



## CHALLENGES OF ONLINE CLASSES FOR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN TOURISM HIGHER EDUCATION IN COVID-19 PANDEMIC CONTEXT. STUDY CASE ALBANIA AND ROMANIA

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**Abstract:** *The present study aims to identify the main challenges facing students and teachers in 2 tourism higher education units in Albania and Romania in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Using the questionnaire as a research tool, the authors of the article identified the problems faced by students and teachers in online courses and how they chose to deal with it.*

### • Introduction

Over time, the educational system has been continuously subjected to a multitude of challenges, this determining its evolution over time. At the level of each country, the educational system has its particularities, depending on the national educational policy adopted.

However, the year 2020 remains a very special year for the educational system around the world, the COVID-19 pandemic has determined a "revolution" in each country. Both teachers and students are forced to adapt to new teaching strategies, new methods of teaching and learning online.

### • Material and method

Using the survey as research method and questionnaire as research instrument, followed by data processing and analysis, the authors of the article, want to emphasize challenges of online classes for students and teachers from tourism higher education in COVID-19 pandemic context. Questionnaires were applied in universities from Albania and Romania.

The survey was realized using the application provided by Google Drive and in order to complete it students and teachers had to access a link. Were applied two different questionnaires, one for students and one for teachers. The survey was realized using the internet.

### • Results and discussions

According to the answers provided, students from Albania and Romania face similar challenges when participating in online courses. It seems that students' challenges are related to the internet connection and communication with their teachers or colleagues. Most students said they face with lack of communication or difficult communication, low internet connection, loss of attention during classes.

Teachers from Albania and Romania emphasized similar challenges in online courses, in this way they face with low involvement of students or low internet connection.

### • Conclusions

After analyzing the answers provided by students and teachers from Albania and Romania to the questionnaires we noticed the following:

- It was necessary for many students and teachers to purchase products or services to ensure the smooth running of online courses (devices, webcams, microphones, headphones, internet services, access to educational resources, graphics tablet, mouse pen etc.).
- For online classes ZOOM and Google Classroom are most used platforms.
- Most of students and teachers did not use these platforms before the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Over 80% of students and teachers from both countries learned to use online platforms by their self. Some of them also participated to courses or watched free tutorials.
- 56,3% of Albanian teachers prefer online courses and face to face courses, 43,7% prefer just face to face teaching.
- 60% of Romanian teachers prefer just face to face courses and 40% online courses and face to face courses.
- Most of students prefer face to face courses (65% of Albanian students and 70% of Romanian students)
- Some students prefer online courses and face to face courses (24% of Albanian students and 25% of Romanian students) and there are students from both studied country who prefer only online courses.