


MANAGERIAL POLICIES ON DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT IN EDUCATION AND THE WELLBEING OF STUDENTS: ANXIETY AND EXHAUSTION

Blerina Hamzallari^A, Ortenca Kotherja^B



ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
<p>Article history:</p> <p>Received 09 June 2023</p> <p>Accepted 06 September 2023</p>	<p>Purpose: The purpose of this study is to describe indicators of anxiety level and exhaustion among students of Tirana University during online learning as a result of pandemic conditions.</p> <p>Theoretical framework: Researchers face the tasks of knowing the impact of virtual environment on perceptions, attitudes, emotions, and wellbeing of students so that managers of higher education address practices and selected methods based on research studies, in order to protect psychological capital, to provide social support and to minimize burnout.</p> <p>Design/Methodology/Approach: This study uses quantitative methods of collecting and analyzing data. Instrument of data collection is a questionnaire in which Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) is integrated as well as questionnaire of Exhaustion at work by Hock. Study sampling consists of full time students at the University of Tirana who have experienced on line learning. Students were randomly selected based on gender, age and different residence areas.</p> <p>Findings: The results demonstrated that high anxiety levels among students directly influenced their exhaustion, whether psychological or physical exhaustion.</p> <p>Research, Practical & Social implications: In addition, this study contributes to the successful implementation of technology in the future, in the teaching process in the universities with the aim of achieving the high indicators of individual performance, but also educational institutions.</p> <p>Originality/Value: The findings of this study may help to fill the knowledge gap regarding systematic studies on the students' psychological and individual response toward online teaching. Such research will help policymakers to consider student well-being in future e-learning development strategies.</p> <p>Doi: https://doi.org/10.26668/businessreview/2023.v8i9.2941</p>
<p>Keywords:</p> <p>Anxiety; E-learning; Exhaustion; Students; University; Wellbeing.</p> <div data-bbox="172 1016 480 1263" style="text-align: center;">  </div>	

POLÍTICAS DE GESTÃO DO DESENVOLVIMENTO DIGITAL NA EDUCAÇÃO E NO BEM-ESTAR DOS ESTUDANTES: ANSIEDADE E EXAUSTÃO

RESUMO

Objetivo: O objetivo deste estudo é descrever indicadores de nível de ansiedade e exaustão entre os alunos da Universidade de Tirana durante a aprendizagem on-line como resultado de condições pandêmicas.

Estrutura teórica: Os pesquisadores enfrentam as tarefas de conhecer o impacto do ambiente virtual nas percepções, atitudes, emoções e bem-estar dos alunos para que os gestores do ensino superior abordem práticas e métodos selecionados com base em estudos de pesquisa, a fim de proteger o capital psicológico, fornecer apoio social e minimizar o esgotamento.

Projeto/Methodologia/Abordagem: Este estudo utiliza métodos quantitativos de recolha e análise de dados. O instrumento de coleta de dados é um questionário no qual o Inventário de Ansiedade Beck (BAI) é integrado, bem

^A PhD in Sociology. Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Sociology, University of Tirana. Tirana, Albania. E-mail: bhamzallari@gmail.com Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5523-3141>

^B PhD in Psychology. Faculty of Social Sciences, Department of Pedagogy and Psychology, University of Tirana. Tirana, Albania. E-mail: kotherja_ortenca@hotmail.com Orcid: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0669-1995>

como o questionário de Esgotamento no trabalho por Hock. A amostragem de estudo consiste em estudantes em tempo integral da Universidade de Tirana que tenham experimentado aprendizagem on-line. Os alunos foram selecionados aleatoriamente com base no sexo, idade e diferentes áreas de residência.

Constatações: Os resultados demonstraram que os altos níveis de ansiedade entre os alunos influenciaram diretamente sua exaustão, seja psicológica ou física.

Investigação, Implicações práticas e Sociais: Além disso, este estudo contribui para a implementação bem sucedida da tecnologia no futuro, no processo de ensino nas universidades com o objetivo de alcançar os altos indicadores de desempenho individual, mas também instituições educacionais.

Originalidade/Valor: Os resultados deste estudo podem ajudar a preencher a lacuna de conhecimento em relação a estudos sistemáticos sobre a resposta psicológica e individual dos alunos ao ensino on-line. Essa pesquisa ajudará os formuladores de políticas a considerar o bem-estar dos estudantes em futuras estratégias de desenvolvimento de e-learning.

Palavras-chave: Ansiedade, Aprendizagem Eletrônica, Exaustão, Estudantes, Universidade, Bem-estar.

POLÍTICAS DE GESTIÓN DEL DESARROLLO DIGITAL EN LA EDUCACIÓN Y EL BIENESTAR DE LOS ESTUDIANTES: ANSIEDAD Y AGOTACIÓN

RESUMEN

Objetivo: El objetivo de este estudio es describir indicadores del nivel de ansiedad y agotamiento de los estudiantes de la Universidad de Tirana durante el aprendizaje en línea como resultado de condiciones pandémicas.

