Title:	*CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING SOME INFLUENCES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE FIELD OF EDUCATION IN THE ROMANIAN SOCIETY*
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CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING SOME INFLUENCES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE FIELD OF EDUCATION IN THE ROMANIAN SOCIETY

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ABSTRACT:
THE FIELD OF EDUCATION HAS UNDERGONE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES WITH THE EMERGENCE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC EARLY IN 2020. ALL HUMANITY HAS HAD TO ADAPT TO THE NEW REALITY IMPOSED BY THE CREATED STATE OF AFFAIRS. GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE OF EDUCATION AT THE SOCIETAL LEVEL, INCLUDING THE SECURITY PERSPECTIVE, THE COMPETENT NATIONAL AUTHORITIES, BUT ALSO THE ACTORS INVOLVED IN THE EDUCATION PROCESS, HAD TO ADOPT MEASURES TO ADAPT THE SUBSEQUENT ACTIVITIES OF THE EDUCATION PROCESS TO THE REALITIES OF THE NEW PANDEMIC. FOR THE MOST PART, AT LEAST UNTIL THE BEGINNING OF THE SCHOOL / UNIVERSITY YEAR 2021-2022, EDUCATION HAS BEEN TRANSLATED INTO VIRTUAL SPACE, AT ALMOST ALL LEVELS OF REPORTING. THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE NEW EXISTENTIAL REALITY WERE NOT THE MOST FAVORABLE, DUE TO AN ACCUMULATION OF FACTORS OF VARIOUS NATURE. THE OPINIONS OF SPECIALISTS IN EDUCATION SCIENCES, AS WELL AS OF MOST OPINION FORMERS OR THOSE DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE EDUCATIONAL ACT (TEACHERS / PUPILS / STUDENTS), HIGHLIGHT MAJOR SHORTCOMINGS IN TERMS OF ITS PURPOSE. THE DECLINE IN THE LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE CAN ONLY BE WORRYING, THE EFFECTS HAVING AN IMPACT INCLUDING THE SECURITY OF THE COUNTRY, AS LONG AS EDUCATION IS A NATIONAL PRIORITY AND IS PERCEIVED AS A DIMENSION OF NATIONAL SECURITY.

KEY WORDS: EDUCATION, PANDEMIC, ONLINE, SECURITY, SOCIETY.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The methodology used to present and highlight the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the field of education in Romania is of a qualitative nature, the scientific approach being purely theoretical. The authors' study starts with the highlighting of the importance of education on the characteristics of social life, analyzed also from a security perspective, later highlighting the way in which the measures adopted by state authorities to limit the effects of the pandemic on the population affected the educational act as a whole. For the relevance of the approach, in order to perform a more concise and concrete analysis,

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we used the selective method of data from internal or external bibliographic sources, in the fields of medical sciences, education sciences, political sciences, public diplomacy and security sciences.

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT EDUCATION. ROLE AND NECESSITY

Discussions about education have been a concern of the media and opinion formers in recent decades (including the authors of this study[3]), being a matter more than natural if we start from the premise that education is the multitude of activities carried out at the societal and individual level for the formation of human personality, in accordance with the interests of society and its expectations of human involvement, depository of a consistent body of knowledge, in developing and imprinting an upward trajectory of society, as a natural desideratum of what evolution is as a whole.

The fundamental dimension of the concept of education is teaching, which is given an essential role in today's society, precisely because it is an essential pillar meant to train the individual, in multiple forms. The level of education of citizens is, in fact, a mirror of the level of culture and civilization of a nation. The interaction between the „teacher" and the „learner" is the main element that contributes to the training of the individual, to the formation of human capital of society, because the „teacher" is able to contribute to the development and capitalization of the abilities with which each individual is born, because he „*cannot become a man unless he is educated*"[4].

It is unanimously acknowledged that modern society wants educated individuals, able to face the challenges posed by the unprecedented and sometimes uncontrolled processes caused by the complex phenomenon of globalization on a global scale. The realities of recent decades have shown that throughout the world, regardless of geographical position, level of economic development of states or type of government (democratic or authoritarian), sex or religion, citizens have understood the role and need for education as a whole for the evolution of the individual and society, being willing to invest in education, in learning, detaching themselves from customary practices that have not allowed for centuries, certain categories of the population, especially women, access to knowledge, especially since education must „*prepare people for the kind of society that does not exist*"[5] so far.

Education, learning and knowledge (in everyday language, „school") have become resources of power for many of the state entities that have realized the need for the educated citizen in society and have invested heavily in this field, Nelson Mandela's statement that „*education is the most powerful weapon that you can use to change the world* "[6], being more than edifying in this sense. Prof. PhD. Radu Munteanu, former rector of the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca, stated that „*School is a great enterprise of the spirit which, in the end, lets us understand that, although we all live under the same sky, we do not all have the*

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[3]Cătălin, Peptan, Adriana, Peptan, „Considerations regarding the role of online teaching-learning methods in current society", Annals of the „Constantin Brancuși" of Târgu-Jiu, Education Sciences Series, No. 2/2020; Silvana, Peptan, „Risks and threats to Romania's national security in the postCOVID-19 period", Dissertation, master „Global Security Studies", West University of Timișoara, 2021. In the present study, some aspects that are the object of the mentioned works are taken over / updated / reprocessed.

