66%) and allow for higher levels of interaction (11.11%). For instance, student S51 stated:

*“Yes, because it helps students to have more access to the information they need.”*

While S54 stated:

*“In my personal experience, during online learning, I achieved better results, and it was easier for me to express myself compared to classroom learning.”*

Additionally, S57 mentioned that:

*“We express ourselves better with female professors, as there is less emotion.”*

Table 11. Codes related to positive opinions

| Theme   | Codes   | Percentage (%) |
|---|---|----------------|
| The effectiveness of the educational process (n=18, 43.90%) | Facilitating the learning process                                       | 38.88          |
|   | Easier communication/comfort  | 33.33          |
|   | Greater access to information   | 16.66          |
|   | Higher interaction  | 11.11          |
|   | Facilitates students with lower income                                  | 36.36          |
| Inclusiveness (n=11, 26.82%)                                | Higher participation  | 27.27          |
|   | Facilitates working students  | 18.18          |
|   | Facilitates students with health problems                               | 18.18          |
| Technological skills (n=6, 14.63%)                          | Knowledge of different applications                                     | 66.66          |
|   | Computer skills and network interaction with students                   | 33.33          |
| Alternative methods (blended) (n=6, 14.63%)                 | Combining online learning with classroom learning in specific subjects  | 66.66          |
|   | Only online learning for some subjects (such as informatics/statistics) | 33.33          |

Another issue that students consider relevant to the use of online learning is inclusivity (26.82%). They support this idea by arguing that offering online courses would create more opportunities for broader participation in the educational process, particularly for students with lower incomes, health problems, or part-time jobs. Here are some students' opinions on this subject, S38 stated:

*“Yes, because some students face challenges attending school regularly due to economic difficulties, and online learning could facilitate the process.”*

Other positive thoughts reported were related to technological skills acquired by using online classes in the future (14.63%). Four students stated that they would be more capable of using different applications, and two students emphasized that online classes would help them network with other students in the course. Similarly, other studies [27], [28] investigated the students' endorsement of the integration of online learning programs, with a majority considering it a great idea. However, despite these positive elements, considering the issues raised by students, it is important to emphasize the need to pay close attention to certain aspects during the implementation of online learning in the future. Furthermore, employing effective educational strategies will not only motivate and engage learners but also enhance teacher interaction. These tactics enhance students' engagement in educational activities [29]. In this context, the quality of the instructor plays a vital role in determining students' satisfaction with online classes. The effectiveness of the instructor during lectures is crucial for creating a positive learning experience. A skilled and efficient instructor can engage students, and facilitate meaningful interactions, which ultimately enhances student satisfaction with the online course [30]. S31 stated:

*“It is necessary to become more familiar with computer programs, and additional training should be provided in this direction.”*

A percentage of 14.63% of students supported the idea of online learning as an alternative method for the learning process. Among them, some suggested combining online learning with classroom learning for specific subjects (4 students), while others proposed using exclusively online classes for some subjects, such as computer science and statistics (2 students). Regarding these issues, S70 reported:

*“I believe it would be more efficient to alternate between online learning and classroom sessions for certain subjects and tasks that require special attention.”*

Similarly, in other studies, blended learning is also supported. Online learning indeed presents significant opportunities for both teachers and students. It offers flexibility in terms of time and location, allowing students to access education remotely and teachers to reach a wider audience [31]. While flexibility was initially acknowledged for granting access to underserved populations, it has now evolved into a guiding principle that empowers learners to pursue educational opportunities without disrupting other responsibilities they may encounter [32].

#### 4. CONCLUSION

According to the findings, students held both positive and negative perceptions regarding the effectiveness of online learning compared to classroom learning. In general, students rated most statements related to the effectiveness of online courses more favorably than those related to classroom learning. More specifically, students perceived online learning as either more effective or somewhat more effective than

classroom learning in enhancing their technical skills, dedicating more time to homework, feeling more comfortable answering questions via email rather than orally, and regarding instructors' capacity to grasp the virtual setting and streamline the learning platform. However, students reported that the similarity of the structure, understanding of materials, and communication with their instructors during online learning were either less effective or somewhat less effective compared to classroom learning.