Estructura teórica: Los investigadores se enfrentan a la tarea de conocer el impacto del entorno virtual en las percepciones, actitudes, emociones y bienestar de los estudiantes, de manera que los directores de la educación superior aborden prácticas y métodos seleccionados basados en estudios de investigación, con el fin de proteger el capital psicológico, brindar apoyo social y minimizar el agotamiento.

Proyecto/Metodología/Enfoque: Este estudio utiliza métodos cuantitativos de recopilación y análisis de datos. El instrumento de recopilación de datos es un cuestionario en el que se integra el Inventario de Ansiedad de Beck (BAI), así como el cuestionario de Exhaustion en el trabajo de Hock. La muestra de estudio está formada por estudiantes de tiempo completo de la Universidad de Tirana que han experimentado el aprendizaje en línea. Los estudiantes fueron seleccionados al azar en base al sexo, edad y diferentes áreas de residencia.

Hallazgos: Los resultados mostraron que los altos niveles de ansiedad entre los alumnos influyeron directamente en su agotamiento, ya sea psicológico o físico.

Investigación, Implicaciones prácticas y Sociales: Además, este estudio contribuye a la implementación exitosa de la tecnología en el futuro, en el proceso docente en las universidades, con el objetivo de alcanzar altos indicadores de desempeño individual, pero también en las instituciones educativas.

Originalidad/Valor: Los resultados de este estudio pueden ayudar a colmar la brecha de conocimiento en relación con los estudios sistemáticos sobre la respuesta individual y psicológica de los estudiantes a la educación en línea. Esta investigación ayudará a los responsables de las políticas a considerar el bienestar de los estudiantes en futuras estrategias para el desarrollo del e-learning.

Palabras clave: Ansiedad, E-learning, Exhaust, Estudiantes, Universidad, Bienestar.

INTRODUCTION

Human society in its natural cycle develops through challenges and unexpected events. It appeared that even during the beginning of the third decade of 21th century society faced numerous disastrous events, some caused by humans, and some others caused by nature. Covid-19 is considered as a unique form of social disaster by many studies that were carried out during the period of the impact of Covid-19, in the post-impact, and recuperation period (Connell, 2020; Cosic et al., 2020; Esterwood & Saeed, 2020; Fischer, 1998).

Reactions towards restrictions that are born out of conditions of disaster bring about modification of *the social structure of the activity and prompt the need for research studies on individual behavior and organizational preparedness to interact against the threat*. (Fischer, 1998:3). Even Covid-19 attracted attention to research scholars on two main directions. On the one hand, the pandemic made us realize our organizational capabilities to control our way of life and its consequences, and on the other, the need to identify factors that are responsible for the creation of such social situations that reveal society's vulnerabilities (Matthewman & Huppertz, 2020).

Responses towards emergency situations throughout the world touched upon a set of organizational aspects of society, transforming forms and structures of pre pandemic relations in order to be flexible towards situations of the disaster. One of the structures that was the focus of immediate change were the institutions of higher education. The change in the teaching form, from face to face teaching to virtual teaching was a behavioral response towards emergency situations under conditions of disaster. The focus of this study will be the vulnerability of students during distance learning as a result of pandemic situation. The pandemic and distant learning, that was a result of the pandemic, are two major factors that encourage attention towards the changes of social situations that influence psychological situation and individual's response towards new conditions.

The transition to online learning encountered a natural resistance that expressed the uncertainty and anomie of the pandemic context. The leaders of higher education institutions and policy makers should also engage in what Al-Hyari (2023) considers as "resistance management" which helps how to deal with individuals and reach their requests and desires to implement change successfully, in addition to motivating them to succeed in the changing process. There have been numerous studies in Albanian context that focus on distance learning during the pandemic. However, there is a gap in knowledge with regard to systematic studies on the students' psychological and individual response toward online teaching under the conditions of pandemics. Existing studies show that disasters like pandemic bring about changes in human behavior, cause deep psych emotional trauma, that negatively impact human potential to respond to changes in the structure of social relations. (Cosic et al., 2020; Esterwood & Saeed, 2020). Scholars point out that during and after disasters, new places and social structures may be rebuilt, however, one must carefully consider if the rebuilding and adaptation of subjects follow the rhythm of these development, because social vacuum may arise, that

creates premises for social inequalities and behavioral disorder (Arcaya, Raker & Waters, 2020; Jetten et al., 2020).

