

University of Pardubice
Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

COVID-19 as a Challenge for Students

Bc. Maryia Kasiankova

Master Thesis

2024

Univerzita Pardubice
Fakulta filozofická
Akademický rok: 2021/2022

ZADÁNÍ DIPLOMOVÉ PRÁCE

(projektu, uměleckého díla, uměleckého výkonu)

Jméno a příjmení: **Bc. Maryia Kasiankova**
Osobní číslo: **H21381**
Studijní program: **N0314A250014 Sociální a kulturní antropologie**
Téma práce: **Covid-19 jako výzva pro studenty**
Zadávající katedra: **Katedra sociální a kulturní antropologie**

Zásady pro vypracování

The dissertation will investigate the effects of COVID-19 on university students. Based on the magnitude that this virus had reached, its research has become of high importance, as many scientists were attempting to find a cure for the disease. However, this is not the only aspect of the issue that needs to be understood, as the far-reaching impact of this virus on the student community also requires attention. The goal of this thesis is to find out how university students perceive the degree of stress and motivation during the COVID-19 pandemic. This dissertation primarily examines the measures taken as well as the social consequences of these measures from an anthropological perspective. It looks at students and their ways of coping with the pandemic and asks how students coped with the lack of experiencing the university as a physical institution as well as missing the sociality during the studies. Whether gender and cultural aspects made a difference in coping strategies will be examined. The research will use qualitative methods of data collection, specifically interview with probing technique. The study also seeks to contribute to the growing body of knowledge of the social repercussions of the pandemic and thus offers help in planning for inclusive and supportive mechanisms for mental health and higher education in the future.

Rozsah pracovní zprávy:
Rozsah grafických prací:
Forma zpracování diplomové práce: **tištěná/elektronická**
Jazyk zpracování: **Angličtina**

Seznam doporučené literatury:

1. Beck, A.T. (1976). Cognitive therapy of the emotional disorders. New York: New American Library. ISBN10: 0452009286
2. Bryman, A. (2016): Social Research Methods. 4th Edition. Oxford Press, ISBN 978-0-19-958805-3.
3. Chokheli, L. (2023): Covid as a Cultural Phenomenon: Changing Perceptions and Daily Life Among International Students in Prague, Czech Republic. [online]. Available at: <https://dspace.cuni.cz/handle/20.500.11956/182853>
4. Gunawardena, C. N., & Mclsaac, M. S. (2013). Distance education. In Handbook of research on educational communications and technology (p: 361-401). Routledge.
5. Huang, Y., & Zhao, N. (2020). Generalized anxiety disorder, depressive symptoms and sleep quality during COVID-19 outbreak in China: a web-based cross-sectional survey. Psychiatry Research, 288, 112954.
6. Pierrie Bourdieu (1992). The Logic of Practice. Published by Stanford University Press, ISBN: 978-0804720113.

Vedoucí diplomové práce: **doc. PhDr. Lale Yalcin-Heckmann**
Katedra sociální a kulturní antropologie

Datum zadání diplomové práce: **30. března 2022**
Termín odevzdání diplomové práce: **30. března 2023**

doc. Mgr. Jiří Kubeš, Ph.D.
děkan

PhDr. Tomáš Boukal, Ph.D.
vedoucí katedry

V Pardubicích dne 30. listopadu 2022

Prohlášení

Tuto práci jsem vypracoval samostatně. Veškeré literární prameny a informace, které jsem v práci využil, jsou uvedeny v seznamu použité literatury.

Byl jsem seznámen s tím, že se na moji práci vztahují práva a povinnosti vyplývající ze zákona č. 121/2000 Sb., o právu autorském, o právech souvisejících s právem autorským a o změně některých zákonů (autorský zákon), ve znění pozdějších předpisů, zejména se skutečností, že Univerzita Pardubice má právo na uzavření licenční smlouvy o užití této práce jako školního díla podle § 60 odst. 1 autorského zákona, a s tím, že pokud dojde k užití této práce mnou nebo bude poskytnuta licence o užití jinému subjektu, je Univerzita Pardubice oprávněna ode mne požadovat přiměřený příspěvek na úhradu nákladů, které na vytvoření díla vynaložila, a to podle okolností až do jejich skutečné výše.

Beru na vědomí, že v souladu s § 47b zákona č. 111/1998 Sb., o vysokých školách a o změně a doplnění dalších zákonů (zákon o vysokých školách), ve znění pozdějších předpisů, a směrnicí Univerzity Pardubice č. 7/2019 Pravidla pro odevzdávání, zveřejňování a formální úpravu závěrečných prací, ve znění pozdějších dodatků, bude práce zveřejněna prostřednictvím Digitální knihovny Univerzity Pardubice.

V Pardubicích dne 15. 3. 2024

Bc. Maryia Kasiankova

Acknowledgement

I am deeply grateful to doc. Lale Yalcin-Heckmann, PhDr. for her invaluable guidance and advice, which played a crucial role in the completion of my thesis. The dedication and support she provided throughout this journey were truly priceless.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to my family for their unwavering support over the past three years. Their encouragement and belief in me have meant the world and have been instrumental in my academic endeavors.

Anotace

Diplomová práce zkoumá problémy, kterým studenti čelili během pandemie COVID-19, a využívá přístup kvalitativní analýzy prostřednictvím rozhovorů. Teoretický rámec vychází z teorie plánovaného chování a Bourdieuova konceptu habitů, aby bylo možné porozumět reakcím studentů na chování a sociálnímu vnímání uprostřed pandemie. Empirická část využívá narativní přístup a zkoumá témata, jako je osobní adaptace, společenské důsledky, emocionální pohoda a změny životního stylu. Prostřednictvím rozhovorů se studie zabývá různými problémy, které studenti zažívají, včetně přechodu na online učení, omezené socializace a emocionálních bojů. Analýza poskytuje vhled do rozmanitých zkušeností a mechanismů zvládnání studentů v tomto náročném období. V závěru jsou syntetizována zjištění a diskutována omezení studie, která poskytují komplexní pochopení dopadu COVID-19 na životy studentů.

Klíčová slova

COVID-19, lockdown, narativy, zvyky, výzva, učení, virus, pandemie

Title

COVID-19 as a Challenge for Students

Annotation

The diploma thesis examines the challenges faced by students during the COVID-19 pandemic, employing a qualitative analysis approach through interviews. The theoretical framework draws from the theory of planned behavior and Bourdieu's concept of habitus to understand students' behavioral responses and social perceptions amidst the pandemic. The empirical part employs a narrative approach, exploring themes such as personal adaptation, societal implications, emotional well-being, and lifestyle changes. Through interviews, the study delves into the various challenges experienced by students, including the shift to online learning, restricted socialization, and emotional struggles. The analysis provides insights into the diverse experiences and coping mechanisms of students during this challenging period. The conclusion synthesizes the findings and discusses the limitations of the study, providing a comprehensive understanding of the impact of COVID-19 on students' lives.