While a smaller percentage of students reported an increase or somewhat increase in the amount and quality of interaction with their instructor during online learning, respondents in this study consented that the quality and quantity of interaction with other students stayed consistent, with no statistical differences between them. Based on students' experiences with online learning, it appears that social interaction between students and instructors did not increase compared to classroom learning. The findings clearly indicate that students preferred classroom learning over online learning, with the majority stating that online learning should not be offered as a part of the teaching process in the future. Students supported this negative approach by highlighting that online learning is associated with physical and psychological consequences, including a lack of attention and concentration, stress, psychological fatigue, as well as technical difficulties such as application issues, poor or absent network connections, and frequent power cuts. However, it is important to highlight that a significant number of students exhibit a favorable attitude toward the adoption of online courses. They suggest that online courses should be offered as an alternative way of learning or specifically for different subjects in the curricula. Furthermore, the results showed that online courses can create opportunities for greater inclusiveness, more effective teaching, and increased technological skills among students. These research findings can serve as an evaluation tool for stakeholders, including lecturers and decision-makers, regarding the future implementation of online learning.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The researchers would like to express their gratitude to all the social work students for their time and contributions. Additionally, we extend our thanks to the University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi" for providing financial support to cover the publication fee of the article.

#### REFERENCES




- [1] S. Zaccoletti *et al.*, "Parents' perceptions of student academic motivation during the COVID-19 lockdown: a cross-country comparison," *Frontiers in Psychology*, vol. 11, pp. 592–670, Dec. 2020, doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.592670.
- [2] A. R. Masalimova, M. A. Khvatova, L. S. Chikileva, E. P. Zvyagintseva, V. V. Stepanova, and M. V. Melnik, "Distance learning in higher education during COVID-19," *Frontiers in Education*, vol. 7, p. 822958, Mar. 2022, doi: 10.3389/educ.2022.822958.
- [3] S. Li, C. Zhang, Q. Liu, and K. Tong, "E-learning during COVID-19: perspectives and experiences of the faculty and students," *BMC Medical Education*, vol. 22, no. 1, p. 328, Dec. 2022, doi: 10.1186/s12909-022-03383-x.
- [4] S. Dhawan, "Online learning: a panacea in the time of COVID-19 crisis," *Journal of Educational Technology Systems*, vol. 49, no. 1, pp. 5–22, Sep. 2020, doi: 10.1177/0047239520934018.
- [5] M. Roman and A.-P. Ploeanu, "The effectiveness of the emergency eLearning during COVID-19 pandemic. The case of higher education in economics in Romania," *International Review of Economics Education*, vol. 37, p. 100218, Jun. 2021, doi: 10.1016/j.iree.2021.100218.
- [6] E. Edelhauser and L. Lupu-Dima, "Is romania prepared for e-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic?" *Sustainability*, vol. 12, no. 13, p. 5438, Jul. 2020, doi: 10.3390/su12135438.
- [7] P. Rivera-Vargas, T. Anderson, and C. A. Cano, "Exploring students' learning experience in online education: analysis and improvement proposals based on the case of a Spanish open learning university," *Educational Technology Research and Development*, vol. 69, no. 6, pp. 3367–3389, Dec. 2021, doi: 10.1007/s11423-021-10045-0.
- [8] H. Istiqomah, M. Hatip, H. Fatkurochman, and F. Mufaridah, "Students' perceptions on the implementation of online learning in pandemic era," *ELLITE: Journal of English Language, Literature, and Teaching*, vol. 6, no. 2, pp. 85–91, Dec. 2021, doi: 10.32528/ellipse.v6i2.6163.
- [9] K. Kedraka and C. Kaltsidis, "Effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on university pedagogy: students' experiences and considerations," *European Journal of Education Studies*, vol. 7, no. 8, pp. 17–29, Jul. 2020, doi: 10.46827/ejes.v7i8.3176.
- [10] L. R. Spears, "Social presence, social interaction, collaborative learning, and satisfaction in online and face-to-face courses," Ph.D. dissertation, Iowa State University, United States, 2012.
- [11] H. Atwa *et al.*, "Online, face-to-face, or blended learning? Faculty and medical students' perceptions during the COVID-19 pandemic: A mixed-method study," *Frontiers in Medicine*, vol. 9, no. 3, pp. 791–352, Feb. 2022, doi: 10.3389/fmed.2022.791352.
- [12] M. Adnan, "Online learning amid the COVID-19 pandemic: students perspectives," *Journal of Pedagogical Sociology and Psychology*, vol. 1, no. 2, pp. 45–51, Jun. 2020, doi: 10.33902/JPSP.2020261309.
- [13] M. T. Hebecci, Y. Bertiz, and S. Alan, "Investigation of views of students and teachers on distance education practices during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic," *International Journal of Technology in Education and Science*, vol. 4, no. 4, pp. 267–282, Sep. 2020, doi: 10.46328/ijtes.v4i4.113.
- [14] M. van Wart *et al.*, "Integrating students' perspectives about online learning: a hierarchy of factors," *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, vol. 17, no. 1, p. 53, Dec. 2020, doi: 10.1186/s41239-020-00229-8.
- [15] D. Nambiar, "The impact of online learning during COVID-19: students' and teachers' perspectives," *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 783–793, 2020.
- [16] P. Ananga and I. K. Biney, "Comparing face-to-face and online teaching and learning in higher education," *MIER Journal of Educational Studies Trends and Practices*, vol. 7, no. 2, pp. 165–179, Jan. 2021, doi: 10.52634/mier/2017/v7/i2/1415.






