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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

**POST-PANDEMIC  
CHALLENGES IN PSYCHOLOGY  
AND EDUCATION**

# Book of Abstracts

16-17 DECEMBER  
2022



**INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE**

**POST-PANDEMIC CHALLENGES IN  
PSYCHOLOGY AND EDUCATION**

16-17, DECEMBER, 2022

Faculty of Social Sciences

University of Tirana

Tirana, Albania



## **Introduction:**

During COVID-19, mental health problems become a global health concern, which was at increased risk in the course of this health emergency. Education plays an important role in life skills development and also in the personal aspect, education is important in promoting well-being, resilience, self-control, and self-esteem and also improves emotional health and grit. To understand the various ways in which Covid-19 has affected people's psychological aspects and education is necessary to see those problems in connection between them and often those affect the way that people make poor choices related to their behaviors and future. In this context is important to look at the overall person and our role is to provide people with awareness and necessary skills to become empowered, and responsible for themselves and society by using a mechanism of development assets.

As COVID-19 Pandemic was a challenge for mental health and education, it is crucial we deepen our understanding of social, psychological and educational dynamics by challenging our assumptions and analyzing them with empirical studies. This 2-day conference will provide an interdisciplinary platform for academics, researchers, policymakers, students, and interested community members. With the theme post-pandemic challenges on psychology and education", the conference will be a wonderful opportunity to explore current research, trends, and insights about this topic while expanding your professional networks.

This international conference brings together distinguished professors from around the world, academics, psychologists, education specialists, sociologists, and researchers and to share their insights. The goal is to broaden awareness of different contexts in the pursuit of synergies and solutions. We look forward to your active participation in this academic activity of the Department of Psychology and Education.

## **Conference topics:**

- 1. The impact of the pandemic on the mental health of children, adolescents, and adults**
- 2. Effects on developmental trajectories and (digital) education.**
- 3. Bio-psychological consequences of COVID-19 and its burden on (mental) health.**
- 4. Psychological effects of economic consequences and work conditions on well-being and mental health**
- 5. Relevance of social ties, cohesion, and resilience for individuals and societies as protective factors buffering the pandemic.**
- 6. Digitalization and E-mental health in times of a pandemic (and beyond).**
- 7. Lessons learned for other global crises (e.g., climate change) and social systems coping with major challenges**



## **Preface**

### **The volume in your hands includes the abstracts held at the International Scientific Conference preface**

The volume in your hands includes the papers held at the International Scientific Conference "Transition and Society, a multidisciplinary approach" organized by the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Tirana, in cooperation with AAB College, University of Pristina, University of Tetova, Order of Psychologists in the Republic of Albania, University of Sofia, St. Kliment Ohridski, University of Lausanne, on December, 16-17, 2022.

The documents that are part of this publication are some of the most prominent and have met the criteria set by the scientific board of the conference. We note with pleasure that in the scientific activity (already institutionalized and annual), to which this publication is related, many researchers, known for their outstanding contribution to the development of science in our country, participated, but also many researchers from young people, from different universities inside and outside the country. Therefore, we find the opportunity to thank all the participants once again.

Each author bears personal responsibility for the theoretical and methodological content of his paper. The editors have aimed for the theoretical subject to be the same as that which has come from each author.

Finally, a special thanks go to all the management structures of the University of Tirana, who dedicated themselves to the quality and serious realization of this conference. organized by the Department of Pedagogy and Psychology, Faculty of Social Sciences in cooperation with the AAB College.

***Edmond Rapti***

***Chairman of the Scientific Committee!***

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# LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE COVID-19 CRISIS FOR REFORMING HIGHER EDUCATION IN ALBANIA

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## **Abstract**

Globally, there is a consensus that higher education after the COVID-19 crisis cannot return to previous ways of doing things, it must be rethought, reformed, and reshaped in order to play a major role in helping to shape a better post-COVID world. The analyses of the challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic by the higher education institutions in the world and especially by Albania universities and lessons learned from the COVID-19 crisis for reforming higher education are the focus of this paper. They are extracted based on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on these aspects of the activity of higher education institutions: teaching and learning; digitalization; governance; legislation framework; and quality assurance. International reports and local university reports; policy documents, manuals, and, guidelines, produced during the pandemic; published research papers and legislative frameworks have served as a source of research evidence. The paper came to the conclusion that lessons learned are milestones that can enable institutions of higher education and policymakers to meet future crises; adjust and improve institutional functioning in the longer term, and contribute to reshaping society.

**Keywords:** *challenges, COVID-19 crisis, reforming higher education, lessons learned*

# TRANSPARENCY IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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## Abstract

Public administration is made up of people, processes, and powers which are fulfilled public functions through regulatory framework insurance and through the observation of its appliance, through guaranteeing the standards and the delivery of services and public goods.

In order to fulfill these functions, the development of human resources, the growth of the capacity of the employees, and their knowledge of the methods, technics, and processes of administration is the key to every public administration. Transparency means freedom of access in the administration background, freedom of information, and the assurance of administrative justice. Responsibility includes the responsibility of those who make decisions and the control over the administration and its functions. Participation means giving everyone the opportunity to be part of the process of growth and development. Transparency in decision-making processes and in institutions has the potential to become the main strategy in fighting corruption and in improving the quality of urbane governance in general. In conclusion, transparency is the basic principle of a responsive system of governance. Access to information plays the main part in promoting transparency. The information must be provided on time and it must be correct in order to be used in an effective way. Who provides the information and to what purpose, become key aspects of transparency, when competing interests come together in certain case.

**Keywords:** *Administration, information, transparency, human resources, people.*

# RELATIONSHIPS OF ANXIETY LEVELS WITH THE NATURE OF INFORMATION ON THE PANDEMIC SITUATION

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## **Abstract**

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic tested the health of people, and the capacities of institutions and enabled them to survive and learn the relevant lessons. The author is involved in public information activities raising the issue of information management in times of uncertainty.

Conflicting information also contains an invaluable opportunity for developing critical thinking. The following presentation will deal only with the new context that conflicting information creates in the processing of anxiety that is activated during a pandemic.

The presentation based methodologically on published studies and observations in the Albanian context ends with the hypothesis that the successful management of the pandemic needs to take into account both the objective uncertainty created by the threat of infection and the circulation of unverified, unstructured, unaddressed, contradictory information,

**Keywords:** *Anxiety, conflicting information, decision-making, pandemic*



# SEXTING DURING ADOLESCENCE (15-18 YEARS); MOTIVES AND IMPACTS IN THE EMOTIONAL ASPECT

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## Abstract

The research "*Sexting during the period of adolescence (15-18 years); Motives and emotional impacts*" comes as a scientific study after several months of research about the motives of sexting and its emotional experiences. Sexting is a widespread phenomenon with a wide scope in the population, especially in adolescence in the last decade. Sexting has many different definitions depending on the context and the discussion involved. In this paper, sexting will be defined as sending, receiving or distributing messages, images, or videos with sexual content through electronic means, mainly mobile phones (Klettke et al, 2013).

**Methodology:** For the realization of this study, several research questions were raised, among which it can be mentioned that the first research question has to do with verifying the relationship that exists between involvement in sexting and emotional experiences. The second research question is related to teenagers' motives for engaging in sexting. Continuing, the third research question consists of the most used programs for engaging in sexting. As well as the last two research questions focused on the differences that may exist between rural and urban areas as well as between genders.

The study included a sample of 78 teenagers aged 15-18 years, namely 39 subjects from the city of Tirana and 39 participating teenagers from Fieri. Snowball sampling was applied to achieve this sample. In order to answer the research questions, data collection was carried out through a mixed method, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Specifically, the subjects were administered a Questionnaire (*Sexting Motives Questionnaire*, Bianchi D, et al, 2016,  $\alpha = 0.786$ ) which enabled highlighting the involvement in primary and secondary sexting as well as the basic motives. For the collection of information regarding the emotional state, a qualitative method was used, which consisted of the development of two focus groups (26 adolescents).

**Results:** The findings of this study showed that engaging in sexting was associated with different emotional experiences depending on the user. Also, in terms of motives, the results showed that there are a number of motives that lead teenagers to engage in sexting.

**Keywords:** *sexting, adolescence, motive, emotional impact*

# RESHAPING TEACHING TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING BASED ON THE EXPERIENCE GAINED DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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## Abstract

The experience gained from implementing virtual teaching in the period of the COVID-19 pandemic has increased my interest to conduct research on reshaping the teaching process of translation and interpretation in universities. This paper focuses on the analysis of the experience gained during the virtual teaching of translation and interpreting courses at the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the University of Tirana, aiming to present recommendations for reshaping the teaching process. For the purposes of this research, the following research questions were set: 1) What are the advantages and challenges translation faculties encounter in virtual teaching of translation and interpreting during the COVID-19 pandemic? 2) What are the reasons for reshaping the teaching process for translation and interpreting? 3) What are the most effective contemporary teaching approaches that can be implemented in teaching translation and interpreting courses? The study, of course, does not aim to generalize, but seeks to discover the opinion of faculties of the Faculty of Foreign Languages of the University of Tirana on virtual teaching; the advantages and challenges they faced; interests and reasons for reshaping teaching; possible new approaches for teaching translation and interpreting. Data were collected through interviews conducted with 12 lecturers who teach in translation and interpreting courses. The research found that: research on virtual and distance teaching provides a valuable source of information for rethinking and reshaping teaching of translation and interpreting; virtual teaching in translation and interpretation has several advantages, but also many challenges to overcome; it is necessary to reshape the teaching of translation and interpretation using modern technology; it is needed to experiment new contemporary teaching approaches that combine classroom teaching with virtual teaching and choose among them the more effective approach for teaching translation and interpreting courses.

**Keywords:** *reshaping teaching, virtual teaching, classroom teaching, teaching translation, interpreting*

# COVID -19 AND ITS IMPACT ON THE LIFE OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE SURVIVORS

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## **Abstract**

The Covid-19 pandemic situation had a devastating impact on the Albanian economy and especially on the situation of women and girls/children in vulnerable conditions. Concerns about an increase in domestic abuse were clear as soon as the lockdown was announced in March 2020.<sup>1</sup> Statistics have shown a decrease in reported cases of gender-based violence (GVB) to the police, especially during the two-month lockdown period in March-April 2021. The underreporting of gender-based violence cases during the whole pandemic period is an issue to be tackled, especially at the grassroots level. Covid-19 also brought a reduction in the inter-institutional response to addressing domestic violence cases, especially at the local level. The structures of social services at the municipal level have been mainly limited and focused on support with food packages, in almost all 61 municipalities of the country.

The aim of this study is to understand the experiences, needs, and challenges of gender-based violence survivors in accessing services and dealing with the effects of emergency situations. The methodology used for this purpose was qualitative. The study included 9 GBV cases who have received services from the shelters through using semi-structured interviews.

Data from the interviews show that women, girls, and children in Albania, survivors of GVB faced difficulties in reaching out for help because the protection system was not prepared to respond to emerging needs and survivors were not able to seek support. Another identified difficulty was related to the accession of needed psycho-social services. Furthermore, the COVID-19 period impacted deeper the socio-economic prospects, and a significant increase of mental health problems for victims of GVB was reported.

**Keywords:** *Covid-19, gender-based violence, pandemic situation, impact, psycho-social services.*

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<sup>1</sup> *Un Women (2020) "Voices of gender equality mechanisms on COVID-19".*

# THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF STUDENTS

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## **Abstract**

In March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) officially classified COVID-19 as a global pandemic. Countries and territories across the world began to implement quarantine and shelter-in-place orders in an attempt to limit social contact and slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus. This drastic change in the way of living, of course, impacted the mental health of people. The goal of this study was to explore the impact that the pandemic of COVID-19 brought on mental health. The research method used in this study was the qualitative one. The chosen sample was intentional and the instrument for data collecting was an in-depth, half-structured interview with open questions. The data were collected through the interviews of 17 students, in the Faculty of Social Sciences in Tirana. The results of the study showed that the pandemic of COVID-19 affected the mental health of the students that participated in this study in two different aspects. Firstly, on the negative aspect, the pandemic brought stress, anxiety, depression, insomnia, uncertainty, and many other negative feelings that impacted the mental health of the students.

