

PERCEPTION OF CHANGES IN EDUCATION AND PRODUCTIVITY THROUGH THE EYES OF STUDENTS DURING A PANDEMIC

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Abstract: *The area of research is the view of students of the University of Economics in Bratislava on changes in education and productivity before and during a pandemic. The main goal of the article is to draw attention to the difference in the perception of education and related productivity through the eyes of these full-time students before and during the global pandemic. In this publication, we use various methods, analysis and synthesis in all phases of problem solving. Furthermore, induction, deduction and method of comparison. Finally, we use a quantitative method through a standardized online questionnaire. The result will be the evaluation of three established hypotheses resulting from the questionnaire and their subsequent possible application for the university.*

Keywords: perception, education, productivity, students, pandemic

1 INTRODUCTION

As many as 90% of all pupils and students (1.5 billion) worldwide were affected by the closure of educational institutions in response to the halting of the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 [11]. This situation has led many scientists to show interest in how the forced transition to distance learning has affected teachers and students. During the last year 2020, many national and international studies were carried out on the study of various aspects of the transition to distance education and their implementation. Most research deals with either academic work and life [5] or students' mental health [7] [12], or a combination of these two topics [9].

Studies on the psychological effects of a pandemic suggest that it is young people who are particularly sensitive to the effects of a pandemic, which has an impact on their mental health [10]. Based on the age of the students, this is understandable as they are in the developmental phase. This is manifested by the sensitive and vulnerable response of the individual to uncertainties and changes in life [1]. Due to the above facts, the COVID-19 crisis may have taken them by surprise.

Attention should be drawn to the fact that study, and therefore schools and universities, play a major role in students' lives. Under normal conditions, they spent every day in schools and universities, made social contacts, were subconsciously motivated to do so by a team or teachers, and in their free time they met with friends they had made in schools. These facts affect all other aspects of students' daily routines. Many of them had to make fundamental changes, such as moving back to their parents, staying powerless abroad due to closed borders [4]. Among other things, maintaining the right productivity and performance is not easy from the home environment. It was necessary to find one's own motivation and focus on education [2].

Based on the above facts, we decided to examine changes in the perception of students of the University of Economics in Bratislava, especially in the field of education and productivity during a world pandemic. All the above categories are closely linked.

2 METHODOLOGY

The main goal of the article is to draw attention to the difference in the perception of education and related productivity through the eyes of students of the University of Economics in Bratislava before and during the global pandemic.

We build on many other studies in this area. The article contains several research methods such as analysis and synthesis of text and secondary data, as well as induction and deduction. The main research method used is the quantitative method through a standardized questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed online to students of the University of Economics in Bratislava.

Graphs and tables are shown in the article to provide a better understanding to readers. They help to understand the nature and interpretation of the results that this article offers.

The partial goal is to correspond to the established hypotheses:

- H1: We assume that most students prefer the distance form of education in the future within the Education indicator.
- H2: We assume that the majority of students within the Education indicator changed their view of all activities related to education during a pandemic.
- H3: We assume that the majority of students were affected by the change in the Productivity indicator - their working status changed.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The most important part is the quantitative collection of data through online questionnaires. Every effective implementation of quantitative research consists in the systematic collection of data through questionnaires [6]. His work consists of correctly formulated sets of questions and uniqueness of answers and their subsequent arrangement so that they serve to analyse the data and can be used to interpret the results obtained [3]. The current situation in the world affected by the pandemic is forcing us to move into the online environment, and therefore we are seeing more and more studies conducted on the basis of online questionnaires.

3.1 Description of the questionnaire

The author defines a questionnaire as a set of written or oral questions to which the respondent is subject or to which he must answer in writing or orally [8]. The respondents of the questionnaire are full-time students of the University of Economics in Bratislava. The selected research sample consists of 100 people aged 18 to 25 years. The questionnaire was distributed online, filled in by 62% of women and 38% of men. As many as 57% of students have a part-time job. The monthly income for 53% of students is up to 400 euros, for the others more - up to 1200 euros. Students completed the questionnaire at a time when the third wave of the pandemic had begun around us and their teaching process continued online. We used the following questions to verify the established hypotheses:

Perception of quality of life before a pandemic:

Question 1a: How did you perceive within the indicator Education - activities related to education?

Question 2a: How did you perceive within the indicator Education - activities related to education in the field focused on practice?

Question 3a: Which form of education suits you better with a view to the future?

Question 4a: Within the Productivity indicator - do you perform work activities?

Perception of quality of life during a pandemic:

Question 1b: Has your perception of the Education indicator - activities related to education during the pandemic changed?

