DISTANCE LEARNING IN THE COVID-19 PERIOD

INTRODUCTION

Despite being criticized, contemporary higher education in Russia reached a new stage of development; it did well as judged by highly qualified single-discipline experts, strong leaders, teachers and employees engaged in other industries. The ground was laid by newly introduced educational technologies, newly designed mixed forms of teaching that use practical and project methods to deliver teaching materials (O’DOWD, 2017; MALYUGA, SHVETS & TIKHOMIROV, 2016, STADLER-HEER, 2021). However, distance learning adopted by the majority of the universities in the Russian Federation based on the order of the Ministry of Education and Science in 2020 and early 2021 The Decree of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation dated, 2020 has significantly limited the trends in further degree-level education development and revealed multiple issues that negatively affect learning experiences. (THE DECREE, 2020)

The aim of the research is to determine the way to minimize the loss of learning capacity in degree-level education caused by the pandemic and the gaps in remote technologies that impede quality learning.

Research objectives:

- to define the concept of remote technologies and their role in higher education;
- to conduct a survey among teachers and students on the quality of online higher education during the pandemic period;
- to draw conclusions on remote learning potential and its disadvantages.

RESEARCH METHODS

The research was based on statistical data obtained from those involved in degree-level education, including university teachers and students. The analysis was based on open sources that publish remote learning indicators. Forum and conference data were also studied. Author’s own observations were used as well. In addition, comparative and historical methods, regression and visual data analysis, comparison and analogue methods, surveys, empirical data statistical analysis, an expert-analytical method, and other methods were used.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Currently conferences, scientific articles and comprehensive studies are entirely devoted to discussing remote technologies in higher education. However, there is still no qualitative assessment of the losses suffered by higher education as a result of the pandemic in Russia and throughout the world. Most universities claim that the use of remote technologies can be seen as a major breakthrough for the educational environment, which is proved by students’ winter and summer examination results, as well as by teachers’ reviews on the systems developed by their teaching facilities (THE MEETING REPORT, 2020, p.1, our translation).
At the same time, considering the results of the research carried out in the student environment, it is clear that the data mentioned above are not fully reliable. It should be clarified that remote technologies are based on innovations in digital environment, which makes them “breakthrough” technologies speeding up the technological progress and adding to modern university transition to a new stage of growth (MINAEV, ISAEVA, KIRYANOVA, GORNOV, 2020; MALYUGA, 2016). For the research to be more comprehensive, the concept of “remote technologies” interpreted by different authors from different points of view should be given.

Lutfullayev G.U. suggests that remote learning is organized educational activities that apply the information and telecommunication infrastructure when transferring data, and students and their teachers communicate synchronously or asynchronously (LUTFULLAYEV, 2020, p.40, our translation). Zabrodina I.V. correlates remote technologies in teaching with technological progress and specialized software development, as well as digital and remote environment that totally complements learning with elements and enables giving lessons online (ZABRODINA et al, 2019, p.40, our translation). According to N.S. Filatova, remote education is a kind of educational services provided to students using specialized information and educational environment based on modern digital means (FILATOVA, 2020, p.68, our translation).

In general, all presented definitions are similar in nature referring the specifics of remote technologies in education to services avoiding personal meetings between students and teachers which are replaced with online communication via online communication channels. Remote technologies minimize the need for those involved in learning to leave their houses. Remarkably, remote technologies have not just emerged in education but have been steadily integrated into learning throughout quite a long period of time and were actively used in most universities and colleges across the country (SULEIMANOVA, 2020).