The purpose of this study is to contribute to research that helps on disaster education, their effect and behavior during disasters. In addition, the study contributes to the knowledge of the importance of mental health and emotional problems, to the successful implementation of technology in the future of learning process in the universities. Such studies are seen with interest as they consider psychological capital, with the aim that in the interaction environment of students we build the opportunity of having a positive relationship between them, favoring high indicators of individual performance, but also of educational institutions (Barratt & Duran, 2021; Çavuş & Gökçen, 2015).

Definitions of the Study Variables

The main variables in this study are anxiety and consumption. Their conceptual and operational explanation is based on existing literature and the study context.

Anxiety is generally defined as a condition or reaction characterized by tension, nervousness, worry and high level of situation of reaction of nervous system. (Spielberger & Rickman, 1990). Scholars define anxiety as one of the basic negative emotions of the individual, like anger, sadness, disgust, and other emotions. However, different from these other emotions, anxiety corresponds to a situation caused by insecurity (Zeidner & Matthews, 2011). In order to operationalize the variable of anxiety, Beck Inventory is used that consists of 21 distinguishable and measurable indicators to measure anxiety (Beck et al. 1988).

Exhaustion is characterized by a fatigue emotional and physical state, denial of self, refusal to be part of environment, work and lack of desire to live (Pines et al., 1981). The state of physical and emotional exhaustion are features that characterize burnout, along with other characteristics such as insomnia, depression, anxiety, lack of interest on life (Gundersen, 2001). To operationalize exhaustion, the professional Instrument of Burnout by Hock (1988), that consists of 9 measurable indicators for psychological exhaustion and 9 measurable indicators of physical exhaustion.

Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The purpose of this study is to describe indicators of anxiety and exhaustion level among students of Tirana University during distant learning in the conditions of pandemic situations. In order to realize this study, the following objectives are outlined:

Objective 1 of the study: - To look at the differences that exist based by socio-demographic characteristics (gender, rural/urban area) with regards to the impact of anxiety on students' exhaustion during online learning

Research question 1a: Is there a difference between female and male students with regards to the impact of anxiety on students' exhaustion during online learning?

Research question 1b: Is there a difference between students who live in rural areas versus students who live in urban areas with regards to the impact of anxiety on students' exhaustion during online learning?

Objective 2 of the study – To look at the relationship between anxiety and exhaustion among students of Tirana University during online learning.

Research question 2a: What is the relationship between anxiety and exhaustion among students?

Research question 2b: Does students' anxiety depend on psychological/physical exhaustion?

Objective 3 of the study –To indicate the specific weight of components of physical/psychological exhaustion and anxiety dependence of students in teaching in relations to physical and psychological exhaustion.

Research question 3a: What is the weight of each component of physical-psychological exhaustion during distant learning among students of Tirana University?

Research question 3b: Does students' anxiety depend on psychological/physical exhaustion?

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study of behavior, emotions and psychosocial attitudes during and post Covid-19 distant learning process, especially on line teaching, has been the focus of numerous studies. Emotional behavior has played an important role in successfully facing emergency situations, like that of Covid-19 (Wuopulos, 2020).

When face to face teaching was not possible due to fear of infection, the distant learning was not a possibility for everyone. The longer the schools stayed closed, the more problems with motivations and teaching results the students displayed (Akat, & Karataş, 2020). This study aims to measure indicators of emotional behavior, such as anxiety, psychological and physical exhaustion during online teaching that were imposed on a massive scale and without any alternatives during Covid-19 pandemic. During pandemic, a growing number of

interdisciplinary studies demonstrated evidence of the dynamics of students' behavior with regard to anxiety, stress, efficacy, mental health, burnout, etc.

A study conducted in China by Hu, et al. (2022) with 512 students during first wave of covid -19 showed that virtual learning environment during covid-19 has favored conditions that those students who were involved in this form of learning demonstrate anxiety signs that must be taken into consideration and must be treated. Study findings (Hu et al. 2022) identified considerable levels of self-reported anxiety among 72% of students and that anxiety may negatively impact adaptation to distant learning and its learning outcomes. Findings by Almaiah et al. (2022) came to similar conclusion.

The pandemic period was a combination of social anxiety and computer anxiety that impacted quality of students' e-learning. Students' adaptation level to virtual learning and their effective inclusion was favorable under the conditions of low anxiety levels. Quality of cooperation and interaction in virtual classes may create a successful environment of interaction if anxiety factors that are caused as a result of technology are managed. The environment of interaction through telecommunication technology is characterized by considerable levels of stress and burned out. An increasing number of studies draw attention to the creation of practical strategies that can improve climate of interaction in virtual environment in support of psychological health, physical health and wellbeing of actors involved in these work environment (Mheidly, Fares, & Fares, 2020; Ahmed, 2023).

