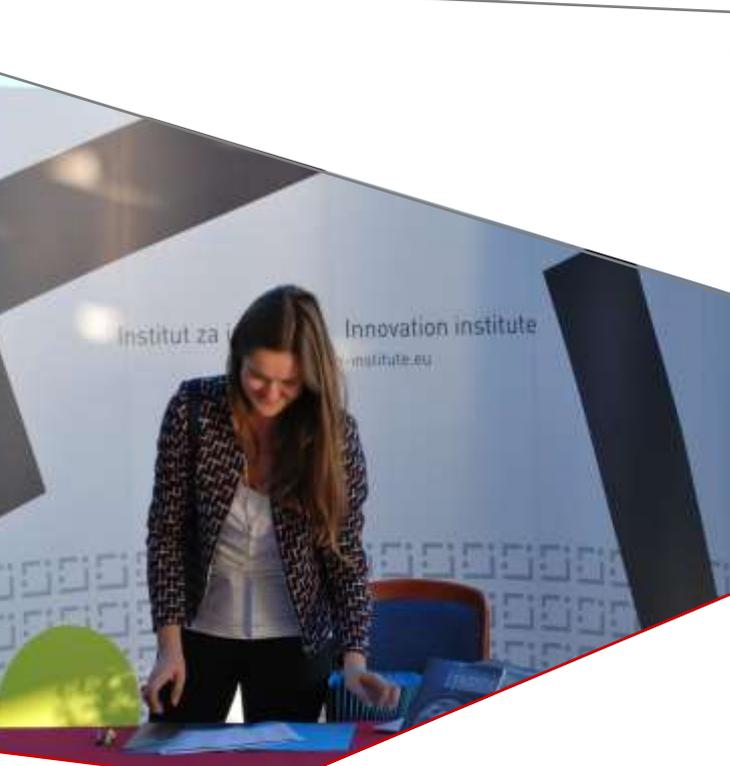


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Zoran Krupka, PhD
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Nurses Group Dynamics Test (NGDT) for Screening Applicants to Nursing Studies

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Abstract

Due to the high demand for nurses in Western countries, nursing education institutions are under pressure to train students who will be able to join the work force immediately upon graduation. To this end, effective applicant screening is necessary. Research shows that cognitive abilities are not sufficient to predict success in the field of nursing and that non-cognitive and non-academic abilities are also of major importance. The Nurses Group Dynamics Test (NGDT) was developed to assess these abilities.

The current study examines the ability of the NGDT to predict success in the first year of nursing studies. Data were collected for all first-year nursing students (N=70) at two time points—nursing school registration and end of first year of studies. Entrance data included grade point average (GPA), psychometric entrance exam score (PET) and NGDT score. End-of-year data included average end-of-year grade and clinical experience grade.

The results indicate that the NGDT has high predictive validity both for average end-of-year grade and for clinical experience grade. Indeed, its predictive validity is higher than that of other measures (PET, GPA).

The results reinforce the prevalent view today that in addition to the customary cognitive measures, nursing school candidates should be screened according to non-cognitive and non-academic measures. The findings show that the NGDT is a suitable tool for screening nursing school candidates.

Keywords

Nurses Group Dynamics Test (NGDT), non-cognitive skills, student selection, predictive validity, student nurse success

The Educational Process in Higher Education in the Era of Covid-19 - Students' Views

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Abstract

Greek public administration was forced to adapt to the demands of e-government in a violent but also immediate way. Actions that had not been completed for decades were carried out in a very short period of time. Public administration adapted to the demands of the 4th Industrial Revolution, globalization and the pandemic. The exact same thing happened to the educational process, especially in the field of higher education. The institutional framework determined and still determines that it is necessary that courses of all levels be conducted on a face-to-face basis, while only a certain proportion of courses in postgraduate studies programmes can be conducted by the distance learning method.

University of Thessaly played a leading part in these actions and contributed to the realization and completion of the courses according to the initial programming through the use of a special platform. In this article, the views of male and female students of University of Thessaly on the educational process in the era of the pandemic are recorded, while recommendations are made for its improvement. Furthermore, the main conceptual approaches to the issue of distance learning are presented.

The conclusions are particularly significant and, whatever their utilization may be, can substantially contribute to the upgrading of the educational process in higher education.

Keywords

Asynchronous learning, distance learning, synchronous learning, pandemic, higher education

COVID-19 has messed up our whole life!
(Extract from a female student's interview)

1. Introduction

Distance learning, synchronous and asynchronous, was established in a violent way in Greek education, due to COVID-19 and the implemented technological changes. Professor Spinnelis (2020) argues that a great many significant strides that had not been made over the last decades, were made in electronic government and digital transformation in spring 2020. These strides had to do with the organizations, as well as the citizens, and finally the maturity of all the stakeholders (SEV, 2019). Citizens corresponded to the changes in a satisfying way and gained access to many public administration services. Through the use of new technologies, public administration reduced administrative bureaucracy to a significant degree making its services function in order to provide a faster service to citizens, while its modernization proved satisfactory.

In this framework, Greek Higher Education Institutions acted accordingly and assisted, so that the courses were conducted by the synchronous and asynchronous distance learning method during the spring semester of the academic year 2019-2020. The University of Thessaly corresponded immediately and in a very short period of time formed the appropriate conditions, so that the courses could start at both undergraduate and postgraduate level right after the initial announcements of the Greek government. Almost all courses of all the Faculties and Departments were and are still conducted by this method and through the use of popular platforms. Nonetheless, what are the students' views on the new conditions in the era of the 4th Industrial Revolution, Globalization and the Pandemic, given the fact that in Greek reality and especially at undergraduate level distance learning has not been established?¹

2. Conceptual Definitions

The Constitution (article 16, paragraph 5, section 1) determines that *“Education at university level shall be provided exclusively by institutions which are fully self-governed public law legal persons. These institutions shall operate under the supervision of the State and are entitled to financial assistance from it; they shall operate on the basis of statutorily enacted by-laws. Merging or splitting of university level institutions may take place notwithstanding any contrary provisions, as a law shall provide”*. The Greek educational system is considered and actually is centralized, and is regulated by many institutional texts that do not allow latitude and initiatives on the part of educational executives. The competent Ministry makes all the decisions and forms the strategic educational policies. These policies must be characterized by vision and long-term planning (Leviakangas et al., 2016).

¹ I would like to express my very great appreciation to Pouliana Louisa, BA Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, MA University of Westminster, for her valuable and constructive suggestions during the planning and development of this research work.

According to 2018 surveys, Greece was the last country in the EU with regard to digital skills both in entrepreneurship and in the general population. This ground was gained to a great extent due to the pandemic of COVID-19. This research present that regarding public administration and *“notwithstanding the high investments and the important projects implemented over the last years mainly in the context of community support frameworks, Greece is left lagging behind in matters of electronic government, mostly as a result of the lack of continuity in Public Administration, the absence of a long-term vision for the digital transformation of the state and the significant delays or/and deficiencies in planning regarding projects of key importance”* (SEV, 2019, p. 10).

The Ministry of Interior reports that “Electronic Government (eGovernment) relates to the modernization of the State and Public Administration, using Information and Communication Technologies, to radically transform the existing procedures and upgrade the services provided to services of added value, so that Administration can become more effective and more efficient, thus ensuring the satisfaction of society’s requirements and promoting active citizen participation” (http://minadmin.ypes.gr/?page_id=12126).

Microsoft defines that digital transformation “is about redesigning how you bring together people, data, and processes. A digital transformation strategy focusing on these three pillars will help you create value for your customers and maintain a competitive advantage” (https://www.microsoft.com/elgr/digitaltransformation/?wt.mc_id=AID680543_QSG_OLA_2_22213).

Many studies have recently been presented relating to the COVID-19 outbreak at global and European level. In Italy the first emergence of the virus was recorded on 20th February 2020 in Lombardy, followed by its extremely rapid spreading with disastrous effects (Livingston, 2020). Setiawan (2020) refers to the initial outbreak of the pandemic in the city of Wuhan, China, in December 2019, as well as the spreading of the virus in Asian countries. In the same article, a corresponding research is presented, which was carried out involving 35 primary students engaging in distance learning due to COVID-19. The study proved the lack of students’ education on ICT issues. In his research, Sahu (2020) refers to the psychological impact of the pandemic on the lives of students and academic staff in relation to the use of new technologies. Illanes and others (2020) refer to the need of creating a distance learning nerve center functioning within universities and coordinating the relevant actions. Finally, Tsiotas and others (2020) record and present the policies implemented by the Greek state to combat the pandemic.

According to the EU, the COVID-19 outbreak in member-states of the EU disrupted the usual provision of the educational activity. Online tools serve different educational purposes, such as connecting educators and learners when in separate locations, accessing information and environments not usually available in every home or institution, and finally supporting continued professional development of the participants in the educational process. Online platforms can be used to ensure continuity in education activities (https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/coronavirus-online-learning-resources_el; <https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/covid-19>).

Distance learning is facilitated by educational communication means requiring the minimum or at least the mixed interpersonal connection between teacher and student. It is divided into synchronous and asynchronous learning. Synchronous learning refers to the immediate instruction/ transmission of learning in real time through an online platform. Asynchronous learning refers to the instruction during which students cooperate with their teachers at a different time from the learning delivery process or the creation process of the necessary material by the teachers (via eclass) (<https://mathainoumestospiti.gov.gr/schetika/>).

The experience so far was restricted to the use of eclass (asynchronous learning) in the context of the organization of the educational process. The Hellenic Open University (EAP) was the only university of all in Greece that had relevant experience. The rest of the universities organized and are still organizing postgraduate studies programmes, a small proportion of which is conducted by the distance learning method. In order to meet the increased needs of the educational process, many online learning platforms were utilized. The creation of specialized virtual learning systems provides teachers with all the necessary potential so as to adapt teaching methods to the new era needs.

3. Research Methodology

The research adopted the qualitative method and used the methodological tool of the semistructured interview. The qualitative method is appropriate for small-field research, where the research hypotheses have not been adequately analyzed by the scientific community (Adler et al., 2018; Bryman, 2008). The particular method allows an in-depth analysis of the process. In the attempt of understanding the specific issue, qualitative research enables us to realize the changes effected (Babie, 2018).

The research is small-scale due to lack of resources. One hundred semistructured interviews were conducted by using an e-learning platform, each lasting 10 minutes. The participants were students of the Undergraduate Studies Programme in Business Administration of the University of Thessaly, who are the ones mostly subjected to the current changes. The students were asked to answer six questions, specifically: "What are the consequences of establishing distance learning in your life", "What are the psychological consequences of the new way of the educational process", "Present the advantages and disadvantages of the new form of education", "What are the main problems you faced", "Make suggestions regarding the issue", and finally "What are the psychological consequences of the pandemic and the new reality". In the end, they could also report whatever else they considered necessary. During the interview, the necessary clarifications were provided by the interviewer. Moreover, the written approval on the part of the respondents was granted regarding their participation in the research (Adler et al., 2018; Zafeiropoulos, 2015; Saunders et al., 2014).

The interview can contribute to a substantive dialogue and depends to a great extent on the interviewer's empathy and perception. When the interviewer possesses these skills, s/he helps the interviewee to express himself/herself freely and explain even further what s/he says (Adler et al., 2018; Babie, 2018).

The results of the research are indicative and in no way representative of the views and perceptions of all male and female students. The research constitutes a first exploratory attempt, which could evolve into a broader nationwide research. The research is necessary to be generalized to the total of universities (AEI), and be repeated on a larger sample of respondents on a regular basis even after the end of the pandemic. In any case, it is necessary that the validity of the conclusions and the reliability of the results be tested. The participants in the research highlighted as the main concerns of the new era the lack of interpersonal contact (with their teachers, as well as their fellow students), the quality of the course, technology, and last but not least, psychological issues. It is worth noting that all the submitted data and answers were used exclusively for the specific research.

4. Presentation of Results

The research was conducted from the end of April till the first days of May 2020. The participants were students of the Undergraduate Studies Programme in Business Administration of the University of Thessaly. The students aged 19-23 attended the 2nd and 4th year of their studies. Some of them were older, because they attended a second degree. They came from all over Greece.