Another noteworthy detail is that that the new “remote” learning mode, having become an alternative for extramural and part-time education, was created and successfully adopted in the service market. At the same time, we can’t but mention that remote form of learning is mainly used by employed people, being short of time but concerned of their education and personal growth. Nevertheless, it was the COVID pandemic and the COVID-related quarantine that developed remote technologies in higher education to their highest degree. The systems on which these forms of study are built are presented in Table 1.
Table 1 - Remote learning platforms

| Platform name | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---------------|------------|---------------|
| MOODLE (RUDENKO, 2020, p. 110, our translation) | • flexible fill-in scheme; enables uploading simple or more complex schemes: Wiki sections, glossaries (can be filled out by students), tasks, various forms of testing. The system works using the open-source scheme - open source. Due to this, the vast community regularly creates useful extensions and modules in the Moodle environment - currently, there are roughly 1,500 of these. | • service setting up is expensive. • Moodle is demanding of the server. Free hosting enables installing only older system versions. • Out-of-date, non-user-friendly interface. • Moodle does not issue certificates of completion. |
| TeachBase (MAKHMUDOVA, 2018, p. 290, our translation) | • enables arranging everything in one place, can form training programs, monitor performance, render assistance and evaluate the results; • detailed statistics of learning progress. Student are controlled as informative as possible. • The cost is established for a specific number of participants only. | • Errors in the registration form; • interface workload and the need to frequently confirm actions by putting personal data; • frequent reaction timeouts when the broadcast may be suspended; • there are complaints against the platform quality. Many do not like the mobile application, which does not allow speeding up videos or downloading the for offline watching. |
| Udemy (KLYAGIN and MAKARIEVA, 2021, our translation) | • Good quality video and audio. Teacher’s speech is audible and understandable, the video is good enough to see everything that happens on the screen. | • high costs. • Video and audio quality. Sometimes the quality is perfect, but sometimes it is terrible. |
| Platforms for webinars (Webinar, Click Meeting) (WEBINAR SERVICES, 2020, our translation) | • The feature set fully complies with the standard capacity list of webinar sites. There are a number of perks (webinar broadcast on website, branding, series and cycles of events). • Unlimited file storage. • Maximum recording time for 1 webinar - 72 hours • Free technical support (chat, mail, phone), the message is answered within a few minutes | • Participants cannot download a webinar record to their computers, it can only be viewed on the platform server. • The host cannot hold online events using a storaghe, only PC. • There is no payment acceptance system for paid events. |
| Dialogue simulators (Spring a LMS eTutorium) (WHAT IS A DIALOGUE SIMULATOR, 2019, our translation) | • dialogue can be incorporated into the course so that the transition from a nonlinear to a linear scenario and vice versa will not be obvious to a student. This will create “individuality” of the virtual excursion. • The user can select the audience, complexity that corresponds to the audience’s reaction, to view presentation from the virtual screen during the story-telling. | • it is impossible to create a virtual psychologist who will support complex conceptualizations, and there is no way to quickly change the reaction of bots to different meanings of a single phrase. • Other area development is limited by computer linguistics advances. |
| interactive objects for courses Learningapps. org, Raptivity, HSP (LEARNING, APS, 2019, our translation) | • Any other people’s exercise in the gallery can be used as a template for application. • Simply created exercises | Feature set is limited. For Russian-speaking users, the Tools section has been translated into Russian only by half. |

Source: Search data.

Considering the technologies presented, we have to mention that MOODLE is the most commonly used platform in remote technologies. This system is used by 150 Russian universities (INTERNET JOURNAL “EXPERT-ONLINE, 2016). The platform is built having the ability to solve basic academic problems at different education levels, with less fatigue and the ability to hold students’ interest and motivation to study.

In most universities, theory is delivered by video and audio lectures, autovebinars, providing students with electronic textbooks, presentations and screencasts (POSPELOV e al., 2015, p. 9). When learning remotely, students practice skills via project tasks, webinars, simulators (laboratory workshops, case studies, review works, essays, tasks), web conferences, chat rooms, person-to-person consultations (KHAKIMOVA; LAPASOVA, 2020, p. 32, our translation).

Tests of all forms and qualification works provide an opportunity to monitor and coordinate learning progress and achievements (TSYRENOVA, 2020, p. 31, our translation) Thus, university remote technologies work using a huge number of platforms and applications intensifying and increasing efficiency of this process. At the same time, each university chooses its own platform which is adapted to teaching and teaching methods specifics, the target audience and students’ place of living.