Secondly, on the positive side, the students interviewed said that spending more time with their families, not having to worry about school and work, and having more time to take care of themselves felt really good and made all this period enjoyable.

**Key words:** *Covid-19, mental health, impact*

# THE NEW TRAJECTORIES OF DIGITIZATION AND EDUCATION IN THE WESTERN BALKANS DURING THE COVID PERIOD

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## Abstract

Every facet of life was affected by the Covid-19 epidemic, which also created new social, political, economic, and cultural obstacles. When Covid-19 struck the Western Balkan country's educational systems, they were unprepared. Due to the Albanian earthquake that caused the school year to be delayed by one month, beginning in November 2019, the Covid-19 pandemic presented an especially difficult situation for Albania. Despite quick responses throughout the region, school closures were less successful, leading to learning losses and a wider equity gap. Additionally, there are no data for the Western Balkans countries, but there are unmistakable signs that teachers there, are not equipped to create long-term distance learning programs that are successful. The commitment to develop new teaching strategies by fusing in-person and online instruction should be one of the key goals of the educational system in order to open up new spaces for those with impairments and those with the limited economic prospect. The numerous issues raised by Covid-19 amply demonstrated the inadequacies of policies and the educational system, not just in Albania but also in other Western Balkan nations. This article attempts to analyze the existing research on the educational paths taken in the Western Balkans throughout the 2020–2022 timeframe, comparing the drawbacks and difficulties while also learning from one another's experiences. The systematic review is the applied research methodology. The literature review is the tool that is being used. Ten scientific articles from the two-year period 2020–2022 make up the sample.

**Keywords:** *Western Balkan, Education, Digitalization, Covid–19 pandemic*

# LEARNING THROUGH THE GAME AND ITS IMPACT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE DURING THE PANDEMIC PERIOD

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## Abstract

The strategy of learning through games and its influence on the development of student's knowledge is a technique that has received a lot of attention, taking into account the fact that game increases the focus of students, and develops memory, creativity, and creative skills in students. However, the COVID 10 pandemic period was a very challenging period for every character included in the educational system, in our case students, teachers and parents, where many techniques used with physical presence where evaporated in online form, or transformed in other form. To find out how where games used during the pandemic in educational system, we conducted a research where the main objective was the level and form of implementation of game as a teaching technique during Covid 19 in primary schools, among teachers and students from I do 5th grade. In accordance with defined objectives, survey and interview techniques were applied in the research with N=120 teachers and N=80 students. Results that there is a strong correlation of implementation of games as technique by parents and teachers in the period of the pandemic and the students learning and mental health. This research, as well as the results gained during the research, will be a driving path headed to the application of the game in the process of learning as well as the benefits in the development of students' knowledge by creating a positive approach about learning, motivating students with their participation and creating a progressive attitude towards learning along with awareness of parents toward the efficacy of home based game application.

**Keywords:** *play, strategy, knowledge, teaching, learning activities, parents, mental health.*

# POSITIVE YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ASSETS AS A STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH TO HEALTHY ADOLESCENTS

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## **Abstract**

The theoretical approach of Positive Youth Development Assets focuses on developmental assets that play a crucial role in the understanding of the person as a whole

According to the ecological approach of PYD, factors such as family support school climate, neighborhood, communities, and adolescent's own dispositions to be more responsible, and aware, develop a sense of purpose altruism, and commitment to education are considered critical factors that help create a positive climate for them to grow and flourish.

The aim of this study is to understand the role of the PYD framework in relation to external and internal assets. This framework perceives adolescents in a holistic way, focusing on external and internal assets. External assets like Support, Empowerment, Boundaries, Expectations, and Constructive Use of Time help adolescents create a climate that makes them feel more supported and has a positive experience with people and other institutions. Internal assets are related to Commitment to learning, Positive values, Positive identity, and Social competencies.

According to the current theoretical perspectives, the PYD model seems to be a valid method to explore factors that affect the positive development of adolescents and also an excellent approach to building intervention programs for them.

**Keywords:** *Adolescents, internal assets, external assets, theoretical perspectives, review*

# LEISURE SUBJECT ACTIVITIES AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS LEARNING MOTIVATION

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## Abstract

Based on the fact that the leisure activities of students enrich the forms of knowledge in school, we can say that their implementation by teachers affects the internal motivation and social needs of students. Leisure subject's activities are part of teaching techniques that teachers use to motivate students for learning, which is why should be seen as inclusive part of teaching process. In North Macedonia, there are few data regarding leisure activities outside the teaching process, however very little has been researched on subject's leisure activities. For this reason, we carried out a research where the objective of our research was oriented towards the level of implementation of leisure classroom activities during the learning process, and its correlation with students' motivation in learning progress aged 6-11 years old. So, the main hypothesis of this research was: ***The inclusion of leisure subject activities in specific learning situations affects the motivation of students for learning.*** In accordance with defined objectives, survey and interview techniques were applied in the research with N=100 teachers and 100=students. Results showed a confirmation of the hypothesis, respectively there is a strong correlation of implementation of leisure classroom activates and increase of student's motivation for learning. The obtained results should serve to identify and overcome shortcomings in implementation leisure classroom activities that simultaneously have a great impact in motivation learning development of students in primary education.

**Keywords:** *Leisure classroom activities, students, teachers, primary education, motivation, learning development*



# "FIXATION IN TIME" - FRUSTRATION OR SOCIAL CONNECTION BETWEEN GENERATIONS: A PSYCHOPATHOLOGY OF EVERYDAY LIFE IN ILLUSORY TIMES

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## **Abstract**

The state of emergency pandemic disturbed the life routine of all generations. Young people faced the opposite or the need to re-articulate vitality, since medical practices to avoid the effects of the Covid-19 virus had social isolation and social distance as the main practice. The prolongation of the state of isolation and preventive measures worsened the psychological condition of young people. Young people had plans, expectations about themselves, desires, dreams. Disruption of the routine, such as not attending school, online learning, social restrictions caused in some young people deep boredom, despair, anxiety, in others panic attacks, social phobia, etc.

The outside world was "proposed" by medical institutions, and was also perceived by people as dangerous: the 'social other' dangerous, polluted, dirty, alien, sick. The extraordinary situation [pandemic situation] made it difficult or at least quite different [extra-ordinary] for young people to move into adulthood, but it also exposed their pain to family members and others. The paper will analyze three cases, aged 19-24, students during the pandemic, namely two boys and one girl. The method used is the in-depth psychoanalytic interview of free "associations". The first case is of a patient followed before, during, after the pandemic [if we can call the current time that way]. The second and third cases are family members who contact me after the pandemic for consultation. The analysis focuses on existential dilemmas and their confrontation with distrust in science, namely on the effects of the vaccine, leading us to hypothesize a stagnation, regression in *infantile time* of the subject.

Our thesis is that in extraordinary pandemic times the young person will have the predisposition to think that it was the external factors (pandemic/world) which caused the severity of the psychological state and not a previous conflicting state between internal psychic instances such as (ego-ideal or ideal ego).

**Keywords:** *exceptional period, young people, subject, ego ideal, ideal ego, social connection, clinical practice.*

# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON MENTAL HEALTH IN ALBANIA

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## Abstract

There have been several studies about mental health and its problematics from the starting of the pandemic Covid-19. The quarantine has had a significant impact on people correlated with psychological effects. Social distance measures after the quarantine and the ongoing of the pandemic situation led to a changing of people's habits with social, physical, and psychological consequences.

This study tried to describe the situation in Albania in times of Covid-19, and its impact on people's life. It aimed to verify the resilience trajectory in Albania of adults aged 18 years and older and to detect potentially factors that could influence mental health in Albania. Descriptive statistics and correlations were used to evidence the mental health consequences during the pandemic in the first year.

A sample of 227 participants completed online the battery of questionnaires. The study showed that mental health was deteriorating during and after the quarantine. There were high rates of depression, anxiety, social isolation, and suicidal ideation were found mainly in women of 18-29 years old. The study confirmed the difficulties of people in coping with the pandemic situation. The researchers tried to identify the main psychological effects of Covid-19 pandemic to contribute to building better resilience and improving mental health and wellbeing.

**Keywords:** *mental health; resilience; Covid-19; social isolation, anxiety, social distance.*

# PERCEIVED STRESS, SELF ESTEEM AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AFTER COVID-19 PANDEMIC AMONG HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS IN LUSHNJA

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## Abstract

This study aims to explore the relationship between perceived stress, self-esteem and academic performance after pandemic lockdown. Pandemic of covid-19 was something unexpected that changed our lives. It affected our physical and psychological health, our social interactions and our everyday life routine. Students were one of the most affected categories due to the involvement in a new teaching process such as the creation of virtual classes and online learning.

The main objective of this study is to study if there is a relationship between perceived stress, self-esteem and academic performance at 12-th grade high school students in Lushnja. Another objective is to highlight if there are gender differences in perceived stress levels.

The sample of this study consists of 115 high school students of 12-th class from three public high schools in Lushnja. Specifically, the sample consists of (n = 60) females and (n = 55) males. Two questionnaires were used for data collection. The perceived stress scale contains 10 questions about feelings and thoughts and Rosenberg self-esteem contains 10 statements. We referred as academic performance to the average grade of the last year.

Correlations show that the higher the perceived stress, the lower is the self-esteem and the academic performance. According to t-test, there is no difference between male and female in perceived stress levels.

**Key words:** *perceived stress, self-esteem, academic performance, high school students*

# STRESS, ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION IN HEALTHCARE WORKERS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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## Abstract

Healthcare workers have been at the center of the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, thus also facing various job-related stressors. Based on studies conducted in different countries, the main purpose of this study is to examine the prevalence of depression, anxiety and stress among a sample of healthcare workers in four of Tirana's public hospitals, who faced and dealt with most of patients infected with Covid-19.

The study included a sample of 173 healthcare workers (doctor, nurse and laboratory technician) from two public hospitals and two private hospitals in Tirana. Forty-two of them were employees, medical staff belonging to the University Hospital Center of Tirana, "Mother Teresa", forty of them were employees, medical staff belonging to the University Trauma Hospital "Military Hospital", forty-four were employees, medical staff belonging to the "American Hospital 1" in Tirana and forty-seven were employees, medical staff belonging to the "Hygeia Hospital" in Tirana.

The DASS-21 questionnaire created by Lovibond, S.H. & Lovibond, P.F. (1995), was used as the instrument to assess the level of occurrence for possible symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression in the medical staff. Depression Scale assesses dysphoria, hopelessness, life deprivation, self-deprecation, lack of interest/involvement, anhedonia and laziness. Anxiety Scale assesses autonomic arousal, skeletal muscle effects, situational anxiety and subjective experience of the impact of anxiety. The degree of stress is sensitive to non-specific chronic arousal levels.

The results showed that the doctor and nurse professions derived highest figures of assessments of the symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression categorized according to the assessment levels of the DASS-21 questionnaire, namely; nurses showing a 'moderate' level of stress are 62.16%, followed by doctors with 52.08%. In the measurement of anxiety symptoms regarding these professions we find inclusion of the level 'very severe' in all three of them. Specifically doctors occupy 29.17% of this level, nurses 35.14%, followed by laboratory technicians with 10.53%.

In the measurements of the depressive symptoms according to the evaluation levels that were followed in this study, the values that stand out most, are the 'moderate' level of

depression in doctors with a rate of 56.25% and the 'severe' level of depression in nurses with a rate of 37.84%.

What stands out most in this study is that, measured by gender the symptoms of stress, anxiety and depression for the male participants exhibit greater values in the assessment levels rating 'severe' and 'very severe'. The level of categorization of 'severe' and 'very severe' with 17.92% each.

In women, healthcare workers participating in this study, we note that there is an equal distribution in the measurement levels of assessment of symptoms for stress, anxiety and depression and where the main place is occupied by the measuring level 'moderate' for stress 50.75%, for depression 43.28%. While for anxiety, they have a proportionately equal distribution at all levels of measurement.

The higher the more present the levels of assessment of 'moderate', 'severe' and 'very severe' of these psychological states of mental health in the medical staff, the higher the need for assistance of these employees from mental health workers.