Key words

COVID-19, lockdown, narratives, habits, challenge, learning, virus, pandemic

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 10 |
| 1 Methodology | 11 |
| 1.1 Research Methods | 11 |
| 1.1.1 Probing/follow-up technique of interview..... | 11 |
| 1.1.2 Participant Selection | 12 |
| 1.1.3 Themes of the interview | 12 |
| 1.1.4 Reliability of Research | 13 |
| 1.2 Ethical consideration | 14 |
| 1.3 Research Reflexivity | 14 |
| 2 Theoretical Background | 16 |
| 2.1 The theory of planned behavior..... | 16 |
| 2.2 Habitus by Bourdieu..... | 17 |
| 2.3 Definition of Pandemic..... | 19 |
| 2.4 Timeline of COVID-19 Pandemics in Czech Republic. | 20 |
| 2.5 Preview of COVID-19 and its Consequences on Education | 23 |
| 2.5.1 Academic and Educational Life during the COVID–19 Pandemics..... | 24 |
| 2.6 Changing perceptions of daily life during the pandemic..... | 24 |
| 2.7 Social connectedness in relation to Covid–19 | 25 |
| 2.7.1 Well-being | 26 |
| 2.8 Recent studies in the Czech Republic | 27 |
| 1.5.1 Restricted socialization | 31 |
| 1.5.2 Emotions Experienced during and due to the Pandemic | 31 |
| 2.8.1 Disappointment..... | 33 |
| 3 Analysis of interviews | 34 |
| 3.1 Personal impact and adaptation | 34 |
| 3.2 Societal and Global Impact | 40 |

| | | |
|-----|--|----|
| 3.3 | Emotional and Mental Health | 46 |
| 3.4 | Health and Lifestyle Changes | 48 |
| 3.5 | Interview with the dormitory worker | 51 |
| 3.6 | Theory of Planned Behavior | 54 |
| 3.7 | Theory of planned behavior and wearing masks | 55 |
| 3.8 | Theory of “Habitus” | 55 |
| | Conclusion..... | 57 |
| | Reference List | 59 |
| | List of Appendix..... | 68 |

List of Tables

| | |
|---|----|
| Table 1 – Participants of The Research..... | 12 |
|---|----|

List of Figures

| | |
|---|----|
| Figure 1 – Theory of Reasoned Action..... | 17 |
|---|----|

Introduction

This master thesis deals with the topic of how COVID-19 turned out to be a challenging circumstance for students in Czech Republic. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on global society, resulting in significant transformations in several domains, including the economy, politics, education, social structures, and household arrangements (UNESCO 2020: 8).

I aim to investigate how students in the Czech Republic have adapted to the measures implemented by the Czech government. The study seeks to understand their responses to the vaccination process, their behavior concerning wearing masks in public places, and whether any lasting impact from the COVID-19 pandemic is evident in their overall behavior.

The analysis refers to the theory of planned behavior by Ajzen (1991) which should help to understand the attitude of students towards pandemic, then their behavior and final intentions of a certain behavior. The theory of habitus by Bourdieu (1987) referenced by Harker, Mahar and Wilkes (2001) helps to analyze the shifts in students' behavior and how their habits were changed due to lockdown and pandemic. During the pandemic, educational institutions over the globe encountered diverse policies and determinations from regional and governmental entities, resulting in disparate encounters for educators, learners, and other workers of university institutions. The measures taken by the government have changed the lives of nearly 9 million people in the Czech Republic and either fortunately or unfortunately, most of the Czech population had to cope with such measures. However, reactions differ as some people perceived such changes as life-saving and reasonable and certainly some people took it as very challenging, unreasonable and disadvantageous. Those measures were unavoidable and necessary for the government to execute in order to prevent the spread of the disease and save the population.

I try to find answers to research question such as: How did students in the Czech Republic perceive the measures taken by government, such as mask wearing, keeping 6 feet distance and overall isolation in case of a positive test? How has the transition to online learning affected students' motivation, self-regulation, and study habits? What was the online-teaching like for students and how long did it take for students to get used to it

1 Methodology

In my own study, qualitative data were gathered through semi-structured interviews. The interview processes have taken place from 24.07.2023 – 28.11.2023. The interviews were done in Russian, with Russian speaking participants and in English with others. Interviews were chosen as the primary method of data collection due to the possibility of providing rich, in-depth insights into the research topic. The semi-structured format allowed for a balance between a predetermined set of questions and the flexibility to explore emergent themes and ideas (Bryman 2016: 120).

1.1 Research Methods

The theory of planned behavior by Ajzen (1991) was chosen to help understand the attitude of students towards pandemic, their behavior and final intentions of a certain behavior. Generally, the theory of planned behavior presumes how a certain factor (in this case, lockdown) has shifted the behavior of participants, for example questions N. 4, 5, 8, help to identify how such shifting turned places.

The theoretical framework of habitus written by Bourdieu and Collins (2019: 22) should help to analyze the possible shifts in students' behavior and how their habits changed (as far as they reflect on them) due to lockdown and pandemic. According to Bourdieu and Collins (2019) habits change because of the *social circumstance* that shape patterns of behavior, thus, habits could be “inconsistent”, for example, in case of a pandemic, wearing a mask was a must due to pandemic restrictions. This, however, might turn into a habit which might last for some time and then disappear again. The questions Nr. 11, 12, 17, 19 are focused on identifying the shifts of participant's habits.

1.1.1 Probing/follow-up technique of interview

In the framework of interview, I applied the probing technique, or in other words, following-up method, to elicit more detailed or specific responses from the interviewee. The technique serves for various reasons, such as:

- Clarification of information
- Exploration of a topic in more depth
- Uncovering underlying reasons or motivations behind the interviewee's statements/answers.

By using such a technique, I gathered more comprehensive answers and nuanced information, allowing for a deeper analysis of participant’s perspectives, experience and insights. The technique is particularly used in qualitative research (Bryman 2016: 231), where rich, detailed responses are essential for analysis.