Each University was free to choose its platform, though having no immediate positive results in some cases. At the same time, both teachers and students faced inconveniences. The situation was complicated by the lack of Internet communication in some remote regions of.
Russia, which completely drove a number of students out of the educational process. In addition, technical condition of computers or tablets used by students for learning purposes leaves much to be desired, and not everyone can afford buying a new one (SHTYKHNO et al., 2020, # 5, p 114, our translation).

As for assessment of knowledge acquired by students studying in many leading universities during the pandemic period, the scores were higher than a year before (ANALYTICAL DATA, 2020, our translation). At the same time, they cannot be recognized as objective, since it is common knowledge that when passing on-line exams and tests, many students cheated the proctoring system in all possible ways, while some teachers gave many grades “automatically” to avoid negative results.

Remote learning has revealed many other problems associated with the inability to learn a number of subjects where personal communication is mainly required and it is difficult to check student’s knowledge via a computer which also relates to teaching translation (MALYUGA, KROUGLOV, TOMALIN, 2018). Undoubtedly, it affects learning negatively and lowers competencies of future university and college graduates.

It is also proved by scientific studies carried out by foreign scientists. Thus, there was a significant outflow of foreign students in China due to the pandemic, with the simultaneous mass return of Chinese residents studying in foreign universities. Most of them were unable to adapt to the learning mode offered to them (HUANG et al., 2020).

It was much earlier when American scientists warned about the inefficiency of home schooling, pointing the reduced quality of knowledge obtained in this learning mode (RYAN, 2021). At the same time, the moderate use of remote education techniques allows students to more easily adapt to new challenges and conditions which may repeatedly and regularly occur in the future.

Thus, distance learning in the COVID period revealed many problems and potential opportunities for degree-level education development. To clarify the advantages and disadvantages of remote learning in Russia, a sociological study including students of the RUDN Economics Faculty, both bachelor-degree (48) and master-degree (110) students, and their teachers (SHTYKHNO et al., 2020, # 5, p 114, our translation), was carried out. We collected data using team conferences, seminars, personal interactions, personal observations and a survey consisting of 15 questions for students. Regarding teachers, they were offered to go through a survey consisting of 7 questions. We tried to analyze and focus on the key problems that teachers and students face in online learning. The questions the students were asked and the answer options are given in Table 2.
Table 2 - Questions and answer options that university students were asked concerning remote learning technology quality

| No. | Question                                                                 | Answer distribution                                      |
|-----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1.  | Age                                                                      | 17-25, 25-35, 35-45, 45-55, 55 and older                 |
| 2.  | Do you have access to the online learning device?                       | Yes, Yes, but it doesn’t work well, No                   |
| 3.  | Which device do you use for remote learning?                            | Laptop, Desktop, Tablet, Smartphone                      |
| 4.  | How strong are you motivated for remote learning?                       | low, below average, average, good, high                  |
| 5.  | How do you generally feel about remote learning?                        | bad, below average, average, good, very good             |
| 6.  | Are you satisfied with your progress during remote learning?            | Not at all, below average, average, Above average, Completely |
| 7.  | Are you satisfied with online lesson content?                           | Not at all, below average, average, Above average, Completely |
| 8.  | Are you satisfied with the quality of remote learning tools (platforms)? | Not at all, below average, average, Above average, Completely |
| 9.  | Are you more likely to be distracted by distance learning?              | considerably more frequently, much more frequently, somewhat more frequently, a little more frequently, no |
| 10. | Is offline control seemingly influential on the education quality?      | Definitely yes, not always, not very good, no             |
| 11. | Do you see the difference between online and offline learning?          | Yes, No, Don’t know                                       |
| 12. | How stressful is distance learning for you during the pandemic?        | Very stressful, Slightly stressful, Moderately stressful, Not stressful at all |
| 13. | Which online learning tools do you use?                                 | Google services, E-mail, Viber, Training information system (RUDN LMS platform), Others |
| 14. | What are the most attractive features of online learning?              | I can manage time on my own, I learn to work on my own, I am fully involved in learning |
| 15. | What problems occurring when learning online are the most important to you? | communication, Internet failures and problems experienced by teachers, teachers lack confidence in Internet resources, channel failures, lack of control, lack of personal communication |

Source: Search data.