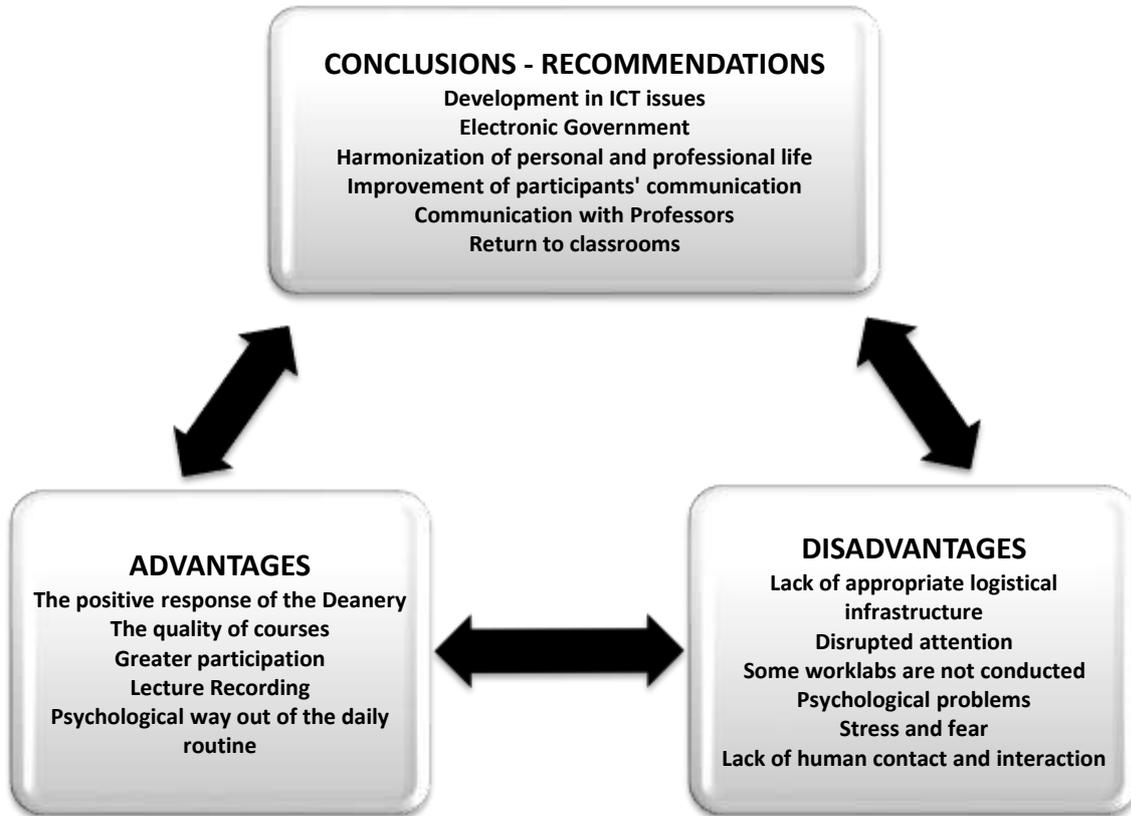
Gleaning the answers, it appears that all students recognized the efforts of the Senate of the University of Thessaly to immediately meet the requirements and needs created in a violent way by the pandemic. They considered that the quality of courses was maintained at a satisfactory level corresponding with that of the face-to-face courses, due to the experience of most Professors. The courses were interactive and the assignments were given within a very short period of time. Furthermore, they considered as an advantage the fact that participation was feasible even for those that could not take part in the face-to-face courses for diverse reasons (job, army, distance, etc.), having thus the chance to complete their studies. Moreover, they could watch the lecture later on in case of recording. In this way, they saved time and money and organized their schedule as they wished. Finally, they thought that the courses contributed to offering a psychological way out and facing the problems of the new daily routine. A female student characteristically stated that "Since we 'Stay home', being able to maintain contact with the teachers/fellow students and continue the courses at school was significant so as to 'fill' the time and not feel that our whole life is put on hold".

Regarding the disadvantages of distance learning, they included the lack of appropriate logistical infrastructure at home, technical problems especially appearing in the first few days, while others stated that their attention was disrupted. They also stressed that some courses and special work labs were not conducted due to their particularity. Moreover, they could not express their queries due to technical problems. They also noted the inability of teachers to check which students consistently attended each lecture.

Finally, most of the participants highlighted the psychological dimension of the issue as well. More specifically, they mentioned the stress induced by confinement and the newly formed conditions, the feeling of "imprisonment" (even though they realized that it was effected for the protection of public health), the consequences of the lack of interpersonal contact with their Professors, as well as their fellow students. A sufficient number of students stated that

they also faced health problems as a result of the excessive use of computers (headaches, dizziness, hearing problems, etc.).

Diagram 1: The results of the research



Source: Personal data processing

They also highlighted the psychological side-effects on their performance due to fear. A respondent characteristically answered that “the conditions of confinement in a state of asymmetric threat to health, in combination with the social and emotional isolation are factors that do not favor learning. Moreover, I think (based on experience) that interaction with fellow students and teachers alike in face-to-face instruction is irreplaceable”. Another respondent stated that “Generally, nowadays we tend to do everything electronically, but I firmly believe that education should not be effected in this way... the interaction effected in the classroom cannot be achieved via any kind of online platform”. Finally, a third one stated that “since confinement I have not been able to gradually respond fully to everything I would like to or in the way I would like to. It is extremely difficult for a person to suddenly be cut off from human contact and learn to depend more on technological means than human interaction, along with the feeling of imprisonment, since all our actions are monitored and patronized. This pandemic, due to circumstances, has induced great fear to people and consequently a bad psychology, which affects us to a great degree”.

5. Conclusions

All countries need to review their strategies now.
(Dr. M. J. Ryan, WHO Informal Advisory Group Member)

It appears that all male and female students were pleased with the immediate response of the University of Thessaly to meet the demands of the specific time period. It was characteristically reported that “the response of the competent bodies in relation to the way the courses were conducted during the COVID-19 period, was very rapid, which surprised me in a positive way”. Moreover, they were pleased with the standard and quality of the courses, as well as most of the teachers.

The urgent need that arose contributed to knowledge improvement in computer science and communication issues. One of the respondents characteristically noted that these conditions helped, so that “we could develop regarding technology and at last learn to work in other more modern ways”. The respondents stressed that they realized in depth the significance of electronic government”.

From the answers given, it appears that the harmonization of personal and professional life through teleworking and distance learning may be just a myth. A female student characteristically stated that “as a mother, a teacher, a computer scientist and a student, I may say that this time period is one of the busiest of my life”.

The main recommendations, resulting from the respondents’ views, are the following (National Reform Programme, 2020):

- Teachers should maintain the previous contact with the students or/and increase it.
- All the participants should overcome the noises in communication and the message should be reciprocally conveyed to the participants.
- It is necessary that a better understanding among teachers be established regarding the scheduling of the courses timetable, so that teaching course hours do not coincide.
- It is necessary that an even greater improvement of the communication among participants during the educational process be achieved, as well as the improvement in the attitude of teachers in relation to the students’ workload.
- The classic form of the educational process is necessary to be maintained, so that personal contact is not lost, as well as the motive of positive competition.
- Further harmonization of personal and professional life is necessary to be pursued, so that all stakeholders can participate in distance learning without any distractions.
- Training through specialized seminars on the use of special platforms is deemed necessary.
- The State should provide the appropriate logistical infrastructure to the financially unprivileged or the residents of remote areas, and also promote the attendance of specialized seminars on distance learning. At the same time, the Internet connection is necessary to be upgraded.
- The Universities in the framework of self-governance and in cooperation with the State can use distance learning for the improvement of the quality of education and the facilitation of access to it for people with Special Needs as well. The University of Thessaly actively participates in these actions.

As Claudine Gay, Professor at Harvard University, stated, “we of course remain committed to academic continuity, but we cannot proceed as if nothing has changed. Everything has changed” (<https://harvardmagazine.com/2020/04/harvard-arts-and-sciences-freezes-faculty-hiring>).

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Attitudes of Arab Teachers Teaching in Private Bilingual Schools towards Arab Public School Education in Israel: 'Disappointment' with Arab Public School Education

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Abstract

This research presents the disappointment of Arab teachers in Israel who teach in bilingual (private) schools with Arab public school education. Their disappointment developed after their continuous exposure to the teaching methods, quality of studies, and emphasis on the development of the student's personality and personal identity. The research population consisted of twelve Arab teachers, who have more than five years of experience in bilingual education. The research question examines the teachers' attitudes towards Arab public school education in terms of teachers, pedagogy and quality of teaching, and development of the Arab student's identity. The research finds among all the teachers very great disappointment in all respects – educational and pedagogical, deficient development of the student's personality in personal, social, and identity terms, attitude to the teachers, and achievements. The research concludes that it is necessary to cultivate the Arab public school system, change the methods of teaching from traditional to student-centered teaching, advance the quality of teaching, and adjust the teaching to the needs of the Arab student and not the needs of the Israeli establishment. Furthermore, it is necessary to promote teacher training colleges and quality of the development of the Arab teacher as an educational and academic "leader".

1. Introduction

This article will attempt to focus on the reasons for the disappointment of the Arab teachers who teach in the bilingual schools with Arab public school education as indicated by the interviews with the Arab teachers. The next section will present a short background on the Arab minority in Israel and its education system, which has suffered from exclusion since the establishment of the state. The following section presents the research, then the article presents the findings and last a conclusion.

2. Review of the Literature

2.1. The Palestinian Arab minority in Israel: background

The State of Israel, established in 1948, is a Jewish state in the sense that most of the citizens are Jewish (people), it serves as the nation state of the Jews (nation), and has a Jewish affiliation (religious), which is expressed in the assimilation of parts of Jewish religious law into the state law (Zilbersheid, 2009). After the 1948 War, the Nakba, the Palestinian Arab population, the majority until 1948, became the minority (Alhaj, 1988). This minority constitutes about 20% of the citizens of Israel (Haj Yahia & Arar, 2014) and continues to live in Israel (Ghanem & Mustafa, 2009; Saadi, 1997). This minority is a national and linguistic minority (Smootha, 2004), in which there is an additional division according to religion: 82% Muslims, 9% Christians, and 9% Druse (Saar, 2007). Since the Palestinian Arabs became a minority in the State of Israel, there has been structural tension between majority and minority. The civilian integration processes did not conceal the interest of the Arab population in expressing its national uniqueness in the face of the attempt of the Israeli governments to blur its national features (Maza, 2016).

2.2. The Israeli education system, its core program, and the Palestinian minority

The State Education Law arranges the structure of state education in Israel into two main sectors: state education and state religious education. The state religious education sector incorporates Jewish religious values, which were an inseparable part of the historical identity of the people of Israel (Gross, 2004). In Israel there is a division into a Jewish education system and an Arab education system (Mari, 1978). While the State Education Law emphasizes the cultivation of the Jewish identity and values, it does not determine any parallel objectives in Arab education in Israel, although there were attempts in the 1970s-1980s to do so in committees headed by Jewish educators (Al-Haj, 1995). In the Arab education system in Israel, the language of instruction is Arabic. There are four subsectors: Arab, Druse, Circassian, and Bedouin. Every subsector has a unique curriculum (Mayan, 2018).

The basic goals of the core program are to maintain social stability and preserve the cultural uniqueness that characterizes the groups in the country (Rottenberg, 2006). Two of the goals of the core program in Israel were to influence the collective identity of Israeli society and to assimilate values of unity and social cohesion (National Task Force for the Promotion of Education in Israel). However, given the political reality in Israel, the core studies exclude the Arabs and the Ultra-Orthodox Jews, groups that threaten the hegemony of the dominant class

(Markman & Yonah, 2009). Therefore, in the present situation of the education system in Israel, it is impossible to crystallize a core program shared by Arabs and Jews. The educational discourse in Israel bases on the principle to cultivate educational values according to the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state (Bargouti, 2011).

Arab education thus is a victim of Israeli pluralism since the Jewish majority manages it, and the authorities determine the curricula, without the involvement of many Arabs, if any. The involvement of Arabs does not go beyond the writing or translation of books and study materials according to the painstakingly defined guidelines and does not pass the boundary of the actualization of the policy of the majority (Mari, 1978). The education system in Israel does not perceive the Palestinian Arab sector as a legitimate element. Although Israeli society is a pluralistic society, Israel intentionally has not created a common basis for true multicultural education and in the meantime has missed an opportunity of exposing Jewish students to Arab culture (Abu Saad, 2007).

2.3. Israel and educational rights for its Palestinian minority

As a native, national, cultural, religious, and linguistic minority that has suffered and is still suffering from discrimination and deprivation on a collective basis, the Arab minority in Israel has the right to assert its collective right to education (Abas, 2004, in Jabareen & Agbaria, 2010). While the State of Israel respects the right of the Arab population to have an education system in Arabic, the right to education in the mother tongue does not fulfill the rights of minorities in the field of education, such as the right to have cultural-educational autonomy, in order to maintain and develop the cultural-natural heritage and identity (Rabin, 2002). Although the State Education Law (1953) defines the state education system in Israel as well as the objectives of the system, it does so only in Jewish terms and for Jewish students. The language of the law almost completely ignores the collective educational interests of the Palestinian-Arab citizens in Israel (Jabareen, 2006).

Israeli legislation has yet to recognize explicitly the right of the Arab minority to influence education, not as a private right but as a group right, despite the trend in the legal discourse to adjust the education system to the multicultural reality in Israel. The law gives nearly absolute governmental freedom of action to the Ministry of Education, and it controls the Arab education system in a significantly centralized manner, both on the school level, for example, in terms of teacher employment and educational goals and curricula (Al-Haj, 2001), and on the level of the college of teacher training (Agbaria & Jabareen, 2015). All schools in Arab society in Israel act under the supervision and with the financing of the Ministry of Education and are affiliated to some degree with the state education sector. This affiliation is expressed today primarily through the guidance and management staffs in the districts, the general and professional supervisors of the Ministry of Education, and the small headquarters units in the internal subdivision that exists today as subsectors in Arab education (Abu Asba, 2007).

The formulation of the state goals completely ignored the Arab students, and it is clear that the goals of education serve the majority group and intend to promote exclusively the Jewish national agenda (Abu-Nimer, 2001). While the focus of the Jewish education system is Zionist and national, the Arab education system lacks any Palestinian Arab content. The Arab

education system attempts to strengthen the cultural-religious component instead of Arab-national component, since the perception is that the Israel Arabs constitute a potential security risk for instability (Abu Asba, 2005). The contents of the curriculum in the Arab schools deny the Palestinian Arab identity and culture and emphasize Zionist Jewish values, which reinforces naturally the sense of deprivation of Arab students and teachers and causes steadily increasing alienation (Golan-Agon, 2004). "The Arab education system aspires to shape the unique Israeli Arab, which is disconnected from the original national and cultural roots, related in an inextricable relationship to the Arab world and the Palestinian world" (Mari, 1978). The intention of the contents of the Arab education system was to weaken the Palestinian Arab identity and to create a submissive Arab who is willing to accept his inferiority versus Jewish supremacy (Al-Haj, 1996).