1.1.2 Participant Selection

Participants were selected through purposeful sampling, aiming to include individuals with diverse perspectives and experiences related to lockdown environment due to COVID–19. All participants were students of UPCE. The sampling size included:

- Students enrolled in universities (see Table 1, students mentioned from 1 to 10)
- Worker of dormitory unites (one receptionist) (11th person is a receptionist)

| Participant | Gender | Age | Language of interview | Nationality | Time of the interview |
|----------------|--------|-----|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Participant 1 | Female | 21 | Russian | Republic of Belarus | 24.07.2023 45 minutes |
| Participant 2 | Female | 20 | Russian | Republic of Belarus | 30.07.2023 50 minutes |
| Participant 3 | Female | 20 | Russian | Russian Federation | 23.08.2023 40 minutes |
| Participant 4 | Male | 26 | English | Czech Republic | 30.08.2023 45 minutes |
| Participant 5 | Female | 24 | English | Czech Republic | 05.09.2023 35 minutes |
| Participant 6 | Male | 24 | English | Czech Republic | 10.09.2023 45 minutes |
| Participant 7 | Male | 22 | Russian | Russian Federation | 15.10.2023 45 minutes |
| Participant 8 | Male | 24 | English | Nigeria | 05.11.2023 1 hour |
| Participant 9 | Male | 25 | Russian | Russian Federation | 26.11.2023 40 minutes |
| Participant 10 | Male | 23 | Russian | Kazakhstan | 07.12.2023 35 minutes |
| Participant 11 | Female | 38 | English | Czech Republic | 28.11.2023 25 minutes |

*Table 1- Participants of the Research
Source: Author*

1.1.3 Themes of the interview

In this section, I outline the primary topics discussed in the interviews, conducted with 11 individuals representing diverse cultural backgrounds, as observed by the researcher. There are mainly 4 themes covered in interviews, those are:

Personal impact and adaptation:

- Questions about how the individual's life, behavior, and relationships with friends and relatives were affected by the pandemic.
- Inquiries about living arrangements, changes in behavior, concentration, hobbies, and coping mechanisms, purchasing food.

Societal and global impact:

- Questions exploring the broader impact of the pandemic on society, institutions, and global changes.
- Including discussions on governmental responses, university and studying, leadership in universities, and changes in the world.
- Touching upon subjects like public health measures, vaccination attitudes, and societal behavior.

Emotional and mental health:

- Questions focusing on the individual's emotional well-being, coping strategies, and mental health during the pandemic. Inquiries about the individual's state of mind, seeking professional help, and positive aspects found amidst the challenges.
- Addressing feelings and reflections on the time of the pandemic and lockdown.

Health and lifestyle changes:

- Covering topics such as attitudes towards health, food procurement methods, alcohol or tobacco use, and online/social media usage.
- Exploring personal experiences with vaccination and adherence to health guidelines.

I plan to highlight answers for each category, based on interviews.

1.1.4 Reliability of Research

To ensure the reliability of the findings, several measures were employed. These included checking, wherein participants were provided with summaries of their interviews to verify accuracy and interpretation. However, I fully acknowledge that my research depends on participants' recollections of their life experiences, which may be unclear or inaccurate. Given the broad timeframe of the study, there is a possibility that participants might incorrectly reference specific periods.

1.2 Ethical consideration

Prior to conducting interviews, the ethical oral approval of participants was agreed upon, especially when recording the interview. Participants were orally provided with overall information regarding the interview, outlining the purpose of the study, confidentiality measures, and their rights as participants. Names are not disclosed in the thesis; however, age, nationality, gender, occupation, and language of the interview are listed in Table 1.

Interviews were conducted either in person or remotely, through Telegram application, depending on participant's preferences and logistical considerations. Each interview session lasted approximately [30 – 60 minutes] and was audio-recorded with the participant's consent. The semi-structured interview guide (see Appendix 1) served as a flexible framework for guiding the conversation while allowing for exploration of unanticipated themes.

1.3 Research Reflexivity

The small sample size poses a challenge as it may not sufficiently capture the diverse array of experiences and viewpoints among students navigating the impacts of COVID-19. Consequently, the findings may lack broader applicability beyond the specific group of students at Pardubice University when compared to students from other universities across the Czech Republic.

Furthermore, the lack of diversity within the sample exacerbates this issue, potentially introducing biases into the collected data. Certain demographic groups or minority perspectives may be underrepresented, thus limiting the depth and comprehensiveness of the findings in capturing the myriad challenges faced by students. Additionally, the perspectives of other university members, such as teachers, were not explored in the research, which could have provided valuable insights into the overall situation.

Memory bias is another notable limitation of the research. Participants relied solely on their recollections from the lockdown period, which may have led to certain memory lapses or the omission of crucial information. Participants could have encountered difficulties in accurately recalling their experiences during the pandemic, potentially affecting the reliability of the data collected.

Moreover, contextual factors such as cultural norms, institutional policies, or external events may not have been fully considered in the research design. This oversight could have restricted the depth of understanding of the unique challenges faced by students during the

COVID-19 pandemic in the Czech Republic, limiting the comprehensiveness of the study's findings.

My research shares similarities with the studies conducted by Horálek et al. (2021) and Chokheli (2023). While Horálek et al. focused on quantitative analysis among UPCE students, my research also reveals tendencies towards decreased motivation, reduced interest, and productivity since the onset of COVID-19 measures. Participants in my study (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10) reported spending more time on social networking sites, watching movies, and engaging in video games, which aligns with Horálek et al.'s findings regarding procrastination behaviors among students from the Restoration Faculty and Chemical Technology.

Although my research did not specifically aim to investigate reasons for procrastination, the results show similarities to Horálek et al.'s findings. Additionally, both studies noted disagreements and negative attitudes towards government measures among participants.

Similarly, the research by Chokheli yielded comparable results. Participants expressed negative experiences with online learning, which was also reflected in half of my participants' feedback (1, 2, 3, 4, 9). Both studies highlighted the challenges of limited social interactions and gatherings, particularly among international students. Some participants (4, 5, 6) in my research, who were Czech citizens, found the adaptation process easier due to living in close proximity with their families, while others (1, 3, 7, 9) found it challenging. These findings align with Chokheli's observations (Chokheli 2023).

2 Theoretical Background

To address the research questions outlined above, it is essential to establish a theoretical framework that sheds light on various aspects, including human behavior and socialization, the formation of habits, and the reactions of the ego to specific circumstances. Consequently, I introduce the foundational theoretical background upon which my study relies. While the primary focus of this research (master thesis) is on anthropology, there exists a clear connection to the psychological aspects of human development and behavioral responses to both controllable and uncontrollable circumstances. Both are concerned with human behavior; both address human learning and development of personalities. Both contributed to an understanding of individual culture and society. Both come closer to recognize the importance of the patterns of human cognition and the beliefs and values related to human society.

2.1 The theory of planned behavior

The first COVID-19 intervention that people and communities used was social distancing. Because it minimizes personal contact, social distancing practices (such as staying at home and keeping a distance of six feet outside) were helpful in limiting the spread of COVID-19 (Abouk, Heydari 2021; Prabhakaran 2021; Rusu 2021). The majority of studies on social distancing look at how successful it was or how willing people were to adopt the habit. According to Allegrante et al. (2020: 13), behavior theory research is required to comprehend the social and individual aspects that surround social distancing. The findings from these studies are crucial for creating future interventions connected to social distancing that may be effective in combating pandemics in the future. The theory of planned behavior was created by Ajzen (1991). His intentions were to predict the behavior of people based on their attitude, perceived norms and perceived behavioral control. However, this was later introduced with new dimensions (see Figure 1). These three dimensions are based on three different belief systems: normative beliefs (approvers/disapprovers) shape people's perceptions of norms, behavioral beliefs (advantages/disadvantages) shape people's attitudes, and control beliefs (barriers/facilitators) shape people's perceptions of behavioral control.