The results of the study will be further presented. Table 3 shows the percentage distribution of responses to the questions asked.
| No | Question                                                                 | Answer distribution                                      | %  |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----|
| 1  | Age                                                                       | 17-25, 78                                                |    |
|    |                                                                           | 25-35, 20                                                |    |
|    |                                                                           | 35-45, 2                                                |    |
|    |                                                                           | 45-55, 2                                                 |    |
|    |                                                                           | 55 and older                                             |    |
| 2  | Do you have access to an online learning device?                          | Yes, 60                                                  |    |
|    |                                                                           | Yes, but it doesn’t work well, 35                       |    |
|    |                                                                           | No, 5                                                   |    |
| 3  | Which device do you use for remote learning?                              | Laptop, 39                                               |    |
|    |                                                                           | Desktop, 21                                              |    |
|    |                                                                           | Tablet, 30                                              |    |
|    |                                                                           | Smartphone, 10                                           |    |
| 4  | How strong are you motivated for remote learning?                         | low, 30                                                  |    |
|    |                                                                           | below average, 32                                        |    |
|    |                                                                           | good, 10                                                |    |
| 5  | How do you generally feel about remote learning?                          | bad, 65                                                  |    |
|    |                                                                           | below average, 10                                        |    |
|    |                                                                           | good, 10                                                |    |
| 6  | Are you satisfied with your progress during remote learning?              | Not at all, 30                                           |    |
|    |                                                                           | below average, 35                                        |    |
|    |                                                                           | average, 20                                              |    |
| 7  | Are you satisfied with online lesson content?                             | Not at all, 30                                           |    |
|    |                                                                           | below average, 35                                        |    |
| 8  | Are you satisfied with the quality of remote learning tools (platforms)?  | Not at all, 20                                           |    |
|    |                                                                           | below average, 30                                        |    |
|    |                                                                           | average, 36                                              |    |
|    |                                                                           | Completely, 5                                            |    |
| 9  | Are you more likely to be distracted by distance learning?                | considerably more frequently, 50                        |    |
|    |                                                                           | much more frequently, 40                                 |    |
|    |                                                                           | somewhat more frequently                                 |    |
|    |                                                                           | a little more frequently                                 |    |
| 10 | Is offline control seemingly influential on the education quality?        | Definitely yes, 50                                       |    |
|    |                                                                           | not always, 40                                           |    |
|    |                                                                           | not very good, 10                                        |    |
| 11 | Do you see the difference between online and offline learning?            | Yes, 90                                                  |    |
|    |                                                                           | No, 5                                                   |    |
|    |                                                                           | Don’t know, 5                                           |    |
| 12 | How stressful is distance learning for you during the pandemic?          | Very stressful, 10                                       |    |
|    |                                                                           | Slightly stressful, 10                                   |    |
|    |                                                                           | Moderately stressful, 30                                 |    |
| 13 | Which online learning tools do you use?                                   | Google services, 4                                       |    |
|    |                                                                           | E-mail, 3                                                |    |
|    |                                                                           | Viber, 3                                                 |    |
|    |                                                                           | Training information system (RUDN LMS platform), 70      |    |
|    |                                                                           | Others, 20                                               |    |
| 14 | What are the most attractive features of online learning?                | I can manage time on my own, 60                         |    |
|    |                                                                           | I learn to work on my own, 30                            |    |
|    |                                                                           | I am fully involved in learning, 10                      |    |
|    |                                                                           | communication, 25                                         |    |
| 15 | What problems occurring when learning online are the most important to you? | Internet failures and problems experienced by teachers, 30 |    |
|    |                                                                           | teachers lack confidence in Internet resources, 10       |    |
|    |                                                                           | channel failures, 5                                      |    |
|    |                                                                           | lack of control, 3                                        |    |
|    |                                                                           | lack of personal communication, 27                       |    |