- [17] I. Koçiaj, P. Dhoqina, E. Revani, and D. Brahimaj, "The attitude of high-school students regarding online learning during COVID-19 pandemic situation: the case of Albania," *International Journal of Innovative Technology and Interdisciplinary Sciences*, vol. 4, no. 3, pp. 764–775, 2021, doi: 10.15157/IJTIS.2021.4.3.764-775.
- [18] N. Quka, "Students' impressions of online learning in Albania," *European Journal of Social Science Education and Research*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 55–63, Aug. 2021, doi: 10.26417/523hdx45f.
- [19] P. Xhelili, E. Ibrahim, E. Rruci, and K. Sheme, "Adaptation and perception of online learning during COVID-19 pandemic by Albanian university students," *International Journal on Studies in Education*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 103–111, Jan. 2021, doi: 10.46328/ijonse.49.
- [20] D. Rakaj, "EFL students' perceptions of online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic: a case study," *International Journal of Educational Management and Innovation*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 23–29, Jan. 2022, doi: 10.12928/ijemi.v3i1.4643.
- [21] T. Muthuprasad, S. Aiswarya, K. S. Aditya, and G. K. Jha, "Students' perception and preference for online education in India during COVID-19 pandemic," *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, vol. 3, no. 1, p. 100101, 2021, doi: 10.1016/j.ssaho.2020.100101.
- [22] A. G. Picciano, "Beyond student perceptions: issues of interaction, presence, and performance in an online course," *Online Learning*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 21–40, Mar. 2019, doi: 10.24059/olj.v6i1.1870.
- [23] S. Abbasi, T. Ayoob, A. Malik, and S. I. Memon, "Perceptions of students regarding e-learning during COVID-19 at a private medical college," *Pakistan Journal of Medical Sciences*, vol. 36, pp. S57–S61, May 2020, doi: 10.12669/pjms.36.COVID19-S4.2766.
- [24] W. Bao, "COVID-19 and online teaching in higher education: a case study of Peking University," *Human Behavior and Emerging Technologies*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 113–115, Apr. 2020, doi: 10.1002/hbe2.191.
- [25] Vinayachandra, G. P. K., R. M., and K. P. K., "Students' perception of the effectiveness of technology assisted online education during COVID-19 pandemic: an empirical study," *International Journal of Management, Technology, and Social Sciences*, vol. 6, no. 1, pp. 203–225, Jun. 2021, doi: 10.47992/IJMTS.2581.6012.0141.
- [26] A. Selvaraj, V. Radhin, N. KA, N. Benson, and A. J. Mathew, "Effect of pandemic based online education on teaching and learning system," *International Journal of Educational Development*, vol. 85, p. 102444, Sep. 2021, doi: 10.1016/j.ijedudev.2021.102444.
- [27] J. Demuyakor, "Coronavirus (COVID-19) and online learning in higher institutions of education: a survey of the perceptions of Ghanaian International Students in China," *Online Journal of Communication and Media Technologies*, vol. 10, no. 3, p. e202018, May 2020, doi: 10.29333/ojcm/8286.
- [28] K. V. Elumalai *et al.*, "Factors affecting the quality of e-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic from the perspective of higher education students," *Journal of Information Technology Education: Research*, vol. 19, pp. 731–753, 2020, doi: 10.28945/4628.
- [29] H. Rezaei *et al.*, "Elucidating experiences of faculty members in applying effective teaching strategies in the online class during the COVID-19: a qualitative study," *Journal of Education and Health Promotion*, vol. 12, no. 1, p. 177, 2023, doi: 10.4103/jehp.jehp\_787\_22.
- [30] R. Gopal, V. Singh, and A. Aggarwal, "Impact of online classes on the satisfaction and performance of students during the pandemic period of COVID 19," *Education and Information Technologies*, vol. 26, no. 6, pp. 6923–6947, Nov. 2021, doi: 10.1007/s10639-021-10523-1.
- [31] M. Gupta, "Impact of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic on classroom teaching: challenges of online classes and solutions," *Journal of Education and Health Promotion*, vol. 10, p. 155, 2021, doi: 10.4103/jehp.jehp\_1104\_20.
- [32] G. Veletsianos and S. Houlden, "An analysis of flexible learning and flexibility over the last 40 years of distance education," *Distance Education*, vol. 40, no. 4, pp. 454–468, Oct. 2019, doi: 10.1080/01587919.2019.1681893.