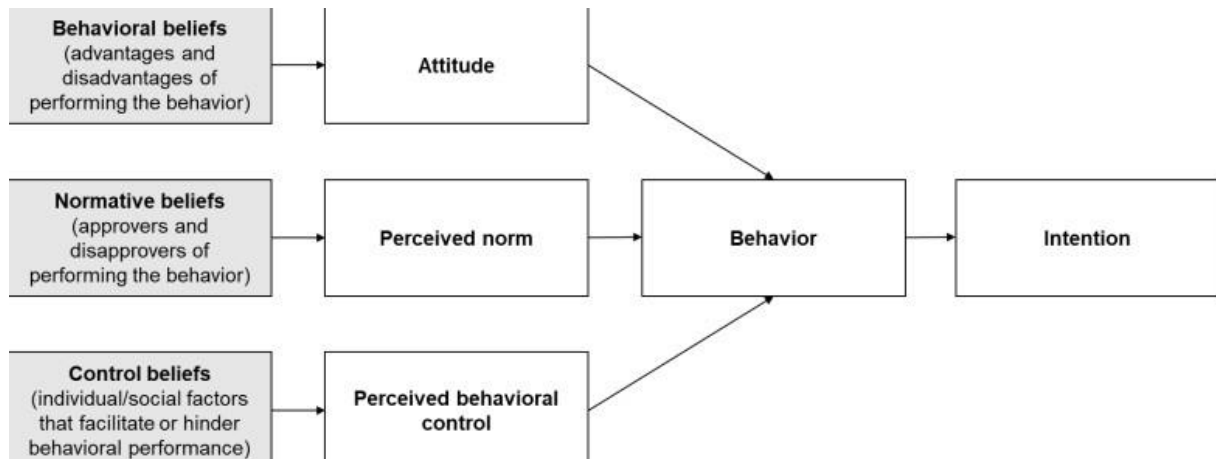


Figure 1 - Theory of Reasoned Action
Source: Ajzen & Fishbein 2010: 22

The choice of employing the Theory of Reasoned Action/Planned Behavior (TRA/TPB) in Fishbein and Ajzen's research is justified by its validation through the planned behavior theory. However, the initial step of TRA involves delineating the target, action, context, and time elements (Ajzen, Fishbein 2010: 23). In my research, I identify the target group as students, the action as social distancing, the context as governmental measures, and the time element as the COVID-19 lockdown period. Despite variations in terminology, earlier research, and public health organizations during the early stages of the pandemic utilized comparable concepts (Abouk, Heydari 2021; Andersen 2021; Cassidy-Bushrow et al. 2021; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2021). These include the sampling group being students, the action as adherence to lockdown measures, the context as imposed restrictions, and the time element as the duration of the pandemic. Despite differences in terminology, the underlying meanings remain consistent.

2.2 Habitus by Bourdieu

Another theory which is regarded in this research is the habitus theory written by Bourdieu (Bourdieu 1986: 37). The concept of habitus refers to a set of durable and transposable dispositions, which are shaped by an individual's social background, experiences, and cultural upbringing (Bourdieu, Collins 2019). These dispositions influence a person's perceptions, preferences, and practices, and guide their behavior in various social situations. A person's habitus is something that acts on a subconscious level and is profoundly established in their day-to-day routines and ways of thinking; rather than being something that people are expressly aware of, it operates on this level. It is a product of the process of socialization and reflects the different forms of capital (economic, social, and cultural) that an individual owns (Bourdieu 1990: 55; Harker, Mahar and Wilkes 2001).

The idea of habitus enables us to progress from 'practice' as a concept to actual practices and the principles that differentiate them from one another. In societies that are stratified according to social classes, different groups of people can be distinguished from one another based on the practices that they engage in, such as their dietary habits, patterns of consumption, modes of dress, cultural practices, voting patterns, and so on. Bourdieu showed in his book *Distinction* (1979: 55), these behaviors have significant connections among themselves and constitute lifestyles, which are representations of class-based habitus. However, these behaviors can also be distinguished according to the amount of economic or cultural capital that is predominant. These distinctions take on their full significance within a framework of cultural oppositions that discovered classification rules that agents put into practice on a daily basis when making judgments about the actions of others (for instance, distinguished versus vulgar, elegant against rude, etc.). The behaviors that are characteristic of a group are not static; rather, they can develop throughout time and even gain a 'nobility' when they are supported by the dominant classes (such as the punk style that has been integrated into high fashion), or they can become mundane when they are widely disseminated (Bourdieu 1979: 75).

Bourdieu (1979: 58) proposed that one of the primary contributors to the perpetuation of social inequality is one's habitus. It has an impact on the decisions that individuals come to, the possibilities they pursue, and the results they obtain in the many social circumstances they find themselves in. This indicates that people with comparable habitus have a greater chance of feeling at ease and achieving success in social contexts that are comparable to their own. However, within a context of imposed restrictions, most people felt uncomfortable at the beginning (being under the same circumstances could potentially drive people uncomfortable (Abouk, Heydari 2021 Cassidy-Bushrow et al. 2021) but eventually got used to various measures and restrictions. That indicates the fact that *habitus* requires time for coping mechanism.

Bourdieu's concept of habitus explains why individuals from similar social backgrounds often exhibit similar tastes, behaviors, and perceptions, as their habitus has been shaped by similar social conditions and experiences. While habits can be seen as specific manifestations of the broader habitus, they do not encompass the entirety of the concept. Habits are more about repeated actions, whereas habitus is about the underlying dispositions and inclinations that guide a wide range of behaviors, including habits.

To summarize, habitus and habits are not the same, though they are related. Habitus is a broader, more profound concept encompassing the ingrained dispositions shaped by social

contexts, while habits are specific, repeated behaviors. Bourdieu's theory of practice and the interplay between habitus, field, and capital provides the theoretical framework for understanding how deeply ingrained social structures shape individual behaviors and dispositions.

Using habitus as an analogy I am arguing that habits of people became somewhat similar whilst ongoing pandemic as most students/people had to have training at home, played video games, ordered food online due to measures taken by government. However, this is an exemplary proposal, I have been exploring a kind of common habitus while interviewing students in the Czech Republic.

It's important to note that while habitus is relatively stable, it is not entirely fixed. It can evolve over time through new experiences and exposure to different social environments. Additionally, Bourdieu's concept of habitus is part of his broader theory of social reproduction and cultural capital, which seeks to understand how social hierarchies are maintained and reproduced across generations.