**Keywords:** *Covid-19, stress, anxiety, depression, healthcare.*

# THE INFLUENCE OF EARLY MALADAPTIVE SCHEMAS ON LEVELS OF BURNOUT AMONG STAFFS OF SHELTERS ASSISTING VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND VICTIMS OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING

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## Abstract

Early maladaptive schemas (EMS) are 'a broad, pervasive theme or pattern comprised of memories, emotions, cognitions, and bodily sensations regarding oneself and one's relationships with others, developed during childhood or adolescence' (Young, Klosko, 2003). Different studies suggest EMS influence on levels of burnout among psychotherapists, social workers and other helping professions (Simpson et al, 2018, Mahboueb et al, 2015)

The study's aim is to investigate the relationship between early maladaptive schemas and burnout among staffs of shelters of victims of domestic abuse and human trafficking in Albania. In the study are included staffs working in shelters assisting victims of domestic violence and trafficking. The main objectives of this study are: To identify the presence of early maladaptive schemas in professionals working in the shelters. To measure the level of burnout in shelters staff; To explore the correlations between early maladaptive schemas and the level of burnout in shelters staff. Two instruments are used to collect the data: Young Schema Questionnaire – Short Form for identifying the early maladaptive schemas and Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) for measuring the levels of burnout among the staff of the shelters. The instruments are distributed and completed online. The data are in the process of being collected and analyzed and will be presented during the conference.

**Keywords:** *early maladaptive schemas (EMS), burn out, shelters*

# DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS A PREDICTORS OF FULFILLING AND SATISFYING LIFE OF ADOLESCENTS

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## **Abstract**

The framework of Positive Developmental Assets was considered a predictor of life satisfaction, a condition of a healthy life that fulfills the expectations of a person. The aim of this study was to explore the relationship between perceived internal and external assets of PYD and the adolescent's life satisfaction. Data are collected using the Developmental Assets profile developed by the Search Institute: <http://www.search-institute.org/> (Benson et al., 1998) and Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985; Pavot et al., 1991) as part of a cross-sectional project before and aftermath the Covid-19 pandemic. A convenience sample of 409 Albanian students, 51% Albanian students from the majority group, and 14% from Roma, 2.9% Egyptian, 12% North Macedonian, 7% Greek, and 12% from Bulgarian minority groups that live in Albania participated in it. Statistics analyses were conducted to examine the relationship between internal and external assets of PYD and perceived life satisfaction for demographic variables such as age, gender, or ethnicity. Results suggested significant differences between external and internal assets for all ethnic groups. The perceived life satisfaction was reported in a moderate positive range. Findings revealed that internal and external assets had significant differences according to gender, age, and group minority. Life satisfaction was weakly associated with demographics variable as age, gender, or ethnicity. Life Satisfaction was found to be a predictor of nine of the Developmental Assets. Developmental assets have a cumulative effect on life satisfaction and the healthy development of adolescents.

**Keywords:** *Ethnicity, Internal Assets, External Assets, Life Satisfaction, Covid-19 Pandemic*

# MENTAL HEALTH OF EMPLOYEES WORKING FROM HOME DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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## **Abstract**

The COVID-19 Pandemic has fundamentally changed our everyday lives. Moreover, it has dramatically changed the way we travel, the way we shop, the way we work and the way we connect and get together with other people. During the Pandemic, workers of many companies around the world were advised to work from home as a governmental measurement to interrupt the infection chain. Despite being a good measurement for the physical health, this measurement brought side effects to the mental health, such as stress, depression and isolation feelings.

The present study aims to analyze the mental health of employees that were forced to work from home, and in particular, their stress levels and isolation feelings which came as a result of the lockdown. Not being able to meet their friends, family and coworkers, many employees faced mental health issues. The number of people asking psychological help during the Pandemic and later increased drastically. Also, the antidepressants and other stress related drugs prescribed increased extremely fast.

In this research a meta-analysis of a variety of published research is conducted to investigate how the COVID-19 Pandemic affected the lives and working routines of many employees around the world. Now two years after harsh lockdowns one can still see these effects and perceive a different way of life and work.

**Keywords:** *Pandemic, Work from home, Isolation, Stress, Mental health*



# THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON STUDENTS' LEARNING IN THE PRIVATE SCHOOL "VIKTOR HYGO"

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## Abstract

Social distance has been one of the words we have heard most often, therefore the return to school has resulted in a gap between how we should adapt to the new reality and at the same time not to forget the old reality. In 2020, the COVID-19 Pandemic spread all over the world, which has been an important global issue that has negatively affected human life. In this study, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the learning of students at the "Viktor Hygo" school was studied. The research design in this study is a mixed method. Quantitative data were collected using an online survey questionnaire from 350 randomly selected students and 6 semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect qualitative data. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for quantitative data analysis and qualitative data were coded and analyzed thematically. Quantitative findings indicate that students have experienced continuous online teaching and learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study also revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic had a non-positive impact on student learning. Also, the qualitative findings revealed that some of the students had problems with the Internet and technological devices in their learning, but rather with concentration. Students have also expressed that they have a negative attitude towards online learning and have described it as inappropriate and inefficient, with few opportunities for interaction and discussion. The study's findings will help education leaders review and adopt policies for teaching and learning in emergencies. It will also help teachers to design a proper plan to improve their lessons.

**Keywords:** *COVID-19 pandemic, student learning, online teaching*

# A THEORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND THE REDUCTION OF THE LEVEL OF ANXIETY AND STRESS

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## **Abstract**

The bibliographical analysis of scientific studies on pathologies such as: anxiety, stress or depression, shows that these kinds of pathologies intervene in the decision-making in everyday life and may cause obstacles with irreparable consequences. The negative impact of these pathologies on the human behaviour may also increase the consumption rates of psychoactive substances as an inducement to promote physiological changes in the human body. These situations associated with the psychological problems in the individual's life can be reduced through the application of therapies related to sports practice. The correlation between physical activity and mental health of an individual shows that physical exercises do increase the feeling of self-confidence and well-being, as well as improve the functioning of their cognitive activity. This relationship helps individuals to improve their physical and psychological quality of the life, and this also serves to improve the emotional state and reduce levels of anxiety, depression and stress. The methodology used in this article is based on the bibliographic method and a qualitative approach has been so applied at the descriptive level of the scientific literature focusing on the analysis of the correlation between the physical activity and the mental health of an individual. The scientific studies and articles of various authors in this field show that the effect deriving from the physical activity are beneficial for the individual's physical, mental and psychological health, regardless of gender or age differences.

**Keywords:** *physical activity, mental health, stress, anxiety, physiological benefits, psychological benefits*

# BOUNCING BACK TO "NORMALITY": EXAMINING RESILIENCE IN CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF ENVIRONMENTAL RISKS

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## Abstract

Environmental hazards are documented affecting large numbers of children and young people worldwide. Biological environmental risks (COVID-19 pandemic) and psycho-social risks (emotional distress, anxiety, and depression in the school environment), in the Kosovo context, were examined in this study. The purpose of this study consists in understanding the impact that environmental risks pose on the psychological well-being of children and adolescents, and how they the capacity for resilience in this population group. Participants are 234 young people (10-18 years old). The research method is survey and the design is quantitative. The instruments used in this study are: *The Children and Youth Resilience Measure (CYRM)*, *The Stirling Children's Wellbeing Scale*, *the COVID-19 Student Stress Questionnaire* and the *Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10)*. Data were collected through physical administration of questionnaires in schools and online administration on the KoBo Toolbox platform. The results of the study testify to the negative impact of social isolation and fear of infection as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic on the capacity for resilience among Kosovar youth. Moreover, the psychological distress that children and adolescents experience in the school environment further deteriorates their psychological well-being and affects resilience, making them weaker in coping with stressful events. Parents, teachers and health professionals should promote these negative effects and support the adaptive development of young people.

**Keywords:** *Resilience, Environmental Risks, Welfare, Protective Factors, Childhood, Adolescence*

# IMPACTS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' MENTAL HEALTH

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## Abstract

As the countries all over the world, Albania adopted lockdown strategy with potential consequences on everyday life, mental and physical health. This study explored the impact of COVID-19 on mental health and wellbeing among university students studying in their institution country (stayers) and students studying abroad and returned to their home country (returnees) after the pandemic isolation.

A cross-sectional study was conducted between October 2020 and February 2021 among 130 university students. Data was collected by using online questionnaire including DASS 21 and IES-R. All quantitative statistical analyses were performed with SPSS for Windows (version 20.0). Descriptive analysis and bivariate linear regression were performed to examine the association of variables. The estimates of the strengths of associations were demonstrated by the  $\beta$  (Beta Coefficient) with a 95% confidence interval (CI). Respondents who did not complete the questionnaires were excluded. 28.4% of the respondents had stress, 43% anxiety, 38.5% depression from mild to extremely severe, according to DASS 21 and 68.61% had event-specific distress from mild to severe in terms of severity according to IES-R. In conclusion the COVID-19 pandemic imposed psychological consequences on students to a great extent which requires professional attention. Compared with returnees, stayers had significantly higher stress from COVID-19-related stressors such as personal health and lack of social support (Cohen's  $d$ : 0.57–1.11), higher perceived stress [10-item Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10)] [ $22.6 \pm 6.2$  vs.  $19.1 \pm 6.1$ ,  $\beta$  [95% confidence interval (CI)]]. The study concluded that stayers experienced more adverse mental health impacts than returnees. Stayers hesitated to seek support for emotional problems, fear stigma, and prefer to handle problems alone. Returnees were provided with support groups to help students alleviate mental health problems.

**Keywords:** *mental health, depression, anxiety, stress, university students*

# THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN

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## Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an enormous impact across the world. In this discussion paper, it is examined the effect that lockdown has had on the mental health and wellbeing of children; leading to significant healthcare concerns. The objective of this paper was to summarize existing survey studies addressing the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the mental health of children. For this systematic review, it was performed an electronic search in multiple databases from December 2019 to December 2020. The quality appraisal of the included studies was performed with the Critical Appraisal Skills Program Qualitative Checklist. In addition, it was made a narrative synthesis of the qualitative data. A few points should be made about the importance of addressing the indirect impact of COVID-19 on child development and mental health.

In total, 18 survey studies with 28,358 participants, ranging from 4 to 14 years of age, are included in this review. Anxiety (28%), depression (22%), loneliness (6%), stress (5%), fear (5%), tension (3%), anger (3%), fatigue (3%), confusion (6%), and worry (3%) were the most common mental health issues reported. Children with psychiatric and/or developmental disorders, such as severe obesity, chronic lung disease, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, cystic fibrosis, and obsessive-compulsive disorders, were especially vulnerable to the mental health effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Age, gender, psychological quality, and negative coping strategies were identified as risk factors for the development of mental health problems. As indicated by the results of international research, closure of schools and limited access to friendship groups can cause acute anxiety and stress in children. The evidence indicates a key role to be played through creative arts, physical activity, opportunities to act altruistically and access to open spaces.

**Keywords:** *mental health, psychosocial well-being, children, COVID-19, anxiety, stress*

# CULTURE CHANGE AND SCHOOL FUNCTIONING AFTER THE PANDEMIC

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## **Abstract**

The pandemic suddenly changes everyone's daily life. The devastating effects of the pandemic have been published everywhere. It had an extraordinary effect in terms of bringing about important changes in education. Education has not undergone such a sudden evolutionary change for decades.

Learning, as an active process of realizing the understanding of the world, includes different approaches, methods and strategies for the most effective learning. As teachers and students interacted with distance learning, they together realized its potential.

The paper aims to investigate the changes that the pandemic has brought to the culture and functioning of the school in pre-university education.

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to investigate and describe the challenges and innovations that appeared during distance learning in the Albanian educational system.

The study carried out is a form of qualitative research by critically treating the literature, field notes and semi-structured interviews with teachers of lower secondary education and with students of the age group 9-14 years old in the city of Elbasan.

The findings of this study will provide a potential contribution to the quality of hybrid learning, teacher and student support, accompanied by suggestions for the parties involved.