**Source:** Search data.

To illustrate the results of the study, the results of the most relevant questions are presented graphically. The most important question is: “Do you have access to an online learning device?” The distribution of responses to this question is shown in Figure 1.
Figure 1 - Distribution of responses to the question: "Do you have access to an online learning device?"

| Response                          | Percentage |
|----------------------------------|------------|
| Yes, but it doesn't work well    | 35%        |
| No                               | 5%         |
| Yes                              | 60%        |

Source: Search data.

The survey showed that most students possess the equipment required to study remotely. However, 35% of the equipment works quite poorly. But still, computers or other devices used to transmit information are not always the reason for failure. In some cases, it is lack of the Internet or its poor quality which disables timely and full provision of educational services, lowers the knowledge gained, and hinders educational development in general. 5% of respondents do not have access to distance learning at all, which in general is a major issue.

While learning online, a number of students shared technical devices with their classmates or friends in view of financial difficulties. As a result, they were unable to continue sharing this technology during the pandemic and some of them were not provided with the technological means which made distance learning impossible. The pie chart below illustrates the distribution of responses to the question: "How do you generally feel about remote learning?"

Figure 2 - The distribution of responses to the question: "How do you generally feel about remote learning?"

| Feeling                | Percentage |
|------------------------|------------|
| Bad                    | 65%        |
| Below average          | 10%        |
| Average                | 10%        |
| Good                   | 10%        |
| Very good              | 5%         |

Source: Search data.

The survey showed that only 5% of students fully approve of distance learning and consider it as somewhat inevitable and are forced to accept these events. At the same time, 65% of the students surveyed estimated distance learning as a negative phenomenon. The remaining three groups of students distributed equally and rated it as average, good or below average. We can say that more students are negative about distance learning during the pandemic period, since the learning mode seems to be unusual to them, as well contradicting to social laws and life development. Many students found it hard to be locked in their homes due to Covid-19 pandemic. The following question with response distribution is given graphically:
"Are you satisfied with your progress during remote learning?" The results of the survey are shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3** - Question response distribution: «Are you satisfied with your progress during remote learning?».

| Satisfaction Level   | Percentage |
|----------------------|------------|
| Not at all           | 30%        |
| Below average        | 35%        |
| Average              | 20%        |
| Above average        | 10%        |
| Completely           | 5%         |

**Source**: Search data.

The answers were distributed as follows:

- 30% of respondents were not satisfied with their progress, because they believed that they did not learn anything new and remote learning slowed down their progress.
- 35% rated newly acquired knowledge and the quality of their achievements during the pandemic below average.
- 20% rated this parameter as average, 5% were highly satisfied with their achievements as they managed to gain new skills, new achievements, and developed their own talents as well.
- A question about the quality of remote learning tools was the next to be asked.

The distribution of the responses to the question is shown in Figure 4.

**Figure 4** - Question response distribution: «Are you satisfied with the quality of remote learning tools (platforms)?»

| Satisfaction Level   | Percentage |
|----------------------|------------|
| Not at all           | 20%        |
| Below average        | 30%        |
| Average              | 36%        |
| Above average        | 10%        |
| Completely           | 4%         |

**Source**: Search data.

1/3 of the students estimated their satisfaction with these platforms average (36%), while 30% estimated them below average, 20% of respondents were dissatisfied. This parameter was rated above average by 10% of respondents, 4% rated remote technologies high. This suggests that the quality of distance learning, namely the platforms used in education, leaves
much to be desired. The following are the most attractive aspects of distance learning that were noted by students (Figure 5).

**Figure 5** - Distribution of responses to the question “What are the most attractive features of online learning?”

Source: Search data.

The vast majority noted the ability to manage time (60%), as well as gain self-control skills (30%). 10% noted that they are totally involved in education process when during distance learning. The following are the most significant online learning problems.