Mamolo (2022) in his study on online learning and motivation, self-efficacy and anxiety among students refers to learning environment during Covid-19 as the "New normal". Study findings show that students' experiences during new normal went hand in hand with anxiety and depression because of a lack of teaching infrastructure, many homework, and lack of motivation of self-efficacy. Transfer of teaching to digital platform revealed a complex and difficult environment of interaction. In general, interaction in e-learning environment depends on technological capabilities. Existing studies show that a positive perception of self-efficacy in virtual environment, preparation for class, satisfaction in learning and low anxiety level is in direct proportion with the ability to use technology (Peltier, Chennamaneni, & Barber, 2021).

Even before pandemic, studies had examined psycho-emotional elements of students in learning and the management of institutions of higher learning. Studies demonstrated that experiences like loneliness, stress, anxiety, learning burnout as indicators of students' performance, motivation level in effective participation in learning and self-efficacy (Ling, et al., 2014; Poulouva, & Cerna, 2018; Stoeber, et al., 2011). After the extraordinary conditions of

pandemic and transformation of teaching process through technology, research focused on issues of exhaustion during teaching and the learning burnout in order to direct future strategies towards an effective management of social crisis in the institutions of higher learning.

According to Ahmed (2023) having a strategic plan for the development of e-learning is a must to get a successful online education program because it helps to ensure that the program meets the needs of its users and also provides the tools to measure the success of e-learning initiatives. Should be considered the mediating effects of attitudes towards change, because research evidence suggests that it is important to identify what influences the attitudes of social actors towards change in order to facilitate and optimize their receptivity to change and, therefore, ensure the success of the change in the work environment in higher education institutions (Rusok et al., 2023). Independent learning and lack of social interaction during the pandemic brought about to students isolation, as well as feeling of loneliness, which caused emotional stress and negative perceptions towards quality of life. Research scholarship suggests that unusual circumstances of isolation and loneliness, like those of Covid-19 pandemic affect academic performance of students of they show mental health vulnerability (Yang & Swekwi, 2021). Under conditions of deprivation of free movement, in order for students to avoid regressive behavior and emotional attitudes, it is suggested that coping mechanism such as self-comfort and self-efficacy be used (Mamolo, 2022; Yang & Swekwi, 2021; Peltier et al., 2021).

Räisänen et al. (2020) in one of their studies considered students' exhaustion a result of relations between learning and their self-regulation and their dependence of their same-age peers. The results of this study show that the higher the indicators of self-regulation among students, the less the need for support of their same-age peers, and the exhaustion during learning is lower. While low indicators of self-regulation show a high potential for exhaustion during learning as a result of lack of their same-age peer support. A group of researchers explore the connection between social support and motivation to learn with burnout and psychological wellbeing. The results of such study, conducted with 486 university students of ages 18-35 years old, show that social support have a tendency to reduce stress and depression among students. On the other hand, burnout can impact psychological wellbeing of students (Rehman et al., 2022).

Burnout impact during learning can be a serious threat to physical and psychological wellbeing. A study by Azzi et al. (2021) with 67 institutions of higher learning in Brazil, showed that students could be divided into three groups: with regards to their experiences and

perceptions toward quality of life during online learning: those students with low quality of life, students with intermediate quality of life and those with better quality of life. The first group of students consisted of students who were younger and mainly female, who self-reported anxiety and stress, high exhaustion, negative perception towards online learning and low quality of life. Even after the pandemic, hybrid teaching forms, or forms dedicated to a virtual environment will increase. Distant learning is, among others, a flexible way to accommodate work schedules with learning and to manage time in the most optimal way for all activities. Researchers face the tasks of knowing the impact of virtual environment on perceptions, attitudes, emotions, and wellbeing of students so that managers of higher education address practices and selected methods based on research studies, in order to protect psychological capital, to provide social support and to minimize burnout.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes methodological aspects of the study, including explanation of instruments, sample used, and size of sample how sample was chosen. The study outlines objectives and research questions that illustrate variables not only based on theoretical literature, but also through the application of questionnaires in the field. This enables the analysis of the statistical data in order to provide descriptive and analytical analysis for the study, as well as discussion of findings, conclusions and further recommendations based on the results on anxiety and its influence on students' exhaustion during pandemic period.

Description of Research Sample

The sampling for this study consists of full time students who are studying in Tirana University who have experienced on line learning. Criteria for choosing subjects in the study were that they were students of 6 faculties of Tirana Universities. These faculties include: Faculty of Social Sciences, Faculty of Philology and History, Faculty of Natural Sciences, Faculty of Law, Economic Faculty, Faculty of Foreign Languages. Students were chosen randomly based on gender and area where they lived. About 1095 students took part in the study, but the final database consisted only of responses from 1000 subjects. The final sample consists of questionnaires of 1000 students, which has a reliability coefficient of 95% and 5% error. First, the study categorized the empirical data by number of students who were attending online line teaching.

