

**СЕКЦІЯ 6.**  
**УПРАВЛІННЯ ОСВІТНЬОЮ ДІЯЛЬНІСТЮ У ЦИФРОВОМУ ПРОСТОРИ**

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**EDUCATION QUALITY MANAGEMENT AT HEIs IN UKRAINE  
DURING COVID-19**

The Ukraine's system of education that encompasses pre-schools system and culminates in recertification programs was revolutionized when the Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine of March 11, 2020 № 211 "On prevention of the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19) on the territory of Ukraine" was issued [1]. The document marked a new era related to education management strategies in the lockdown, teaching and learning organization, assessment / evaluation, ICT infrastructure, and support given to teaching staff members. In terms of higher education institutions (hereinafter – the HEIs), the urgent transition from traditional learning and teaching to distance learning seems to have happened overnight. According to the anonymous survey conducted by the State Service for the Quality of Education in Ukraine (hereinafter – the Service) monitoring the changes between March, 2020 and May, 2020 almost all institutions in Ukraine coped with the challenges present and were able to successfully transit to remote learning and teaching by the end the spring semester in 2020. A total of 28,391 respondents took part in the survey among whom 22.367 were HEI students and 6.024 were HEI teaching staff members. All respondents including faculty members and students were unanimous in their belief that 90% HEIs efficiently transited to remote teaching and learning during the quarantine period.

The results are really striking taking into consideration the data reporting the share of online practice before the lockdown in Ukraine. According to the survey, 15,7 % respondents never taught online, 39,5 % respondents indicated that they used information technology from time to time and 44,8 % were regular users before the lockdown. This situation is explained by the fact that more than half (57.9%) respondents had not improved their digital skills and never enrolled in any recertification course handling the issues of modern information and communication technologies and every fifth had never practiced online teaching before the quarantine. It is necessary to accentuate that while HEIs offered a technology course for their faculty members, a third of respondents in this category noted they never considered taking this course as there was no need.

Although, the transition to online mode of teaching in the lockdown of the spring semester of 2020 was extremely urgent and HEIs had not any time to prepare for the transition, the numbers of regular uses skyrocketed to 94 % in the autumn semester of 2020 [2]. It is obvious that teaching staff skills to provide online teaching have improved substantially.

This research investigated several factors that had an impact on quality teaching and learning at HEIs in Ukraine. Initially, many HEIs were reported to have offered consistent technological support to assist faculty members to improve ICT skills for distance teaching. More than half of all the participants who answered the survey (50.3%) noted that their technical skills improved because they were able to share experiences and to cooperate with other faculty members through special online platforms. Furthermore, 46.3% of respondents could use the services offered by the special technical service centres / division set up at their university; 36.4% improved their technical skills by taking online courses offered by the Ministry of

Education in Ukraine and non-governmental organisations that were disseminating relevant information focusing on digital literacy.

It is interesting to emphasize that almost every other teaching staff member considers it extremely beneficial nowadays to participate in any international training program that the HEIs can offer through partnership with universities overseas; the other half believes that having an opportunity to exchange experience with colleagues at the HEIs can provide faculty members with the opportunity to learn technological skills from each other. A little less than half surveyed respondents (42.1%) indicate the need for cooperation with other institutions in Ukraine. A quarter of respondents believe that their HEI has to start collecting and analyzing the needs for digital (distance) competence learning while the other quarter (25.9%) suggest that the internal audit revealing the strengths and weaknesses related to online teaching and learning should be conducted.

Another reason that boosted the distance learning and teaching is technological facilities that HEIs are currently providing. Analyzing the changes that are happening in Mukachevo State University, the university technical provision has immensely improved. Consequently, it ensures a proper communication between the departments that result in a proper quality of education.

There are still many issues that require attention, for example, the development of content for distance learning, or the quality of indicators that measure student outcomes online. However, the findings allow reaching several conclusions related to the issue. Firstly, although the transition to online teaching and learning in Ukraine was hasty, without necessary preparation, it took several months for 92 % of teaching staff members to acquire information communications technology skills to provide online teaching. The range of instruments teachers learned expanded; the fear of technology was overcome. Secondly, HEIs in Ukraine do value education and focus on enhancing its quality. Since having ICT infrastructure became the key factor for the HEI to be competitive in the pandemic time, a lot of strategic planning was put into action to enhance the HEI learning environment: the online platforms were purchased or activated, webinars were provided to help staff to learn new ICT instruments. Thirdly, it was proved that teachers remain the key issue in providing quality education, however, challenged by the COVID 19, teaching staff have to continue learning instruments and experimenting with platforms to use online teaching benefits to the full extent. Finally, in order to provide the quality education, the HEI administration has to reconsider the workload policy, student-teacher ratio, and teacher obligations that will make HEI environment more conducive for professional development of teaching staff members, enhance their creativity and efficacy for overcoming challenges. In this context it is worth to outline the education management strategies that ensure that right conditions are created, and students and educators are encouraged to fulfill their potential.

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