Significant gaps persist between Arab education and Jewish education (Hadad, 2018). The gaps in budgets between Jewish and Arab society are apparent in the lack of structures, study classes, laboratories, and sports facilities, as well as the poorer standard of these in Arab education (Hadad, 2018). Despite consistent improvement, the level of achievements in Arab education is far lower than that in Jewish education. A large gap exists in the percentage of eligibility for the high school matriculation certification between the two systems. The phenomenon of dropping out continues to be especially severe among Arab high school students, more than among Jewish ones. Within Arab education, there is difference in achievements between the private schools, mostly Christian, and the state public schools. While the cost of the private Christian schools is high, the student's chances of earning a high school matriculation certification and acceptance into the university are higher (Reches, 2007). Thus, a most influential factor on the student level of achievement is the parent economic level (Hadad, 2018). Education is a significant part of life, enabling the person to fulfill abilities, shape perceptions, build social awareness, and make personal and professional decisions. Therefore, it is necessary to research all aspects of education, and the objective of present research was to examine teachers' attitudes towards Arab public school education.

3. Research

3.1. Research question

What are the teachers' attitudes towards Arab public school education in terms of teachers, pedagogy and quality of teaching, and development of the Arab student's identity?

3.2. Research respondents

The research conducted interviews with twelve teachers² from three bilingual schools of the Hand-in-Hand Association. The teachers, who have at least five years of teaching experience, teach in the bilingual school:

- Four teachers from the Galil School in the north of Israel.
- Five teachers from the Max Rayne School in Jerusalem.
- Three teachers from the Bridge over the Wadi School in Kfar Kara.

² All names presented are pseudonyms.

4. Research Findings: Disappointment with Arab Public Education

The research studied the responses of the Arab teachers to the question of teachers' attitudes towards Arab public school education. It is important to note that one of the reasons for the dropping out of Arab teachers from the public Arab schools is their great disappointment with the instructional, social, and personal services provided to the Arab student. The main argument of all the research participants is that the Arab schools remain traditional and do not have new and advanced teaching methods. The Arab schools do not consider the work on the formation of the student's personality to be important. In addition, the Arab school does not see its role to be the formation of the personality and identity of the Arab student in social and national terms. Rather, their perception of the school is that it is only for the inculcation of knowledge. The disappointment and criticism regarding the service provided in the Arab schools referred to a number of directions: Ministry of Education/the establishment, the school principals, the young teachers, and traditional Arab society.

4.1. Pedagogical disappointment

The pedagogical disappointment arose for a number of reasons. On the one hand, the pedagogical achievements in the Arab schools are very important, while on the other hand there is a continuous decline in the quality of the teaching and the achievements of the Arab students. The main argument according to all the research participants is that the main disappointment in the public Arab schools is that the perception that the school goal is only the students' achievements. Marya: "...It is as if the student is like a 'bottle' that I go into in order to pour the material into this bottle...the knowledge...and this is it. ... And I connect with the excellent students and weaken (put into the margins) the other student ...everything was always more achievement-oriented than educational..."

Another facet of the pedagogical disappointment is that the Arab education system still uses the traditional and frontal teaching methods and not the advanced and innovative teaching methods. The main teaching method in the Arab public schools is the memorization without understanding of the textbooks or without meaning to the students, and not up-to-date teaching methods such as education for meaning (source). Rasha: "The regular school...primarily teaches from the book...and this is it...maybe maybe if you want to be creative and you think and put some effort maybe this will be received without encouragement and maybe it will not be received with encouragement."

Criticism against and disappointment with the Ministry of Education arose in all that is related to the policy of the 'decision' on the contents of the textbooks for the Arab students which are not 'interesting' and are not suitable for the needs of the Arab students. One interviewee said she is forced to change the book contents so that they will be 'suitable and interesting' for the Arab student. Aia: "We had books from the Ministry of Education...but I add and take out contents from the book...for instance, today there are two groups...One is stronger and one is weaker...for the weaker one for instance I changed an entire unit...I introduced Ahmad Shuki (an Arab poet) ...these contents are not in the books of the Ministry of Education."

The argument of the participants for the decline in the achievements is not only because of the establishment. They expressed disappointment and criticism towards the young Arab

teachers, who have not changed their perception towards students, adhere to the traditional methods, and do not provide a solution for the needs of the Arab student. This is one of the reasons for the departure of the Arab teachers and parents from the Arab public schools.

Marya: "...there are some...do not like the attitude of the Arab schools... about how the teachers...the quality of the teaching and the quality of the teachers (the value) ...is steadily declining...from what it was in the past...and some of the teachers do not look at the student as a person."

To conclude, it was found that most of the interviewees on the one hand criticized the Arab schools that emphasize only the achievement aspect of students and on the other hand 'blame' the policy of the Ministry of Education, which emphasizes only the quantity of the material and not the quality or the coordination with the Arab student's needs. Regarding the power of the influence of the achievements and the pedagogy, this research found that Arab society in general and the Arab education system in Israel in particular place at the top of its priorities, the students' achievements, in terms of importance. Conversely, the formation of the personality, the development of a positive self-image, and the formation of the national identity of the Arab student is at the bottom of the priorities. This is a source of disappointment and dropping out from the competitive public Arab schools. In other words, the establishment exploited the 'pedagogical dimension' in the Arab schools in order to weaken the engagement in the formation of the personality and the identity of the Arab student in Israel. Following the focus only on the achievements of the students in the Arab schools and the marginality of the engagement in the formation of the self and social personality of the Arab student, there was a decline in the students' achievements, and not the opposite.

4.2. Disappointment with the formation of the personality

There is disappointment from the Arab public schools, in terms of the 'formation of the student's personality', primarily with the policy of the establishment, principals, and teachers. It is possible to argue that the disappointment with the lack of formation of the student's personality, as a result of the burden and pressure of the study materials and textbooks that the Ministry of Education, obligates the teacher to convey to the Arab student, leads to lack of creativity and lack of availability of the Arab teachers to the formation of the student's personal identity.

Rasi: "And you strangled the principal with the standardized tests...what is left to him ...what is left to him with the staff to work with the students ... where will the creativity be...when will there be innovation/creativity...when will there be education for values."

Aia: "The books of the Ministry of Education really do not speak to the Arab student and not to his identity...and they do not learn about Arab poets...not at all...I don't know... how by mistake perhaps this was ...there was a passage on Ibn Alhaitam...which is a good passage...almost alone...and I made a big deal of this. From it I went into all the Arab 'researchers'...and I gave a task to each pair of students to prepare a presentation on an Arab researcher...where he came from and his deeds...there was then a month of preparations...the students enjoyed this...they were surprised that there is a researcher by the name of Ibn

Sina...they did not know this about themselves...I told them that I was taught that 'if not for the Arabs Europe would have started from zero'...and I wrote this on the board...I explained to them the extent to which the Arabs reached Andalusia...and asked them ... what happened, why did we stop."

Aia: "We made a change in the students, to be proud...I have a weekly lesson called 'Meeting with the Arab Sage'...this was one of the important lessons for the students' identity...there was a lack in something...since I am so limited in the learning materials of first and second grades...I explained to them that the role of every sage/theoretician is ... there is nothing at all in the textbooks of the Ministry of Education". She further added, "When I decided to introduce new contents...for instance...I chose Ahmad Shuki...since this is a very interesting lesson...I want an Arab poet who comes from the children's world...who will speak to the students...the students were 'proud' of this Arab poet...they did not believe that the Arabs were really on a high level...they did not believe that the Arabs were on such a level...I attempt to introduce educational topics that the student likes...and asks for." Hence, the curriculum and textbooks are greatly deficient in contents suited to the Arab student's needs and causing pride in him.

4.3. Disappointment with the formation of the personality towards the teachers

The Arab teachers were disappointed only with the lack of the formation of the student's personality but also with the destruction in this aspect. The Arab teachers do not see the student as a person but as a 'machine' of grades. For instance, one teacher in her response to the question of why she does not teach in Arab public education asserted that she and many parents/teachers removed their children from Arab public education because of the attitude of the teachers who do not see the students as a 'person'. Maryam: "There is a part...do not like the attitude in the Arab schools...how the teachers...the quality of the teaching and the quality of the teachers (the value)...is steadily declining...from what was in the past...and some of the teachers do not look at the student as a person...some...and not all...there are amazing teachers...*but the absolute majority of the Arab teachers do not treat the student as a person*...there is still verbal and physical violence in the schools...and therefore I preferred to bring my children here...this is the main reason...this situation hurts the parents...and it is hard for them that their children will experience this...and some want their child to learn in a different method from what they learned...since this opens for them horizons differently...to be a person in society."

To summarize, the findings indicate that in the Arab schools there is no reference and consideration of the formation of the Arab student's personality from the establishment, from the teachers, and even from the parents. Therefore, many Arab teachers, who have another perception of the importance of education and the perception of the role of the school, escape and choose to teach in the bilingual school.

4.4. Disappointment with the degree of the formation of the national identity

Disappointment with the degree of formation of the Arab identity expressed in the teachers' personal experiences during the interviews is primarily towards the policy of the Ministry of

Education/establishment, the school principals, and the first generation of the Arab society in Israel and the Arab leadership.

Continuing the previous argument on disappointment with the formation of the personality of the Arab student by the Ministry of Education, the policy of the Ministry of Education/the establishment, which exerts control from top down, was to totally 'ignore' the Arab student's needs in terms of formation of the national identity of the Arab minority in Israel. Most interviewees reflected their disappointment with the public Arab schools from their own personal experiences, both in the Arab school in their childhood (public and private) and in higher education in Israel. They even shared experiences of disappointment with the self-discovery of the extent to which they are ignored during their integration in teaching in the bilingual school.

The main disappointment with the Ministry of Education/the establishment is because of the policy of supervision, intimidation, and silencing that the Ministry of Education deploys towards the Arab schools and their principals, who are forbidden to teach 'illegal' contents and are summoned to a disciplinary committee if they dare educate for national identity. For example, one teacher asserted that she taught in a private official school, which is considered a good school, but in this unique school there was no work on the identity of the Arab student. Rasi: "I taught in the school...a private school...a good school...but there wasn't in their ideology...or in that of any other school...*it did not have in the ideology about the reinforcement of the national identity...they would come to my father and caution him about his daughter.*"

Another interviewee also taught in an official private school where it was prohibited to speak about national issues. She remembers one of the teachers would insert national contents (proving that Arab students wanted to hear about themselves, their narrative, and their heritage). Rasha: "This would not be in the Arab schools...at all...I learned in a private school...in that time ... we had a teacher who brought to us a poem of Taufik Ziad (a national poet) and for us this was 'wow'... she did a great thing ... in the Arab schools there is no education for culture and for the formation of the Palestinian identity."

These personal experiences caused them to discover in their academic and/or professional path that they were under the policy of the military government of the creation of a generation 'ignorant' in its national identity. According to most teachers, the policy of the creation of an Arab generation 'ignorant' of its identity still continues today in the public Arab schools. One interviewee asserted that when her daughter moved to learn in the middle school in the village, she was traumatized to discover the students in her class do not know anything about their identity. She was angry and disappointed with the situation of the public Arab schools.

Additionally, most of the interviewees noted disappointment with the Arab school principals, who are obedient and who fear the supervision and the rigid intervention of the establishment in their schools. Sara: "Once I sent an email to my principal that I want to hold an activity in the class on Nakba Day...the principal answered me...'we in the school are prohibited to speak about the Nakba and this is according to the directives of the Ministry of Education...and then I saw the principal the day after and he told me in a low voice 'These things are not sent in

official mail ... it is forbidden ... since somebody could see this...' and he continued and told me that he too understands that the Nakba is important to the students...but not on official mail."

This policy damaged the perception of the principals of the Arab schools, who are seen as collaborators serving the needs of the establishment and not the needs of the Arab student and Arab society. One interviewee noted her disappointment with Arab public education in terms of the formation of the Arab students' national identity. The principal turned to her because she discusses in her class a national topic – Land Day, an important topic in heritage and history for Arab society, which every student must know about. She stated this conversation was a type of "deterrence" or "intimidation". Rasi: "Once the principal told me...I know what you are doing'...I answered him 'what am I doing?'...'I know what you are teaching'. I told him 'really...then come learn a lesson with me'. He told me, "I know what you are teaching and I like what you are teaching'. I said to him, 'so where is the problem?' He answered me 'Nothing, I only wanted to tell you that I know.' So I said to him 'OK...good...what you know...that I am teaching about Land Day...instead of letting all the teachers in your school teach about Land Day'. Then you think to say...this teacher who teaches is committed to the person employing him, who is the principal, and the principal is committed to the person employing him...to be as 'obedient' as possible...unfortunately, he is caught by the throat 'he is prohibited to teach this or this or this'...he (the principal) did not tell me not to teach...but this was a type of deterrence."

