ONLINE LEARNING – BETWEEN NECESSITY AND OPTION

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Abstract

The analysis of the educational policy in relation to online education takes into account major decisions that have a direct impact on all those involved in taking these decisions and, of course, on how they become functional. Underlying the study is a personal approach of subjects who are more or less affected by the general condition caused by the pandemic, but only some have taken into account that there are cases where students' access to education is oppressed but which can attend classes online. The objective of the research study was to establish a basis for a legislative proposal in the field of education regardingthe inclusion of the option to choose the way of access to education, in the classical system or online, according to its particularities. Following the possibility of adopting an online education, the for it and against opinios have also arisen, and have led to the natural question of whether this system can be considereda possible, viable option to continue education, regardless of the motivation for major forceor not. In the context of the pandemic, the results of the survey and virtual discussions conducted on social media about the opinions of online learning have been divided: some believe that they have succed it, by effectively organizing learning using digital tools, others have noticed about the problems they have faced on a daily basis. The fact is that the situation created was an extraordinary one and the state created can mean a new start for the entire education system.

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Keywords: Pandemic, Online Education, Technology, Questionnaire, Networks

1. Introduction

Any unforeseen situation comes unannounced. One cannot have time to prepare before, it doesn't warn youin any way. It doesn't ask you if you can or want to deal with it. Simply... occurs. And how each person, entity, institution, state, continent copes – it depends on each of them. And when this cannot be achieved, as is usually the case, then it takes a reorganization of all possible principles, strategies and actions in order to overcome the impediment. Over time, many such impediments have been proven. Some with collateral damage, others at a more silent level. But they were outdated. But each blow has made its mark on each individual, creating a wave of beliefs and considerations that are more diverse, contradictory but constructive.

The same approach has taken place since the start of the COVID SARS 2 pandemic in 2020 at the world level. The entire globe has been affected, more or less - people, institutions, states, systems - even the education system.

In Romania, the private system reacted and adapted as quickly as it could to new challenges in order to move to online education. The state system, however, has adapted more slowly, with restraints to change. It wasn't time for research to find optimal solutions.

The online education solution was quickly chosen even though the state was not ready. Teachers were chosen to stop and asked to hold classes online, without receiving clear instructions, and especially without taking into account the possibilities and training of each individual teacher. It was clear: it was an emergency, just like in the states of war. From this moment on, chaos was in place: each teacher did as well as how he succeeded, relative to the solutions of the moment. Without protocols and quick solutions at the national level, some teachers have struggled to keep their classes online, sent work sheets, concomitantly, to the parallel, trying to save what was left of the previous school year. Then many enjoyed an unexpected holiday in the run-up to the Easter holiday, when the ad hoc organization of distance education involved the majority of the using the text messages or image transmission apps (e.g. WhatsApp), direct

telephone conversations between teachers and students, various educational sites.

Since then, an attempt has been made to approach an online education policy as a part of an educational policy adapted to the current state. From the experience gained during the years of education, online education policy is one of the educational policies that is experiencing bottlenecks. This policy includes the strategy of providing the solid basis, the support required to conduct courses online for all students, and the tactic is reflected in solutions related to the granting of tablets and financial aid to cases that do not have access to such tools necessary to conduct online education.

The development of the online education policy implies the existence of a context that is currently determined by the global expansion of the pandemic caused by the SARS-COV2 virus.

The interface between politics and education in the current context highlights information about the management of school institutions, innovations in the school system, the relationship between teachers and the Ministry of Education as an employer, the relationship between technology and classical education, the continuous training of teachers, the salaries of teachers in relation to the additional effort made, the system of evaluation of pupils within the new context and the dynamics between the political situation and the educational system. The actors involved in this policy are: teachers, students, parents, trade unions and as a pressure group - state institutions with decision-making power: government, parliament, ministries, etc.

The object of study of educational policy is the actions taken by the government in response to the problems that come from the education system. Following the need to adopt online education, pros and cons have also arisen, which have led to the natural question of whether this system can be considered for a possible viable option to continue education, regardless of the motivation for force majeure or not.

2. Literature review

An important source of research is in addition to the education legislation updated following the COFID pandemic, numerous articles and studies carried out for the purpose of analysing the impact of online education, professional groups on social networks, as well as the positive and negative experiences promoted in the media. In

virtual discussions, the most up-to-date topics were about the effect of distance learning, technology for ensuring online education, time and resources management for students under the given conditions, professional orientation and career development of students.

