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ASSESSMENT OF STUDENT WELFARE IN UKRAINE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Introduction. In the modern world students face with the new reality of education and the social distancing and a distant learning become a part of our culture.

Students are obliged to accept the new methods of keeping in touch with their groupmates, friends and teachers. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government of Ukraine has introduced some temporary restrictive measures, including suspension of offline learning and transition to studying via the Internet, using online learning technologies, various e-learning platforms, such as Moodle, videoconferences (Zoom, Google classroom, Microsoft class etc.), social networking sites, etc. Sometimes these changes can lead some students to feel helpless and overwhelmed.

Review of recent publications. Many scientists have researched various aspects of creation of online learning environment and the influence of distant studying on the students. For instance, P. Redmond analyzed the use of online technologies in higher education, and came to the conclusion as well as many other Ukrainian experts, that the real capacity of the Ukrainian higher education to work online is under the question.

Objectives of the paper. The article deals with the impact of pandemic and quarantine on the Ukrainian students, their psychological and emotional state and their welfare in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Results of the research. Firstly, it is important to mention, that most of the Ukrainian higher educational institutions have similar problems today, among them: 1) a lack of institutional strategies and resources for arranging distance learning; 2) implementation of good-quality multimedia services and contents is still new and

the plethora of such services needs to be navigated; 3) limited experience and expertise of the teaching staff and lack of digital proficiency are the major obstacles to implementing distance learning at the appropriate level. These problems influence the quality of knowledge the students gain during the studying process and their attitude towards studying [4].

In spite of the fact that the higher educational institutions inform, that students are able to cope with the distance learning, a quite a large number of students have some problems with home Internet access, especially those who live in rural areas, far from the city, and don't usually have a stable and appropriate Internet connection, because the local providers are not ready to cope with the increased traffic which exceeds their server capacity. Moreover, some students might not have modern computers or affordable internet contracts [4].

So, they have to struggle to adapt to the contemporary reality with less access to learning materials and less support. So, due to such conditions, self-discipline is essential for effective virtual studying and interaction with teachers and groupmates. Students are under the obligation to learn theoretical material and practical tasks independently and to perform laboratory workshops and scientific discussions. Some of them need more support and help in this process than others [2].

Secondly, the students in Ukraine find themselves in a completely new situation and without a clear understanding of how long it will last, the instant effect it can have on their daily life, including costs and other financial problems, and of course, on the continuation of their study. Moreover, they have some fears, for example, such as not being able to graduate in time, having no ability to take the certificates or the virus preventing them from finishing their exams.

According to some studies, some fears have reduced drastically, with others being at the same level [5: 363]. It is necessary to underline that universities as well as schools are hubs of social activity and human interaction and when they are closed many students miss out on social contact that is essential to learning and individual development. Taking into account all these facts, we may summarize, that COVID-19 pandemic has influenced the level of students' life satisfaction, life worthwhile and happiness, and increased the level of anxiety and stress, compared with the previous years. A lot of students reported, during various surveys, that their well-being and mental health has worsened as a result of the pandemic. This makes them vulnerable to dropping out, future unemployment, and increased incidence of psychiatric disorders such as depression, anxiety and substance use disorders [1].

Thirdly, the results of the investigations held by our scientists show, that most Ukrainian students spend only 2 or 3 hours learning online, the rest of the time they have a rest or working. Such a situation is very complicated, because students who do not pay much attention to their study in the future will not be able to meet necessary job requirements and they will not become good specialists. So, in the future Ukraine can face a very serious problem connected with the lack of qualified workers in different spheres [5: 367].

Conclusion. In conclusion, we can summarize, that student welfare in terms of COVID-19 pandemic leaves much to be desired. Because they have a lot of problems

organizing the online studying at home, their psychological and emotional state is not stable and the level of self-discipline and self-organization sometimes is not as high as it might be.

The main recommendations for improvement of the exiting situation are the following: to organize training courses of online education methods for teachers; university's management should provide constant monitoring of the satisfaction of students and lecturers of the online education organization for the accumulation of statistical data in the dynamics and analyzing the situation; to develop special governmental programs for students, which will offer them some psychological kind of help, which is quite necessary in terms of the present situation.

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