[4]Vasile, Metu, Education, necessity in human development, available at https://ziarullumina.ro/actualitate-religioasa/stiri/educatia-necesitate-in-dezvoltarea-omului-38897.html, accessed: 24.04.2021.

[5] Edgard, Faure, *Learning to be*, (Bucharest:Didactic and Pedagogical Publishing House, 1974), 54.

[6]Adriana, Toma, From the Wisdom of Nelson Mandela. 10 tips to follow, available at https://revistacariere.ro/inspiratie/din-intelepciunea-lui-nelson-mandela-10-sfaturi-demne-de-urmat, accessed: 31.03.2021.

same horizon. The school must generate competencies by processing the information of instruction and training, which will allow the articulation of the acquired skills with the commands of the moment"[7].

Such an approach has allowed, in recent years, many countries in the world, which almost half a century ago were almost nothing in terms of knowledge determined by the education of their own citizens, to make essential progress in regarding the evolution on the scale of importance, from multiple points of view, at planetary level.

On the other hand, the phenomenon of globalization, allowing the free movement of people, has been able to contribute to facilitating the migration of a large number of people from poor countries, with a low level of development, to economically developed countries with high-performing education, thus facilitating their access to knowledge. The great American or Western European universities are attended by students from all over the world, the knowledge acquired through learning, as a dimension of education, can be accessed by more and more people and subsequently disseminated in the countries of origin of the „learners".

Through such practices, humanity as a whole evolves, because an educated individual will be able to respond to the needs, challenges or situations he will face, regardless of the particularities of the geographical area in which he will act, identifying optimal solutions and thus giving value to the classical functions of education, selection and transmission of information and knowledge from society to the individual, development of the biopsychic potential of the individual and its preparation for integration and manifestation in societal life.

There are two very important current dimensions of education, in the context of the exceptional dynamics of security threats that characterize the contemporary world. First of all, the dimension of science education, which requires innovative, critical thinking, capable of using the achievements of science to facilitate everyday life and acquire social responsibility, which allows the individual to know the world around him, knowing that science has been the basis of all technological processes that offered the possibility of knowledge in all fields of activity. It should be noted that, since 2007, the European Commission has recommended „*moving from science education mainly through deductive methods*" to „*science education through inductive methods*", arguing that Europe's long-term ability to „*innovate the quality of research will decrease too(…), and the acquisition of skills needed in all areas of life, in a society increasingly dependent on the use of knowledge, is under increasing threat*"[8]. Secondly, it must be argued that education contributes substantially to the individual's attainment of the 'status' of freedom, from multiple points of view (social, political, cultural or economic), in accordance with the horizon of expectation and its possibilities. In a global world, characterized by multiple conditionalities, the possibility of the free manifestation of the individual to capitalize and enhance his abilities is directly proportional to the degree of knowledge acquired through conscious actions aimed at increasing his level of education.

As a corollary, we could say that education contributes to what we generically call „socialization" in the global world, by transmitting and receiving the multiple values of social communication.

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[7] Interview given to the author on 15.09.2021.

[8] The map of science education based on investigation in Europe, available at https://ceae.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/raport-IBSE-web-3.pdf, accessed: 15.09.2021.

AN APPROACH TO EDUCATION FROM A SECURITY PERSPECTIVE

In recent decades, education has been in a process of transition, undergoing several reforms, which aim to develop the educational process and adapt it to the trends and peculiarities that shape the world in which we live. The aim was to conceptualize an education system prepared for the transformations in the technological sphere (emphasis on digitalization), social, security or economic, which, at the same time, would promote and support national interests. Frequently, education has been seen as a tool of „soft power", through which a state seeks to assert itself and strengthen its position on the international stage, so that education and culture have quickly become the most effective tools through which a state can achieve its interests by focusing on advancing human development.[9]

As is well known, another pillar of particular importance to the state is national security[10], which aims to protect the state and counter any threat to it, while protecting national interests. Being multidimensional, multidirectional, but also multifunctional, national security has also been subject to continuous development, ensuring national security becoming a responsibility of both the state and citizens, emphasizing the idea of civic spirit. The multidimensional character of national security must be reflected in a security strategy in which the dimension of education, research, but also of culture has an important role, the development of these dimensions representing, in fact, the essential element of national security.

Therefore, an attempt will be made to make explicit the link between education and national security. Both education and the national security of a state are two defining aspects in order to build a society based on welfare and security, between the two aspects there is a direct link, both being interconnected. The absence of a strong link between education and national security can have a major negative impact on all dimensions of national importance (including: political, economic, socio-cultural, etc.), and can be, at the same time, the catalyst for risks and vulnerabilities to the address of a state. At the same time, in order to avoid the occurrence of such manifestations against a state, substantial and constant investments in education are needed to increase the national level of literacy, the quality of education being a key factor in the resistance of populations to misinformation, a phenomenon that can affect significantly the security of a state.

In this context, in order to ensure national security, education must be a priority area wich is to be given due attention by state decision-makers in order to give applicative valences to this status.