3. Research methodology

What is important in the analysis carried out is that the process should certainly not be considered independently and taken out of context.It is extremely necessary to understand the phenomenon itself, the events of the past year can be extremely important in order to understand certain problems related to the process, or even the final decision itself to have the possibility of an option. Therefore, what is due to the study should be matched with statistical information on what is happening at national level, or at least with perceptions of those who may find themselves in the event of a need to continue online education. The investigation procedure will be a field one, but of course, carried out online in the local community and will include 3 main stages (launching the online questionnaire, recording the answers and analyzing them) plus the documentation work.

The research followed the stages for analyzing the facts, educational processes for each level and analyzed process by noticing "certain skills in dealing a research in order to get to a realistic view of the researched subject" (Anghel, 2017, p .176).

The main research tool will be the questionnaire, of course allowing the researcher's malleability in analyzing answers that can sometimes be inconclusive. Direct observation is also not excluded when it will prove useful for studying particular aspects.

Emphasis shall be placed on complementarity, on mutual validation of the instrument and data sources. The obtaining of data related to the questionnaire is carried out on the same platform through which the transmission is carried out.

The expected results are automatically to obtain a favorable answer, in the sense of opening up the opportunity to choose online education and providing answers to research questions. With this, the results of the research can be used both by those who will carry out further analysis processes in this regard so that they are to the benefit of students, parents and teachers in Romania. Last but not least, an expected result of great importance is to bring to the fore the

usefulness of this studio for concrete social and educational problems, so that the general public is aware of the need to implement such a system for subjects in such circumstances.

4. Analysis and interpretation of the research data

The online education questionnaire contained 10 questions and was sent to 250 subjects, of which 238 answered. The subjects were students, parents, techears which, some of them were parets too. 79% of subjects fall into the adult category compared to 21% who are students. Of the 188 adults who responded, 16% of subjects are aged 21-30 years, 26% of subjects are aged 31-40 years, 25% of subjects are between the ages of 41-50 years, 11% of subjects are aged between 51-60 years and 1% of subjects are over 60 years.

It could be noticed that it was proven an active involvement among adults in online education, their answers being absolutely given by both parents and teachers. 54 % of subjects fall into the parent category, 21 % in the teacher category and 25% in the students category. Also, among the adults who answered the questionnaire, there is a greater involvement among parents than teachers.

This can be interpreted as greater involvement following personal reactions due to the influence this change in education has brought in response to the global state of emergency.

There are also teachers who are also parents and who have an overview of the issues under discussion, but the analysis took into account the respondent's first employment, that is teacher or parent.

From the total of 238 respondents, 48% consider the online education system acceptable as efficiency, with the balance tilting towards lower efficiency, with a 31% high efficiency response with a 21% response. In this response, it is taken into account that the answers are subjective, speaking of subjects who in turn mentioned whether or not they were affected by the impact that the online system had on each individual actor but in close contact with each other, the reporting being done in mutual correlation.

Regarding the need to continue the online education system, 60% of respondents are against (some were categorical, without giving a reason), 15% were for the continuation of this system, 1% did not respond and 24% conditioned the continuation of the online study according to the pandemic.

The possibility of the education becoming all technology as an important factor in the development of education, is unacceptable for 27% of respondents, viable for 26% of respondents and for the remaining 47%, this is seen as a possibility in the future.

In the replies to this question, it is mentioned that all subjects took into account the analysis in relation to their own experience, without taking into account the need for such action, compared to other persons who might be in the circumstances of such a possibility and which would be appropriate for further education and avoidance of educational failures.

Regarding the possibility that in the future there is the option of students/parents choosing how to conduct education: classical or online, for the subject of the study, the possibility of choosing for classical or online education is unacceptable for 57% , acceptable for 33%, 6% saw it as a possibility in the future and 4% were unable to express any opinion.

This opportunity was not taken into account by the subjects who categorically rejected this system, strictly referring to the global situation during the pandemic period, and seeing it as a possibility only in situations of maximum urgency, mentioning as negative effects: the lack of socialization, the development of children as communicative individuals, turning them into individualistic losers, unable to empathize, i.e. having a negative effect from a social point of view and for the community to which they belong. One of the question was about the technology skills in education for the subjects, and 21% responded that they were doing well, 4% admitted that it was not a strong point, but 75% mentioned that they mastered technology in online classes. Student's attention to classes was identified as indifferent by 16% of respondents, 33% mentioned that efficiency is not achieved at an appropriate level, and 54% agreed with efficiency in classes in terms of students' attention. The effectiveness of students in online classes is also a topic to discuss as it relates to the degree of responsibility and interest they develop for a particular subject or teacher, finding solutions and/or increasingly relevant reasons for attending classes.