However, some interviewees argued that the principals should not be blamed for ignoring and not forming the national identity, since the principals are also 'victims' of the policy of intimidation of the Ministry of Education. Thus, they ignore education for important issues such as formation of the national identity and education for values. One teacher justified the fear of principals and teachers to provide an answer to the Arab student's needs, under the policy of intimidation and supervision, arguing that the state exploits the 'weaknesses of Arab society and its economic dependence on Jewish society. She asserts that the solution must be holistic cooperation. Suha: "...most Arab schools do not have education for identity and nationality...the problem is not only the principals or the teachers...the problem here is social and the representatives of society...this is larger than the school...since our Arab representatives in the Knesset will not make a change on this topic...we cannot alone as educators change this...or introduce a change...since today if an Arab teacher says something...he is summoned to a disciplinary committee...so of course I am afraid...I as a mother will take care of myself ...and I will be forced not to speak...I speak honestly...I understand them...but here in the bilingual school I feel safe speaking...outside no... therefore the solution is a 'social uprising' together...with educators...but educators cannot make the change alone."

Another teacher added another facet to the ignorance: ignorance from the home on the national topics, which according to some interviewees is the fear of the establishment (the period of the military government under which the parents lived). One teacher compared herself to Jewish teachers who come to teach in the bilingual school. Suha: "We the Arabs come with zero knowledge...even on our nationalism...and they the Jews with all the knowledge on their nationalism...it is clear why we do not have knowledge on our nationalism...because in our school it is prohibited to speak about this...even in our homes we

do not educate about this...such a discussion does not occur in the home/in the family...I do not remember ever in my life as a student that we had a conversation at home on national issues...the Nakba or Land Day...in their schools it is possible...since this is the message that the State sends to the schools.”

In addition, many interviewees directed disappointment towards traditional Arab society and criticized the need for change of thinking or perception of the student in the Arab schools that emphasizes only the students’ achievements without consideration of the formation of the student’s personality or identity. One interviewee sharply criticized, from her personal experience and school life as a student, traditional Arab society, which represses the students personally, socially, and politically from a young age. Mai: “It was very important to me the personal aspect...to create and produce for the new ages and for my children a life not like mine...both in terms of the preparation, the conditions, the frameworks...and not the attitude...I want a small school, not a large one, I want my children to feel safe in the school...the teacher to know each and every student, to have a personal attitude to each and every student...a personal attitude towards my children...to respect my children... or my son to find the place where he can speak and express himself...since we until today grew up in a society that is not accustomed to expressing its emotions...everything is ‘repression, repression’”.

The school is a place/framework not only for knowledge for the student and evaluation according to his achievements but also for the formation of the personality and the national identity. The Arab teachers experienced themselves the personal, social, and national ‘ignorance’, both in the universities and in the teachers’ meetings. Mai: “In the first meeting in the teachers’ room...the conversation began about the ‘Land Day’ ceremony...I discovered that I do not have full knowledge about Land Day...I do not have enough knowledge...I do not understand about myself...why do I not know? When you think about this? I think with myself...I remember my father when I wanted to begin my studies in Jerusalem...told me ‘You are going to learn...this is not your issue and put it aside.’”

5. Conclusion

The research found great disappointment with Arab public school education among Arab teachers who teach in the bilingual schools. This disappointment has a number of sources: the teachers were former students in Arab public schools, the teachers are currently mothers of students who learn in public education, and the teachers are now working in private education. The Arab teachers significantly noted that they are very disappointed with the quality of Arab public education in all respects – education, instruction, pedagogy, teacher attitude towards the student, and development of the student’s personality in personal, social, and national terms. Most of the teachers noted that they developed their personal national identity following their work in private education.

Therefore, a change of policy of the Ministry of Education towards Arab public school education is important. It is necessary to give full or partial ‘autonomy’ in the setting of the goals and contents of part of the curriculum, especially the learning contents related to the society and social-cultural-national identity of the Arab minority, which is found with two

contradicting and complementing identities – the Israeli civic identity and the national-social-cultural and religious identity. It is important to think about how it is possible to form the identity of the Arab student as an equal Israeli citizen who also has a Palestinian religious-national identity.

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Stress Factors among Arab Teachers in Israel

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Abstract

Teaching is a stressful profession characterizing the work of teachers. The Neoliberal reforms have added a further burden on teachers' work, increasing stress at work and resulting in negative health, occupational and economic consequences. The aims of the study were to examine the perceptions of stress factors among Arab teachers in Israel, and the relationship between Arab teachers' stress factors by type of school (elementary, middle school and high school) and gender.

Methods: Stress factors were measured using an instrument developed by Ablin et al. (2010). Three hundred forty-two public school Arab teachers participated in the study, of whom 230 were female and 112 were male. One hundred twenty-five worked in elementary schools, 78 in middle schools, and 130 in high schools.

Findings: The most stressful factors among Arab teachers were "crowded schedule and lack of flexibility", "the student composition of the class" and "conflicting requirements between school assignments and home responsibilities". Significant statistical differences were found between teachers' stress factors by gender and school type. Female teachers rated stress factors "grade composition" and "household demand conflict with work requirements" higher than male teachers. Elementary teachers rated stress factors "student parents", "lack of proper physical conditions in classroom" and "requirement to teach a subject other than one's specialty" higher than high school teachers. Middle school teachers rated stress factors "school management", "general supervisors", and "requirement to teach a subject other than one's specialty" higher than primary school teachers.

Conclusion: The results of the study are relevant to educators, policymakers, and institutes involved in training teachers and school principals. Identifying and preventing the causes of stress are likely to facilitate better teaching conditions.

The Role of Educational Leadership in Acquiring Environmental Responsibility of Businesses

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Abstract

It is a fact that many companies have not yet adapted to the modern environmental requirements of our time. This fact indicates that many things have not been done and that many of them should be done quickly and immediately. Actions that have not been taken for a long time are understood to have to be taken in the near future with seriousness, courage and determination. The decisive contribution to the achievement of this goal is played by the education and much more the leadership of the education, which will be the spearhead for the exercise of responsible and coordinated action with appropriate planning.

The educational process has proven in the past that it has contributed significantly to the formation of patterns and behaviors of those who first highlight the problem and then through appropriate and consciously responsible actions to mitigate it and finally deal with it through appropriate strategic planning.

It is therefore understood that tackling the problem requires first understanding the detrimental consequences of maintaining the current reality for present and future generations, highlighting the problem, selecting best practices by taking initiatives and implementing proposed actions to correct treatment of the problem.

The main conceptual approaches to the issue of environmental responsibility of companies during their productive operation will be presented.

The conclusions that will emerge are considered very important and, regardless of their use, can substantially contribute to the upgrading of the educational process in the environmental education of companies.

Keywords

Educational leadership, environmental protection, business responsibility

1. Introduction

In recent years more and more people are talking about the term environment. In an attempt to describe what an environment is, we must first accept two basic forms of it: the natural and the man-made. As natural, we could consider the environment in which the presence of man is not apparent. On the other hand, man-made is the environment that until today has been formed by man himself. Our environment as it is shaped today is largely man-made, because: a) We live in man-made cities.; b) We live in houses built by people.; and c) We use for our transportation cars made by people with the help of natural science of course.

These are all human works. Very rarely will we be somewhere where we will not see similar projects. But even in those places it is very possible that man is present. Either there will be traces of crops and other forms of exploitation, gentler, or there will be other forms of exploitation more indistinguishable, such as cultivated forests, artificial lakes, floating rivers, landscaped and developed beaches. What is clear is that there is some form of pollution. Nowadays, this purely natural environment, what we call virgin nature, does not exist or, if it does exist, it is far away from us, usually in the forests of the equator, at the poles, or in the great oceans (Papamanolis, 2012).

So, what stands out to be the current form of the natural environment is a basically natural environment, with minor or major alterations due to the diverse human activities. Of course, there is talk of alterations because man has always been and will be part of the environment, interacts with it and actively participates in its formation and evolution. Simply, lately, its effects have taken more violent forms, resulting in the appearance of significant alterations (Papamanolis, 2012).

Knowledge, then, of what the natural environment is and how it works, is considered particularly useful and very important not only for the need to protect it from constant human interventions but also for the improvement of the man-made environment itself. Many of the problems of modern cities, such as persistent pollution, rapidly deteriorating climatic conditions, and various natural disasters, are largely due to the fact that the limits of natural environmental resilience have not been taken seriously in the design and development of human activities. and its positive role in the quality of life of the inhabitants (Papamanolis, 2012).

The deepening of the Environmental Planning and the elaboration of policies and practical methods of Environmental Protection presupposes the acquisition of basic knowledge related to the composition and operation of the natural environment. The most suitable times for the deepening in the Environmental Planning and in the elaboration of the appropriate policies and the best practical methods of Environmental Protection, is the Education and especially the Educational Leadership that will undertake the strategic planning of the whole project.

2. Conceptual Definitions

*"Nature does nothing in vain" Aristotle
That is, nothing given by nature is without order.*

It is appropriate to first delineate some conceptual approaches related to the environment for a more complete understanding of the meanings. In social research, the process of agreeing on what a term means is called conceptualization and the result is called meaning. (Babbie, 2018). Sustainable Development is considered the development that is based on the rational management of natural resources in such a way that the current needs can be met and at the same time the coverage of the needs of the future is not mortgaged (Panagiotou, 2020).

Pollution is the form of contamination that is distinguished by the presence of pathogenic microorganisms in the environment that indicate the possibility of the presence of such microorganisms (According to Law 1650/1986 as harmonized with the directives 97/11 EU and 96/61 EU "of the general impact of the environment Directive 2000/60 / EU on EU water policy and Directive 2008/99 / EU on marine pollution}).

There is ecological balance when we distinguish the relatively stable relationship that is formed over time between the factors and the elements of the environment of an ecosystem (Law 1650/86, Government Gazette 160A / 18.10.86). Ecosystem is considered to be every set of biotic and non-biotic factors and elements of the environment that exist in a specific area and are in constant interaction with each other (Law 1650/86, Government Gazette 160A / 18.10.86).

Environment is the set of natural and man-made factors and elements that interact and affect the ecological balance, the quality of life, the health of the inhabitants, the historical and cultural tradition and the aesthetic values (Botsis, 2020). An environmental report is a regular issue (usually an annual journal) of information about how a business is dealing with environmental issues. A comprehensive environmental report should include the company's environmental policy, its performance on significant environmental problems and its ongoing commitment to resolving them. It may, in addition, include future objectives with the ultimate aim of achieving the protection and preservation of the environment (<http://www1.aegean.gr>).

All the required actions, measures, actions and projects that aim to avoid the burden of the environment or its restoration, its preservation and improvement is considered as Environmental protection (Sampatakakis, 2010). Safety, hygiene, human working conditions, productivity incentives, educational initiatives, volunteering, human resources management, recruitment and utilization of skilled human resources, lifelong learning, equal opportunities are part of Corporate Social Responsibility actions (Aspridis et al., 2014).

Corporate governance includes all the instruments and the non-typical mechanisms that govern the relationships between those who manage the business and those who invest in it. In addition, corporate governance includes all those principles and rules associated with improving corporate governance (Aspridis, 2015).

Pollution occurs when the presence of pollutants in the environment is apparent, i.e. any kind of substance, noise, radiation or other forms of energy, in quantity, concentration or duration that can adversely affect health, living organisms and ecosystems or material damage, and generally to make the environment unsuitable for its desired uses (<https://www.nomoskopio.gr>).

Environmental degradation is the pollution or any other change in the environment caused by human activities, which is likely to have a negative impact on the ecological balance, the quality of life and health of the inhabitants, the historical and cultural heritage and the aesthetic values (according to Law 1650/1986 as harmonized with the directives 97/11 EU and 96/61 EU "of the general environment", of the Directive 2000/60 / EU "on water policy in the EU" and of the Directive 2008 / 99 / EU on marine pollution).

Greenhouse effect is called the phenomenon which is caused due to the action of a group of gases that are found in small concentrations in the atmosphere (CO₂, NO_x, water vapor, O₃, etc.). These gases, while permeable to solar radiation, absorb much of the earth's radiation. As a result, there is a retention of radiation in the atmosphere that causes an increase in its temperature (Stathis, 2015). Natural resources are every element of the environment that is used or can be used by man to meet his needs and is a value for society as a whole (<https://www.eetaa.gr>). Natural recipient is every element of the environment that is used for the final disposal of waste (<https://www.nomoskopio.gr>).

Regarding the management of environmental impacts and the consumption of natural resources in the context of corporate social responsibility of companies, it is necessary to reduce the consumption of resources or pollutant emissions and waste during their productive operation, in order to reduce environmental burdens. Adequate environmental education would help for the proper use and management of natural resources in the future (Koukoumbliakos & Nousia, 2008). Safety, hygiene, human working conditions, productivity incentives, educational initiatives, volunteering, human resources management, recruitment and utilization of skilled human resources, lifelong learning, equal opportunities are part of Corporate Social Responsibility actions (Aspridis et al., 2014).

Corporate governance includes all the instruments and non-typical mechanisms that govern the relationships between those who manage the business and those who invest in it. In addition, corporate governance includes all those principles and rules associated with improving corporate governance (Aspridis, 2015).

3. Research Methodology

The methodology followed is based on bibliographic research and text analysis. The bibliographic review will refer to the systematic examination of the research that has been conducted in the specific field of study. In addition, it aims to the creative synthesis of bibliographic sources and their critical evaluation in order to obtain a clear picture of the level of knowledge for the subject to be investigated (<http://lib.eap.gr>). Finally, the existence of a bibliographic review proves that the theoretical background of the object has been sufficiently developed (<http://orion.lib.teithe.gr>).