Study Instrument

Description of questionnaire: This paper uses Inventory of Anxiety by Beck (BAI) Beck, et al., 1988) and Exhaustion at work by Hock (1988) as the instrument to collect data. This questionnaire consists of 3 sections: demographic data that include general information, such as age, gender, and place of place of birth (rural/urban). Second section: As mentioned earlier, this study uses “Anxiety Inventory of Beck (BAI). This questionnaire consists of 21 responses (4 scale ratings) used to evaluate intensity of anxiety symptoms. Findings may vary from 0-63: minimal anxiety levels (0-7), minimal anxiety (8-15), moderate anxiety (16-25) dhe severe anxiety (26-63).

Section III: Exhaustion at work by Hock (1988) that was modified to adapt to Albanian culture consists of two parts that is physical exhaustion and psychological exhaustion. Part A- Psychological worries as a result of exhaustion at work that are related mainly to forgetfulness, low motivation, weariness, anger, anxiety, etc. Part B- *Physical worries*, expressed through loss of appetite, muscular shaking, excessive fatigue, headache, etc.

In order to see the validity of instruments, we conducted a pilot study. About 30 students took part in the study, from two Faculties of Tirana University. Out of these 20 students were female and 10 were males. Students who took part in the pilot study did not participate in the main study. The study was conducted following ethical standards where all participants were ensured confidentiality of their information. Results of validity testing of Beck Instrument showed a reliability of $\alpha=0.947$ and Exhaustion at Work showed a reliability of $\alpha=0.885$. High levels of validity provided high applicable opportunity in our study.

Analysis of Statistical Findings

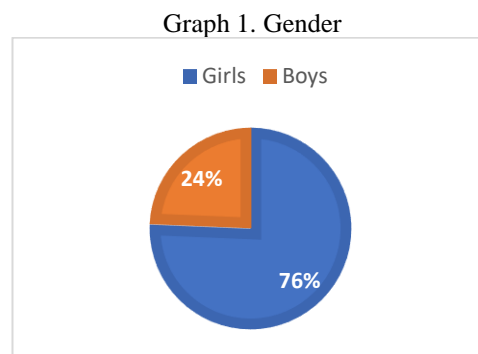
Part of the process was the creation of a data based on collected data and their analysis. SPSS 26 computer program was used to analyze data. Analysis of information was done through descriptive analysis, cross tabulations, tests of independence, correlations among variables, factorial analysis, construction and analysis of study's main objectives and research questions, analysis of variance (ANOVA), regression of multiple coefficients, etc. To summarize, the analysis includes not only descriptive analysis but also analytical analysis.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics of Study Participants

Descriptive statistics on gender and age

About 1000 students of Tirana University took part in the study. The study sample consists of 76 % (n=760) female and 24% (n=240) male, as shown in Graph 1. The sample shows that there are more female than male. This is in line with disproportionate numbers of female and male students in the higher institute of Tirana University, where during academic year 2020-2021, 79% of students were female (Ministry of Education and Sports, 2022).



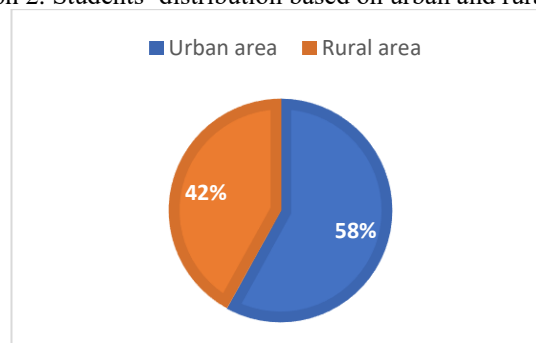
Source: Prepared by the authors.

With regard to age, minimal age of participants was 18 years old, while maximal age was 40 years old, the mean age was 21.9 years.

Students in urban and rural areas

In order to provide a picture as to students' area distribution, during online learning we provide the following graph. Sample results shows that 58% of students live in urban area and 42% of students live in rural area, as shown in Graph 2. More students during online teaching have stayed in urban areas in order to access more easily online teaching.

Graph 2. Students' distribution based on urban and rural area.



Source: Prepared by the authors.

Findings Objective 1: - To see the difference that exists based on socio-demographic characteristics (gender, urban/rural area) with regard to the impact of anxiety during online learning and students' exhaustion.

Research question 1a: Is there a difference between female and male students with regard to the impact of anxiety and students' exhaustion during online learning?

The results, based on *Levene Test* show that value of $Sig = 0.618 > 0.05$ coming to the conclusion that variance among these groups (male and female students) are equal (this is evident by the closer values of standard deviation of each group). *T test* of independent means show that although mean average of anxiety among Females is $M = 2.17$ and standard deviation $= 0.556$ and among Males $M = 2.14$ and standard deviation $= 0.559$ for $\alpha = 0.05$ and $t(998) = 0.924$ value of *Sig* (2-tailed) is $0.356 > 0.05$. This shows that there are no statistically meaningful differences with regards to anxiety and gender that is if the student is male or female.