The importance of education is regulated in the Romanian Constitution[11], the fundamental law of the Romanian state, where, in art. 32 is recorded „The right to education", through which the state guarantees and ensures the right to education for its citizens. Romania also has the National Education Law no. 1/2011, in which, once again, the Romanian state assumes the responsibility to ensure its citizens the right to education

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[9] Aidarbek, Amirbek; Kanat, Ydyrys, „Education And Soft Power: Analysis As An Instrument Of Foreign Policy", in *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences,* (Vol. 143, 2014), 514-515.

[10] Law no. 51/1991 on the national security of Romania, Published in the Official Gazette of Romania, number 163/07 August 1991. Article 1 states: „*The national security of Romania means the state of legality, balance and social, economic and the policy necessary for the existence and development of the Romanian national state, as a sovereign, unitary, independent and indivisible state, to maintain the rule of law, as well as the climate of unrestricted exercise of fundamental rights, freedoms and duties of citizens, according to democratic principles and norms established by the Constitution*".

[11] The Romanian Constitution, available at https://www.constitutiaromaniei.ro/art-32-dreptul-la-invatatura/, accessed: 16.03.2021.

throughout their lives, the law having as vision the promotion of an education system based on „*values, creativity, volitional capacities and action capacities, fundamental knowledge, skills and abilities of direct utility, in the profession and in society*"[12].

The National Strategy for National Defense is the main tool through which Romania strengthens its national defense planning, providing the strategic framework through which are organized and coordinated activities aimed at defending the country and national security. The National Strategy for the Defense of the Country for the period 2020-2024, emphasizes the concept of extended national security, in which an important role belongs to education, being called „vital area" for the country, so that the strategic document aims to ensure a balance between national security and various fields, such as education, health and the economy, but also the modernization of these fields, by ensuring a sustainable and efficient development.[13]

Note: At the international level, we meet organizations, institutions and structures that have implemented policies and adopted laws in the field of education, which highlights the importance of this field for society as a whole. The United Nations has adopted both the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, in which States parties have an obligation to ensure the right of children to education and training.[14]

Another international institution that has addressed this issue is the European Union, which has adopted a complex legislative package on education and research[15], the right to education being enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, art. 14 referring to ensuring the right to education of any person.[16]

TEACHING, LEARNING, ASSESSMENT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The educational process, conceived as the direct or indirect interaction between teacher and student, is traditionally characterized by its direct nature and the interdependence of the two partes involved in all three of its main actions: teaching, learning and assessment. For centuries, these three actions have been carried out in the classroom, through the physical presence of the „teacher" and the „student", regardless of the form of education: preschool education, primary education, lower secondary education, upper secondary education, non-university tertiary education (arts and crafts schools, apprenticeship schools, post-secondary education), higher education (undergraduate, master's and doctoral programs), although in recent decades, globally, especially in terms of education forms of distance learning have been successfully implemented. The medical constraints imposed by the pandemic caused by the new SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, since the beginning of 2020, have required major transformations in the global education process, including in the case of Romania, but what was noted was precisely the different degree of implementation of these transformations at

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[12] National education law no. 1/2011, available at https://lege5.ro/gratuit/geztsobvgi/legea-educatiei-nationale-nr-1-2011, accessed: 16.03.2021.

[13] National Strategy for the Defense of the Country for the period 2020-2024, available at https://www.presidency.ro/files/userfiles/Documente/Strategia_Nationala_de_Aparare_a_Tarii_2020_2024.pdf, accessed: 17.03.2021.

[14] Onița, Burdeți, The right to education, in documents of international law and Romanian law, available at https://tribunainvatamantului.ro/dreptul-la-educatie-in-documente-de-drept-international-si-drept-romanesc/, accessed: 17.03.2021.

[15] This legislative package can be accessed at https://eur-lex.europa.eu/summary/chapter/1501.html.

[16] Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, available at https://fra.europa.eu/ro/eu-charter/article/14-dreptul-la-educatie, accessed: 17.03.2021.

the level of the states of the world, some states (as was our country) rushing to close the educational units and translate the subsequent activities in the online space, while others, among which countries with a rich democratic experience, continued the teaching activities in the classic version, „face to face", regardless of the medical risks to which teachers and pupils / students were subjected, giving weight, thus, to the national priority of education.

The public rhetoric towards such a situation was diverse at international level and, implicitly, in the Romanian space, highlighting beneficial and problematic aspects of both ways of approaching the educational process in the postCOVID-19 period. As the points of view are so diverse, it is very difficult to conclude pertinently which of the variants is advisable in the conditions of the present pandemic, and on what coordinates the state decision-makers should be located regarding the future decisions related to the educational process as a whole. In such a context, differing views are expressed, including the quality of education and the „performance" of the „actors" involved, although most voices believe that online education has not proved to be a successful solution during the pandemic.

In order to be able to express some ideas as close as possible to the daily reality, regarding the analyzed subject, it is necessary to make a short x-ray of the three actions subsequent to the educational process, respectively teaching, learning, assessment.