**Keywords:** *pandemic, hybrid learning, challenge, innovation*

# STUDY ON RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COVID-19 EXPOSURE, DEATH ANXIETY AND RESILIENCE AT STUDENTS (AGE 19-30)

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## Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic confronted humanity with a new challenging reality, before which each individual would have to develop adaptation mechanisms. Studies during and after the pandemic have a great interest in the field of Psychology because of the impacts or relationships of COVID-19 with mental health. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between exposure to COVID-19 with death anxiety and the degree of resilience, in "Bachelor" and "Master" students (University of Tirana). In a sample of 175 students (age 19 – 30), exposure to COVID-19 was measured using COVID-19 Exposure Scale (National Center for PTSD, 2021,) death anxiety was measured using the Revised Death Anxiety Scale (Thorson and Powell, 1992), while the resilience was measured using the Brief Resilient Coping Scale (Sinclair and Wallston, 2004). The hypotheses were: 1) There is a significant correlation between exposure to COVID – 19 and death anxiety; 2) Death anxiety correlates negatively with resilience; 3) There is a significant correlation between exposure to COVID – 19 and resilience.

According to the findings: 63% of students participated in this study have tested positive for COVID-19 and among them 60% reported “medium and high” level of death anxiety, also 65% of them reported “medium and high” level of resilience. The results showed that COVID-19 exposure and death anxiety were related significantly ( $r = .181^*$ ;  $p < .05$ ). A negative significant relationship was found between death anxiety and resilience ( $r = -.175^{**}$ ;  $p < .01$ ), and also between COVID-19 exposure and resilience ( $r = -.153^*$ ;  $p < .05$ ). The findings of this study suggest further research with more complicated design, necessary to determine the impact of COVID-19 exposure and death anxiety on resilience.

**Keywords:** *COVID-19 Exposure, Death anxiety, Resilience, Students*

# THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON MENTAL HEALTH OF CHILDREN, ADOLESCENTS, AND ADULTS

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## Abstract

In modern human history, the pandemic created by the COVID-19 coronavirus has brought about an unprecedented situation. One of the major consequences that COVID-19 has caused in human society is the damage to people's mental health. During the pandemic, but still today, people feel stress, anxiety, or heart attacks, or worse, depression.

Various researchers around the world have developed studies on the mental health problems caused by the pandemic not only in people in general but especially in children, adults and adolescents.

Using non-parametric analyses, the impacts of COVID-19 on adolescent mental health were examined. Based on the studies conducted on adolescents, it has been concluded that there is an existential connection between the impact of COVID-19 and psychological distress in the lives of adolescents, children and adults. Likewise, it has been discovered that female adolescents report higher levels of mental health distress than male adolescents or that residence has had a strong effect on the level of psychological distress among adolescents, children and adults.

In conclusion, the paper will also focus on strategies for passive coping with mental health in adolescents and children.

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have greatly affected and continue to affect the psychological well-being of children and adolescents, and the consequences can be reduced if appropriate coping strategies are used.

**Keywords:** *Mental health, quality of life, coping behaviors, children and adolescents at risk, COVID-19*



# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ANXIETY, DEPRESSION, AND STRESS LEVELS AND COVID-19 INFECTION

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## **Abstract**

Several studies have documented the serious impact of COVID-19 on the mental health of the population globally. However, studies conducted in the field of psychology during pandemic have documented repeatedly the correlation between mental health and infection with COVID-19, where higher levels of anxiety, depression, and stress were found in participants infected with COVID-19 compared to participants who have never been infected with the virus.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the impact that infection with COVID-19 had on levels of anxiety, depression, and stress. DASS-21 questionnaire was used to assess the levels of anxiety, depression, and stress. The total sample consisted of 120 participants, where 62 participants have been infected with COVID-19, and 52 participants were non-infected.

The results showed that the infection with COVID-19 increased levels of anxiety and stress levels among participants, while no significant differences were identified for depression. Further, no significant differences were found in terms of gender in infected participants.

It can be argued that being infected with COVID-19 was a risk factor that has accelerated the increase in anxiety and stress levels. Implications of this study, possible interventions, and further recommendations will also be discussed.

**Keywords:** *Covid-19, anxiety, depression, stress, DASS-21*

# YOUTH AND THEIR MENTAL HEALTH AFTER COVID-19

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## Abstract

Since the World Health Organization's Declaration of the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Pandemic on March 11, 2020, economies around the world have been shaken, leading to global economic recessions. The slow pace of vaccinations and the rapid spread of the Delta and Omicron variants continue to increase uncertainty about how quickly this pandemic can overcome. Concerns about the implications for the mental health of the population during and after the pandemic and related to public health restrictions, as well as the ongoing economic recession, global economic uncertainty and an uneven and shaky economic recovery which have become areas of growing public and academic discourse.

In this way, the paper will address how the pandemic has not only caused a physical health crisis, but has also caused many psychological and mental crises and most important it has effect a very sensitive group such as youth,

This paper will present a conceptual analysis of how the pandemic affects individual mental health and coping behaviors from the perspective of individual economic status, individual context, and social context.

At the end of this paper, through analysis and research, it will be proven how the pandemic has led to an increase in economic uncertainty, an increase in unemployment and underemployment pressure, an increase in income insecurity and different degrees of employment pressure and economic difficulties; different levels of mental health problems are stimulated, ranging from perceived uncertainty, worry, fear, stress, anxiety, depression, etc., and changes in behavior as a result of mental health problems.

**Keywords:** *mental health, youth, stress, depression, economic review*

# FIGURATIVE ART IN THE EYES OF CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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## **Abstract**

Every powerful emotion is accompanied by the impulse to perform an action, the control of this impulse is definitely figurative art. The process of creating form, thinking, the harmony of emotions, can be spotted through some figurative elements and psychological skills. The reflection of figurative art is the healing of the soul. Children will find salvation through drawing, painting, engraving. Children's silence, fear, various phobias, anxiety, etc., are some characteristics that characterize children with special needs, the road they pass is very dark, this darkness is illuminated by the play of color, figures and constructions of positive characters, teaching and educating them with the strongest patience, and with the greatest love one can give. The situation of special children is the very word SPECIAL, they are special in their art, those with figurative elements and the accompanying sense of beauty are beautiful. Beauty can be seen in their eyes, in their smile, in their perception of art.

**Keywords:** *Emotion, game, picture, art, special needs*

# CHALLENGES FACED BY CHILDREN WITH DIFFERENT ABILITIES AND THEIR PARENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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## **Abstract**

Covid-19 represents a challenge for all parents who have children with different abilities. Most of them, when faced with a very stressful situation like this, have a basic concern for the well-being and safety of their children. Children with different abilities are included in the “high risk” category, due to secondary health conditions. Social distancing has made it difficult to get services that children with different abilities need, such as physical therapy, developmental therapy, and help with daily tasks. Parents of children with different abilities may also have to give up work or reduce their working hours to care for their child. This paper aims to highlight the difficulties faced by parents of children with different abilities during the covid-19 pandemic. In its focus is the evidence of the impact that the covid-19 pandemic has had on the relationship between children with different abilities and their parents, their psychosocial well-being, education and learning and related needs. The conducted study is qualitative. 11 (N= 11) parents of children with different abilities in the age 28-42 participated in the study, where 9 of them belong to the female gender and 2 to the male gender. The sample selected is purposeful. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews. The results showed that the closure of key services has meant that many children with different abilities who were undergoing physiotherapy or developmental therapy sessions have regressed in development and acquired behaviors, which has made it difficult for parents to manage them. Managing children's inappropriate behaviors has proven to be the main challenge that parents of children with different abilities have faced during the covid-19 pandemic.

**Keywords:** *Covid-19 pandemic, different abilities, challenge, parents*

# THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNAL COHESION PSYCHOTHERAPY IN TREATING YOUNG CLIENTS WITH DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY DISORDERS: THE ROLE OF DEVELOPMENTAL ASSETS IN KOSOVO CONTEXT

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## Abstract

The positive youth development approach (PYD) is widely used as a meaningful framework to guide research, policy, and intervention, to support young people to develop their full potential. Psychotherapy, on the other hand, is a verbal and psychological procedure that can be a suitable solution to mental health concerns, which are prevalent among youth. This study aimed to explore the potential role of developmental assets in treating clients with depression and anxiety disorders using Internal Cohesion Psychotherapy (ICP). In total, 10 young people who took at least five sessions of ICP were part of this study. In-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted to gather information about clients' experiences with ICP and their perceptions/opinions on the presence of developmental assets in their lives. The results confirm the effectiveness of ICP in treating depression and anxiety, while clients acknowledge the role of developmental assets in their psychotherapeutic process. The current study has important theoretical, practical, and research implications. It provides evidence of how clients use their developmental assets in maximizing the effectiveness of the ICP process. The usage of developmental assets to enhance the effectiveness of psychotherapy opens a new path for further research and can serve as a foundation ground for intervention in mental health among youth.

**Keywords:** *Internal Cohesion Psychotherapy, positive youth development approach, intervention, anxiety disorders.*

# THE IMPACT OF PROFESSIONAL CONSUMPTION ON THE GENERAL PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONALS IN THE DISTRICT OF TIRANA

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## **Abstract**

Burnout is not simply a result of long hours. Is a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors and is defined by the three dimensions of exhaustion, feelings of cynism and a sense of ineffectiveness. It remains an interesting field in psychology since such professions where there is a direct contact with service users, the risk is higher to experience symptoms of this syndrome. The psychological well-being variable is also an important issue in clinical psychology. The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between burnout and general psychological wellbeing to mental health professionals. Also, the aim was to identify the differences between the participants of the study based on demographic variables. Burnout was measured through the dimensions of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization and personal achievements. On the other hand, psychological wellbeing was measured through 6 dimensions. The study included 53 mental health professionals at various institutions in the district of Tirana. Correlation analysis showed that there is a statistically significant link between the dimensions of burnout and the dimensions of psychological wellbeing, regression analysis showed that emotional exhaustion and depersonalization reduce psychological wellbeing, while personal achievements increase it. People related professions can be even in a larger risk to deal with burnout and professional consumption. This happens regarded to the work conditions where a psychologist is exposed to several mental health conditions and eventually this can affect their psychological well-being. It is recommended to conduct other studies with a larger sample to increase the representation. On the other hand, it is strongly suggested to find and offer solutions for a way-out to recharge and be more helpful for people who require mental health support after mental health professionals can deal with their own mental health issues. Among one another, therapists should check on their therapist colleagues.

**Keywords:** *burnout, psychological well-being, mental health professionals.*

# EXPERIENCE OF COVID-19 IN PEOPLE LIVING WITH HIV/AIDS IN ALBANIA

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## Abstract

In December 2019, SARS-Cov-2 was found in Wuhan, China, and quickly it became a global health emergency. In early March, 2020, it was officially announced a pandemic had started. The effects of this pandemic will be long-lasting, affecting all areas of our life and slowing the development. The global and national response to the pandemic has underlying gaps in both level of readiness and response. The pandemic has severely overwhelmed the healthcare systems, and most of the health facilities were repurpose for the COVID-19 patients and the routine services were disrupted. Chronic *infectious diseases as HIV, TB and Hepatitis requiring continuous support of health services* because the patients need continuous care and supply of treatment. Interruptions in the intake of treatment is not only detrimental to the health of the patient but it is also associated with the risk of the development of resistance to therapy. Non availability of these treatments and services have a serious negative impact on the mental health of people living with chronic infectious diseases as HIV/AIDS. Depression, anxiety are the most frequent mental health disorders, occur at prevailing high rates among people living with HIV because mental health disorders are related to poorer HIV care continuum outcomes and co-occur with other psychological and structural factors.

The aim of this research paper is to understand and describe the experience of PLWH during COVID-19. This is a phenomenological, qualitative research paper. The individual interview method is used to collect information, and also the patient diary is used where it is possible. The sample size is eight people living with HIV/AIDS, which take ARV therapy nearby ambulatory clinic during January - March, 2022.