Research question 1b: Are there differences in the terms of area (rural/urban) and the impact of anxiety on students' exhaustion during online teaching?

Levene Test for homogeneity of variance showed that value of $Sig = 0.518 > 0.05$ that shows that variance of anxiety for both groups of students (rural/urban areas) are equal (and standard deviations among groups are almost equal). *T test* of independent means show that although mean average of anxiety is higher in urban areas ($M = 4.16$ and $SD = 0.544$) and in rural areas ($M = 4.14$ dhe $SD = 0.580$) this is not statistically significant because for $\alpha = 0.05$ and for $t(998) = -0.697$ value of *Sig* (2-tailed) is $0.486 > 0.05$. Therefore, there are no statistically important differences between impact of anxiety students experience during online learning process based on the fact that students have accessed learning from rural or urban areas. This is also confirmed by Anova Analysis where Fischer value $F(1:998) = 0.486$ and Signif. Value $= 0.486$.

Findings objective 2: - To examine relationship between anxiety and exhaustion among students during online teaching at Tirana University.

Research question 2a: What is the relationship between anxiety and exhaustion among students?

In order to address this question, this paper uses Pearson correlation. With regard to the relationship between anxiety with exhaustion, data show that the value of Person correlation is $r_{xy} = 0.250$. This means that relationship has positive direction and relatively high because based on the theory r_{xy} varies -1 and $+1$ which means that the closer to 1 , the stronger is the relationship and vice versa. Anxiety has a positive relationship with consumption, which means

the higher the anxiety level among students, the higher their exhaustion level in online learning. In order to analyze research question: what the relationship between anxiety and exhaustion during online learning is, this paper uses Anova analysis to see if there is a statistical significance in order to continue with linear regression Test of Independence *Chi Square* used to analyze independence among variables. The findings reveal that there is a relationship between anxiety and exhaustion during online learning, because corresponding values of Sig. are smaller than 0.05, also for $\alpha=5\%$ and $F(3:996) = 11.037$ we have value of Sig =0.000 (ANOVA analysis). This allows us to come to the conclusion that statistical significance is meaningful. This implies the fact that the higher the exhaustion level among students, the higher the impact of anxiety level.

Findings objective 3: To show the weight of components of physical/psychological exhaustion and dependence of anxiety among students in on line teaching in relationship to psychological and physical exhaustion.

Research question 3a: What is the specific weight of each component of physical-psychological exhaustion during online learning among students of University of Tirana?

Weight of the Instrument: Physical/psychological Exhaustion Instrument consists of two aspects: physical exhaustion and psychological exhaustion. The following are respective values: Like every other profession, even the work in teaching and studying process has its own difficulties that are of physical and psychological characters. With regard to worries of psychological character, data show that students encounter problems like forgetfulness, boredom, great desire to stay in bed in the morning, etc., despite the fact that their values varies from 0.4% - 14.7%. In the meantime, while referring to the week or month, these values increase showing us that everyday problems exist and continue to accumulate. There are also students that respond that they have never had such worries that are problematic for them. May be this is due to the fact that they hesitate to openly express their worries and the consequences they bring about (Table 1).

Table 1. Worries of psychological character.

	Never	1-2 times in 6 months	every month	Every week	Every day	Total
Forgetfulness	51.7	28.7	12.3	5.5	1.8	100.0
Loss of Consciousness	86.7	7.3	1.6	4.0	0.4	100.0
Decrease in Motivation	49.5	34.8	7.1	6.9	1.7	100.0
Anxiety	54.2	27.9	9.8	6.1	2.0	100.0
Annoyance or anger	21.9	42.0	19.4	12.6	4.1	100.0
Decline in humor for a long time/Depression	70.3	19.6	4.2	4.2	1.7	100.0

Great desire to stay in bed in the morning	33.4	27.1	13.3	11.5	14.7	100.0
Decrease in sexual interest	53.6	21.9	18.0	4.1	2.4	100.0
Tendency to eat/drink or smoke more than usual	68.2	17.3	8.4	3.0	3.1	100.0

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Physical Consumption: With regard to physical worries and their frequency, Table 2. shows that body pain, physical fatigue, headache, etc occur every day. If we refer to monthly recurrence, there is an increase in tendency. This is due to the fact of accumulation of these physical worries. In addition, one should not forget the psychological worries that were mentioned above that impact or add their effect to physical worries and their recurrence. Even for these questions, responses vary from 33.1%- 66.2% declare that they have never had physical worries.

Table 2. Worries of physical character.