In a general sense, teaching is the qualified action carried out by teachers with the role of transmitting the message with psycho-pedagogical value, which aims to give birth and stimulate specific learning behaviors, such as knowledge reception, cognitive processing, assimilation, internalization and their behavioral application as skills or means of solving certain problematic issues they face throughout life. In the modern sense, teaching also refers to the set of „*actions and operations*" necessary for the transmission of knowledge.[17]

Learning is specific to the human being and requires a psychic activity of acquiring knowledge through actions led by a teacher, which have as effect: the assimilation, internalization and capitalization of the educational curriculum in its various forms. It is seen as „*any new acquisition, which manifests itself as a change in the behavioral sphere, as a result of practice*"[18].

Assessment is a complex activity related to the educational process through which information on learning outcomes is „collected, processed and interpreted", depending on its objectives and purpose, according to a set of predetermined criteria. It is a process of self-regulation that must be seen as an „*application moment of learning*", with an educational, selective, diagnostic and prognostic and feedback function.[19]

Experts in the field have long focused on the particularities of instructional-educational activity, concluding that their purpose is to obtain skills and performance in accordance with educational purposes, and this requires methods and means specific to each of the dimensions of the educational process.

The teaching-learning-assessment methods known in the literature are, on the one hand, the traditional ones (didactic presentation, didactic conversation, demonstration, working with the textbook, exercise, homework), and on the other hand the modern ones

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[17] The teaching-learning-evaluation relationship, available at
https: //www.rasfoiesc.com/educatie/didactica/Relatia-predareinvatareevaluar43.php, accessed: 15.03.2021.
[18] The teaching-learning-evaluation relationship, available at
https: //www.rasfoiesc.com/educatie/didactica/Relatia-predareinvatareevaluar43.php, accessed: 15.03.2021.
[19] The teaching-learning-evaluation relationship, available at
https: //www.rasfoiesc.com/educatie/didactica/Relatia-predareinvatareevaluar43.php, accessed: 15.03.2021.

(algorithmization), problem solving, didactic game, programmed training, discovery learning, computer assisted learning, etc.).[20]

With reference to modern methods, especially computer-assisted learning, in this chapter some assessments will be made regarding the impact of the pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus on this field, being known that in the last year the teaching process was translated largely into cyberspace.

Even before the beginning of the pandemic, the specialized media had contradictory discussions about the advantages and disadvantages of the two ways of approaching the issue previously brought into discussion. If the methods in the first category are said to have in the center of concern the interest in mastering the content of teaching, the essential role belongs to the teacher, the student being seen only as an object of training that is subject to the transmission and assimilation of a large volume of knowledge in a short time, not allowing their creative thinking, the methods of the second category emphasize the prioritization of students' personality, stimulating them in to discover new knowledge and giving rise to the intrinsic motivation of learning, the teacher being the one who has the role of enhancing the student's motivation for such behavior.[21]

Although humanity is at the beginning of the third millennium, in which the results of the discovery of science and technology are more than obvious, a large part of societal activities taking place through „technical tools", global education, but especially the Romanian one has been put in front of a unique situation, respectively the replacement of the direct interaction, „face to face", between teacher and student, with the interaction in the virtual space, resorting to online education. Starting with preschool education, all forms of education, in many cases including doctoral and postdoctoral, have replaced classrooms or amphitheaters with „virtual rooms", trying to adapt to the particularities imposed by medical restrictions specific to the new pandemic. In fact, the entire global society has been marked by a sudden migration to online communication and distance work, using intensively platforms such as Moodle, Skype Professional, Zoom Professional, Google Meet or Google Classroom, as well as many other applications, much more specialized, to increase interactivity and easy access to operation with data and information of interest to all categories of people, including students.

Despite all the efforts made by the actors involved in the educational process, who started from the premise that *„the transition to online involves more than meetings through audio-video platforms or topics sent through messaging applications"*[22], the problematic aspects manifested to the full like any novelty activity, the causalities being multiple, both objective and subjective, being determined to a large extent by the lack of basic skills in the use of online means, both by a large part of students and of teachers, an explicable issue if we take into account the Eurostat statistics for 2019 which show that 43% of Romanian citizens aged 16-74 had low digital skills, which ranks our country in first place in the European

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[20] Constantin, Cucoș, *Pedagogy*, (Iași:Polirom Publishing House, 1996), 84-96.

[21] Ionela-Gina, Iacob, Comparative study between traditional and modern methods used in the teaching-learning process, available at https://edict.ro/studiu-comparativ-intre-metodele-traditionale-si-moderne-utilizate-in-procesul -of-teaching-learning, accessed on 24.03.2021.

[22] Florian, Bogdan; Sebastian, Țoc „Policy notes: Education during the pandemic. Answers to the endless crisis of the Romanian educational system ", 2020, p. 13, available at http://www.snspa.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Policy-note-educatie_final.pdf, accessed: 10.09. 2021.

Union in this chapter. Also on the last place we are in the situation of young people aged 16-24, only 56% of them with basic digital skills or above basic level.[23]

In this context, the experience gained in more than one year of education in the online space allows us to draw some conclusions (based on some studies in the field[24]), as follows:

● Online education has reconfigured society's perception of the educational act, starting from the problematic aspects born with the pandemic that led, inevitably, to the paradigm shift in the relationship between school and family. In the heart of the school and the family, the student became the „link" between school and family, causing the latter to become aware of the importance of the teacher on the social scale and to participate more actively in supporting him in carrying out specific activities, with immediate benefits for the student and family. Retains the attention, in this sense, the point of view expressed by Prof. PhD. Florin Dragan, rector of the Polytechnic University of Timisoara: „*Staying at home kept them (students - na) in the same area of the family, with a certain feedback from parents who could see if they attend classes, in a more controlled environment* "[25].