**The results.** The coronavirus pandemic has caused significant social and economic consequences that they are especially felt by those that are most likely to be left behind. The continued ambiguity of the situation, pose significant problems to mental health due to increased levels of anxiety. Lockdowns and restricted movement resulting in a lack of social engagement have aggravated feelings of loneliness in people living with HIV. All people living with HIV experienced marginalization, prejudice and discrimination in their home, because of it people living with HIV are more likely to develop mental health issues.

**Keywords:** HIV/AIDS; COVID 19; mental health; people living with HIV (PLWH)

# LESSONS (*LEARNED*) FROM COVID-19: IMPLICATIONS FOR PRACTICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE

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## **Abstract**

The circumstances created by the spread of COVID-19 and the subsequent changes in education have caused several concerns for children, parents, and teachers worldwide. This study presents research conducted to examine the effects of COVID-19 measures (physical isolation, school closure, and quarantine) on the well-being and education of both the general student population in Kosovo (i.e., schoolchildren and university students, along with their families) and the country's subpopulations (i.e., children with disabilities and students with extraordinary intelligence). Using a phenomenological approach, the above variables were explored among ( $n = 56$ ) parents, ( $n = 18$ ) teachers, ( $n = 5$ ) human rights experts, ( $n = 20$ ) gifted children, and ( $n = 78$ ) higher education students in Kosovo. Findings from the study show that the circumstances created by COVID-19 have caused a great deal of concern among students, parents, and teachers. Home isolation, lack of socialization, change in daily routine, the inadequacy of online education, and lack of support services have negatively impacted the emotional state of both gifted children and children with disabilities, contributing to parental load and stress. Lack of attention and concentration, which decreased motivation to attend lectures; limited space at home; and distraction by family members while learning online were among the main challenges faced by higher education students. The COVID-19 period increased mothers' commitments at home and worsened children's behaviors and moods, which increased mothers' stress and harshened their disciplinary practices. This study also includes practical recommendations on advancing the quality of education and professional support to be more holistic, effective, and inclusive. These findings and recommendations are indented to inform policymakers, educational institutions, and mental health professionals.

**Keywords:** *COVID-19, school closure, parents, teachers, students, challenges, opportunities*



# PSYCHOLOGICAL PROBLEMS AS A CONSEQUENCE OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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## Abstract

COVID-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on mental health and is now listed as one of the most difficult psychological situations to manage. During a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic, it is common for everyone to experience increased levels of distress and anxiety, particularly as a result of social isolation, and this is now one of the most important challenges for the public health response to the pandemic.

**Methods.** Between April 1 and May 30, 2021, online interviews were carried out in the general population. The interviews contained questions on perceived mental health impact, fear of COVID-19, coping with the disease, depressive symptoms, anxiety, worry, and loneliness. Also, the authors were part of different initiatives of online counseling about mental health issues, offering expertise in different stages and in managing problematic cases.

**Results.** There are a variety of ways the pandemic has likely affected mental health, particularly with widespread social isolation resulting from necessary safety measures. There are so many links between social isolation and loneliness to both poor mental and physical health. Throughout the pandemic, anxiety, depression, sleep disruptions, and relationship problems, have increased for many adults. They have also experienced a number of pandemic-related consequences – such as closures of universities, transitioning to remote work, and loss of income or employment – that may contribute to poor mental health. Throughout the pandemic, women have been more likely to report poor mental health symptoms compared to men.

**Recommendations.** These findings highlight the need for preparedness in the health sector, as well as in the mental health sector during outbreaks of infectious diseases, and the need for concerted efforts, sensitive adaptation of existing protocols, and the development of new guidelines for the management of mental health problems for the present pandemic and subsequent occurrences.

**Keywords:** *pandemic, mental health, assessment*

# THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON DOCTOR-PATIENT COMMUNICATION IN THE FIRST PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

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## **Abstract**

The Covid'19 pandemic created a global public health crisis. State measures and protocols created difficulties in effective doctor-patient communication, therefore, precisely, the psychological evaluation of this communication during the pandemic becomes the main object of our research in this study topic. The purpose of the study is to specifically describe the impact of the pandemic on the functioning of the doctor-patient relationship in the primary service in our country, highlighting the problems and the ways to solve them.

This study aims to contribute to the recognition of a new development of the doctor-patient relationship in a new reality of human relations during the pandemic. The focus of the study was the primary service in Health Centers where patients get in touch with the family doctor. The study was carried out in the District of Lezha, namely in the primary service in the cities of Rrëshen, Laçi, and Lezha. Family doctors and their patients in these cities were selected as the sample of this study. Part of this study was a sample of 6 family doctors and 24 patients throughout the Lezha District. The patients selected in this study belonged to the list of patients affected by Covid'19, who received and maintained contact with the family doctor for the health care protocol in home conditions during the rehabilitation period.

This study was built on the qualitative approach of scientific research. The study was carried out using as an instrument the structured interview focusing on the impact of the pandemic on effective doctor-patient communication. The results of the study showed that during the pandemic doctor-patient communication had barriers and a negative impact on this relationship. State protocols, physical distancing and protective measures significantly affected this relationship, reducing the quality of interaction and the level of empathy.

**Keywords:** *doctor-patient relationship, interaction, effective communication, primary care, psychological evaluation of communication.*

# HOW REPRODUCTIVE AND SEXUAL HEALTH SERVICES ARE CLASSIFIED FOR YOUNG PEOPLE DURING COVID 19 IN THE CITY OF DIBRA

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## **Abstract**

Pre-adolescent and adolescent children are subject to many social pressures that promote early sexual activity, smoking, substance abuse, eating disorders, accidents, suicides and violence. Sexual health is part of reproductive health and means improving sexual life and healthy relationships, information, counseling, assistance related to reproduction and sexually transmitted diseases. The qualitative method was used in the study, as this method helps us understand the "forms of social interaction" between them and society, seen through the eyes of representative participants and based on the "cultural meaning" that they give to their knowledge, perceptions and their experiences. Our study aims to classify sexual and reproductive services by the youth of the city of Dibra during COVID 19. The objectives of the study were the understanding and interpretation of the demographic, socio-economic, educational, immigrant, and environmental factors that influence the receipt of sexual and reproductive health services by young people in the city of Dibra. Also to better understand the level of knowledge of young people and their interests in sexual and reproductive health. As well as creating a clearer picture of how peers, family, or other information networks can contribute to improving their sexual and reproductive health. The sampling selected for this study is purposive sampling (part of non-probability sampling). The study was conducted with a sample of 15 individuals who conducted semi-structured interviews and 2 focus groups with 7-9 participants, conducted at the municipal level, such as obstetricians, school principals, public health specialists, family planning specialists, pharmacists, teachers, parents, and young people. Referring to the findings of the study, it was noticed that there is a significant lack of services for young people regarding sexual and reproductive health in the city of Dibra. *"I think everything has remained unchanged. At least I, as a representative of the youth of Dibra, do not see any change after the covid. Young people are always ready for information, especially those related to their health. During the conversation, more of my peers express our desire to follow services of this type because we are the ideal age group to be informed on this topic."* Conclusions of the study: School is an important part of their life and has the potential to play an educational role in the behaviors and practices they will adopt throughout their life. An active approach to health promotion in schools should be part of the scholastic program. Pupils health committees in schools, teachers, and parents can raise awareness and develop programs in this area with community participation.

**Keywords:** *sexual and reproductive health, young people, covid-19, services, education, awareness*

# EMPATHY AND STRESS RESPONSE COPING MECHANISM IN PARENTS WITH AUTISM-SPECTRUM DISORDER CHILDREN

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## Abstract

The purpose of the current paper is to investigate the two macro-areas of empathy and coping in parents of children with Autism-Spectrum Disorders and their atypical development milestones. Coping and empathy were the two constructs at the center of this research aimed at investigating the differences in eighteen parents (N=18) of children with autism spectrum disorder diagnose at several elementary schools in Tirana, aged between 6 and 9 years old. Data were collected through the administration of EQ (Empathy Quotient; Baron-Cohen et al., 2004) and COPE (Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced; Sica et al., 2008). The study also investigated, in the ASD children parents' group alone, the more general condition of parental stress, through the PSI-SF questionnaire (Parenting Stress Index; Abidin, 1997), the perception of the child's temperament through the QUIT (Italian Questionnaires of Temperament; Axia, 2002) and the level of alexithymia detected by TAS-20 (Toronto Alexithymia Scale; Bagby et al., 1994). Data indicators showed significant differences in the use of coping strategies. marked by transcendent orientation, with higher scores in the group of parents of ASD children as compared with other parents. Another significant difference was revealed between the coping styles used by fathers and mothers concerns the withdrawal on social support strategies: in both groups, mothers scored higher, suggesting that we rely more on the search for understanding than fathers. of information and emotional release, characteristics which, as in the case of transcendent orientation, do not correlate with psychological well-being. With respect to empathy, although no statistically significant differences were found between the two groups, the data collected allowed us to identify one of the levels of empathy of mothers and fathers in the ASD children group, with higher scores in mothers. Among the most relevant results in the comparison between mothers and fathers we found: (1) positive correlations between the PSI scores ( $\rho = .87$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), except in the dysfunctional parent-child interaction scale suggesting that, in the event that one of the two parents perceives the child as not responding to his expectations and, interactions with the child; (2) positive correlations between the scores on the QUIT scales ( $r = .67$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ), to be understood in terms that the child is perceived in the same way by both parents; (3) negative correlation, as first expected, between the total alexithymia score and the EQ score ( $\rho = -.55$ ;  $p < 0.05$ ). If it is true that families with children with disabilities need to be considered as evolving systems, there is a fundamental assumption in order not to run the risk of judging as permanent a non-adaptive reaction at the time of diagnosis or, vice versa,

of considering the overcoming of this impact as the only obstacle that the family of a disabled child has to face, it is equally true that this system could be induced by a therapeutic plan to build which also the study of the "atypical potential family" as a fundamental importance.

**Keywords:** *Autism Spectrum Disorder, Parenting Style, Coping Strategies, Empathy, Alexithymia*

# COGNITIVE PROCESSING OF PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAUMA: THE ROLE OF DISCLOSURE ON POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER SYMPTOMS

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## Abstract

The mechanisms by which disclosure about stressful or traumatic events influence cognitive processing of psychological trauma have attracted a great deal of interest among researchers and therapists.

The main question in this study involves the effects of disclosure on cognitive and emotional processing, whether talking about the psychological trauma in nonclinical settings may affect the symptoms of posttraumatic stress disorder. At the center of the study is the evidence of the level of experiencing the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder in police officers, researching the severity of the symptoms, the relationship between severity of trauma and disclosure and also the relationship between disclosure and cognitive processing.

Quantitative methodology was employed for the realization of this study. The participants of the study were 150 police officers who completed Police Traumatic Events Checklist, the Cognitive Processing of Trauma Scale, the Disclosure of Trauma Questionnaire, and the Checklist for Post-Traumatic Stress. All the data were analyzed in SPSS by employing t-test, ANOVA, Correlations and mediation and moderation analysis on Process package. The findings show that Police officers in the Criminal Police Department and the Anti-Terrorist Directorate suffer more from post-traumatic stress disorder. The results showed that the higher the urge to talk about the trauma, the lower the posttraumatic stress disorder they have experienced, and adapted cognitive processing reduced the severity of this disorder.

The data showed that women have a higher incentive to talk about trauma compared to men. The findings and conclusions of this scientific research can serve as a basis for understanding the role of disclosure about stressful or traumatic events in cognitive processing and also the clinical work of psychologists for the psychological care of Police employees.

**Keywords:** *disclosure of trauma, cognitive processing of trauma, post-traumatic stress disorder police officers*

# LIVING THROUGH EMOTIONS: ARE WE PREDISPOSED TO REACT TO NEGATIVE EMOTIONS MORE THAN TO POSITIVE ONES?

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## Abstract

Feelings and emotions in different periods of science development and psychology were considered as irrational part of our judgment for the world. Different approaches in psychology have created taxonomies of emotions, usually classifying them as *negative* or *positive*. Emotions are an integral part of human nature; therefore, they are considered as a way in dealing with everyday life problems. *Negative* feelings when persistent are often a criterion of psychopathologies. In this paper we investigate the physiological reactions to situations that convey *negative* and *positive* feelings. More specifically, it aims to explore whether the subjects tend to react more to *negative* emotions rather than to *positive* ones. 25 adults (M age=20 years, SD= .5; 54% girls) from different regions of Kosovo were part of this study. Participants were exposed to 18 video-clips, while their physiological changes were measured using *Pulse Transducer*. As expected, the results showed a higher physiological response towards the scenes in video-clips that conveyed *negative* emotions. Our findings support previous evidence that higher physiological changes are experienced when exposed to *negative* emotions.