The current way of verifying knowledge and giving notes in the online system, 8% consider it indifferent, 51% consider it not relevant and 41% consider it effective. The way of verifying the knowledge

assimilated during online classes is regarded as a slightly underrated assessment tool as it is very difficult to understand all students in listening or testing, with a high degree of risk that the answers are not personalized but with influences both within the family and in the manual in order to obtain grades that do not correctly reflect the student's preparation.

The general opinion about online education, tilt the balance towards a positive opinion of 48% contrary to respondents who do not have a very good opinion of 41% and 11% regard it with difference.

5. Conclusions

In this study it is an advantage that both students, parents and teachers have taken this topic seriously and have been actively involved in expressing their opinion regarding the organization of the online learning process. Most of them demonstrated openness for effective communication and accountability. Parents had different attitudes towards the organization of the online learning process, identifying problems in the conduct of this type of education, seeing as the only solution a return to the classic system, as soon as the situation in the country allows it. I mean, I see this option possible only in case of force majeure, in the process of continuing the educational process for students. Based on the results of the survey, it is noted that there are also subjects who are open to such an opportunity. During the period of organization of distance learning, the role of parents has become a more complex one, from that of parental education, to that of pedagogical guide in the sense of guidance, monitoring, sometimes even tutoring in situations where students claim that they cannot understand concretely and need clarification. This leads to an additional degree of loading and often becoming an overwork for parents who have neither time nor knowledge nor psycho-pedagogical skills for such a challenge. An important role of the parent during this period has been the provision of well-defined work space for the child/children, which psychologically helps the student to take the work seriously and be more responsible. Which is not exactly possible for 100% of students. The biggest challenge for parents working from home during this period was to perform their tasks at work and at the same time meet the needs of the child/children. In addition to changes

in isolation situations, parents must manage children's emotions, fatigue, household and work tasks at the same time as children's needs. The close link between parents and teachers was essential during the online education process. Social media has been a real support in communication between participating actors. Thus, during the period of distance learning, a large part of the parents, who saw their child unique and had exaggerated demands towards the teachers, realized how complicated the mission of the pedagogues is. They understood that they had to arm themselves with patience, to focus not so much on knowledge, grades or high grades, but primarily on child safety, health and an emotional balance ensured both in the family and in society, including at school.

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, the results of the survey and virtual discussions carried out on social media with teachers, students and parents about the opinions of online learning, opinions have been divided: some believe that teachers, parents and students have oriented themselves quite well, effectively organizing learning using digital tools. Others, however, noted the problems they faced on a daily basis (lack of direct contact with teachers and colleagues, poor organization, non-compliance with the study program, poor involvement of parents, lack of teacher training, lack of performance technique, hallucinatory motivations of students to miss classes, etc.). The fact is that the situation created was an extraordinary one and the education system, like the whole society, was taken by surprise. But the state created can be a new start for the entire education system, including teachers, students and parents.

Beyond the virtual accumulation of knowledge and the technological development of skills, it has been shown that the school should be prepared to adapt to different contexts of reality, to provoke emotions and attitudes, to build characters, in a value context influenced by various factors. Online education being a new stage in the organization of the educational process, and even though it has caused tension and frustration, it has largely become an important alternative to reforming the entire traditional education system. Virtual learning has become an opportunity to define both the role of the student as an active and self-taught part of learning, and of the teacher, who must be able to make it easier to inspire the study in the idea of being more of a guide and less controlling this process. Teacher and managerial

training programs should be rethought, focused on online learning, as an alternative to traditional learning according to personal choices. In the process of organizing online learning, teachers need special training, which will need to provide continuous constructive feedback to students and parents, helping them to progress. In the process of teacher training, it should be borne in mind that it is necessary to adapt the study of the intellectual possibilities of each student. It will study at its own pace, it must not be forced by certain circumstances and the knowledge verification must be carried out on the basis of descriptors to help it highlight the weaknesses it has to improve. Thus, each student can be helped to reach his full potential, through personalized strategies, promoted both by direct virtual contact between the teacher and the student in certain situations imposed by certain circumstances. It is necessary to encourage personalized learning, which involves the humanization of the education system, with a focus not so much on compliance with the provisions of the written curriculum as on the real needs of the child and the development of their own skills and competences, but for now the education system is far from such an achievement. The student must be taught to learn, be accustomed to teaching-learning methods and techniques, especially those related to self-learning and mutual learning, self-organization, self-assessment, mutual evaluation and teamwork.

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