The research will also approach policies implemented by the Greek state through the Ministry of Education on education issues related to sustainable development. First, there will be an extensive report on the current situation and then the ways in which the Greek state and specifically the Ministry of Education deals with the issue of sustainable development. The aim is to present critical policies pursued by the Greek State so that the changes that will take place will help in the acquisition of environmental responsibility of companies with the use of technology.

Findings are expected to contribute significantly to the creation of higher and more adequate education through appropriate educational leadership so that they can guide more safely and effectively in the new way of managing and managing sustainable development. On the other hand, the state will be able, having trained its staff properly, to be better organized in the modern era and to face any difficulties that may arise in the future.

4. State Planning

In an effort to plan and prevent dangerous and uncontrollable situations, the state, by decision of the Minister of Education, established the institution of Educational Project Coordinators. Managing a project is one of the most important management tools in many businesses. Companies running project management plans are in a position to predict their future. In particular, project managers are able to identify upcoming problems for the company and prepare themselves in advance (Rehor & Vrchota, 2017). Strategic management represents the current direction of administration and management and applies to all types of companies including small and large enterprises (Rolínek et al., 2014). Strategic management is a process that aims to ensure a long-term prosperity of managed issues. Its condition is based on the project executives (management, owners, key interest groups) who define the strategic objectives and then a resource management strategy implemented in the most effective way while considering the external factors (Rolínek et al., 2015).

More specifically, the task of the Educational Project Coordinators of the Regional Centers for Educational Planning (PEKES) is to promote the goals of the educational policy and to facilitate its implementation, through the scientific and pedagogical support of the units, of the Laboratory Centers (E.K.), of the Educational and Counseling Support Centers (K.E.Σ.Y.), of the Training Centers for Sustainability (K.E.A.) and of the Laboratory Centers of Natural Sciences (E.K.Φ. E.). At the same time, the educational project coordinators contribute to the formulation of the national educational policy, in the context of the annual evaluation reports of the project of the Regional Educational Planning Centers (PEKES), as well as suggest educational measures and changes to the training issues related to their duties to the bodies of the Ministry of Education. In addition, in the context of their interdisciplinary action, they work for the implementation of the mission of the Regional Centers for Educational Planning (PE.K.ES), co-shape the strategic planning of the project of the Regional Centers for Educational Planning (PEKES) and organize and implement the annual planning and its evaluation. Under the responsibility of the Organizing Coordinator of the Regional Centers for Educational Planning (PE.K.ES), the Educational Project Coordinators work collectively in Plenary and jointly shape the planning, scheduling and evaluation of the project of PE.K.E. Σ

<https://edu.klimaka.gr/nomothesia/kathkontologio/541-nomothesia-kathkontologio-sxolikoi-symboyloi>).

The educational project coordinators define all the objectives, procedures, policies, principles and actions in a common framework of scientific and pedagogical guidance and support of the educational units and Laboratory Centers (Laboratories), the educational staff of Educational and Counseling Support Centers (K.E.S.Y.) and the Sustainability Training Centers K.E.A., as well as the Heads of Informatics and New Technologies, and Laboratory Centers of Natural Sciences (EKF). E.). Also, under the responsibility of the Organizing Coordinator, the Educational Project Coordinators meet in groups either per level of education, or per cognitive area regardless of level, in order to elaborate specific topics and formulate presentations to the Plenary (<https://edu.klimaka.gr/>).

To carry out their work, the Educational Project Coordinators (<https://edu.klimaka.gr/nomothesia/kathkontologio/541-nomothesia-kathkontologio-sxolikoi-symboyloi>):

- a) They study the annual reports of planning and evaluation of the educational work of the educational units and Laboratory Centers (Laboratories), of which they have the educational responsibility, as well as the support structures of the educational work of their area of responsibility, index the requests, identify their needs for supportive assistance and, under the responsibility of the Organizational Coordinator, collectively make decisions regarding the design-planning of the project of the Regional Educational Planning Centers (PEKES).
- b) In the context of joint, collective and interdisciplinary decision-making, they systematically exchange information on the educational needs of the educational units of their area of responsibility and cooperate for the grouping of needs and the organization of the necessary educational support of the units with common needs.
- c) In the context of the decisions of the Plenary Session of the Regional Centers for Educational Planning (PE.K.ES). for the collective planning of its action, they organize the monthly individual planning of their project, which they submit to the Organizing Coordinator. In individual programming, the actions such as trainings, meetings with Directors of Education or Directors or Heads of units or other support structures of the educational project, as well as the implementation schedule of these actions are clearly recorded. At the end of the year they submit an annual report of their activity to the Organizing Coordinator.
- d) They support the educational units in the planning and evaluation processes of the educational project, investigate their educational needs, encourage and support the cooperation between the units. Under the responsibility of the Organizational Coordinator and in combination with the centrally designed training programs, they organize the training framework for teachers according to modern scientific requirements and teaching needs, enhancing their potential for professional development. In addition, they provide ongoing scientific guidance in the design and implementation of training, in respect to the educational unit.
- e) They support the implementation of the Curricula and the implementation of educational innovations in the educational structures of which they have the scientific and educational responsibility and guidance, depending on the teachers'

needs and particularities and the social data of their area of responsibility, with the aim of optimal support of the educational project.

- f) They have the scientific and pedagogical responsibility for the support of the teachers in the units and the Laboratory Centers (Laboratory Centers) of their area of responsibility.
- g) They visit the educational units and the Laboratory Centers (Laboratories), cooperate with the Directors at the regional level and provide them with their scientific and advisory support in matters of educational function and practice. They provide scientific, educational and consulting support for a variety of topics, such as the planning and evaluation of educational work, the implementation of educational programs, crisis management, conducting research activities and the selection and utilization of educational material.
- h) They encourage teachers to take initiatives and develop innovative actions and collaborations to optimize the educational and teaching practice and achieve educational goals.
- i) They organize informative training meetings with teachers, cooperate with the Educational and Counseling Support Centers of K.E.S.Y., the Training Centers for Sustainability (K.E.A.) and the Heads of Informatics and New Technologies, for issues that concern the Curricula, the differentiated instruction, the implementation of innovative actions and programs to respond to the criteria for the selection of educational material, the new teaching approaches, as well as the modern ways of utilizing Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in its administrative operation unit and teaching practice.
- j) They have the responsibility of scientific guidance and supervision of teachers in their field. They support teachers in the processes of planning and implementation of teaching activities, cater to the satisfaction of their special training needs and suggest alternative solutions to issues that may be difficult for teachers to manage.
- k) Utilizing all appropriate means and the possibilities of two-way communication provided by Information Communication Technologies, they cooperate with the teachers of the units of their area of responsibility for issues of didactic and scientific interest and focus on solving problems related to daily educational operation and practice. They emphasize the support of new teachers and organize on a case-by-case basis presentations of exemplary teaching, collaborating with teachers and deciding jointly on the course content, methodology, tools, strategies and evaluation of the learning process.
- l) They organize under their responsibility and participate in joint meetings with the Directors of Education, the Directors of the units and Laboratory Centers (EC), the Heads of the Centers for Educational and Counseling Support (K.E.S.Y). and the Sustainability Training Centers (SEN) for the examination of general educational issues, the adaptation of the educational policy to the data and the special needs of the educational units of their area of responsibility, the organization of the teacher training, the management crises and the treatment of specific problems.

In particular, the Coordinators of the Sustainability Education Project have the scientific responsibility to support the primary and secondary education teachers in their area of responsibility for sustainability education issues. They collaborate with the Supervisors and the Teaching Teams of the Sustainability Training Centers (KEA) and the Teachers' Associations

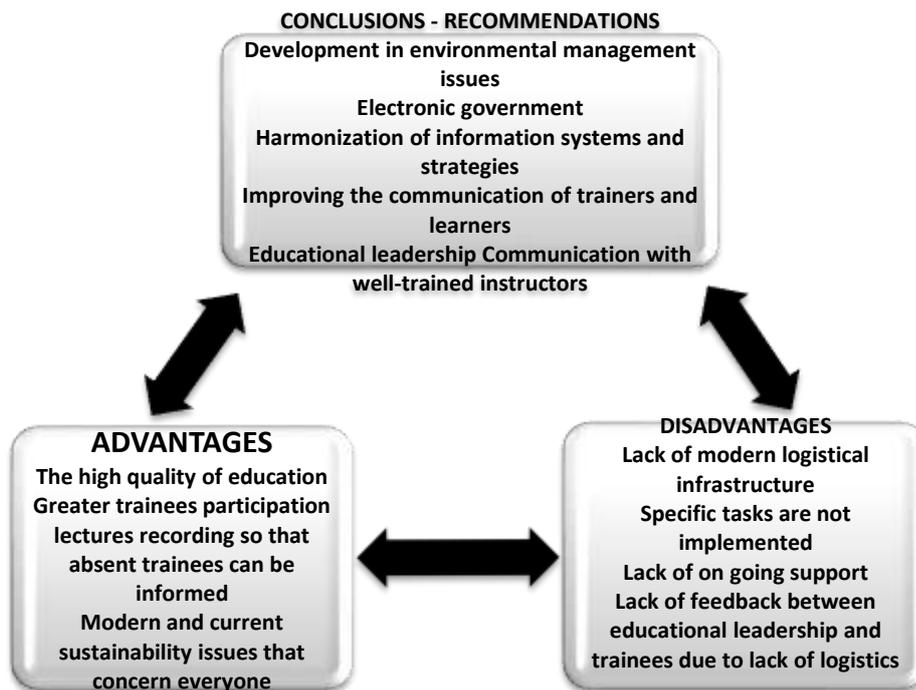
in order to develop and implement training actions for sustainability and the implementation of innovative programs of educational activities related to the environment, the culture and health, considering the needs of educational units and the specificities of local conditions. They implement training activities to support teachers in sustainability education issues, which are part of the design of the Regional Educational Planning Centers (PE.K.ES). and for the implementation of which they can cooperate with the Training Centers for Sustainability (K.E.A.) Finally, they are responsible for monitoring the planning and evaluation of the educational work of the Training Centers for Sustainability (K.E.A.) and have their pedagogical and scientific supervision (<https://edu.klimaka.gr/nomothesia/kathkontologio/541-nomothesia-kathkontologio-sxolikoi-symboyloi>).

5. Presentation of Results

All of the above highlighted important findings regarding advantages but also several disadvantages. At the same time, through them, there can be important recommendations but also indications of increased interest for sustainable development. Regarding the advantages, it is understood that Educational Leadership can significantly contribute to the improvement of sustainable development. This is achieved due to the high quality of the training provided by the well-trained teaching staff in combination with the appropriate instructions of the educational leadership.

The educational administration has the ability to ensure that the teaching staff is constantly updated and on a regular basis so that it can inspire, impart its knowledge and motivate learners by formulating new pilot programs and case studies during the operation of the educational programs. However, there are significant disadvantages. The criticism is focused on highlighting the lack of modern infrastructure that points out significant shortcomings, so that they can effectively and efficiently cure decades of problems. It is frustrating these days that there are no suitable logistical means for the faster transmission and utilization of knowledge. The existence of this material would significantly help in the even greater absorption of the educational program and in its fuller understanding.

Diagram 1: The results of the research



Source: Personal data processing

6. Conclusions

The urgent need for the safer operation of companies in matters of environmental pollution has contributed to the improvement of knowledge in matters of information technology, communication and especially education on environmental issues and in particular issues of avoidance of pollutants and environmental pollution.

The main recommendations, resulting from the above findings, are the following:

- Teachers should maintain direct contact with learners and increase it to the extent possible.
- All participants (trainers and trainees) must be armed with patience and perseverance that will help them overcome any potential problems in communication and the message that will be transmitted is important to be conveyed reciprocally to all participants and in all directions so that it is not subject to misinterpretations and creates misconceptions.
- It is necessary to have better communication between the educational leadership and the teachers regarding the planning of the educational program, so that the teaching and teaching hours do not overlap. The decisive factor in this will be the educational leadership, which has the overall responsibility of the whole project.
- It is necessary to achieve even greater improvement of communication between participants during the educational process, as well as to improve the teachers' attitude in relation to the workload of participants.

- The traditional form of the educational process is necessary to be maintained, so as not to lose the participants' personal contact and interaction as well as the motivation for a fair competition and rivalry of the trainees who will take part in the educational process.
- Further strengthening of the infrastructure is required so that all interested parties can participate in an ongoing training without distractions.
- It is necessary to train through specialized training seminars on the use of special platforms that will favor the creation of electronic classrooms for training and dredging in environmental protection issues.
- The State must provide the appropriate logistical infrastructure to its educational leadership and also promote the continuous monitoring of specialized seminars and training for the continuing education of more and more trainees.