• The category of efforts made to streamline the implementation of online education and increase its attractiveness includes counseling activities carried out by teachers, with the role of arousing students' interest in the educational process in this delicate period of time caused by the pandemic. It is worth mentioning the point of view expressed by Associate Prof. PhD. Mădălin Bunoiu, vice-rector of the West University of Timișoara, according to which: „*Counseling is a major problem in university education and we tried to compensate, so at the level of the first year of study we have a counseling discipline*"[26]. Some recent specialized studies conducted at Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca conclude that „*undergraduate students are more affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, and female students tend to be slightly more anxious than male students, but, as a whole, the pandemic has a negative impact on all students*"[27].

● The online activities required additional efforts from teachers who, being faced with a unique situation, had to reconfigure the educational process, on all three dimensions of it, teaching, learning and assessment. They participated in interactive activities that allowed the exchange of ideas and good practices, in webinars held in different formats. Prof. PhD. Mircea Miclea, former Minister of Education, stated: „*If we do not use this crisis to rebuild the teaching-learning process, the crisis came in vain, for the school in Romania. Three things are essential in teaching any discipline: a) what you teach (...); b) how you teach (...) and c) with what attitude you teach (...)*"[28].

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[23]The strategy regarding the digitalization of education in Romania, available at https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/SMART.Edu%20-%20document%20consultare.pdf, accessed: 15.03.2021

[24]Genoveva, Farcaș, Online learning or distance learning?, available at https://tribunainvatamantului.ro/20/20/04/13/invatare-online-sau-invatare-la-distanta, accessed: 24.06.2020.

[25] Bogdan, Podar, The dropout rate from Romanian Universities has dropped dramatically. What students say, available at
https://stirileprotv.ro/educatie/rata-de-abandon-din-cadrul-universitatilor-din-romania-a-scazut-drastic-ce-spun-studentii.html, accessed: 15.03.2021.

[26] Bogdan, Podar, The dropout rate from Romanian Universities has dropped dramatically. What students say, available at
https://stirileprotv.ro/educatie/rata-de-abandon-din-cadrul-universitatilor-din-romania-a-scazut-drastic-ce-spun-studentii.html, accessed: 15.03.2021.

[27] Daniela, Cotoranu; Simona, Claudia, Creța; Octavian, Moldovan, „The psychological impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students at Babeș-Bolyai University", in the Transylvanian Journal of Administrative Sciences 1 (48) / 2021, 49.

[28] Mircea, Miclea, Tomorrow's school, available at https://www.edupedu.ro/mircea-miclea-scoala-de-maine/, accessed: 15 03.2021.

● E-learning has led pupils and students to focus more pragmatically on self-assessment of their potential and to pay more attention to the educational act, which has contributed, among other things, to lowering school dropout in some universities. Regarding the West University of Timișoara, the vice-rector Mădălin Bunoiu states that in the last year the dropout rate decreased to 9% in the first year of study, compared to about 30% in 2018, and Valentina Vasile, master student at Babeş -Bolyai University from Cluj -Napoca claims that: „*It has become much more convenient to be able to atend classes without actually going to college. We didn't have to pay the rent, the food and all the related expenses*"[29]. Such a situation is more than commendable, if we take into account the fact that specialized studies show a high incidence of mental health disorders for people who have been directly affected by the effects of the pandemic (see quarantine and isolation of people infected with the new coronavirus)[30], highlighting the combined efforts of students, their families and educational institutions to optimally manage the adverse effects of the pandemic.

● Online education has some peculiarities that can be assimilated as advantages, both by teachers and students, such as time flexibility and optimal management of time resources, superior physical and emotional comfort, students' access to educational resources or easy access of parents to the educational act, etc.

Many of the higher education units have „customized" their schedules according to the students' possibilities, knowing that many of them are involved in other lucrative activities. The rector of the West University of Timișoara, Prof. PhD. Marilen Gabriel Pirtea, recently stated that: „*We use online platforms for asynchronous communication with students, each professor must have materials organized on these platforms, to be accessible to all students at any time*"[31]. In this context, the initiative of some universities to conclude partnerships with television stations with national coverage, which allowed the transmission in video system of teaching activities and certain conferences / round tables on topics of interest to Romanian society, is noteworthy. However, some experts in educational psychology believe that, at least in the first period after the beginning of pandemic, academic institutions have focused „*mainly on the transfer of educational content in the digital world and less on the methods of teaching and delivering knowledge online" such a practice being categorized as a „measure of organizational agility*"[32].

● Supporters of modern teaching methods see the online as a means of achieving fundamental changes in the field of education and not an end in itself. They argue that developments in recent decades in the field of IT&C allow the change of classical methodologies circumscribed to the educational process, and through the diversified, widespread use of multiple modern techniques are likely to generate a higher level of the educational process as a whole.