**Keywords:** *Emotions, Physiological reactions, Psychology*

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN NEUROTICISM AND DEPRESSION: PERCEIVED STRESS AS A MEDIATOR

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## Abstract

This study was conducted with the aim of identifying the relationship between neuroticism as a contributing factor, which makes some people more prone to experience depression, and the mediating role of stressful events. More specifically to analyze whether neuroticism as a personality trait will be positively associated with depression and whether this combination will rise to higher levels in the presence of a stressful event. A sample of 200 volunteer participants, whose age ranged from 19 to 53 years ( $M = 29,48$ ). Participants completed a package of questionnaires including "NEO-PI-R", "Beck's Depression Inventory", "The Perceived Stress Scale". The results of the study found that neuroticism is positively associated with depression  $r = .694$  ( $p < .01$ ), implying that there is a positive correlation between neuroticism and depression. Thus, persons who showed higher results of neuroticism also resulted in higher levels of depression. In addition, according to the results of this study, persons who showed higher levels of perceived stress also resulted in higher levels of neuroticism ( $r = .609$ ,  $p < .01$ ), and depression ( $r = .688$ ,  $p < .01$ ). In conclusion through the Sobel test, it was concluded that perceived stress was an important mediator of the relationship between neurotic personality trait and depression. More specifically, the results of this study suggest that participants with high levels of neuroticism were more sensitive to the effects of stress and the latter may increase susceptibility to depression. So when participants with high levels of neuroticism face stressful events they are more likely to develop depression.

**Keywords:** *depression, stress, and neuroticism*



# CHALLENGES OF IMMIGRANT AND REMIGRANT CHILDREN DURING THE PANDEMIC

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## Abstract

During the period of the Covid-2019 Pandemic, education in all its processes was faced with an unexpected and unprecedented global crisis. Professionals of Education Science had to offer alternative solutions to guarantee the continuity of educational processes. In a very short time, at the global level, education underwent an essential change: the transition from traditional classroom learning to virtual learning. This epochal change marks a new challenge for educational theories and teaching methodologies. The dramatic health and economic effects of the pandemic, the closure of schools of all study cycles, put teachers, students and parents in every corner of the globe in serious trouble, complicating communication and relationships between them. In particular, immigrant children faced many challenges during the pandemic period, which deepened educational inequality compared to their native peers and inhibited their integration and social cohesion in school environments. This study focuses on the analysis of the challenges faced by immigrant and emigrant students during the pandemic. For the purposes of this study, two main questions were defined: 1) What challenges did the immigrant and emigrant children face during the pandemic? 2) How did teachers and parents influence coping with the challenges of immigrant and emigrant children, during the pandemic? Some data were collected through interviews with 10 children, 10 teachers, and 10 parents, one focus group with teachers, and educational policy documents. The findings show that the children faced learning, digital, and social challenges. Distance learning deepened educational and social disadvantages.

**Keywords:** *Immigrant children, emigrant children, challenges, pandemics, educational disadvantages.*

# PROTECTIVE AND RISK FACTORS IN THE QUALITY OF DISTANCE/ONLINE TEACHING – THE PERSPECTIVE OF KOSOVAR TEACHERS

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## Abstract

Circumstances created as preventive measures for the COVID-19 pandemic have caused significant changes in the educational system, specifically in the teaching and learning process. This study explores the effects of the preventive measures for COVID-19 on teachers' well-being, distance (online) motivation for work, and teaching effectiveness. This study used a qualitative research method. In-depth structured interviews were conducted with (n=11) teachers working in public education institutions in Kosovo. Study results show that the circumstances created by COVID-19 affected the well-being of teachers. Numerous individual and organizational factors influenced teachers' motivation for remote work, specifically distance/online teaching and the effectiveness of their practices. Level of school and parental cooperation, attitudes toward online learning, the way the distance (online) learning was organized, and challenges in evaluating students' performance during online learning were among the concerns affecting teachers' work. The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic provide space for the continued exploration of teachers' readiness for changes in the teaching process and have accelerated some inevitable changes for the future. These findings and recommendations are of value to teachers, policymakers, educational institutions, and the community

**Keywords:** *Online teaching, parental cooperation, teachers' motivation, the effectiveness of online teaching*

# PATHOPHYSIOLOGY OF THE AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER SYNDROME: UNIVERSAL DESIGN OF LEARNING MODELS AND ALTERNATIVE COMMUNICATION APPROACH FOR HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

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## Abstract

Autism Spectrum Disorders present one of the most complex forms of the evolutionary dysfunctions for which continuous training and education systems need to provide treatments. Recently, international diagnostic systems have seen developments that have led to significant changes in conception of diagnosis. In DSM-5, one of the diagnostic nosologies that underwent multiple restructuring and articulation is precisely represented by Autism Spectrum Disorders, which in earlier publications were called Pervasive Development Disorders. Disorders, according to new conceptualizations, appear to be represented by a continuation in which the reference parameter for determining gravity is related to the demand for continued support from the environment and especially from the development of innovative techniques of interdisciplinary treatment, which is also the **primary purpose** of the present work. Another equally important objective in this treatise is the exploration and analysis of the Alternative Communication Approach (AAC) and the Universal Design Learning Models (UDLA) that aim at improving the communication processes of subjects with low cognitive functionality for a multi-parametric intervention in the development of psycho-cognitive and social skills in ASD subjects. As a result of the quasi-experimental exposure of ASD and Prototype displaying subjects, the systematic and combined use of AAC and UDLA techniques for improving communication skills improves the contextual and environmental context in responding to the needs of a continuous education in subjects of ASD with low cognitive functionality.

**Keywords:** *Autism Syndrome Pathophysiology, Alternative Communication Approach, Universal Design Learning Model.*

# A QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF PATIENTS' EXPERIENCE OF ONLINE PSYCHOTHERAPY

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## **Abstract**

**Aim:** The Covid-19 pandemic faced the community of psychotherapist with the challenge of providing psychotherapy online, on regular and in long-term basis. For most of psychotherapists, these terms were new and unexplored and so was their understanding on their patients' experience with online psychotherapy. The aim of this study was to explore patients' experience with online psychotherapy and integrate findings in the practice of online psychotherapy.

**Methods:** Eighteen patients (N=18) of psychodynamic psychotherapy were interviewed after the closure of the psychotherapy process, in a follow up session two weeks after. The semi-structured interview explored the online experience compared to the in-room psychotherapy experience. Responses were analyzed using thematic analysis.

**Results:** Four themes were identified: (i) satisfaction versus dissatisfaction; (ii) depth of work; (iii) practicalities versus difficulties; and (iv) relationship and therapeutic alliance. The results indicate that online psychotherapy is experienced as an optimal alternative to in-room psychotherapy.

**Discussion:** Despite challenges, online psychotherapy appears to be a feasible method of intervention. Several factors which could have been expected to be limiting could be overcome and used to the benefit of the process and results.

**Keywords:** *pandemic, online psychotherapy, in-room psychotherapy, challenges*

# THE ROLE OF SOCIAL SUPPORT IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AND CAREER SELF-EFFICACY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

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## **Abstract**

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, young people have experienced numerous changes in their routines affecting health and well-being in all dimensions as well as academic life, including the planning and decision-making process for careers. The current study aims to explore the associations between psychological distress and career self-efficacy in youngsters as well as the role of social support in this relationship. High school students (N = 451) from different regions of Kosovo completed a series of validated measures online on a voluntary basis. The results of the study show the impact of the pandemic on career planning and decision-making processes, the negative correlation of career self-efficacy with psychological stress, and the mediating role of family, school, and peer support in this relationship. The findings of this study provide valuable data for mental health professionals and career professionals toward career guidance and counseling along with theoretical and practical implications and future research directions.

**Keywords:** *social support, psychological distress, career self-efficacy, young people, COVID-19;*

# **An examination of the relationship between early maladaptive schemas and psychopathology in young adults in Albania**

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## **Abstract**

This study investigated relationships between early maladaptive schemas (EMS) and psychological symptoms in young adults in Albania. Although early maladaptive schemas (EMS) have been strongly associated with psychopathology in adults, this association is less clear in young adults. The aim of this study was to examine the relationship between EMS and psychopathology in young people to assess the degree to which EMS discriminate between different psychopathologies. The sample consisted of 150 young adults in nonclinical settings who speak English fluently and could complete all the measures in English language. Psychopathology was assessed using the Symptom Check List-90 (Derogatis, Lipman, & Cavi, 1973). The SCL-90 is an established measure of general psychiatric distress and is widely used to screen for psychiatric symptoms such as somatization, obsessive-compulsive, interpersonal sensitivity, depression, anxiety, anger-hostility, phobic anxiety, paranoid ideation and psychoticism. Young Schema Questionnaire – Short Version (YSQ: Young & Brown, 1994) was employed to measure early maladaptive schemas (EMS) as identified by Young. All the data were analyzed in SPSS by employing t-test, ANOVA, Correlations and mediation and moderation analysis on Process package. The results of the study show that specific early maladaptive schemas (EMS) makes young adults more vulnerable to some psychiatric symptoms than others. In particular, abandonment, emotional deprivation, defectiveness, and failure schemas would predict depressive symptoms, whereas abandonment, vulnerability to harm, and dependence schemas predicted more anxiety symptoms. The results were also analyzed also due to gender differences in EMS and psychopathology. This study shows that EMS's content specificity revealed which schemas were more relevant to each symptom, providing valuable information for prevention and intervention to young adults.

**Keywords:** *early maladaptive schemas, psychological symptoms, young adults.*

# TEACHING PRACTICES DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN SCHOOLS

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## Abstract

School closures have been a common strategy in the battle against COVID-19. However, the costs and benefits of this decision remain fairly well known. Since the start of the pandemic, children have been put at greater risk of dropping out of school, falling behind, and missing out on learning, as well as insecurity and deteriorating emotional health both during the pandemic period and when they return to the classroom. All these issues, as they happened in the Albanian context, are addressed in this study.

The study, conceived with qualitative methodology and carried out in two implementation phases, aimed at exploring teachers' attitudes about online learning, identifying difficulties, needs, successes, challenges during the return to school, and psychosocial issues associated with changes in the models of teaching. To collect data, online focus groups were conducted during the period April-May 2020, in a study sample of 60 teachers of 9-year-old schools in 4 different cities.

The findings identified several difficulties experienced by teachers, such as challenges with technology, lack of instructions for the online process, lack of a unified system, problems with the Internet and lack of technological equipment, overload or the inability to respond to needs academic and psychological of students. The return to school has been experienced with stress by teachers, due to the difficulty to maintain protective measures, risks for infection, difficulties to manage students, burnout, as well as the increase in socio-emotional problems experienced by students. On the other hand, online teaching has been associated with increased cooperation between parents, the orientation of students toward personal fulfillment, as well as familiarity with alternative and creative teaching methods.

**Key words:** *online teaching, classroom teaching, technology, challenges*

# **CORRELATION BETWEEN EXPERIENCES OF ABUSE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD, WITH LONELINESS AND SELF-ESTEEM IN ADULTHOOD**

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## **Abstract**

This research discusses early childhood trauma and the long-term negative consequences that can cause lifelong psychological deficits. Childhood trauma is defined as the psychological result of an external shock, whether sudden or serial, that renders the child temporarily helpless and breaks the usual coping mechanisms (Terr, 1991). Childhood traumas include abuse and neglect: verbal attacks on the child's sense of worth, physical attacks that pose a risk of injury, sexual contact with the child, failure to provide for basic psychological/emotional needs, and failure to provide for basic needs. Symptoms of psychological trauma may develop such as personal and interpersonal dysfunction, dissociation, depression and hypervigilance. In this research, we focused on the long-term impact of early childhood trauma, on loneliness and self-esteem in adulthood. To test the hypotheses, an online questionnaire of 43 questions was distributed, and for the analysis of the results we used correlational analysis and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). Although during the review of the literature, studies were found that supported the relationship between early traumatic experiences with loneliness and self-esteem, the results showed that in fact early traumatic experiences had a significant relationship only with loneliness ( $\beta=.296$ ,  $p=.001$ ). So, the data show a significant positive correlation between abuse at an early age and the feeling of loneliness ( $r=.576$ ,  $p<0.05$ ), while no significant correlation between abuse and self-esteem was evidenced.