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Social Network Sites as an Interpersonal Communication Learning Environment for Adolescents with Autism Spectrum Disorder

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Abstract

In recent decades, social network sites (SNSs) have become an integral part of the daily lives of billions of users, including individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Many adolescents with ASD use SNSs, in apparent contradiction of the social communication difficulties typical of individuals with ASD and of the fact that SNS use requires social skills. The current study examined whether adolescents with ASD perceive SNSs as an environment in which they can learn and practice interpersonal communication skills. Semi-structured in-depth interviews conducted with ten adolescents diagnosed with ASD sought to understand their patterns of SNS use and how this use serves a means of acquiring knowledge about social communication. The results indicate that adolescents with ASD perceive the SNS environment as a place to encounter social situations that can help them learn about social conventions and develop their social communication skills. Nevertheless, it seems they do not fully comprehend SNS social norms and thus often act in ways that are not socially acceptable. These findings raise questions about the perceptions of adolescents with ASD regarding the use of SNS as a tool for enhancing their social skills. Do these perceptions indeed reflect the potential inherent in SNS use? Future studies are needed to examine this issue.

Keywords

Autism spectrum disorder, social networking sites, interpersonal communication learning environment, special education, adolescents

Impressions and Theses from Emergency Remote Teaching at The Chair of Public Safety and Emergency Management of The University of Wuppertal (during COVID 19)

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Abstract

"The current practice of universities is characterized by a wide variety of formats and applications of digital higher education. Predominantly they complement the traditional classroom teaching. However, the potential offered by the use of digital media in higher education (...) is far from exhausted." (translated extract of the call for proposals of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) from February 2016). To which extent this rather moderately assessed digitization of university teaching has progressed, can be experienced live in the context of the current COVID 19 pandemic. Traditional (presence based) universities in Germany had to carry out a full conversion of their courses to digital teaching within a short period of time. It could be best described as formats of emergency remote teaching (ERT). Typical for an eruptive crisis, decisions on new (digital) strategies, structures and procedures (concerning content, methods and didactics) had to be taken relatively quickly and to be swiftly implemented. This also goes along with the uncertainty if teachers and students could handle the situation. Therefore, the proposal deals with the following question: How does ERT affect traditional (presence based) education at a chair of a university? Evaluation results indicate that in the case of the Chair of Public Safety and Emergency Management of the University of Wuppertal the shock was not as great as feared. It could be noted that ERT has generally worked well, although it meant deep cuts and challenges for the involved. At the end, some lessons learned are presented.

Keywords

Digitalization, emergency remote teaching, presence-based university, methods, didactics

1. Introduction and Background

In recent years, digital media, e-learning tools and didactic approaches for higher education have been developed to create new forms of virtual classrooms, teaching environments etc. Depending on the university, they have found their way into university teaching to a greater or lesser extent. German universities seem to have development gaps in this regard, although there is a lack of data that clearly proves the assumption (Kerres, 2020). The digitization of higher education in Germany has been under discussion and “under construction” for years:

“The current practice of universities is characterized by a wide variety of formats and applications of digital higher education. Predominantly they complement the traditional classroom teaching. However, the potential offered by the use of digital media in higher education (...) is far from exhausted.” (translated extract of the call for proposals of the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) from February 2016) (BMBF, 2016)

Today, a few years after this BMBF call, we are facing a critical situation that is putting the already developed digital potentials in higher education to the test. The COVID 19 pandemic has a noticeable impact on education systems all over the world (Bozkurt & Sharma, 2020; Mohammed et al. 2020; Pascault et al. 2020). In Germany, government-ordered lockdowns led to short-term decisions by universities to switch immediately to forms of distance learning and teaching, due to the fact that traditional face-to-face events were no longer allowed. The situation posed challenges particularly for universities that see themselves as presence-based universities and therefore heavily rely on traditional forms of face-to-face classroom teaching and learning. Decisions on new (digital) strategies, structures and procedures (concerning content, methods and didactics) had to be taken relatively quickly and to be swiftly implemented – which is comparable to typical proceedings in an eruptive crisis. These chosen digital education forms could best be described as “*emergency remote teaching*” (ERT). That means “*a temporary shift of instructional delivery to an alternate delivery mode due to crisis circumstances*” which “*involves the fully remote teaching solutions for instruction or education that would otherwise be delivered face-to-face or as blended or hybrid courses and that will return to that format once the crisis or emergency has abated*” (Hodges et al., 2020, p. 6).

The University of Wuppertal is such a presence-based university that had to make the decision in March 2020 to close the doors for students and switch to ERT – only about one month before the lectures should officially start. The university was facing an unforeseen situation. Apparently, it was not prepared for it in all respects, when the ERT decision was made. The question that arises here is now:

How does ERT affect traditional (presence based) education at a chair of a university?

To answer the question, the contribution is based on teaching experiences and evaluations of lectures at the Chair of Public Safety and Emergency Management of the University of Wuppertal. The first section discusses the usual presence-based approaches of the chair, before describing the procedure in the COVID 19 crisis phase in detail. The third part presents methodical procedures, impressions and (empirical) results of the evaluation supplemented by the experiences of lecturers. Finally, some assumptions and lessons learned will be deduced and discussed with regard to the central question.

2. (Conventional) Teaching at the Chair of Public Safety and Emergency Management vs. ERT during COVID 19

Usually the lessons at the Chair of Public Safety and Emergency Management are planned for 75-150 students. Therefore, the “classic” form of university lecture, the presence course is so far the method of choice. Lecturers focus on a special topic in each lesson and provide their students with basic information. Nevertheless, these students are encouraged to participate actively in the course by open questions raised by lecturers during the session. Use of digital media is essentially limited to providing slides for lessons and additional literature via an e-learning platform hosted by the university or discussion forums for further questions in the aftermath of lessons. Only in certain exceptional cases, special tools like live online polls are used during the courses.

The period between the announcement of the digital semester by the head of the University of Wuppertal and the beginning of the lessons was only about one month, so the chosen method had to be swiftly implementable. Due to the need for a short-term conversion of the classic classroom teaching towards a form of digital teaching, caused by COVID 19 (students were not allowed to visit the university anymore), the Chair of Public Safety and Emergency Management had to choose a suitable method quickly. The changeover required not only the selection of an appropriate format to impart the curriculum but also the choice of technical and organizational conditions for this format. Most of the lecturers did not have access to high quality technical equipment for digital teaching. Furthermore, they never had lectured a digital-only course and therefore lacked experience. In addition, the students were not familiar with real forms of digital teaching, either. To address these problems, the chair decided to transform the so far used format of lectures used so far into a digital form to minimize the necessary adjustments for the students. That format has to be distinguished from (real) online education in the sense of long-planned approaches with didactically, methodologically and conceptually coordinated concepts. As others already described in their articles, the Chair of Public Safety and Emergency Management chose ERT in order to master the situation as fast and as smooth as possible for lecturers and students (definition, s. section 1.) (Hodges et al., 2020; Mohammed et al., 2020).

There were two possible formats to transform the lectures into ERT: Live-sessions or recorded videos. Due to the fact, that most lecturers were not familiar with online live sessions, the needed organizational and technical efforts³ as well as they were uncertain about the equipment of students in terms of bandwidth, infrastructure etc. the chair decided to use recorded videos. Furthermore, recorded videos allow the students to attend lectures whenever they have time and thus enable a more flexible way to acquire the course contents. Another important aspect is the possibility for students to repeat lectures as often as they like to, e.g. in case they do not understand the lecture contents at first go. The usually approx. 90 minutes lasting (presence) lessons were reduced to 60 minutes and split into several (two to four) short videos to minimize the effort for the lecturers (short videos are easier to produce) on the one hand and to make them easier to absorb and understand for the students on the other hand. To provide more information in addition to the videos and the slides of the lessons, further literature was available via the online platform. Given the fact, that the

³ There were not enough lecture halls which are prepared for live sessions for every lesson available at the University of Wuppertal.

students were not able to ask questions during the lessons, offers for contacting the lecturers had to be extended. Additional to usual provided general discussion forums (as mentioned at the beginning of this paper) for every thematic block a single discussion forum was set up. To grant the students another option to ask questions, particular live sessions during the semester were executed. To give students the possibility to address problematic topics without fear of disadvantages in consequence of their comments, a form for anonymous remarks was also implemented in the online platform. In addition, they also had the opportunity to address problems, questions, etc. to the lecturers by email (as in 'normal' semesters). To figure out how the students got on with the concept and if there were needs for adjustment, an interim evaluation of the ERT was carried out.

3. ... and the Evaluation of the Story?

It was decided to conduct an out-of-series interim evaluation of the previous ERT in the middle of the semester. This decision was motivated by the new format, which was introduced and implemented in a short time, and the associated lack of knowledge about its effectiveness and acceptance by the students. The evaluation was primarily intended to examine the current situation and the students' handling of the new teaching format and situation and to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the ERT concept. For this purpose, a two-stage evaluation concept consisting of a quantitative survey of the students and a qualitative discussion of the survey results with the students was developed and implemented at the chair. The two-stage evaluation was intended to review the teaching concept and its implementation in the individual courses and, if necessary, to identify potential for improvement for the remaining and, if applicable, subsequent semesters, as well as to provide the teaching staff with initial, orienting feedback on the ERT concept of the chair. For this purpose, an online questionnaire was designed, supplemented by a qualitative discussion and reflection of the results in a joint live session with the students.

Methods of the interim evaluation

At the first stage, a quantitative survey was conducted via an online questionnaire with mostly closed questions. This questionnaire was developed at the Chair of Public Safety and Emergency Management and adapted iteratively via peer feedback among the lecturers of the chair. The questionnaire was made available to the students digitally, using appropriate software. The students were informed that participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous, so that the lecturers could not draw any conclusions about individual students. The survey was activated for the predefined group of students for a period of one week and then closed. During this time, the use of a cookie in the browser ensured that participation was only possible once, and it was also not possible to change or adjust answers afterwards.

The developed questionnaire was divided into three main sections "structure and teaching material", "interaction and support" and "general conditions" and additionally the section "overall impression and feedback to the teaching team", whereby the latter was the only one with the possibility of free feedback. In the first section, the main interest of the research was to find out how the conception of the courses and the materials provided are accepted by the students or whether the essential contents or learning objectives can be conveyed in this way. Accordingly, this section has a very content-conceptual focus. The second section, on the

other hand, focuses primarily on the accompanying phenomena, such as the accessibility of the lecturers for questions and the possibility of exchange via the various channels. The main questions that led to the findings were whether and how offers for interaction were sufficient and accepted. The third section aims at the technical-organizational framework of the ad-hoc conversion from classroom to digital teaching. In particular, technical problems and general difficulties or advantages of digital emergency teaching are to be identified and, if necessary, compared to classroom teaching. The questionnaire was closed after an opening period of 9 days and the data of the closed questions were quantitatively evaluated via SPSS. The feedback from the free text answers was qualitatively evaluated and clustered.

At the second stage, some results of the quantitative interim evaluation were used for a subsequent open qualitative evaluation. This consisted of two parts: First, the lecturers presented selected results of the quantitative survey to the students (input via PowerPoint presentation). In the second step, the results were discussed with the students on the basis of open questions. Main results of the discussions were recorded in minutes. Since other compulsory lectures took place at the same time, many of the previously surveyed students could not participate in the feedback discussion. Therefore, the following (qualitative) results are merely used as impressions that supplement the results of the quantitative survey.

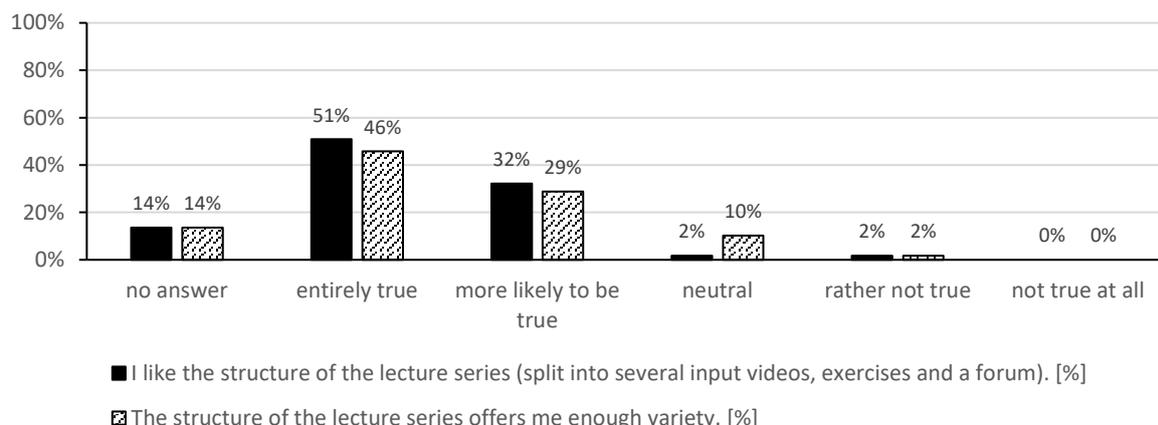
Results

The results of the quantitative survey as well as qualitative discussions of survey results provided some interesting and insightful findings on how students perceived the ERT concept of the Chair of Public Safety and Emergency Management. Even though all of the evaluation results and impressions presented here only refer to the surveyed students of three lecture series (one B.Sc.- and two M.Sc.-courses) at the mentioned chair, they can thus contribute to a deeper understanding of ERT and help to better understand the respective advantages and disadvantages of such a concept.

The participation rate in the questionnaire was surprisingly good despite the early scheduling of the survey during the semester and the voluntary nature of participation. Between 16.4 and 38.8 percent of the students took part in the survey in the individual courses, resulting in a total number of participants of n=59. In particular, the opportunity to give detailed free-text answers was actively used by many students.

One of the key findings was the evidently high level of satisfaction of the students with the overall structure of the lecture series. About 83 percent of the students were completely or predominantly satisfied with the course structure of the evaluated lectures and only two percent were not satisfied (cf. Figure 1).

