

**ICEST 2021**

**II International Conference on Economic and Social Trends for Sustainability of Modern Society**

**ORGANIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL PROCESS FOR FOREIGN  
STUDENTS DURING THE PANDEMIC COVID-19**

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**Abstract**

The pandemic COVID-19 had direct impact on the economies of each country and on the world economy as a whole. There was sharp decrease in social activity due to the closure of institutions and travel bans. Education was not left untouched either. Universities began to massively declare the closure and shift to online studying. Many foreign students were never able to return to the usual regime of studying. The relevance of the topic of the article is determined by the need to analyze the implementation of the educational process in the remote format for foreign students at introducing quarantine measures. The authors used theoretical (content analysis of sociological articles on the implementation of educational programs during pandemic COVID-19, generalization) and empirical methods (descriptive method, included observation). During the study there were considered publications of foreign and domestic scientists and authors, summarized own practice at Industrial University of Tyumen. On the basis of the analysis of foreign and Russian experience of organizing remote training format there were identified the main directions of changes in the work of universities and the difficulties associated with them.

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*Keywords:* Higher education, pandemic Covid-19, foreign students



## 1. Introduction

The self-isolation regime of 2020 and the various restrictive measures that followed it violated the usual way of life of all segments of the population in all countries of the world. Lockdown affected the economy, culture and all levels of education. The field of higher education can safely be called one of those on which the pandemic of coronavirus had the greatest impact on a global scale. Before the outbreak of COVID-19, distance learning forms were dynamically developed and offered by universities to students who want to improve existing knowledge, improve qualifications or study the material in depth; to those who felt comfortable learning due to distance and citizens with disabilities. The events of 2020 forced educational institutions to switch massively to a remote format. Countries were forced to amend the legislation on education, fixing the transition of universities to online education, conducting entrance exams and state certification online, organizing the work and payment of teachers, etc.

## 2. Problem Statement

A review of the modern work of foreign and domestic scientists on the analysis of the implementation of distance learning in universities during quarantine shows that the main topics in this context are: pandemic as a serious challenge to the education (Surma & Kirschner, 2020) state support for universities during the spread of coronavirus infection (Cuaton, 2020; Khaydarova, 2020); analysis of the implementation of distance education in universities during the pandemic; transformation of traditional education and its digitization (Krishnamurthy, 2020).

On April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2021 an online conference of the language courses association “Languages Canada” was held, which said that due to the pandemic, the flow of foreign students in 2020 decreased by 56%. Private educational institutions suffered the most, 39% fewer students came to public universities and colleges. The representative of Trent University Kat D'Amico reports that in the UK, for example, the number of students decreased even more - by 79% (The Economist, 2020). The Economist talks about the crisis in Western higher education. The United States, Great Britain, Australia, Germany and France suffered the most, since their funding largely depends on foreign students. Foreign students usually pay higher fees than domestic students and thus provide a substantial and sometimes significant income for those institutions they choose to attend. The pandemic of coronavirus infection has become a global challenge, requiring the development of adequate strategies, a system of measures to reduce emerging risks in higher education. The new situation has significantly changed the legal, economic and organizational-managerial regime of university functioning.

The crisis of internationalization of universities was expressed in the cessation of student and teaching exchange programs, the suspension of negotiations with employers from different countries, as well as the difficulties in organizing the educational process for foreign students. This issue that we would like to focus our attention on by prioritizing the organization of training and accommodation of foreign students.

### **3. Research Questions**

In course of the study the following questions were raised:

- What is the experience of other countries in organizing foreign students' studying?
- What is Russia's experience in the same question?
- What is the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic to the internationalization of different countries?

### **4. Purpose of the Study**

An analysis of the organization of the educational process for foreign students in the spread of the COVID-19 virus became the goal of our study, for the implementation of which the following tasks were put forward: to study the foreign and domestic experience of universities during quarantine events, to identify the main problems associated with them and to determine the impact of the pandemic on the internationalization of different countries.

### **5. Research Methods**

Authors used the universal scientific research methods as well as methods for comparative and statistical analysis.

#### **5.1. Online-studying and accommodation**

When universities switched to online learning, most universities strengthened cooperation with each other. Mass open online courses were placed in foreign and Russian education on national and international platforms. However, this did not have much effect, since teachers were not familiar with the proposed set of courses, with the online learning methodology and studied courses simultaneously with their students. In many countries, universities discontinued their studies indefinitely due to the pandemic, for example, in Sri Lanka, the government recommended not to conduct full-time classes, and teachers, stopping their activities, advised students to devote this time to repeat the material studied. Malaysia closed its borders to all visitors and told foreign students that they should not try to leave the country, even if a ticket is available, while classes were canceled and should not be restored in the future. India also closed entry to all non-Hindus, however, allowed foreign students to stay in dormitories. Countries such as the Philippines, Bangladesh, Indonesia and Thailand have suspended communication with other countries.