**Keywords:** *Self-esteem, loneliness, early childhood, abuse, adulthood, trauma.*



# PERFECTIONISM AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING: CONSIDERATIONS ON GENDER AND PSYCHOTHERAPY ATTENDANCE DIFFERENCES IN THE LEVEL OF PERFECTIONISM

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## Abstract

**Background:** Perfectionism is a trait that is seen by many with pride and admiration. While high standards and efforts are valuable and sometimes necessary, clinical work and empirical studies have shown that perfectionism may be a trait that leads to anxiety disorders, panic attacks and poor interpersonal relationships.

**Aim:** The purpose of this study was to study the relationship between perfectionism and psychological well-being. Scales used to measure each of the variables were CORE OM for measuring psychological well-being and the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale for perfectionism. 548 people completed the questionnaires through social networks, WhatsApp and the pencil and paper method. 77% of the sample were girls and women and 22.3% boys and men. Only 0.6% were identified as non-binary, and they were removed from the data analysis.

**Method:** To test the main hypotheses of the study, the methods of simple and multiple linear regression, partial correlation, Pearson correlation and tests for independent samples were used. The results of the data analysis showed that there is a negative relationship between perfectionism and psychological well-being. The dimension of perfectionism most closely related to psychological well-being was found to be self-doubt and criticism of mistakes, followed by the parenting dimension. Meanwhile, the dimension of organization and personal standards resulted, in support of the literature, have a weak, if not non-existent relationship with psychological well-being.

**Results:** The results of the data analysis showed that there is a negative relationship between perfectionism and psychological well-being. The dimension of perfectionism most closely related to psychological well-being was found to be self-doubt and criticism of mistakes, followed by the parenting dimension. Meanwhile, the dimension of organization and personal standards resulted, in support of the literature, have a weak, if not non-existent relationship with psychological well-being.

**Recommendations:** The study's findings are coherent with many theoretical and empirical conceptualizations in that higher levels of perfectionism go together with lower levels of psychological wellbeing. Despite these findings, considering the study's limits, it is recommended that replications are necessary to explore for a mediator in this relationship

because the relationship between perfectionism and psychological wellbeing is most probably not linear. On the other hand, other studies could only focus on perfectionism in specific psychiatric disorders and not psychological wellbeing in general.

**Keywords:** *perfectionism, psychological well-being, psychopathology, anxiety, relationships*

# THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC SITUATION ON THE PRISONERS – CASE OF ALBANIA

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## Abstract

Covid-19 pandemic is defined as the most global health crisis of our time and one of the most challenges regarding the human rights. In Albania, patient 0 with Covid – 19 was officially diagnosed on Monday, March 9 2020. The government imposed a mandatory quarantine to curb the infection curve and assist the country's healthcare system cope with cases. And in the justice system were proposed different measures to cope with this new situation. The purpose of the study is to assess the impact of the pandemic situation on the prisoners in Albania prison system in terms of the new situation created in prisons as a result of the pandemic. The study had used the qualitative method. Data collection was conducted through semi-structured interviews with 13 prisoners that were part of the prison system in Albania during the period September-October 2020. As a result of the pandemic situation, face-to-face communications between prisoners and their family members have been reduced and in some months was missing. Such a situation has aggravated the psycho-social conditions of the prisoners. The study showed that for prisoners the management of fears and anxiety it was very difficult. For the prisoners was very important to have trustworthy persons from the prison staff to give them support and information about the pandemic situation. They emphasize that it was very important to implementing safety and public health protocols, but and to create the possibility to have regular communications with each other and family members. The study addresses some recommendations such as the development of clear protocols on the roles and functions that psycho-social workers in prisons should perform during such periods as the pandemic and develop new ways of communication between prisoners and their families, such as the use of technology.

**Keywords:** *prisoners, pandemic situation, psycho-social workers.*

# PSYCHOTHERAPISTS' PERCEPTIONS OF ONLINE THERAPY DURING THE COVID-19 IN ALBANIA

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## Abstract

During the pandemic of COVID-19, online psychotherapy (OPT), became a satisfactory primary delivery system and is currently expected to be one of the delivering tools of this service.

This research is a preliminary research to explore perceptions of psychotherapists towards the effectiveness of online therapy. A total of 30 psychotherapists from different theoretical orientations were selected as participants and data was collected using questionnaires to examine the use of online therapy.

The study has a descriptive survey research design, that uses structured questions to measure participants' responses and analyzes them using quantitative statistical tools such as descriptive statistics and t-test.

Results showed that although respondents had reacted positively towards online therapy, face-to-face therapy was preferred to deliver their services to clients. Investigating how psychotherapist perceive technology as a tool for delivering psychotherapy services is crucial in understanding the usage and challenges that may have implications for training programs, policymaking, and allocation of resources. Participants were divided equally regarding the degree of challenges in establishing an effective therapeutic relationship through OPT; while 40.93 % (n= 16) perceived this aspect of OPT as not challenging, 40.41% (n = 14) found it challenging. Psychotherapists having more than 15 years of experience as practitioners were found to be significantly more comfortable in offering OPT, compared to psychotherapists that had 0 to 5 years of experience as practitioners.

The COVID-19 pandemic brings to light many areas in the field of psychotherapy that need to be addressed in future research.

**Keywords:** *online therapy, Covid-19, psychotherapy, psychotherapists*

# VIRTUAL LEARNING OF ABETARE AND LITERACY SUBJECTS IN THE 1<sup>ST</sup> GRADE STUDENTS

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## **Abstract**

COVID-19 affected all the sectors all over the world, and its impact in the education sector was a negative one. In Albania, the government announced the closure of schools in the region as a way of curbing the spread of the virus. To keep the students active and ensure continued learning over time, the government required that schools embrace home-based learning where all the pedagogical processes would be done remotely.

As a result, teachers are faced with many challenges and demands that have affected the progress of students' lessons, especially in the subjects of Abetare and Literacy, subjects that are developed in the first grades. The possibility to create a supportive and productive learning environment during this period has been considered difficult (Karjalainen & Marjomäki, 2017).

This study was held to explore the impact that COVID-19 has had on the development of the teaching subjects of Primer and Reading in the first grade, with a focus on the pedagogical and psychological aspects of the education process during this period. For the realization of this study, the qualitative methodology was applied through the application of a semi-structured interview in 3 focus groups. The sample of this study consists of 15 first-grade teachers.

The data analysis was carried out using the Weft-QDA program, where factors such as the burdened psychological well-being of teachers and students, low pedagogical support (handholding assistance, appropriate curricular instructions), difficulties in group work or socialization of students, uncertainty (clarity of instructions, level of understanding, tasks performed without parental help), discipline and real results of students.

**Keywords:** *Covid-19, teaching, first grade, Abetare, Literacy*

# THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE MENTAL HEALTH OF 9-YEAR-OLD EDUCATION STUDENTS

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## Abstract

The performance of the compulsory education system is closely related to the mental and emotional health of students. The appearance of COVID-19 brought immediate changes in the development of the learning process and human behaviour. The biggest dilemma in the pandemic period was the difficulty of managing and adapting to the unexpected situations of this new reality. But how difficult was this new way of behaving and living, how online learning affected psychologically, what were the mental and psychological consequences of the post-pandemic shown through the students' behaviours are the general objectives of this paper. The purpose of this research is to highlight the mental and emotional consequences for students caused by the pandemic. The qualitative method carried out through focus groups is the methodology followed in this paper. Focus groups were conducted with teachers and students in 16 schools in the DRAP of Durrës. The results showed that the pandemic affected the mental health of the students, in particular their post-pandemic behaviour was different from what the students had presented before. Isolation for a long period affected the students, showing after the pandemic isolation, isolation and a marked lack of interest in what was around them. An interesting result is that students have created an inseparable connection with the virtual world. The fact remains that the pandemic has affected the regression in the mental development of students, but it has also led to the creation of new mindsets and behaviours that should be taken into consideration by education policymakers. In order to stay closer to the student to overcome the fear of socialization, remove the long and unnecessary stay in social networks, and raise the value of society and group cooperation, teachers, leaders, and school psychologists should be trained in the professional procedure of this new post-pandemic reality.

**Keywords:** *Post-pandemic, mental health, students, compulsory education, online learning*

# WHEN EMOTIONS ARE EXPRESSED FIGURATIVELY PSYCHOLINGUISTIC AND AFFECTIVE NORMS OF 44 IDIOMS FOR ALBANIAN

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## Abstract

To date, most of the psychological and neuroscientific research on the relationship between language and emotion has been centred on literal language, despite the pervasiveness of non-literal expressions in everyday communication. The idiomatic meaning and the default idiom structure are stored in long-term semantic memory together with word meanings, concepts and many other types of multi-word strings.

This study provides affective and psycholinguistic norms for 44 Albanian idiomatic expressions and explores the relationships between affective and psycholinguistic idiom properties. Albanian native speakers rated each idiom for emotional valence, knowledge, familiarity, age of acquisition, semantic transparency and ambiguity. They also described the figurative meaning of each idiom, and rated how confident they were on the attributed meaning. Results showed that idioms rated high in emotional valence were also rated high in semantic transparency. Knowledge is correlated positively with age of acquisitions and semantic transparency. Idioms without a literal counterpart were rated as more emotionally valenced than idioms with a literal counterpart. Although the meaning of ambiguous idioms was less correctly defined than that of unambiguous idioms, ambiguous idioms were rated as more concrete than unambiguous ones.

This suggests that idioms may convey a more direct reference to sensory representations, mediated by the meaning of their constituting words.

**Keywords:** *emotions, Albanian idioms; affect; emotional valence; knowledge; age of acquisition; semantic transparency; ambiguity.*

# THE EFFECTS OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON ALTERNATIVE CARE IN ALBANIA

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## Abstract

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak and associated containment measures affected children, families, communities and the whole society. The purpose of this paper is to present the effects of the pandemic on alternative care services for children in Albania. Methodologically, this paper is based on the project “Development of Foster Care Practice in Albania” implemented during 2019-2020 by Bethany Social Services in collaboration with SOS Children’s Villages in Albania and TLAS, financed by the European Union. Data from the project showed that children in alternative care have been at increased risk as a result of the socioeconomic impact of quarantine, prevention and control measures. Interference to meetings between children in alternative care and their biological families, friendships, daily routines, schooling and services have had negative effects on children’s well-being. On the other side, biological families of children placed in alternative care, who are already vulnerable due to their socioeconomic conditions, have been affected in different ways. Moreover, deinstitutionalization of children resulted in a slower process due to many factors such as court processes, economic and emotional stress of families, insecurity for the future, etc. As a conclusion, there is a need to adapt the current programs and services to better meet the needs of children in alternative care and their respective families.

**Keywords:** *children at risk, alternative care system, residential institutions, biological families, foster families, kinship families.*



# **“COVID-19 POST PANDEMIC THOUGHTS AND ANALYSES: HUMAN FREEDOMS AND RESPONSIBILITIES”**

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## **Abstract**

The aim of this paper is to shape some reflective thoughts on social phenomena that were observed during and after the breakout period of the recent Covid-19 pandemic. The research is based on various documents that have been made public, focusing more on the studies published by experts and researchers from social sciences backgrounds.

The paper analyses the social aspects of the respective social developments during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic, the social debate on people's freedoms, the people's attitude, and the society's attention towards the Covid-19 pandemic while also focusing on the reforming of social and moral behaviours.

Also, the thesis aims to shed some light on the way that Covid-19 pandemic was tackled by the relevant authorities and governing bodies, while focusing on the attitudes of the people impacted and the social phenomena they reflected during such times.