	Never	1-2 times in 6 months	Every month	Every week	Every day	Total
Loss of appetite	61.5	25.3	9.1	2.7	1.4	100.0
Muscle tremors	66.2	24.2	5.0	2.7	1.9	100.0
Sharp pain or pain sensation in various parts of the body	35.7	35.0	18.1	6.8	4.4	100.0
Feeling of excessive fatigue or exhaustion	33.1	34.5	16.4	9.8	6.2	100.0
Tendency to sweat or fast heart rate	51.4	27.9	10.9	5.7	4.1	100.0
Problems with digestion/gastrointestinal Worries	57.7	26.7	9.1	4.1	2.4	100.0
Inability to sleep	46.3	32.1	11.4	6.6	3.6	100.0
Troubled breathing or suffocation	66.1	23.2	5.8	3.2	1.7	100.0
Headache/and or migraine	35.3	35.2	17.5	8.4	3.6	100.0

Source: Prepared by the authors.

Research question 3b. Does students' anxiety depend on psychological/physical exhaustion?

Data show that value of Sig (2-sides) for psychological exhaustion and ANXIETY is $0.349 > 0.05$, which indicate that statistically this relationship is not valid. On the other hand, with regard to physical consumption value of Sig (2-sides) is 0.707 , again greater than 0.05 . This indicates that even this relationship is not significant statistically. In summary we would state that anxiety has an impact on the exhaustion dependence during online teaching but, it should be pointed out that the fact that there are no differences between types of exhaustion, whether it is psychological or physical.

DISCUSSION

Study findings showed that *t Test* of independence revealed that despite the fact that anxiety means among females is $M = 2.17$ and standard deviation $= 0.556$ and among Males

$M=2.14$ and standard deviation $=0.559$ for $\alpha=0.05$ and $t(998)=0.924$ value of Sig (2-tailed) is $0.356 > 0.05$, which shows that there are no meaningful statistical difference with regard to anxiety when it comes to the fact that the student is male or female. With regard to anxiety levels and its greater impact on females and males in exhaustion, this study findings show that there are no difference, but it should also be emphasized that different research studies have revealed different results on this topic.

For example, Hedges (2017) in his study revealed that the higher percentage of students who experience anxiety were males compared to females. According to the author, the statistical difference of anxiety based on gender could be explained with the existence of increasing stereotypes. Along similar lines, research findings by Haikalis et al., (2022; Gillis & Krull, 2020; Sazakli et al., 2021) demonstrated higher levels of anxiety among women and girls than boys. On the other hand research results by Pelucio, *et al.* (2022) on the relationship between gender and anxiety, showed that there were no important statistical differences by gender in anxiety experiences during online learning.

With regards to the relationship between the area (rural/urban) and anxiety levels students experience during on line learning, analysis of Levene *Test* of homogeneity of variance revealed that value of Sig= $0.518 > 0.05$ which shows that anxiety variance among two group of students (in urban and rural areas) are equal (and standard deviations among of two groups are almost equal). This shows that there are no difference in the way in which anxiety is experienced and its impact on line learning. Although anxiety is a human feeling experienced by everyone, even students are not except from this, whether they live in rural area or urban area, because they may encounter difficulty when they study, take tests or when they undertake important decisions. (Ajmal, M. & Ahmad, S., 2019).

Distant learning, despite its accessibility, often demonstrate gaps in understanding of materials to be studied and this causes anxiety levels, thus impacting their exhaustion during teaching process. Along similar lines, Quynh et al. (2020) point out that area of student's residence during online learning is not a factor that impact anxiety levels during online learning. Based on this study results, Pearson Correlation of $r_{xy}=0.250$ showed a positive relationship between anxiety and students' exhaustion during distant learning. Test of independence *Chi Square*, used to analyze dependence among variables also confirms the relationship between anxiety and students' exhaustion, which implies that the higher the anxiety levels among students, the higher their exhaustion, including the physical and psychological one. This study is in line with other studies that pointed out that online learning during Covid-19 created

conditions for mental health vulnerability that could bring about regressive development in emotional behavior among students (Mamolo, 2022; Yang & Swekwi, 2021; Peltier et al., 2021).

In a research study conducted with students by Hu et al. (2022) during online learning during the first wave of COVID-19 pandemic, findings showed that 72% of students self-reported high anxiety levels. Similar findings were found in the study by Almaiah et al. (2022), in which high levels of anxiety during online learning during pandemic were a combination of social anxiety and anxiety caused by technology. In most of the studies, empirical data showed a positive relationship between high anxiety level and online learning during pandemic, which in turn have a negative impact on models of self-regulation, self-efficacy, burn out indicators and motivation to learn among students.