● On the other hand, many of the specialists in the field of education in Romania appreciate that online education has reached its limits during the pandemic. Prof. PhD. Ioan

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[29] Bogdan, Podar, The dropout rate from Romanian Universities has dropped dramatically. What students say, available at

https://stirileprotv.ro/educatie/rata-de-abandon-din-cadrul-universitatilor-din-romania-a-scazut-drastic-ce-spun-studentii.html, accessed: 15.03.2021.

[30] Gabriela, Marinescu; Cristina, Maria, Stoica, „Education and the socio-cultural context in the spread of the Covid-19 virus", in Economics, Social and Engineering Sciences Year 4, No.1-2 / 2021, pp. 201-204.

[31] UVT, Culture is the capital!, available at https://www.uvt.ro/ro/blog/la-uvt-cultura-e-capitala/, accessed: 15.03.2021.

[32] Svetlana, Rusnac, Attitudes towards online university education during the pandemic, Conference on contemporary concerns of criminology, law and psychology in pandemic conditions, (Chisinau, 2020), 36.

Aurel Pop, president of the Romanian Academy, considers online education as a „*breakdown solution*", necessary in the difficult time in which the Romanian society is currently, the essence of traditional education being the ideational message transmitted „from person to person", stating: „*I see this solution as a necessary emergency solution in these times when we cannot see our pupils and our students face to face, but this is not a long-term solution. School, since it was better organized, from the Greeks and the Romans, requires the presence of the teacher, face to face with those for whom the message of the school is intended. (...) The human message is passed from person to person*"[33].

It should also be noted that online education has limits of applicability in certain areas, such as the medical field. Prof. PhD. Dan Poenaru appreciated that: „*In the last year, due to the pandemic we are in, the instructive-educational process has undergone great changes. Personally, I opt for the traditional way of carrying out the educational process, due to its important role of socialization, integration and direct training of the student. (...) Medicine is a practical profession. It is taught in the presence of the master, near the patient's bed and in the operating room. The individual study has an important role in the training of the doctor, it is necessary to be practised all his life. Virtual education cannot provide the doctor with quality instruction. This also leads to the dehumanization of the medical act. A valuable doctor is not trained if he does not have a master he wants to imitate. Medical education must also include many aspects of ethics, such as compassion for the sick person, exemplary dedication and hard work*"[34].

• Some specialists in the field of education sciences highlight the major shortcomings of teaching and learning activities, determined by objective aspects, such as: lack of a computer / tablet / mobile phone in case of a large number of pupils or students; major shortcomings in the field of digital skills, in the case of students and teachers; difficulties in accessing internet networks in particular; difficulties in carrying out educational activities after a program mediated by digital resources.[35] Professor Ştefan Vlaston, specialist in educational sciences, at the beginning of the 2020-2021 school year spoke about the need to return to the classic form of „*face to face*" education, in the context in which a very large number of students, especially from rural areas, do not have access to online forms of education, stating: „*Things are rather bad regarding online courses in Romania, because, according to a Government document, one million students do not have access to online schooling. That means a third of students can't go to school*"[36]. On the other hand, there is a degree of discomfort of teachers involved in online education, due to poor knowledge in the field that generates technical problems in technology-assisted teaching, limited available technology or some internal barriers, „*including here computer anxiety, fear of technology and sometimes inadequately defined roles, as they may sometimes find that their role is just to teach, seeing the ICT component as something separate, which simply adds to their daily tasks, overloading an already saturated schedule*"[37].

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[33]Eugen, Coroianu, Online education - the education of the future?, available at https://www.rri.ro/ro_ro/invatamantul_online_invatamantul_viitorului-2616544, accessed: 24.03.2021.

[34] Interview given to the author on 15.04.2021.

[35] Florian, Bogdan; Sebastian, Țoc „Policy notes: Education during the pandemic. Answers to the endless crisis of the Romanian educational system ", 2020, 9-14, available at http://www.snspa.ro/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Policy-note-educatie_final.pdf, accessed: 10.09. 2021.

[36] Cristina Morozan, Why does the online school not work, available at https://adevarul.ro/educatie/scoala/de-nu-functioneaza-scoala-online-1_5fbbf2f15163ec42712c37ed/index.html, accessed: 15.03.2021.

[37] Cristina, Venera, Tartavurea et al., „Online teaching tactics and the effectiveness of the educational process during the COVID-19 pandemic", Amphitheater Economic, 22 (55), 920-936.

- The quality of the didactic act carried out in the online education variant experienced a significant setback, the decision-makers having to adopt urgent measures to counteract the decline of the Romanian school. Prof. PhD. Sorin Câmpeanu, Minister of Education, in February 2021, stated: „*The quality of the educational act has decreased greatly, for structural reasons, online teaching, and for circumstantial reasons, such as difficult access to technology. Both causes have caused great losses that must be recovered as much as possible*"[38].