**Keywords:** *human freedoms and responsibilities, human communication, public debate, governing policies, national and international cooperation, social behavior.*

# RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERFECTIONISM AND ANXIETY

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## Abstract

This paper consisted of examining perfectionism in the 3 main dimensions according to Hewitt and Flett and anxiety among young people aged 18-29 years. The purpose of this study is to exhibit the relationship that exists between perfectionism and anxiety. The focus of this paper, besides the exploration of the correlational relationship between the variables of interest, also includes the evidence of the relationship between these variables. For the realization of the goal and the achievement of the defined objectives, a correlational study was designed on the basis of which the relationship and the ratio between the variables of interest were investigated. The Trait-State Anxiety Inventory for Adults (STAI; Spielberger, 1983), Beck Anxiety Inventory, Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS; Hewitt & Flett, 1989) were used to conduct the study.

According to the results of the study, it is shown that anxiety as a state has a very strong positive relationship with anxiety as a trait, there is a medium relationship with anxiety (BAI) and a weak positive relationship with Self-oriented perfectionism, other-oriented perfectionism and socially prescribed perfectionism. Trait anxiety has moderate positive relationships with anxiety (BAI) and socially prescribed perfectionism, while it has strong positive relationships with self-oriented perfectionism and other-oriented perfectionism. Anxiety (BAI) has a moderate positive relationship with self-oriented perfectionism and a strong positive relationship with socially prescribed perfectionism, while there is no statistically significant relationship with other-oriented perfectionism. Self-oriented perfectionism has moderate positive relationships with other-oriented perfectionism and socially prescribed perfectionism. Other-oriented perfectionism has a weak positive relationship with socially prescribed perfectionism. Self-oriented perfectionism has moderate positive relationships with other-oriented perfectionism and socially prescribed perfectionism. Other-oriented perfectionism has a weak positive relationship with socially prescribed perfectionism.

Based on the conclusions of this study, important recommendations are drawn up for academic institutions and family environments, for the education and awareness of young people against perfectionism and the level of anxiety.

**Keywords:** *perfectionism, anxiety, symptoms, young people*

# BACK TO SCHOOL: ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF A SHORT-TERM INTERVENTION ON CAREER GUIDANCE AND DECISION MAKING PROCESS

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## Abstract

Social-cognitive constructs are said to play an important role in the career decision-making process. The present study reports the effectiveness of workshops on career guidance and decision-making process in terms of career self-efficacy, outcome expectations and career goals, among young people, after returning to school from the closures of the covid-19 pandemic. Workshops consisted on two days throughout five weeks and were held among 47 adolescents (55.3 % girls and 44.7% boys) in four different schools. A pre- and post-test comparison was used to see if there was any significant effect of these workshops. Therefore, paired-samples t-test was conducted to compare career decision-making self-efficacy, expected results and career goals in the first and second phase. The findings revealed that participation in the workshop had a significant positive effect on the career decision-making self-efficacy and career goals. The study results also indicated that for expected results an increase on the average is noticed in post-test. The link between cognitive constructs and career decision-making suggests that this kind of interventions may be particularly effective for improving career decision-making process. The discussion focuses on implications for career counseling and intervention, limitations of the study, and future research.

**Keywords:** *professional support, career self-efficacy, outcome expectations, career goals, young people, post-pandemic, opportunities*

# TEACHER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN A GENERAL CONTEXT – WITH A FOCUS ON SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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## Abstract

Every day, teachers' professional development is becoming more and more important, not only for the educational system and educational policies but also for the school management and the teachers themselves. Therefore, a general overview of the professional development of teachers is needed. The purpose of this study is to examine the state of teachers' (school-based) professional development according to educational policies and to identify the perceptions of elementary school teachers regarding their needs, conditions, and opportunities for professional development. The study includes a combination of an in-depth review of the existing literature and qualitative methodology. The main legal documents that promote the professional development of teachers have been analyzed. The interview instrument used for the qualitative method was designed by the author himself, and the process used the simple random sampling method. The sample consists of 21 primary education teachers who are also master-level students. Thematic analysis was applied, enabling the exploration and processing of qualitative data through the identification and indexing of key research issues. By identifying the importance and the current state of teacher professional development in primary schools in Kosovo, awareness will be raised among the competent bodies responsible for policy drafting, as well as the staff operating within the school - the management and teaching staff.

**Keywords:** *teacher, teacher professional development, school-based PD, primary school education, educational policies*

# THE PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS OF SOME HIGH SCHOOLS IN THE CITY OF TIRANA REGARDING THE PROCESS OF INCLUSIVENESS OF STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

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## Abstract

This study aimed to analyze the perceptions of teachers of some high schools in the city of Tirana, regarding the challenges they face during their daily work with students with special needs. The approach of this study is qualitative. The selection of teachers who participated in the study was carried out through the purposeful sampling method, that is, only those teachers who have students with special needs in their classes were included in the study. Data collection was carried out through semi-structured interviews and focus groups. Data analysis was carried out using the thematic method. The main topics identified by this analysis are the professional and emotional challenges teachers face in their work with these students, the lack of appropriate qualifications, and cooperation with colleagues, parents, and the school psychologist. The teachers also identified some essential needs that they must address the issues raised.

**Keywords:** *Students with special needs, school, inclusiveness*

# STRESS AND EXHAUSTION AT WORK DURING THE QUARANTINE PERIOD DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, AMONG THE MEDICAL STAFF OF THE SHEFQET NDROQI UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL IN TIRANA

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## Abstract

The main purpose of this study is to describe and investigate the relationship between increased stress at work and burnout among medical personnel at "Shefqet Ndroqi" University Hospital in Tirana. Also, in this study, several other variables were taken into consideration, such as: work load, feeling of safety against Covid-19 and job satisfaction, which were used as intervening factors in the first relationship, and as mediators of this relationship.

The study included a sample of 86 participating doctors and nurses working at "Shefqet Ndroqi" University Hospital, of which 62.7% (n=56) were female and 37.2% (n=32) male. The data were collected through the application of the questionnaire that was given to the participants in direct contact. From the correlational analysis, the results showed that there is a positive correlational relationship between increased stress at work and exhaustion. The strength coefficient of the relationship between stress and exhaustion is statistically significant for the  $p < .05$  level. This shows that the higher the stress, the stronger the exhaustion.

In addition, other analyzes such as partial correlation and mediator analysis were conducted, from which it was found that: the level of job satisfaction has no impact on the stress-exhaustion relationship. But, the feeling of security that the staff is protected from Covid-19 was a factor which moderated the relationship. When people believed they were protected against Covid-19, the stress-exhaustion relationship decreased; while when the feeling of security was low, then the stress-exhaustion relationship was very high. Stress and exhaustion did not differ by gender, but these were higher in nursing staff than in medical staff.

The Covid-19 pandemic suddenly caught the whole globe, but we have already learned a lot and the recommendations to focus more on the person who carried the main burden of it, are applicable and have a lot of impacts.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, medical personnel, quarantine, stress at work, exhaustion at work, Albania.

# THE IMPACT OF FAITH AND RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AS MENTAL HEALTH PROMOTERS AND COPING FACTORS FOR TRAUMA CAUSED DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

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## Abstract

The Covid-19 pandemic is a worldwide phenomenon, which has caused potential stressors in millions of people such as uncertainty about the future, dramatic changes in lifestyle, unemployment, financial problems, prolonged social and physical isolation, insomnia and high psychological anxiety, suicide, etc. All of these stressors have also been linked to psychological well-being and mental health difficulties for populations worldwide. In times of crisis, it has been noticed that a large part of individuals try to find compensatory mechanisms that overcome the burdened psychological state.

Summary. The latest studies reflect the factors that can contribute to positive psychological coping during the pandemic period, that can ensure a healthy psycho-physical state and that is important for the treatment and control of the pandemic. Alexithymia is highly associated with mental health status and psychiatric disorders (Chen et al., 2011). Belief in God and religious practices are often seen as promoting mental health and coping factors for traumas experienced throughout an individual's life (Pargament, 1997). The divine element in times of crisis is the essence of the human need to overcome earthly pain. Studies in Italy reveal that people personally close to the effects of COVID-19 turned to faith as a coping strategy (Molteni et al., 2020).

Conclusions. Religious belief acts as an important philosophical as well as a practical orientation that affects the way people perceive the world, reality and suffering (Pargament, 1997). During extreme and uncontrollable stressors such as disasters, an individual's perceived support from their deity/deities can reduce the harmful outcomes of stressors due to improved coping.

**Keywords:** *pandemic, religious belief, healthcare workers*

# IDENTIFYING NEEDS RELATED TO CAREER COUNSELING USING CDDQ AND ADOR (Career Decision – Making Difficulties Questionnaire and Analyse de la demande d'orientation)

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## Abstract

**Objectives.** The choosing of the profession and the career orientation is a long journey and a crucial decision that all of us must undertake in our life. The process of choosing requires the maturity the resources and the instruments we can rely on and it can result difficult and unsure. The aim of this study is to facilitate this process for the Albanian youth and to explore the results within a high school in Tirana. The objective of ADOR (Analyse de la demande d'orientation) is to propose a system for identifying the needs in orientation of users of guidance services, to help counsellors in their work offering adapted services. On the other hand, the objective of Decision-Making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ) is based on the taxonomy of career decision-making difficulties and was developed to validate the proposed taxonomy and to be a means for locating the focuses of individuals' career decision-making difficulties, a step that is among the first in providing individuals with the help they need.

**Material and methods.** The CDDQ is targeted, primarily, at young adults who are making their first career decisions. The CDDQ has 34 items, with a 9-point response. The individual's difficulties are captured by a 10-scale score profile corresponding to the 10 difficulty categories, each defined as the mean of the responses to the items included in the category. The three clusters: Lack of readiness, lack of Information, Inconsistent Information. According to ADOR, the 54-item questionnaire is designed to provide an overview of the needs, strengths and weaknesses of the user's weaknesses in the form of a profile that will be used either by the user or by the guidance counsellor who will follow the case. Each question contributes to one of the 13 scales which are grouped into five main dimensions. **Results.** A preliminary assessment of the validity and reliability of the dimensions and scales was conducted on a pilot version of CDDQ and ADOR. The main results were organized according to Lack of readiness, Lack of information and Inconsistent information. The correlation showed significant relationships between scales in CDDQ such as: lack of motivation .583\*\*, general indecisions .615\*\*, dysfunctional beliefs .609\*\*, internal conflict .659\*\* and external conflict .463\*\* and in ADOR such as: knowing yourself .675\*\*, knowing the context .762\*\*, implementation of the project .583\*\*, openness to change .507\*\* and future job .519\*\*.

**Keywords:** *career decisions, individual difficulties, instrument validation, assessment*



# ANALYSIS OF DIGITAL COMPETENCE OF EDUCATORS (DIGITAL COMPETENCES AND INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITIES OF PUBLIC HEIS IN ALBANIA. ( DIGICOMP-AL): THE CONTEXT OF UNIVERSITY IN ALBANIA

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## Abstract

Albania, a neighbor to Europe, also needs to be concurrent with universities in Europe, and the academic staff needs to have all the scientific skills. An effective way to improve this situation would be to improve the digital skills of teachers. To determine the level of digital competence of teachers, the Albanian adaptation of the Digital Competences and institutional capacities of public HEIs in Albania. ( DIGICOMP-AL) European Framework for Digital Competence of Educators was used to analyze the self-assessment responses of professors in all state universities in Albania. Several quantitative techniques were used to analyze the data collected from a questionnaire based on the items in the framework. Indicators were assigned to each competency using factor analysis to contrast differences between universities. Correlations between some professors' characteristics and competencies were estimated using OLS. The results show the level of professor's self-assessment of digital competencies in different areas and the differences between graduate programs. The findings highlight the need to improve digital safety and foster a higher level of digital skills in line with the framework. Indeed, more digital skills are needed, taking into account the educational context and the technological, pedagogical and content knowledge needed. Likewise, the same skills need to be developed so that professors can also transmit digital skills to their students and support them in educational centers.

**Keywords:** *Educational technology - Educational innovation - Training - Learning processes - Training- Teaching skills*



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