Question 2b: To what extent has your perception of the Education indicator - activities related to education changed during a pandemic?

Question 3b: To what extent has your perception of the Productivity indicator changed - Do you work during a pandemic?

3.2 Hypothesis verification

Based on the answered online questionnaire, we came to the evaluation and verification of the hypotheses.

H1: We assume that the majority of students within the Education indicator changed their view of all activities related to education during a pandemic.

Before the pandemic:

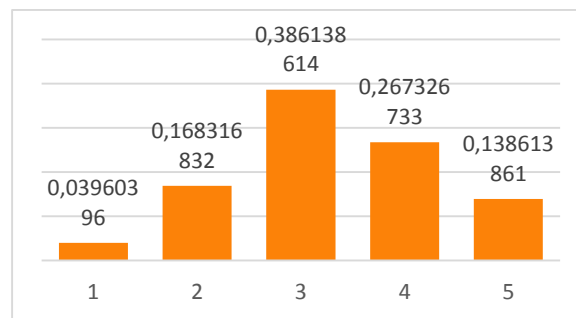


Figure 1 How did you perceive within the indicator Education - activities related to education?

Source: Own processing

On a scale from 1 to 5, students had the opportunity to rate a question. The first graph (before the pandemic) shows that they were most satisfied with the activities related to education at the level of well - 38.6%, the golden mean. Only 4% of students rated this category as excellent.

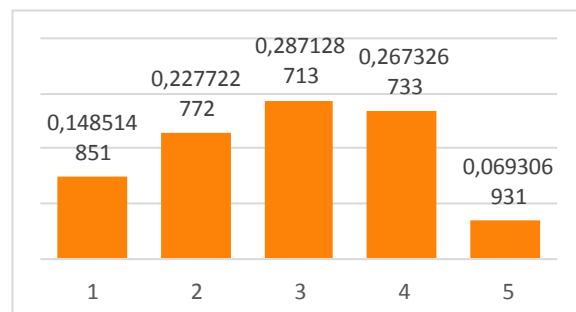


Figure 2 How did you perceive within the indicator Education - activities related to education in the field focused on practice?

Source: Own processing

The same graph as the first one, the only change is in the question concerning educational activities in the field focused on practice. The result is a positive evaluation, most students - 28.7% rated this area as well performed. Another up to 14.9% rated the activities as excellent.

During a pandemic:

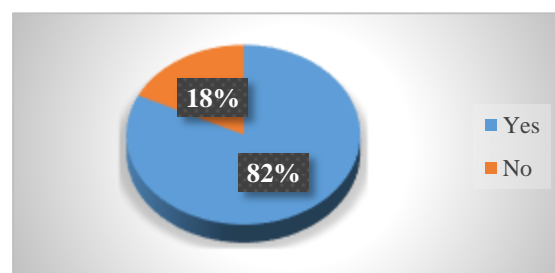


Figure 3 Has your perception of the Education indicator - activities related to education during the pandemic changed?

Source: Own processing

As many as 82.2% of respondents stated that their perception of educational activities during a pandemic had changed. There were no changes in perception for the rest.

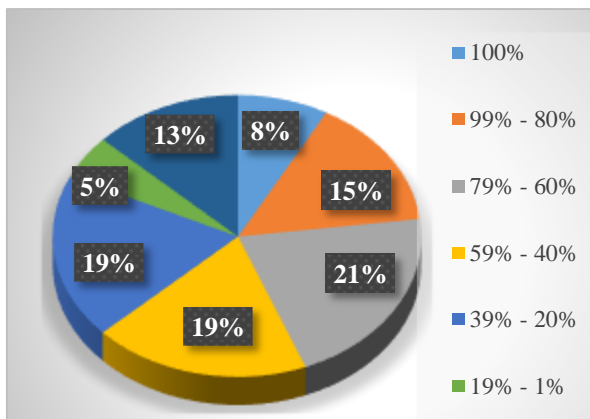


Figure 4 To what extent has your perception of the Education indicator - activities related to education changed during a pandemic?

Source: Own processing

Only a few students (8%) changed their perception of educational activities by 100% during the pandemic. The most significant changes in perception occurred in two categories: 21% of students marked the change on a scale of 60% -79%, with a small decrease 19% of students selected on a scale of 40% -59% and the same scale of 20%-39%. The perception of this indicator did not change at all in 13% of respondents.

The hypothesis was clearly confirmed, 82.2% of students changed their perception of educational activities during a pandemic. Detailed changes in perception are noted above.

H2: We assume that most students prefer the distance form of education in the future within the Education indicator.