My research also deems the fact that "pandemic behavior", such as washing hands, using respirator (however it was a must for the whole population), using own antiseptic, covering mouth when coughing, disinfect fork and knife when eating, might have become a habit for the participants due to social acceptance of such measures. So, similar social background would be anticipated. The findings of the empirical part prove the point how habits have changed the way people behaved even after the pandemic was over.

2.3 Definition of Pandemic

The term *pandemic* finds its etymological origins in the Greek roots "pan," signifying "all," and "demos," denoting "people." It conveys the concept of an extensively disseminated epidemic of a contagious disease, encompassing entire nations or even multiple continents concurrently (Honigsbaum 2009: 15).

Pandemics, as a phenomenon, have been a perpetual presence throughout the course of human history. They have consistently posed formidable challenges to humanity. Regrettably, neither state-of-the-art technologies nor the pinnacle of medical advancements can serve as an unequivocal safeguard against their impact (Honigsbaum 2009: 15). A pandemic, in a global context, represents an eruption of a particular ailment, significantly affecting a substantial portion of the world's population.

Pandemics inherently entail a plethora of adverse consequences, permeating all facets of human existence. Beyond the evident medical implications, a multitude of ancillary dimensions is affected, including economic, political, and societal spheres (UNESCO 2020: 5).

2.4 Timeline of COVID-19 Pandemics in Czech Republic.

The severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) was the causative agent of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Czech Republic. This virus was also the causative agent of the worldwide pandemic of coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19). It all started in Wuhan (China) on the 12th of January. The World Health Organization (WHO 2020) declared COVID-19 a pandemic on March 11, 2020, classifying it as a global menace. Two weeks afterwards the suspected cases in Czech Republic were tested, however, the results were mostly negative (Vlada 2020). I list the timeline of events that are related to the Czech Republic and how, when, and what was implemented by the Czech government:

28th of February 2020 – 170 suspected cases were tested with negative results, 307 people were placed in quarantine by regional health institutions, 77 of those were in the South Bohemian Region (MZČR 2022).

1st of March 2020 – The Ministry of Health, Adam Vojtěch announced that the first three cases were confirmed, the cases were treated at Bulovka Hospital, one case was found at Ústí Nad Labem but it was transported to Bulovka Hospital (ČT24 2020).

6th of March 2020 – Obligatory 14 days quarantine for people returning from selected parts of Italy was announced. As all cases after the 1st of March were related to Italy. As of 6th of March, 1011 people were placed on home quarantine imposed by regional health institutions (RPI 2020).

10th of March 2020 – More and more cases were identified in ever-increasing number of regions of ČR. (MZČR 2020).

11th of March 2020 – All schools were closed, including universities and academic institutions (RPI 2020).

12th of March 2020 – The Czech government announced the state of emergency for 30 days with an adaption of numerous measures. (MVČR 2020).

15th of March 2020 – Prime Minister Andrej Babiš announced the authorization of a countrywide quarantine just before midnight.

18th of March 2020 – The Czech Republic was the first nation in the European Union to implement mandatory facial coverings (Prague Morning 2020).

29th of March 2020 – There were five fatalities. The casualties were a 45-year-old nurse from Thomayer Hospital, an elderly lady residing in a senior home in Michle, and another elderly woman residing at a senior home in Břevnice. A total of 227 individuals were hospitalized, with 45 of them in critical condition. (Seznam 2020).

7th of April 2020 – The administration requested a 30-day extension of the State of Emergency, specifically until May 12, 2020. The Chamber of Deputies of Parliament has approved an extension till 30 April 2020 (Frouzová 2020).

13th of April 2020 – The number of COVID-19 tests decreased from 8,000 per day to only 3,200 per day over the Easter weekend, which encompassed Friday and Monday as state holidays. Health authorities reported that testing capacity throughout the Easter weekend exceeded the demand for testing from potential patients. The health authority anticipated an increase in demand during the upcoming week (Válková 2020).

27th of April 2020 – The Government requested to prolong the State of Emergency until 25 May 2020. The Chamber of Deputies of Parliament approved an extension until May 17, 2020 (PSPČR 2020).

17th of May 2020 – The State of Emergency terminated on May 17th. Extraordinary measures were either terminated or prolonged beyond the State of Emergency with reduced limitations (Novinky 2020).

26th of May 2020 – A judge compelled the pre-trial imprisonment of an individual accused of disseminating COVID-19. A 32-year-old lady was detained for violating quarantine regulations by moving in a public area without wearing a face mask. The woman defied the quarantine restriction by taking a cab to attend a shopping center. The lady was imprisoned in the hospital wing at Brno prison (Novinky 2020).

27th of August 2020 – Czech PM face mask regulations established by Health Ministry yesterday (Pirodsky 2020).

10th of September 2020 – There were 1,161 new cases. There have been over 1,000 cases reported within the last two days 9th and 10th of September of 2020. As from 10th, face masks are mandatory in all indoor areas in the Czech Republic. There were approximately 25

exemptions to the rule, such as dining at restaurants, exercising in gyms, or working from an office at least two meters apart from others. Restrictions did not apply to schools, kindergartens, and playgrounds (Pirodsky 2020).

25th of September 2020 – Ladislav Dušek, head of the Institute of Health Information and Statistics (ÚZIS), said that about 400 teachers at Czech schools got COVID-19 in the first two weeks of September (Remix 2020).

8th of October 2020 – In the Czech Republic it was recorded a new peak of 5,335 new COVID-19 cases. The Czech Republic surpassed Spain as the most severely impacted country in Europe (Pirodsky 2020).

12th of October 2020 – The students' attendance at universities has been prohibited, with the exception of practical teachings concerning general medicine, dentistry, pharmacology and other healthcare programs (Vlada 2020).

4th to 18th of December 2020 – New measure deals with the conducting of antigen tests for COVID-19 on teaching staff if they express an interest (Vlada 2020).

11th of January 2021 – It is also possible to arrange individual consultations even in the case of university students, hold university entrance exams in groups of no more than ten people and hold higher vocational school entrance exams also in groups of no more than ten people (Vlada 2020). However, most of the Universities preferred distance learning, except "Defense procedures of thesis and Final State Examinations".

15th of February 2021 – A new state of emergency is declared. It will last for 14 days until 28 February. Restrictions on the business hours of public authorities and administrative bodies are revoked (Vlada 2020).

27th of February 2021 – New state of emergency applies in the Czech Republic. It will last until 28 March. Existing crisis measures has been re-confirmed and extraordinary measures from Ministry of Health have been extended (Vlada 2020).

24th of April 2021 – Across-the-board testing will be launched at higher education institutions, under conditions similar to those in the other segments with generally ordered testing. Exemptions apply to completely vaccinated persons and persons who recovered from COVID-19 in the last 90 days (Vlada 2021).

The partly chronological timeline would potentially help to navigate in narratives of participants. The chronology ends on 24th of April 2021, due to the fact that after the date, the governmental measures were loosened up bit-by-bit.