## BIOGRAPHIES OF AUTHORS



**Brilanda Lumanaj**    has a Ph.D. in social work since 2013. She has been a lecturer in the Department of Psychology and Social Work, Faculty of Educational Sciences at the University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi", Albania, since 2006. Dr. Lumanaj's main areas of interest and expertise include social science research, focusing on social services for families, children, and community development issues, as well as higher education. She has been a member of the organizational and scientific committees of various national and international conferences. She is also a member of the Order of Social Work of Albania. She can be contacted at email: [brilanda.lumanaj@unishk.edu.al](mailto:brilanda.lumanaj@unishk.edu.al).



**Fatbardha Osmanaga**    has a Ph.D. in Psychology since 2013 and she received the title of Associate Professor in 2016. She has been a lecturer at the University of Shkodra "Luigj Gurakuqi" since 1998, Department of Psychology and Social Work, Faculty of Educational Sciences. Currently, she is Vice Dean of the Faculty of Educational Sciences. Her academic and research profile includes research related to abnormal behavior and inclusive education. She has been a member of the organizational and scientific committees of various national and international conferences, as well as a member of the editorial boards of several international scientific journals. She is also a member of the Order of Psychologists of Albania and a member of the "Ethnic and Cultural Diversity" Board of the European Federation of Psychologists' Association. She can be contacted at email: [fatbardha.osmanaga@unishk.edu.al](mailto:fatbardha.osmanaga@unishk.edu.al).