**Figure 6** - Distribution of responses to the question «What problems occurring when learning online are the most important to you?»

Source: Search data.

Figure 6 shows that all distance education problems are divided into communication and technical issues. Communication issues involve a lack of interaction between the teacher and students, while technical issues are divided into Internet failures and problems experienced by teachers (30%), teachers lack confidence with the Internet resources (10%); channel failures and lack of control. At the same time, many students explain that remote learning mode is characterized by low discipline and involvement. For example, when attending an off-line lecture, a student may get distracted for 5-7 minutes of the total working time, while studying remotely distraction can reach 20-30 minutes.
That is, students often appear to attend lessons, but they do not follow what is going on at the lesson - the fact, which actually diminishes the remote education quality and reduces the overall level of knowledge the students receive. At the same time, shortcomings are also seen in transmitting information: many people perceive it not clearly enough and cannot grasp it completely via a computer. This is the reason why a student tends not to fully learn the presented material and cannot pass the exam well and is forced to resort to additional resources. In addition, insufficient communication between students was assessed negatively. This problem is particularly acute among first year students who need more communication with each other and teachers. These students are adapting to a new period in their life, which requires many technologies to perceive new things painlessly.

In addition, most first-year students turned out to be unfamiliar with educational specifics, such as the way examinations are held, and face other difficulties. In the context of distance learning, it is hardly possible to transfer all details to first-year students. When working normally, many universities hold different extracurricular events to successfully and smoothly adapt their first-year students. Covid-19 pandemic prevented many universities from arranging such events which has negatively affected first-year student adaptation and the way they feel about distance learning. To assess education remote technologies more objectively, we will further present the result of the survey held for the teaching staff. The questions are given in Table 4.

Table 4 - Questions and response options that university teachers were asked on the quality of distance learning technologies

| No | Question                                                                 | Answer distribution                                                                 |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1  | Age                                                                      | 20-25, 25-35, 35-45, 45-55, 55 and older                                         |
| 2  | Which device do you use for remote learning?                             | Laptop, Desktop, Tablet, Smartphone                                                  |
| 3  | How do you generally feel about remote learning?                         | bad, below average, average, good, very good                                        |
| 4  | Are you satisfied with your progress during remote learning?            | Not at all, below average, average, Above average, Completely                       |
| 5  | Are you satisfied with the quality of remote learning tools (platforms)? | Not at all, below average, average, Above average, Completely                       |
| 6  | What are the most attractive features of online learning?               | I can manage time on my own, Students perceive me in a more open way, I am fully involved in teaching |
| 7  | What problems occurring when learning online are the most important to you? | Internet failures and problems, students get mixed up on Internet resources, channel failures, lack of control over students, lack of personal communication |

Source: Search data.

Let us now present the results of the study. Table 5 shows the percentage distribution of the responses to the questions raised.
Table 5- Percentage distribution of the responses to the questions raised for the teachers involved in the survey.

| No | Question                                                                 | Answer distribution          | %  |
|----|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|----|
| 1  | Age                                                                       | 20-25, 5                      |    |
|    |                                                                           | 25-35, 10                     |    |
|    |                                                                           | 35-45, 50                     |    |
|    |                                                                           | 45-55, 10                     |    |
|    |                                                                           | 55 and older, 5              |    |
| 2  | Which device do you use for remote learning?                              | Laptop, 45                   |    |
|    |                                                                           | Desktop, 48                  |    |
|    |                                                                           | Tablet, 7                    |    |
|    |                                                                           | Smartphone, 7                |    |
| 3  | How do you generally feel about remote learning?                          | Bad, 20                      |    |
|    |                                                                           | Below average, 30            |    |
|    |                                                                           | Average, 40                  |    |
|    |                                                                           | Good, 7                      |    |
|    |                                                                           | Very good, 3                 |    |
| 4  | Are you satisfied with your progress during remote learning?              | Not at all, 15               |    |
|    |                                                                           | Below average, 25            |    |
|    |                                                                           | Average, 50                  |    |
|    |                                                                           | Above average, 5             |    |
|    |                                                                           | Completely, 5               |    |
| 5  | Are you satisfied with the quality of remote learning tools (platforms)?   | Not at all, 15               |    |
|    |                                                                           | below average, 25            |    |
|    |                                                                           | average, 50                  |    |
|    |                                                                           | Above average, 5             |    |
|    |                                                                           | Completely, 5               |    |
| 6  | What are the most attractive features of online learning?                 | I can manage my own time, 50 |    |
|    |                                                                           | Students perceive me in a more open way, 40 |    |
|    |                                                                           | I am fully involved in teaching, 10 |    |
| 7  | What problems occurring when learning online are the most important to you? | Internet failures and problems, 20 |    |
|    |                                                                           | students lack confidence in Internet resources, 30 |    |
|    |                                                                           | channel failures, 10         |    |
|    |                                                                           | lack of control over students, 20 |    |
|    |                                                                           | lack of personal communication, 20 |    |