Figure 1: Evaluation of the structure and variety of the lecture series (n=59)



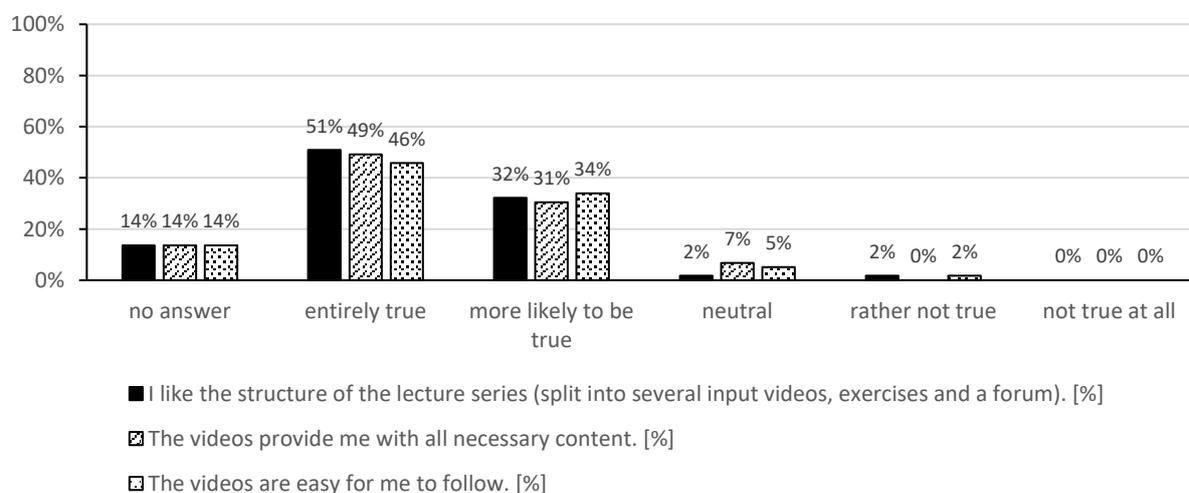
Comments in forums and e-mails, as well as during the qualitative discussions of the survey results supplement the findings as the following quote from a student during the discussion shows:

"Your chair has done a great job with the switch to digital! (...) Accessibility of the lecturers is excellent, questions are answered promptly. I am super satisfied!" [student from a B.Sc. course].

The variety of formats used within the lecture series, on the other hand, was rated somewhat less positively. However, still 75 percent of the students were completely or predominantly satisfied with the variety offered.

The answers of the students show that the videos produced were apparently able to convey the contents of the lectures predominantly well. Around 80 percent of the students were of the opinion that the videos both covered the necessary lecture content and that it would be possible to follow the videos well (cf. Figure 2.).

Figure 2: Evaluation of the videos compared against the structure of the lecture series (n=59)



As can be seen from some qualitative results, the students liked the fact that they have more flexibility through the opportunity to watch the videos for the follow-up of the event again and again at the individual pace they need for learning. The following quote is an example for this:

“I think the format is great. The videos can be reworked well, [exercise] questions focus on what could be important, you are independent of time, to questions you get an answer quickly ... Simply great!” [student from a M.Sc. course]

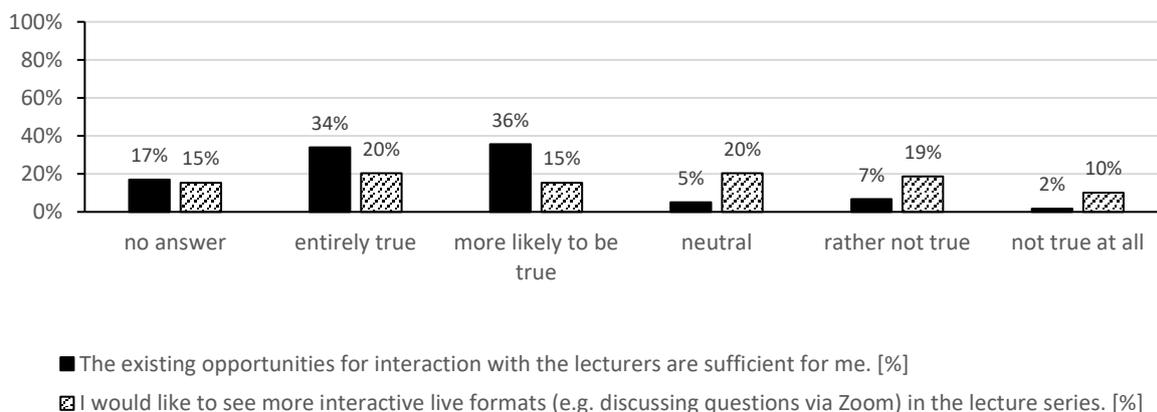
Difficulties of with the videos were discussed during the evaluation sessions:

- some lecturers made a few long videos (two or three videos, up to 30 minutes each), others several short videos (four or five, about 10 minutes per video) as the following quote points to: *“Make lectures a little shorter. Sometimes the videos are too long to focus on the whole time.” [student from a M.Sc. course]*
- some lecturers provided additional material for the videos on the platforms, others provided nothing at all;
- some lecturers discussed exercise questions for the exams at the end of their videos, others did not;
- some lecturers uploaded videos on the platform on time for the planned lecture time slot, others uploaded them delayed (after the time slots of the lectures).

These aspects mentioned by the students could be summarized as a lack of consistency which could unsettle the students about what to expect from their teachers, the concepts etc. During the evaluation discussions – but also as a response to incoming complaining emails from students –, those responsible lectures talked with students about causes of such inconsistencies and constructive approaches to solve these problems. It was an open dealing with the fact that everyone faces the same challenges e.g. in terms of mistakes. Some students reported that they appreciated the openness of the lecturers when looking for explanations and solutions.

However, a different and less homogeneous picture arose with regard to the question of interaction possibilities and live formats. While 69 percent of the students were still completely or predominantly satisfied with the opportunities offered for exchange with the lecturers, around 36 percent of the students asked for more interactive formats in the course (cf. Figure 3).

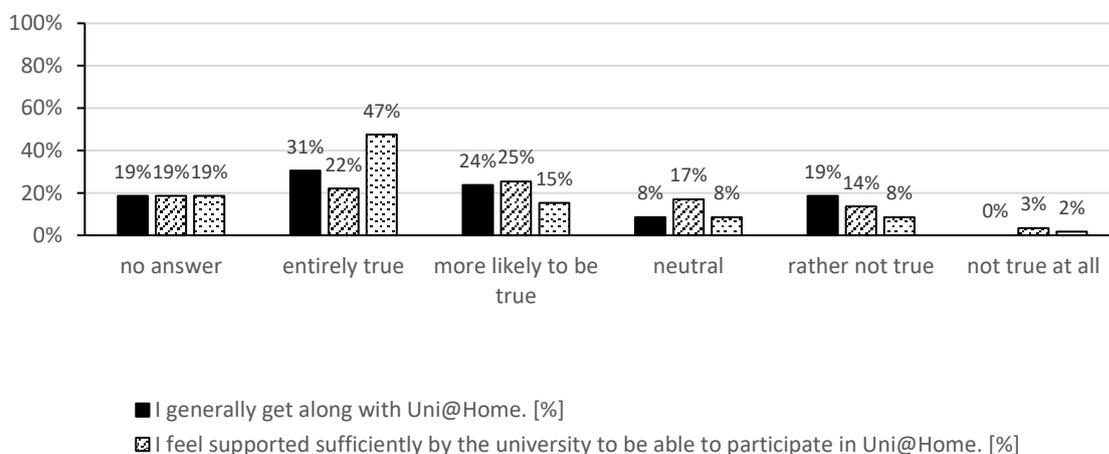
Figure 3: Evaluation of the interaction with the lecturers and the need for more live formats (n=59)



Due to the nature of the survey, it remains unclear which formats the students would prefer. Against this background it is particularly interesting to note that the discussion forums offered were only very sparsely accepted by the students. Comments of the students in the open questionnaire categories and during the evaluation sessions indicated that they do not necessarily need many interactive live discussions, for example, but rather in addition to the videos live consultation hours every now and then, to discuss questions and work out exercises together with the lecturers. The following quote from a student suggests that he would like to get “more control questions and, if possible, a kind of solution or a discussion of the tasks.” [student from a B.Sc. course]

An ambivalent tendency of answers can also be found in the next question. The students were asked to assess how well they generally get along with the new ERT format "Uni@home". 55 percent of the students stated that they at least get along well with the new format. In contrast, 19 percent of the students answered that they would not be able to get along well with the format (cf. 4).

Figure 4: Evaluation of the coping with the ERT format, the satisfaction with university support and the flexibility (n=59)

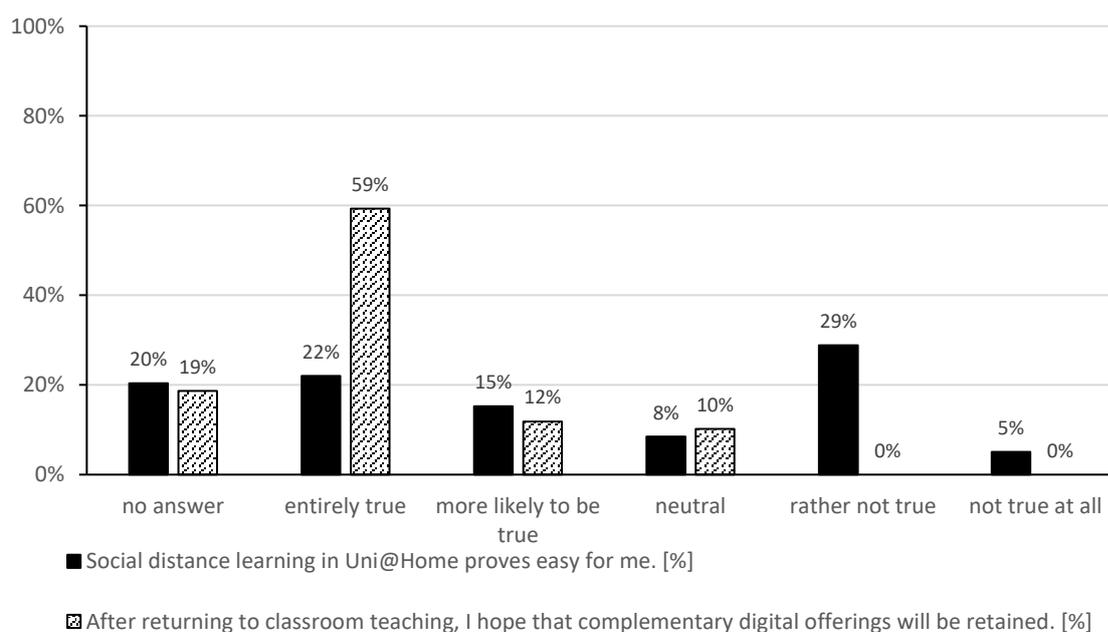


During the live discussions, some of the students reported their experiences with the switch to the ERT format of the whole department and thereby gave some potential explanations for the ambivalent results. Some declared that in the beginning of the ERT phase, they felt some kind of lost while trying to collect relevant information from university communication channels (e-learning platform, newsletter, social media) and to find out when and how each professor of the department organized his lectures. For them it seemed like chaos, because each chair acted and communicated differently (sometimes, also dependent on each lecturer). This perception could be explained by a noticeable lack of uniformity concerning lectures and communication about it. Although students said that after some weeks of getting used to it, it became easier for them to get along with the new structures, they would prefer more coordination and uniform approaches across the whole department.

The short-term nature of the switch from presence-based teaching to the ERT format also seems to be reflected in the assessment of the support provided by the university. A mere 47 percent of the students are predominantly satisfied with the support provided by the university, while approximately 17 percent of the students would have liked more assistance provided by the university. In contrast, around 63 percent of the students appreciate the flexibility that the ERT format gives them in organizing their studies. As already mentioned above, the students appreciate the spatial and temporal independence of ERT (s.a.).

Overall, it can be seen that students do not generally perceive the ERT format as being easier or even more difficult. Around 37 percent of the students consider this socially distanced learning to be rather easy, whereas 34 percent of the students in the survey stated that the new format is somewhat more difficult for them (cf. Figure 5).