2.5 Preview of COVID-19 and its Consequences on Education

The COVID-19 pandemic, attributed to the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, serves as an exemplary case of a pandemic. Its inception in late 2019 and rapid dissemination from its epicenter in Wuhan, China, culminated in a global crisis. It was speculated that the COVID-19 virus originated in a seafood market in Wuhan, China, and propagated through human-to-human transmission, establishing a firm foothold in numerous countries.

In response to the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, universities worldwide made the decision to shut down their physical campuses and transition to online teaching. This sudden shift to remote learning posed significant challenges for students, as it was implemented with limited preparation. Consequently, students faced a multitude of stresses and difficulties caused by the lockdown measures and the adoption of online learning (Passavanti et al. 2021). While students are commonly perceived as adaptive and resourceful, there is an increasing global apprehension concerning the psychological well-being and health of students in colleges and universities, particularly among undergraduates (Aristovnik et al. 2020; Odriozola-González et al. 2020: 34). Moreover, there is evidence suggesting that the degree of concern among university students have been increasing as the ongoing epidemic unfolded (Husky et al. 2020). Recent research conducted by Savage et al. (2020: 41) used an exploratory and longitudinal design to examine the detrimental effects of the COVID-19 epidemic on the mental well-being of university students in the United Kingdom, that most students were satisfied with the restrictions and found it quite advantageous to stay at home. Another comprehensive global study including a targeted sample size of 134,000 university students hailing from 28 different nations, all of whom transitioned to remote learning as a result of the pandemic, revealed a significant correlation between concerns of contracting the virus and the manifestation of adverse mental health indicators (Tasso et al. 2021: 3-6).

The existing research has mostly concentrated on evaluating the overall levels of anxiety and depression among students, that are linked to the pandemic. For instance, Barzilay et al. (2020), Horesh and Brown (2020), and Salari et al. (2020) have all examined both, anxiety and depression factors in Denmark and Switzerland. Additional concerning aspects of the discomfort associated with the COVID-19 pandemic have been recorded, such as escalated

alcohol use (Lechner et al. 2020: 14), disruptions in sleep patterns (Huang et al. 2020: 17), feelings of isolation, and diminished drive towards academic achievement (Tasso et al. 2021: 3-6) among students.

2.5.1 Academic and Educational Life during the COVID–19 Pandemics

Due to the closure of physical institutions with the epidemic, almost all educational institutions have used the remote learning modality for instructional purposes (Tasso et al. 2021: 7). These modifications exposed students to novel frameworks of synchronous and asynchronous online education. According to the Distance Learning Theory (DLT) proposed by Desmond Keegan, it is essential for the remote learning system to replicate the teaching- learning interaction and include it again into the process of instruction to ensure the efficacy of learning (Sherry 1995: 22). It is imperative for distance learning environments of superior quality to include various components that emulate the atmosphere of a physical classroom. These components encompass the transmission of educational content from the instructor to the student, avenues for engaging with fellow learners, the accessibility of classmates in a social context, and methods for showcasing comprehension through projects and evaluations (Gunawardena, McIsaac 2013: 16).

According to the findings of a research conducted by Marler et al. (2021: 16) in Alabama, the experience of COVID-19-related anxiety had a detrimental effect on both academic motivation and feeling of belonging. However, it is important to note that existing scholarly research fails to fully address various aspects of the educational experience that have been affected by the pandemic. These include students' capacity to adapt to the transition from traditional in-person instruction to online learning in the context of a global health crisis, as well as the academic-related factors contributing to deteriorating mental well-being. The study by Marler et al. employs a methodological approach that addresses the aforementioned gaps in the existing research by directly reporting on the viewpoints of students (ibid. 2021: 8).

This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge by bridging the identified gap and enhancing our comprehension of the precise ways in which the pandemic has impacted students' academic experiences.

2.6 Changing perceptions of daily life during the pandemic

The study of Iron (2020) emphasized the significance of daily routines and clock time in daily lives of students in United Kingdom. The disruption produced by the quarantine, known as "quarantine," has led to a disturbance in the routines and a contradictory understanding of how

time is measured or perceived (Iron 2020: 89). A modified understanding of "time reckoning" results in interrupted daily schedules; advancements in technology and the internet allow individuals to be present at any given instant, causing gaps in their daily routines and altering mechanical habits. Later, a small number of individuals mentioned that their sleeping patterns were disrupted. Individuals were required to reorganize their daily routines in response to lockdowns and curfews. Students were required to devise novel indoor activities to prevent boredom, and meaningful outside activities to prevent social isolation at home (ibid. 2020: 90).

Respondents often participated in outdoor pursuits, mostly by taking walks. They derived more pleasure from being outside compared to the past, because of the closure of various establishments and their increased time spent at home. Long walks evolved into a communal pursuit where students engaged in social interactions with their peers and enjoyed the outdoors, free from the confines of enclosed spaces (Iron 2020: 90).

According to Shrier (2021), in-person courses provide a concentrated environment for learning and facilitate dynamic interaction among students and instructors in the USA. On the other hand, online learning might be problematic due to the shorter human attention span Shrier (2021: 66). Although many students had challenges in adapting to online education, a few individuals discovered its advantages. The influence of COVID-19 on the acquisition of technology skills was very useful. The challenges associated with transitioning work, education, and leisure activities to the online realm have facilitated the growth and learning of advanced abilities related to managing and using technology (ibid. 2021: 68).

2.7 Social connectedness in relation to Covid-19

Research has shown that a lack of social interaction may lead to adverse health consequences, but with social isolation emerging as a significant contributor to decreased mortality risks (House et al. 1988). The COVID-19 epidemic presented a significant threat to the level of social connectivity among college students, as it imposed restrictions that limited the opportunity for students to actively participate in their social and academic communities. According to Birmingham et al. (2021: 22-23), a survey done in United Kingdom, revealed that a majority of students, namely over 60%, expressed a high level of anxiety over their social relationships.

Birditt et al. (2021: 41) discovered a correlation between reduced social connections and increased social isolation, as well as a decline in the quality of contacts in Poland. These factors were observed to intensify the psychological discomfort experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, social connectivity is a complex phenomenon that encompasses the

capacity to establish new relationships and sustain current ones. Birmingham et al.'s (2023) and Birditt et al.'s (2021) investigations on the effect of the pandemic on social connectivity have shown associations with adverse effects.

However, these studies have overlooked many strategies and methods (social media, phone calling) used by people in their pursuit of social connection in order not to feel as “left – out.”

2.7.1 Well-being

Since my research topic also deals with the overall well-being of students in the Czech Republic, it is necessary to define what well-being really means. The World Health Organization (WHO) defines well-being as follows:

“a state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community” (WHO 2014: 3).