Source: Search data.

In general, the teaching staff assessed remote learning and the corresponding technologies positively. The distribution of teachers’ responses to the most acute questions concerning this learning mode advantages is shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7- Distribution of responses to the question: “What are the most attractive features of online learning?”

Source: Search data.

Regarding advantages, the most part of respondents underlined the possibility to manage their time (50%) and the possibility for their students to perceive their work in a more open way (40%). In addition, the entire engagement in education is noted as an advantage. However, many teachers, as well as students, negatively estimated remote technologies as they prevent personal contact, have a number of technical issues related to Internet problems, Internet resource reliability, failures in channels and control over students. The next chart (Figure 8)...
demonstrates distribution of responses to the question on disadvantages of distance learning more accurately.

**Figure 8** - Distribution of responses to the question: «What problems occurring when learning online are the most important to you?»

| Problem                                  | Percentage |
|-------------------------------------------|------------|
| Lack of personal communication            | 20%        |
| Internet failures and problems            | 20%        |
| Lack of control over students             | 10%        |
| Channel failures                          |            |
| Students lack confidence in Internet      | 30%        |
| Lack of personal communication...         |            |
| Students lack confidence in Internet      |            |

**Source:** Search data.

20% of respondents see the problem in their inability to technically control the involvement of each student when studying on-line, which decreases education efficiency. In addition, it negatively affects teachers’ emotional state. Many teachers note that remote technologies do not make it possible to assess students’ progress in full and lack interaction between students and teachers deteriorating motivation and rapport which may result in professional and emotional burnout.

But still, remote technologies are clearly the only way to avoid learning disruption during lockdown, though a more detailed plan to deliver teaching materials is to be developed by using new interactive technologies that actually substitute personal contacts. Bearing all this mind, remote technologies can never completely replace high-quality offline education. Traditional learning can be only supplemented by distance-based technologies, strengthen students’ knowledge in specific fields, and further expand training programs, which is generally positive experience that enables free digital environment navigation.

**CONCLUSION**

The study proved the contradictory effect of remote technologies on higher education. Studying these technologies showed that each University entrusted this process to its own technical services that didn’t build efficient distance education immediately using advanced platforms and online learning systems. At the same time, both teachers and students experienced inconveniences and faced challenges that are to overcome. There are students who lack reliable gadgets and sustainable internet connection. We may conclude that covid-19 pandemic widened the digital gap between students from various backgrounds.

There is a slight evidence that remote learning can be efficient in some ways. Our research showed that thou students retain material better during online classes they are not fully satisfied with their progress. The vast majority of students view remote learning as a chance to learn at their own pace that allows them to go back or skip some material and they see it as the biggest advantage. The issue of efficiency is also a matter of closer consideration since students admit that they are easily distracted. Remote learning has revealed many other problems associated with the inability to learn material in a number of subjects where personal
communication should be mainly used and it is difficult to verify student’s knowledge via a computer. Undoubtedly, all that adversely affects the education process and reduces the level of competencies of future university and college graduates. At the same time, the moderate use of remote education techniques allows students to more easily adapt to new challenges and conditions which may repeatedly and regularly occur in the future.