Figure 5: Evaluation whether ERT teaching is easy and the need for digital offerings after returning to presence (n=59)

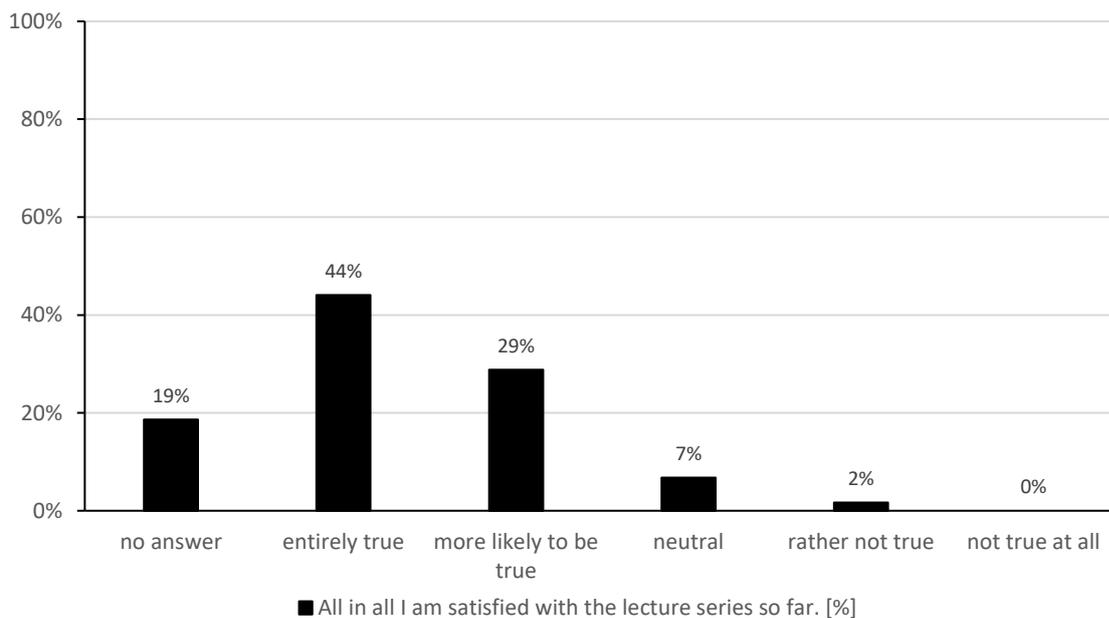


In the live discussions students emphasized getting by with little direct feedback and exchange with the lecturers as a special difficulty of distance learning. Some said that they would ask questions rather in face-to-face events than in online sessions. Others pointed out that they missed direct and personal reactions and motivating feedback from the lecturers.

On the other hand, there is a more consistent opinion as to whether digital offerings should be retained to supplement face-to-face teaching after a future return to the former classroom teaching format. Around 71 percent of the students answered that they would welcome supplementary digital offerings. The qualitative results indicate that some students justify this with the given flexibility aspects again (s.a.). They see e.g. more possibilities for a better compatibility of studies (in the designated period of study) and employment (often to finance their studies).

Overall, the evaluation of the quantitative survey shows that the challenge of the ad-hoc changeover from traditional classroom teaching to an ERT format seems to have worked well. Almost 73 percent of the students surveyed stated that they were completely or predominantly satisfied with the evaluated lecture series so far (cf. Figure 6).

Figure 6: Evaluation of the overall satisfaction with the lecture series (n=59)



The results of the survey suggest that the challenging task of converting the operation of a classic attendance university to an ERT concept was largely successfully mastered at the Chair of Public Safety and Emergency Management. However, in some areas there is also potential to adapt and improve the ERT concept for use in future cycles.

In additional questions in the survey, students stated that they had experienced very few technical and organizational problems with the new format. In particular, the flexibility of the new format was emphasized. In the following section, therefore, theses derived from the evaluation will be discussed which may provide an outlook on future challenges for presence-based universities.

4. Moral of the Story? Some Conclusions and Impacts

Consequences of COVID 19 are affecting universities all over the world. It seems to be a period in which it could be tested live to what extent universities are able to deal with such crises and to maintain educating activities. In addition, the university's reactions allow conclusions to be drawn about the extent to which digital teaching methods and technologies are really integrated into higher education. Particularly for presence-based universities, short-term decisions to shift to digital formats completely (here called: ERT) probably resulted in different challenges for departments, chairs, lecturers and students. The Chair of Public Safety and Emergency Management of the University of Wuppertal is one German example for this. In order to answer the main question of this article: How does ERT affect traditional (presence based) education of a chair of a university?; the sections 2 and 3 highlighted how the switch from presence based education to ERT was put into action by lecturers and how this was evaluated by the students. As a rough conclusion, the shock was not as great as feared. It could be noted that ERT has generally worked well on both sides, although it meant deep cuts and challenges for the involved. But the situation showed in general how adaptable students, teachers, chairs and even a university could be in times of crises. ERT was a good short-term option for the chair, because it was built on already pre-existing and working concepts. It also contained potentials for loss of worries and fears of working with digital teaching and probably raised awareness of opportunities and risks of digital teaching and learning.

In addition, the teachers of the chair draw the following lessons learned and theses from the situation and especially ERT:

#1 “Never underestimate standards”, especially in unusual situations like crisis: Uniform concepts for teaching and studying (ideally across the whole department) help students and lecturers to reduce uncertainty in confusing times, particularly, in chaos phases at the beginning of a crisis – regardless of whether they were created for classroom or online teaching.

#2 “Stick to the plan”: Consistent approaches with concrete working steps for lecturers (like in crisis management plans) support almost “business as usual” and less challenges in unusual times. But to reach this, it seems to be most important that involved lecturers adhere to the plan, to agreed principals like deadlines, punctuality (e.g. sending notes, presentations, documents), coherence (concerning given materials, didactic concepts etc.) as well as forms of (internal and external) communication.

#3 “Find a good balance” between interactive approaches and one-way or one-sided knowledge transfers. It also means to avoid overdoses: exclusively interactive (live) approaches require the online presence of students and reduce the flexibility of ERT, one-way knowledge transfers (only) leave the students alone with their questions. In times of crisis, such one-way formats could make it difficult to persevere during studies.

#4 “(Open) Speech is gold”: Open, concrete and reliable announcements of what students can expect from lecturers, departments and university support students by getting along with such unconventional situations. This includes, but is not limited to, corresponding implementations (e.g. transparent ERT) and a provable accordance of communicated and

actual availability of contact persons support students by getting along with such unconventional situations to, strengthening trust in problem solving competencies, educating persons and institutions. On the one hand this means that what is said will be done, but on the other hand also an open dealing with the fact that everyone faces the same challenges and potentials for mistakes.

#5 “Online or presence?”: ERT formats seem to be acceptable for students who are accustomed to face-to-face-education, if the phase is foreseeable in time. But they are still requesting presence-based approaches in order to get back to personal and direct interaction opportunities. In addition, e.g. the entry for freshmen is probably more difficult without face-to-face events and personal guidance by tutors, lecturers and professors. During COVID 19 lockdowns, students had chances to experience advantages of supplementing digital elements, e.g. in terms of different kinds of flexibility which is why they will probably increasingly demand more of digital components. But then it is also important for lecturers to adapt existing concepts to conditions of digital or online teaching, among other things in order to avoid problems like new inequalities among students, violations of privacy, regulatory grey areas etc.

The short-term switch to ERT was probably a necessary impetus for the chair to tie classroom teaching and digital elements closer together than before by conceptually embedding them. The further elaboration of the used ERT as a crisis management concept for teaching at the chair will be an important step to prepare for (potential) unconventional times in the future as well.

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A Conscious and Proper Matriculation Oath as the First Step to Avoid Plagiarism

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Abstract

There is no doubt that plagiarism and cheating is a problem. However, there is no consensus on the causes of these phenomena. One cause may be the improper execution of matriculation oath as part of a hidden curriculum. These are set based on the analysis of the availability of matriculation oaths of Czech public colleges and their texts. Changes to this situation are proposed. Verification of the veracity is done through a questionnaire for students.

Keywords

Ceremonies, hidden curriculum, matriculation oath, university

1. Introduction

Whether we conceive society as "... a group of people who live in a particular territory, are subject to the same system of political authority and power and realize that they have a different identity to other groups living in their neighborhood" (Mucha, 2001, p. 54) or take another generally accepted theory, we can take a university, faculty or department as a society and treat them like that.

In this sense, we designate the faculty as the basic society for the following reasons: most often it is the faculty that implements the study program; the faculty has a relatively homogenous area of teaching, research, methods and staff; the faculty has self-government and its internal standards; students have a similar knowledge and skill mix. Knowing rules of society limits harm to that society, because if I am not mentally ill (e.g. psychopathy), I knowingly don't harm the complex of which I am a part. Applying these theses to the faculty environment, where members of the academic community should or could be more aware of their belonging, could and should support compliance with the internal rules of society, in our case the faculty.

Hidden curriculum as part of creating a social climate for a particular society is a term used in primary, secondary and higher education. According to Ahola (2000), students should learn "thinking and practices of the profession". It is a form of education towards social skills. And although some think that the task of universities is education, not upbringing, a conscious grasp of the hidden curriculum is essential for the consistency of the direction of the whole society, against the background of the transferred professional information (Kaščák, 2009).

If we adopt a systemic approach to the hidden curriculum, it is essential to disagree with the description of the micro-level presented by James (Mareš & Rybářová, 2003) which is already outdated and, on the contrary, has recently become extremely loose. In many faculties there is no compulsory attendance, students do not attend lectures on time or at all, there is an extreme extent of plagiarism and student fraud. The requirements for the first semesters of study are reduced, there is admission without entrance examinations, and students have a lack of interest in participation in Senate elections and as well as extracurricular activities organized by the school.

On the contrary, a professional approach to preparing students for their particular social role in society could be of greater importance nowadays if we assume that students are consciously directed towards practice, not only in professional but also academic study programs. However, the hidden curriculum content should be the same when using any approach. Is there a hidden curriculum in each degree program? Yes, but it is not always conscious and consistent. And it is this inconsistency that causes students to choose strategies to benefit from (using or surviving) the system, including possible practices such as plagiarism and other scams.

2. Discussion

But how do you get them to change their choice? The solution is to take advantage of current practices and re-awareness of the University's ideas, because the very existence of the Code of Ethics without the knowledge of its content does not solve anything by the academic community. Therefore, is proposed the following procedure:

- 1) Awareness of and focus on the hidden curriculum. Reviewing definitions of graduate profiles, their skills and linking to the official curriculum. Explaining to academics the importance of this step.
- 2) Explanation of the uniqueness of the university environment and education (without upcity), with an emphasis on self-education in a particular direction, not teaching someone. Uniqueness is in academic freedoms and self-government. At the same time emphasize the way of functioning (greater freedom and responsibility at the same time).
- 3) Provide this information in a timely manner, i.e. for future students already interested in higher education. A clear statement when applying to universities that this is a different style of education, that is, learning self and related obligations (including oath or promise). To become acquainted with the wording of matriculation and graduation oaths. Then their decision may be conscious.

2.1. Why the matriculation oath?

The solemn promise (oath) is a way of publicly declaring a commitment. It is a pending commitment. In many cases, promise is a prerequisite for the pursuit of an activity. It must therefore be promised consciously and with full understanding. Unfortunately, this often does not happen in the case of matriculation oaths, and this can be one of the important reasons why students do not consider it to be binding.

2.2. Mistake number 1 - bad implementation

It is at the decision of each faculty, represented by its dean, whether to perform a ceremonial matriculation or to make only a formal promise (signature of the promise), for example in the study department. For the first-year students of full-time bachelor studies, the most often the ceremonial matriculation is obligatory, for the master and doctoral students it is only formal. Even in the case of solemn oaths, each student seldom pronounces the text. Most often, the promise is read, and each student say "I promise".

It is not even known to most students that the matriculation oath is a solemn confirmation of their enrollment in the student register and a real pledge to fulfill certain obligations, including compliance with ethical rules. Without a direct explanation of the substance, context and possible benefits, young people are mostly not interested on their own and often consider higher education only as a way of obtaining a degree and thus a better job or meeting their parents' wishes. The vast majority of young people today do not know what they really want to do and why. Hand in hand with this vagueness, there is less interest in anything given to them from outside.

2.3. Mistake number 2 - content of matriculation oath

Almost never, however, do students know the content of the oath beforehand. Only some faculties have texts of matriculation vows incorporated into their statute or issued by a separate order. However, faculties often do not publish their matriculation oath. Students therefore hear the text of oath just before they say or sign their oath. It is far from being a conscious act. Does this mean that the promise is given little importance?

Even worse situation is with the text of the promise itself. At first glance, it seems to be based on a unified pattern and over time has been deleted fidelity to the state or political doctrine. It begins with a declaration of promise: "I promise" or "I solemnly promise". This is followed by a commitment to fulfill the duties associated with studying at a certain faculty or to fulfill academic duties, often with every effort, all leading to the deepest knowledge of the field. What are academic rights and duties is not explained. Exceptionally, promises include a commitment to act ethically. Some promises include a commitment to developing the humanist and democratic tradition of the university. Such part of the promise should be linked to a clear demonstration of such a tradition.

The conclusion of the promises is usually devoted to preserving or pursuing the good name of the institution, or to refrain from anything that would harm its good name, honor or seriousness. Few matriculations promises contain wider commitments, for example, to bring versatile benefits, respect Christian ethical principles, or help further the development of scientific knowledge for the benefit of man.

It can be assumed that, without prior explanation, the student does not know what the values are behind these promises, cannot explain the meaning of individual words in the text, and may consider the promise to be outdated without linking to real life. At the same time, there is no reminder or interconnection of the contents or methods of teaching with the matriculation oath or preparation for the graduation ceremony.

In doing so, the uniqueness of the university status of students and the unity of the academic community should be highlighted. This could make students and academics better sense of belonging on a common path to education. The group identifies, evaluates and promotes behavior, i.e. even in the case of plagiarism or fraud, the academic community should act unanimously.

3. Conclusion

The matriculation oath is and should be the first and clearly conscious step towards belonging to the academic society and expressing the principles of the hidden curriculum of higher education, because it can be realized through rituals and small ceremonies. Unlike morality and law, ceremonies (as part of academic etiquette) are perceived as less binding and serious, making them more acceptable to some. At present, some faculties are starting to link student beanie with matriculation precisely to improve student acceptance and to increase the engagement of first-year students and better involvement in the academic community.

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