In the context of this research, mental well-being is operationalized as an individual's attainment of personal potential, capacity to effectively manage stress, aptitude for engaging in productive and purposeful activities, and propensity to make meaningful contributions. Such a conclusion was followed by Karademas (2007: 71), elements such as low levels of stress, sadness, and anxiety, as well as high levels of social connectivity, are associated with the promotion of overall well-being.

There are many issues that might impede students' comprehension of academic information, hinder their ability to seek assistance, or hinder their social interactions with classmates. Numerous scholarly investigations have examined the effects of the epidemic on individuals' well-being, particularly in relation to the confluence of academic and social consequences. A recent study conducted by Limeira et al. (2022: 2) in Brazilian school of dentistry, examined the degrees of stress, anxiety, and depression among dental graduates who enrolled in a distance-learning course throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Results revealed that those students witnessed elevated levels of depressive disorders, anxiety, and stress through this period. Furthermore, the study indicated that a mere half of those surveyed students expressed fulfillment with the online learning approach. Additionally, the severity of depression and stress was found to have a negative correlation via the degree of happiness with distance learning. The research also determined that there was a substantial correlation between elevated levels of sadness, anxiety, and stress, and variables such as gender, fear of developing COVID-

19, and having a family member who had recently caught the virus. The presence of confounding variables is an important consideration in comprehending the state of student well-being amidst the then ongoing pandemic (ibid 2022: 2-3).

According to Beck's cognitive theory of depression, there exists a negative correlation between depression and several factors such as academic achievement, self-esteem, and perceived sense of self, the world, and the future (Beck 1976: 44). Moreover, the repercussions of anxiety may pose significant challenges for students, impeding their ability to effectively participate in academic activities, maintain sufficient focus, and cope with demanding learning circumstances, such as examinations. While it is common for individuals to experience minor anxiety as a result of normal biological reactions to unfamiliar or demanding circumstances, excessive anxiety may have a detrimental impact on students' ability to learn.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that the experience of anxiety might exacerbate concurrent emotions of discomfort, including depression (Stavrakaki, Vargo 1986: 61). According to Hapsari (2021: 57), research revealed that students encountered heightened levels of anxiety at the start of distance learning, coinciding with the transition to a state of isolation. A significant portion of the anxiety documented in the research stemmed from concerns over students' perceived difficulty in adapting to the rapid speed of the virtual learning environment Hapsari (2021: 49). Several students reported encountering issues with technology, facing obstacles in comprehending the virtual presentation of course content, and expressing concerns about their own preparedness for online learning, which included undergoing direct examinations in the presence of classmates (Hapsari 2021: 49; Limeira et al. 2022).

The results indicated that, statistically, undergraduate students faced greater challenges in terms of emotional well-being compared to their postgraduate counterparts (Dodd et al. 2021). Additionally, students reported experiencing symptoms such as fatigue, decreased energy levels, and reduced motivation. Beyond anxiety, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a substantial effect on the incidence of psychological issues and mental health disorders, contributing to an overall increase (Chirikov et al. 2020).

2.8 Recent studies in the Czech Republic

A recent study in the Czech Republic at the University of Pardubice, has been carried out by Horálek et al. (2021: 25-26). The research focused on how students perceived Covid-19 in their lives, what effect it had on their mental health and how their motivation to study has changed. The questions focused on their daily life routine and tried to find out how the measures taken by

the government influenced their style of life, their social contacts, mental health, motivation to study and their attitude to procrastination. The results are demonstrated below in bullet points (Horálek et al. 2021: 27, 33, 41) where a total of 782 students participated in a survey:

Students rated the overall impact of Covid measures on their daily lives as predominantly negative across all faculties, regardless of gender, type or form of study.

The questionnaire responses revealed that 80% of respondents have experienced reduced productivity in their activities since the start of the Covid measures. As a result, 88% of respondents experience procrastination to a greater or lesser extent - with the largest percentage of students procrastinating in the Faculty of Restoration and the Faculty of Chemical Technology.

The most common type of procrastination was spending time on social networking sites, and frequent responses included watching movies and TV shows or playing PC games.

A full 78% of all UPCE students surveyed felt reduced motivation. Stress has the most negative impact on students, followed by uncertainty, and in third place lack of social contact.

According to the authors, an unsurprising finding is that the absolute majority of students lacked social contacts, 55% answered that they clearly lacked social contacts, another 32% answered that they rather lacked social contacts. In a developing question about the extent to which students lacked contacts with different groups of people, friends were being lacked the most, with 43% of students missing them. The second most missed group was classmates at 28%. In 3rd and 4th places were for missing partners and people from leisure activities with 23% together. On the other hand, work colleagues were the least missed with only about 7% of students, roommates 8% and the third least missed were teachers with 11%.

These results potentially help my research from the point of comparison and conclusion. It reflects on my non-probability and very small sample of students, whether their reactions are similar to or differ from the general results of the above-mentioned study. Yet, another study was done in the Czech Republic by Chokheli (2023) among international students from (Spain, Italy, Greece, USA, Georgia, France) at VŠE University. Here different perceptions of lockdown were registered.

The author claims that the lockdown, restriction of movement, limited socialization, confusion, feeling of being stuck could be the main characteristics that international students went thru during the pandemic (Chokheli 2023: 10). All students that she interviewed for her

BA study (Chokheli 2023), belonged to the same social group who were placed in the same foreign country (e.g. same universities, study departments in the Czech Republic). Certainly, each individual experienced pandemic differently and Chokheli focuses on personal experience and emotions of each student. The same approach is employed in this study, I am focusing on personal experience and how students reacted to the pandemic overall (ibid. 2023: 14).

Chokheli claims that graduate students experience joy and excitement when moving to another country for a study. However, on the other hand there are a lot of stress and adaptation process that takes place. Chokheli argues that all joy and excitement was taken away by pandemic and lockdown and it mostly exacerbated negative experience due to restrictions on travelling, most students had to stay at home and those who managed to get to the final destination, felt homesick (ibid. 2023: 13).

The Italian students in the Czech Republic who took part in her study said that in spring 2020 they were only permitted to go outside for walks, which eventually became a habitual activity that they much appreciated. Furthermore, students claimed that they continued the practice of walking in post-pandemic era. Despite the imposition of a curfew that limited travel after a certain hour, several individuals disregarded the regulations and ventured outside in order to experience a sense of greater freedom (Chokheli 2023: 17).

A Spanish student remarked that the limits in the Czech Republic were much less stringent compared to those in Spain (Chokheli 2023: 18). Consequently, she took the risk of violating the curfew regulations on many occasions in order to socialize at her friends' residences. Curiously, just one student from Spain admitted to ignoring the established curfew (ibid. 2023: 17). However, the majority of respondents who were in Prague during the pandemic shared living arrangements with flat mates, making it unnecessary to disobey the restrictions in order to socialize, since their pals were already in the same household (ibid. 2023: 18).