In order to establish the advantages and disadvantages of remote learning, a survey was carried out including students of the RUDN Economics Faculty, both bachelor-degree (48) and master-degree (110) students, and their teachers. The survey showed that online learning and teaching is mostly perceived by students and teachers negatively. The reason is not only technical issues caused by network failures, power supply failures, lack of electronic means of communication and the required digital skills but also psychological problems as well. Most students experience difficulties when perceiving online learning, they don’t acquire the most part of information, lose soft skills and personal communication. At the same time, remote technologies have become the tool to minimize losses in education which has been under the threat of failure for the uncertain period of time, and application of these technologies gave many students the chance to successfully graduate from universities and colleges despite the pandemic and get good jobs.

Summing up the research, we may conclude that remote technologies intensify the technical nature of education and, when used as a supplementation to traditional learning, both educators and students can benefit and improve the quality of education in the future and e-learning may become ‘new normal’.

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Distance learning in the COVID-19 period

Ensino a distância no período COVID-19

Educación a distancia en el período COVID-19

Resumo
No presente artigo, é feita uma tentativa de considerar novas possibilidades e ameaças causadas pela pandemia COVID-19 para estudantes. A análise quantitativa e qualitativa dos dados obtidos é realizada. Para coletar dados, foram entrevistados 226 entrevistados no departamento de economia da RUDN. A pesquisa mostrou que a maioria dos alunos e professores percebe negativamente a aprendizagem e o ensino online. A maioria dos alunos tem dificuldades ao perceber o aprendizado online, eles não adquirem a maior parte da informação, perdem soft skills. Ao mesmo tempo, as tecnologias remotas tornaram-se a ferramenta para minimizar as perdas na educação que tem sido ameaçada de fracasso pelo período incerto, e a aplicação dessas tecnologias deu a muitos alunos a chance de se formar com sucesso em universidades e faculdades, apesar da pandemia e conseguir bons empregos.

Palavras-chave: Educação à distância. Ensino superior. Desafios e benefícios do aprendizado online. Levantamento. Questionário.

Abstract
In the given article an attempt to consider new possibilities and threats caused by the COVID-19 pandemic for university and college students is made. The quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data obtained is carried out. To collect data, 226 respondents studying in the RUDN economics department were interviewed. The research showed that most students and teachers perceive online learning and teaching negatively. Most students experience difficulties when perceiving online learning, they don’t acquire the most part of information, lose soft skills. At the same time, remote technologies have become the tool to minimize losses in education which has been under the threat of failure for the uncertain period of time, and application of these technologies gave many students the chance to successfully graduate from universities and colleges despite the pandemic and get good jobs.

Keywords: Distance learning. Higher education. Challenges and benefits of online learning. Survey. Questionnaire.

Resumen
En el artículo se intenta considerar nuevas posibilidades y amenazas causadas por la pandemia de COVID-19 para los estudiantes universitarios. Se realiza el análisis cuantitativo y cualitativo de los datos obtenidos. Para la recolección de datos, se entrevistó a 226 encuestados que estudiaban en el departamento de economía del RUDN. La investigación mostró que la mayoría de los estudiantes y profesores perciben negativamente el aprendizaje y la enseñanza en línea. La mayoría de los estudiantes experimentan dificultades al percibir el aprendizaje en línea, no adquieren la mayor parte de la información, pierden habilidades blandas. Al mismo tiempo, las tecnologías remotas se han convertido en la herramienta para minimizar las pérdidas en la educación que ha estado bajo la amenaza del fracaso durante el período de tiempo incierto, y la aplicación de estas tecnologías dio a muchos estudiantes la oportunidad de graduarse con éxito de universidades y colegios a pesar de la pandemia y obtener buenos empleos.

Palabras-clave: Enseñanza a distancia. Enseñanza superior. Desafíos y beneficios del aprendizaje en línea. Encuesta. Cuestionario.