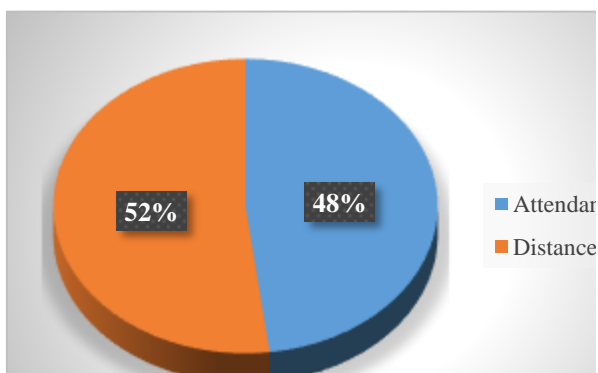


Figure 5 Which form of education suits you better with a view to the future?

Source: Own processing

Only a small difference (4%) divides students into those who prefer full-time teaching and want to return to the university (48%) between those who would prefer to stay in the distance form of study, so they prefer the online environment (52%).

The hypothesis was confirmed, the online form of study with the young generation at universities is gradually coming to the fore.

H3: We assume that the majority of students were affected by the change in the Productivity indicator - their working status changed.

Before the pandemic:

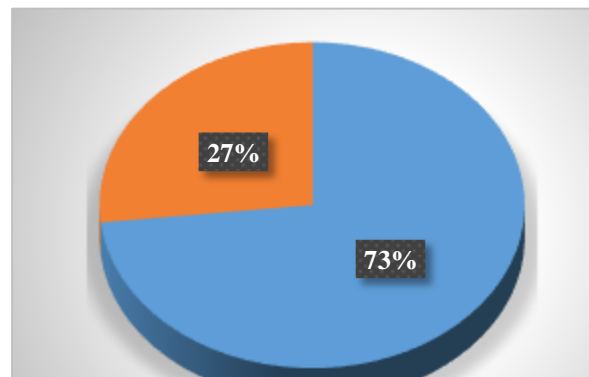


Figure 6 Within the Productivity indicator - do you perform work activities?

Source: Own processing

Here it is possible to observe that most full-time students pursue work in addition to school. As many as 73.3% of respondents work, in most cases brigades.

During a pandemic:

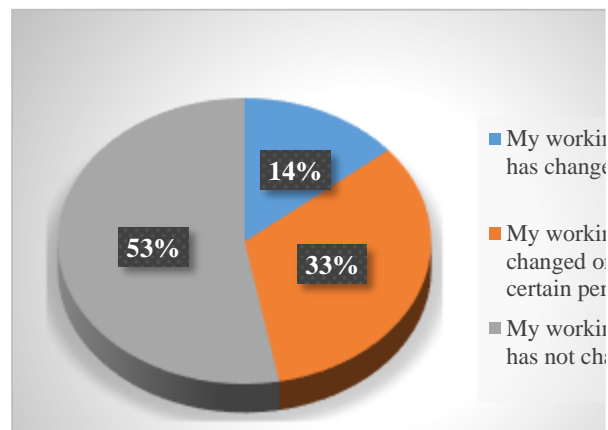


Figure 7 To what extent has your perception of the Productivity indicator changed - Do you work during a pandemic?

Source: Own processing

The following result is a positive fact. More than half (53%) of students did not change their working condition during the pandemic. A significant 33% changed their working condition, but only temporarily. The change occurred in 14% of respondents.

This hypothesis has not been confirmed. Changes in the labour market during the pandemic affected people on a permanent basis rather than part-time workers.

4 CONCLUSION

The aim of the article was to draw attention to full-time students of the University of Economics in Bratislava and their differences in the perception of education and productivity before and during the pandemic. We used various methods to meet the goal, especially it was a quantitative method using a standardized online questionnaire. We had set three hypotheses, two of which were confirmed and one was refuted.

There have been fundamental changes in the field of education. University students switched to the distance form of education. One of the hypotheses was the students' opinion on this form of teaching in the future. Most respondents would be able to imagine and prefer permanent online learning. So far, it remains on a theoretical level. The hypothesis concerning educational activities had a positive evaluation. Respondents evaluate such activities at the university mostly at a good level. However, this does not mean that there is nothing to improve. It is just a well-established foundation on which to constantly build (create new activities by the university). The hypothesis related to productivity, i.e. the work of students alongside the school, was not confirmed. We assumed that the labour market was hit by a pandemic as well as other sectors. However, part-time students (a form of brigade) refuted our claim. It follows that the pandemic did not hit temporary workers as significantly as people working on other possible jobs.

Based on the above facts, it follows that universities should move forward and think about the issue of distance education in the future. Nor should they lag behind with other educational activities and should adapt and adapt to the online environment in every way.

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