The results of this study demonstrate that students of Tirana University have experienced very frequently (every week and every day) elements of psychological exhaustion. Feeling of staying in bed are at (23.2%) and boredom or anger (16.7%), followed by decline in motivation, anxiety, forgetfulness and other indicators. Elements of psychological exhaustion are significantly combined with elements of physical exhaustion on the part of students during online learning. One of the indicators with high frequency (every day and every week) is identified as feeling of excessive fatigue and sweating (16%), headache and/or migraine (12%), sharp pain or pain sensation in different parts of the body (11.2%), lack of sleep (10.2%) followed by fast heart rate, gastrointestinal problems, a sense of lack breathing, muscular trembling and lack of appetite.

Findings show the potential of online learning environment to favor indicators of physical and psychological exhaustion among students. Similar results are found even in other studies, such as those by Räsänen et al. (2020) and Rehman et al. (2022). These studies point out that exhaustion is connected with social support and other elements of self-regulation. Two of the studies show that students' social support by their own peer or their families improve the climate of distant learning by decreasing the exhaustion indicators and improving psychological wellbeing of students. Research by Azzi et al. (2021) showed that physical and psychological wellbeing of students during online learning was threatened by elements of burnout, thus influencing students' perceptions and attitudes towards quality of life during distant learning. Results showed that anxiety has an impact on exhaustion during online learning, but also it is important to underline the fact that there are no differences in terms of exhaustion types, whether it is psychosocial or physical.

CONCLUSION

To experience pandemic is an experience that deeply touches people, making them experience anxiety symptoms. Anxiety is one of the most important emotions that occur normally and can be found among all people. When people experience anxiety, they usually have thoughts or worries that are repeated and prevent them from living normally. They could avoid certain situations caused by worry and also could experience physical or psychological symptoms.

Analysis and discussion of empirical data collected through application of instruments provide an overview on the characteristics of students' situation during online learning in the biggest institution of higher learning in the Republic of Albania. This study provides a picture of the psycho-emotional environment during distant learning and provides the opportunity to compare its results with results from other studies that are conducted on national level, as well as studies carried out on international level. Taking into consideration psycho-emotional health of students during e-learning is important in order to consider management strategies of institutions of higher learning during future social crisis. Additionally, learning is very important in forming knowledge capacities that will help younger people in their later stages in life. A learning environment that encourages and favors anxiety situations and exhaustion will have a negative impact on students' academic performance.

Study results demonstrated that there is a correlation between anxiety experience and exhaustion during online learning among students of Tirana University. If students experienced high levels of anxiety, this will directly impact their exhaustion, whether it is physical and psychological. Impact of anxiety, its experience and exhaustion directly influence the decline of interests towards learning the learning outcomes. The study showed there are not difference as to what has the greatest impact during anxiety experiences, whether it is psychological or physical exhaustion. Daily or weekly psychological worries, health problems and physical fatigue create overload, thus causing anxiety and exhaustion among students. Their situation prevents their adaptation during online learning.

In addition, if we examine gender or rural/urban areas, data show that there are not statistically significant differences. Anxiety experiences has favored, on different levels, psychological and physical exhaustion, thus, having an impact in the learning outcomes during online learning. Therefore, such research studies serve to attract attention to the consolidation of facilitating, fulfilling and motivating strategies in order to improve indicators of adaptation

to online learning among students even under post pandemic conditions, whether in ordinary circumstances or emergency situations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on analysis of empirical data and study findings, taking into consideration the importance of learning environment, managerial policies of higher education, digital development in education and potential of distance learning in the future, we suggest the following:

First, policymakers in the field of higher education in the Republic of Albania must keep in mind training and fulfillment of different needs of students in the learning environment, especially in the distant learning environment. Policy making institutions of Albanian education must aim at the fulfillment, on a higher level, of these needs, as well as preventing the experience of anxiety levels and its impact on students' exhaustion, thus preventing one of the main factors that bring about decline in their academic level.

Second, Pandemic and post pandemic situation need to serve as a place for the application of policies support of improvement and preparation of infrastructure and teaching methods necessary for the creation of the environment and suitable conditions in all of their elements for the development of distant learning as a future alternative.

Third, Creation of conditions for motivation and evaluation of lecturers in their job, as well as support for qualifications and training that have to do with distant learning process. Increase in capacities of lecturers will foster a more effective learning environment and students may demonstrate positive behaviors towards online learning.

Fourth, Implementation of strategies in order to increase awareness among students on the importance of their wellbeing, creating models of institutional behavior that focuses on discussion of the problems that are related to anxiety, exhaustion, stress, depression, whether in face to face or distant teaching. In this way, institutions of higher education need to direct their activities toward preventive measures.

Fifth, Frequent meetings and discussions among lecturers, students in order to understand students' discontent during teaching, components that influence anxiety and finding out the ways to solve them.

Sixth, Institutions of higher education must pay attention to the trainings of pedagogical staff members, strategies and techniques on the realization of online teaching in the most productive and attractive way, thus fostering a positive climate for effective learning.

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