- The assessment activities subsequent to the educational process are difficult in the online implementation variant (both in the case of oral and written evaluation), sometimes they are marked by subjectivism and formalism, being able to generate diagnoses, forecasts, hierarchies and erroneous feedback processes, with negative consequences on the finality of the act itself. The lack of possibilities to correctly monitor the assessment in the online version may also lead to fraud of this activity, due to the associated risks, such as risks associated with technology, risks associated with the assessor risks associated with the evaluated person or risks associated with family members or other persons involved in the evaluation process.[39] Eloquently is the case registered at the Faculty of Law within the University of Bucharest, where a massive group of students defrauded the evaluation process, the documentation of these illegal activities resulting in the proposal to expel about 45 students. Prof. PhD. Răzvan Dincă, the Dean of the Faculty, stated that he found: „*the scale of the phenomenon and at the same time the organization of students, who took advantage of the pandemic and the online examination system by creating parallel communication groups in which they jointly solved exam subjects*"[40].

- Remaining with the analysis in the same space of the quality of the teaching act, it should be noted that the COVID-19 pandemic had totally detrimental consequences on the results obtained by high school graduates at the national baccalaureate exam in the summer of 2021. The assessments coming from the pre-university environment, found in the public space, showed a more than worrying degree in terms of the level of assimilation of knowledge by students, although, paradoxically, the results obtained in the simulation of the baccalaureate exam conducted in March 2021 were better than in the previous year. Although the data provided by the relevant ministry show a degree of pass rated of 73.9%, compared to the number of graduates enrolled in the exam, (higher than the previous year), if you take into account the total number of high school graduates in school year 2020-2121, the degree of passability is more than worrying, being about 55%, it being similar to the one registered at the National Evaluation. It should be noted the very large number of high schools that registered zero pass rate level at the baccalaureate exam, these being mainly in rural areas or

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[38] Sorin Cîmpeanu, after the online school: The quality of the educational act has decreased a lot (...), available at

  https://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-educatie-24588504-sorin-cimpeanu-calitatea-actului-educational-scazut-foarte-mult-pierderile-sunt-mari-foarte-mari-greu-crezut-vom-putea- recover-all.htm, accessed: 16.03.2021.

[39] Maria, Eliza Dulamă (coordinator), *From theory to practice in online evaluation*, (Cluj – Napoca:Cluj University Press Publishing House, 2020), 84-85.

[40] Students who cheated in law exams were expelled. The Rector of the University of Bucharest, in agreement with the proposal, available at https://www.digi24.ro/stiri/actualitate/social/studentii-care-au-fraudat-examenele-de-la-drept-au-fost-exmatriculati-rectorul   -universitatii-bucuresti-de-acord-cu-propunerea-1461150,   accessed: 16.03.2021.

small urban areas, where there were major dysfunctions of the educational process during the pandemic.[41]

Beyond the degree of pass rate of students to the two forms of assessment previously presented, it should be mentioned the decrease of grades obtained by students, even in the context of acceptable degree of difficulty and reasonable level of demand of assessors, Professor Cristina Tunegaru highlighting some of the causes of this state of affairs: „*These children went through everything: new programs, outdated textbooks, new exam subjects, almost a year and a half during the pandemic*"[42].

Analyzing the particularities of the online learning process, from the point of view of its advantages and disadvantages, it could be concluded that online training must become a way to complement the methods of achieving traditional education, to reach the highest possible level of the parameters of the educational process. Prof. PhD. Mircea Miclea claims that: „*future solutions will be blended-learning, mandatory integration of online solutions with face-to-face learning. The world we live in and the minds of our students (digital natives) demand this*"[43].

Thus, online education was the emergency solution adopted at national level in the context in which the COVID-19 pandemic covered the entire national territory and was the only possibility of interaction between teachers and pupils / students during the state of emergency or in the situation of quarantine of some rural or urban localities.

In conclusion, we consider it opportune to present the point of view of academician Ioan Păun Otiman regarding online education: „*In American universities, <<distance education>>, in fact, virtual or online education began in the years 1990-1995. The expansion of virtual education or distance learning has been facilitated by computer networks and the Internet. The fact that, from that period, the computer became a working tool that is in every laboratory, in every office, led to the possibility to take the teaching process out of the amphitheater and the works and seminar room, and the documentation from the library. The lecture hall, seminar or laboratory have been transformed into a huge virtual space interconnected between the student and the teacher's office, from where the courses are broadcast, the practical works are simulated on the computer, homework and projects are executed and seminars are made, as well as online exams etc.*

Distance learning has essentially changed university pedagogy and methodology. The teacher and the student no longer see each other face to face, but dialogue through the computer. The teacher transmits the topic to him, the student executes it and retransmits it to the teacher, he corrects it and retransmits it to the student to see, in a transparent way, what he did right or wrong and how the mistakes are corrected.

Distance learning has emerged as a social necessity and an opportunity for students most interested in their own training. Distance learning students, occupying certain jobs, which they do not want to leave to go full-time student (resident) in university, and the job description at work, constantly changing and expanding, requiring new knowledge, they they

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[41]Ștefan, Vlaston, Comments on the results from Baccalaureate 2021, available at https://adevarul.ro/educatie/scoala/comentarii-asuprarezultatelor-bacalaureat-2021-1_60e2ddc45163ec4271c5be60/ index.html, accessed: 05.08.2021.

[42] Lavinia, Ioniță, National Evaluation 2021: Dramatic decrease in the number of averages of 10 compared to last year, available at https://ziare.com/scoala/rezultate-evaluarea-nationala/medii-nota-10-evaluarea-nationala-2021- 1687614, accessed: 05.08.2021.