A large number of foreign students were trapped in the circumstances, since the university authorities asked to vacate the university dormitories, communication with their home countries was not carried out and the students simply ended up on the street. Pakistan acted on a different way. Campuses exempted from the presence of local students, were decided to use for accommodation centers for patients with suspicion of Covid. Foreign students who were not able to leave the country were transferred to special blocks on the same campuses where they believed were at risk of infection (Khan, 2020). Pakistani students, about 1,300 people, stranded in Hubei province, as the Chinese government decided not to give permission to evacuate these students and the Pakistani government agreed. In May 3, 2021 article on University world

news (Scovian & Wadgy, 2021) announced that African students in India ask the government, embassy and other organizations for help after the death of one of the foreign students in an Indian hospital.

As for universities in Russia, all universities massively switched to distance learning in the spring 2020, returning briefly to the full-time training format in September, universities, again, went online from December to March 2021. Foreign students were allowed to enter the country only in February 2021 after conducting two PCR tests. Those students who were in Russia at the time the pandemic began remained in the dormitories without any restrictions and could continue their studies in a remote format.

To transfer quickly higher education institutions to a remote format is not easy, especially if the result of training is availability of practical skills and experience, but digital platforms or LMS can contribute to this. LMS (learning management system) is a training management system that opens access to university educational materials and makes it possible to conduct lessons remotely.

US universities actively use Blackboard platforms: Blackboard Learn, Blackboard Collaborate Blackboard Mobile, which allow you to create single online environment and optimize the learning process (Bates, 2015). The largest universities in Russia use the Moodle platform. But, unfortunately, not all universities developed digital platforms, which brought chaos to the educational process in the first weeks of study.

At Industrial University of Tyumen, lessons were conducted in the EDUCON system, based on the MOODLE core and created more than 10 years ago (Mayer & Moor, n.d.). On the platform "Educon" there were placed electronic educational and methodological complexes (EUMC), developed by teachers. Initially, the use of the system was passive and was used only for centralized testing, collecting and reviewing written works and passing the "debts" of students.

The electronic learning environment "Educon" reflects the actions of both teachers and students. You can see who and when entered the platform, how often he worked with materials, what tasks he performed and how he handled them.

Other resources were used for on-line work of students and teachers. These are Zoom, Google Meet, Cisco WebEx, Microsoft Teams for Education. Having tried several different services in practice, teachers and students agreed that Zoom is the most convenient platform for them.

The benefits of ZOOM for online learning are the following: can be combined with Windows, Android, iOS, MacOS, attendance can be controlled (through the function of participants), real-time work, chat, interactive board, the ability to record the lesson. Disadvantages: complex interface (you need to spend time getting acquainted with the application), malfunctions, the duration of a free lesson - 40 minutes, hacking.

Of course, stressful situation for all participants could not but affect the quality of training. But the correctly selected course materials, based on the goals and objectives of learning and the characteristics of the educational process on-line, provided positive feedback to students.

## **5.2. Support to foreign students**

In many countries, discussions have begun on whether and in what form universities should provide support to students. Universities in Africa began to provide their students with laptops, pay for the Internet, because a large number of students do not have the opportunity to take online training. Foreign students in

Japan, during the active phase of the pandemic, found themselves in a difficult situation. Almost 90% of all foreign students worked in cafes, in production, construction, etc., due to an official work permit (according to the terms of the student visa, they can work 28 hours a week) before the lockdown and online training. After taking quarantine measures, foreign students were left without work, and, accordingly, without money.

In Thailand, 52 universities and many universities in the UAE reduced the cost of studying in various specialties. However, Russian universities did not reduce the cost of distance learning, citing the fact that most of the costs go to teachers' salaries, and teachers did not work less or worse, and they do not have the right to cut their fees (Vorotnikov, 2021). Universities in Russia retained budget places for foreign students who could not come to the country due to quarantine measures or could not study online due to poor communication/the Internet.

## 6. Findings

The coronavirus pandemic turned everything upside down and the higher education system did not stand aside. The experience of foreign countries showed that not all countries were ready for such an unexpected scenario in the form of suspending their activities in full-time format. In addition to the fact that many countries did not conduct online lessons for students, the attitude of university management and host governments towards them leaves much to be desired. Many researchers believe that the pandemic has a negative impact now and will have in the future on the internationalization of universities, in general, and on student and academic mobility programs, in particular.

## 7. Conclusion

Today, the world community has not yet developed sufficient experience to determine the mechanisms for the well-established functioning of the higher education system during the period of quarantine. The difficulties encountered are common to all schools, regardless to their nationality. The issue of international discourse is constantly evolving, modified and updated with statistical data, thereby enabling us to navigate complex situations, find better solutions and build possible scenarios. The transition to a remote learning format and the use of online platforms allows, on one hand, to systematize the Russian experience of distance learning, and on the other, to integrate the experience and capabilities of foreign and leading Russian universities into the education system in Russia.

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