[43] Mircea, Miclea, Tomorrow's school, available at https://www.edupedu.ro/mircea-miclea-scoala-de-maine/, accessed: 15 03.2021.

are much more interested in completing their studies, compared to young baccalaureates. From the appreciation of American teachers, it results that their current students are very attentive to their own qualification, but those in distance education, from this point of view, are ahead of everyone. Distance learning, to a large extent, has also changed the informational supports of the course, projects, works, almost all the informational support is electronic.

So, online education, which we have adopted and are now practicing, out of necessity, in the entire education system from kindergarten and doctoral schools, constrained by the Coronavirus pandemic, the Americans have discovered and practiced, in certain well-defined and defined circumstances, for almost three decades.

If until the pandemic, online education (virtual or distance) was practiced on a small scale (both in Romania and in Europe), now it has become a pedagogical system, out of necessity, generalized, at all levels of education, as I said before, from kindergarten to doctoral and postdoctoral school. We will see the results in a while.

But for me, one fact is certain. The teaching and education process is not just a simple system of transmission, of circulation of information from sender to receiver. The process is much more complicated, it has a much more complex chemistry.

When you address the child, the young person, you look him in the eye and you realize if you have made yourself understood, accepted. The way the student receives you, gives the whole measure of the quality of education. At least that's how I understood and I understand the teacher-pupil, teacher-student relationship"[44].

POSSIBLE RISK FACTORS AND THREATS TO NATIONAL SECURITY INTERESTS IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

From a security perspective, the change of the paradigm regarding the educational process in the last year and its translation mainly in the online version, as a result of the conditions imposed by the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus, can generate risk factors for the Romanian society, with impact on the state of security as defined in Law no. 51/1991 on the national security of Romania, such as:

 affecting the interests of Romania's national security in terms of „*state of balance and social stability, necessary (...) for the climate of unrestricted exercise of the fundamental rights, freedoms and duties of citizens*"[45], whereas the lack of education, generated in any way, can affect the individual's ability to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of society as a whole, being known that any modern society can develop only in a climate of stability necessary to perform the functions of the state, in the interest of the citizen.

 diminishing the access to education, guaranteed by the Romanian Constitution[46], of an important number of young people (from all forms of education), as a result of the impossibility to access the online platforms for objective or subjective reasons exposed in the previous chapters;

 as the educational process is a process of knowledge achieved through the action of transmitting information, the impossibility of achieving correct information of all young people through online platforms is a violation of legal provisions regarding the right to

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[44] Interview given to the author, on 20.04.2021.
[45] See the definition of national security in Law no. 51/1991 on the national security of Romania.
[46] See the Romanian Constitution, TITLE II - Fundamental rights, freedoms and duties – e.g. equality in rights, right to information, education, expression, health care, work and social protection, healthy environment, etc.

information[47] and may be one of the risk factors for the security interests of our country, in the context in which an informed and educated person can contribute effectively to the development and progress of society;

The possibility of materialization of the risk factors previously presented may be likely to constitute threats to the national security of Romania, in accordance with Law no. 51/1991 regarding the national security of Romania, art. 3, letter (f), which can be assimilated to acts of: „*degradation or disuse of structures necessary for the proper conduct of social life*", the role of the field of education for the evolution of a nation is well known.

CONCLUSIONS

After the beginning of COVID-19 pandemic, Romanian society experienced exceptional changes in all areas, difficult to accept by most burdened citizens, and thus, by the effects of an unending transition after the fall of the communist regime and the establishment of democracy. The field of education, marked by fundamental structural transformations in the last three decades, has been, perhaps, the most affected by the new pandemic that has covered the entire planet since 2020.

The impact of the new pandemic was major on the field of education in Romania, being able to reconfigure, first of all, the operational architecture at the level of all forms of education, with not very favorable consequences for the quality of activities and for their finality. This state of affairs is found despite the efforts made at national level by all actors directly or indirectly involved in the educational process (authorities, teachers, pupils and students, family, society). During this period, teachers, faced with a unique situation, reconfigured the entire educational process (teaching, learning and assessment) and found the resources for a different kind of interaction with pupils / students, supported by their family members.

The translation into the online environment of teaching activities (to a large extent), for reasons of medical security, could not replace the traditional education, face to face, being likely to contribute to affecting the quality of education in Romania, which was already on a downward curve in recent years.

Even in these circumstances, online education has contributed to the overall achievement of the purpose of education, that of forming the personality of the individual, in accordance with the interests of society.

As the horizons of overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic (which at the time of writing this study -September 5, 2021- proves to be very aggressive) are not yet clear, the state authorities together with specialists in the field of education will have to identify optimal solutions for managing the situation created so that the adverse effects on the education of young people are as small as possible.

Globally, the world will have to reinvent itself in order to coexist with new threats, the pandemic in which we find ourselves being considered, both by security experts and the medical world, a security threat to humanity.

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[47] In the Romanian Constitution, at art. 31, the Right to information is specified; „*1. The right of the person to have access to any information of public interest may not be restricted. (2). Public authorities, according to their competences, are obliged to ensure the correct information of citizens on public affairs and on issues of personal interest. 3. The right to information shall be without prejudice to measures to protect young people or national security*".

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