Online education was disadvantageous for many reasons, primarily because it limited students' opportunities for interpersonal contacts. "Observed 74.7% of respondents acknowledged that online learning posed more challenges and complexities compared to in-person education." However, 47.6% agreed that online learning required less time than attending courses in person (Chokheli 2023: 20).

A Spanish graduate student expressed that transitioning to and adapting to online coursework was arduous, particularly given her recent arrival in Prague. According to this Spanish student's suggestion, maintaining attention and concentration during online lessons was

challenging due to the intensive use of technology. Additionally, spending long hours with a laptop resulted in detrimental consequences such as eye strain (Chokheli 2023: 21).

Adapting to limited social interactions and gatherings was challenging (Chokheli 2023: 21-23). One student from Italy expressed the challenges the students had in adapting to the practice of avoiding social interactions. The student emphasized that their cultural heritage played a role in this adjustment. He stated that Italians tend to be physically affectionate and sociable, so it was typical for him to desire handshakes and hugs. However, he acknowledged that some individuals may not be comfortable with such close contact, which created awkwardness during the COVID-19 pandemic (ibid. 2023: 25). The pandemic has enforced social distancing measures and imposed restrictions on sociability, thereby creating a tangible barrier that separates individuals.

The Italian student expressed the students' anticipation for new experiences and student life in Prague, who were ultimately disappointed by the reality not meeting their expectations.

"I found it very disheartening that my experience as a student did not meet my expectations" (Chokheli 2023: 13).

Although the transition to online learning has been difficult, the Italian student has proposed that the pandemic has also facilitated the efficient use of technology and demonstrated the ease of collaborating with others remotely (Chokheli 2023: 13-14). The student highlights that just three years ago, such remote work would have been considered bothersome and challenging, whereas now it is considered the norm.

In early September 2020, a Spanish student had arrived in Prague while the epidemiological situation in the Czech Republic was still steady. The individual expressed the opinion that some traveled to Prague mostly to escape the confines of their dwelling (Chokheli 2023: 16). Hence, the decision to go to Prague may be seen as a means of seeking refuge from the pandemic. Nevertheless, soon after her arrival, the epidemiological circumstances worsened, and *"the anticipated year took an unexpected turn when everything abruptly shut down within a week of my arrival"* (ibid. 2023: 16).

A participant from Georgia, who was in her second year of study during 2020-21, expressed that the experience was peculiar, as she described it as a cycle of familiarity and unfamiliarity, where one would first know someone, then lose that connection, and then reunite and see them as if for the first time. *"Had it not been for the occurrence of Covid, I believe I*

would have acclimatized more easily to the university lifestyle, resulting in enhanced academic years and an overall enriched student experience” (Chokheli 2023: 17).

Let me mention a few more interesting studies by Kee (2021), Wilczewski et al. (2021, 1-4), Collins et al. (2022), Iron (2022), Testa (2020), and Dodd (2021). The studies contribute comparatively to my research, offering valuable insights into various cultural backgrounds and global perceptions of lockdown among students. Additionally, they enhance my understanding by providing ample knowledge on the subject.

1.5.1 Restricted socialization

According to Testa (2020: 12), the COVID–19 pandemic has highlighted the need for socializing. Upon the imposition of socialization restrictions, a multitude of individuals grasped the significance of companionship and the presence of others.

In Chokheli’s study, a student from Georgia expressed the challenge she had in reducing social interaction due to her accustomedness to being in the presence of several others, interacting with her extensive circle of acquaintances, and engaging in physical touch with them (Chokheli 2023: 16). For many individuals, being separated from friends, family, and even unfamiliar individuals was challenging due to the innate social nature of humans, which drives a natural internal want for social interaction and connection (Testa 2020: 12-13).

1.5.2 Emotions Experienced during and due to the Pandemic

Throughout the epidemic, the majority of individuals mostly remained in their residences. In Chokheli’s study each participant acknowledged that they had to allocate a much greater amount of time inside their own residences compared to their typical routines (Chokheli 2023: 19). The epidemic necessitated abrupt and significant adaptations, which had an impact on all facets of respondents' lives, including their emotional and psychological well-being. Consistent with the several scholarly studies discussed earlier, the participants expressed feelings of difficulty, tension, disappointment, sadness, and similar emotions when discussing the alterations in their lives or goals. In the same study mentioned above, a French student expressed feeling significant stress due to a lack of social interaction and communication (ibid. 2023: 19-20). The student also mentioned that spending more time on social media exacerbated her stress, as she was constantly exposed to news about the increasing number of people who had either passed away deceased or infected, which had a profoundly distressing and devastating impact on her (ibid. 2023: 21). She recollected that at the onset of a pandemic she

had a state of terror and a sense of being restricted inside the confines of her living space (ibid. 2023: 19).

The news of the global fatality count and the number of infected patients was mentioned in several interviews as a source of worry (Chokheli 2023: 19). When questioned about the feelings he encountered during the pandemic, a student from the US expressed experiencing impatience, boredom, worry, and maybe even a tinge of sadness:

“I recall experiencing profound sadness and fear as I examined various statistical data and figures pertaining to the mortality and infection rates of individuals...” (Chokheli 2023: 14).

A Spanish student, who arrived in Prague for the first time in September 2020, had a challenging moment shortly after his arrival when he tested positive for COVID-19 (Chokheli 2023: 14). He said that this time was particularly difficult as he was alone and had to confront bad thoughts and pessimistic perspectives.

Additionally, research conducted by Dodd et al. in Australia, revealed that undergraduate students faced more pronounced difficulties compared to graduate students. All interviewed graduate students chose to remain in their host countries throughout the pandemic, while nearly all undergraduate students opted to return home (Dodd et al. 2021: 21).

Bachelor’s students, in particular, mentioned forming social circles among students in Prague and even living with such during the pandemic (Chokheli 2023: 21). Conversely, undergraduate students, especially freshmen, found it challenging to establish connections with others. One potential contributing factor might be the greater experience, increased independence, or maturity of graduate students compared to undergraduates, as indicated in conclusion of this study (ibid. 2023: 47).

Students who went back to their homes emphasized the positive impact that spending time with their families had on their mental and physical health (Chokheli 2023: 31). Both family members and friends were viewed as crucial support networks for individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic. Students who stayed in Prague with housemates during the pandemic also affirmed the importance of companionship during the lockdown (ibid. 2023: 25). A student from Italy expressed:

“We formed a tight-knit group of friends and spent our time together and at the same time, we were relieved of the concern of interacting with others outside our closed environment.

Being in constant proximity with my housemates alleviated the issue of lacking physical contact.” (Chokheli 2023: 26).

2.8.1 Disappointment

According to Kee (2021), a prevalent emotional topic experienced by USA students throughout the pandemic was disappointment and its management. Kee’s interviews revealed that disappointment was a prevalent sentiment, mostly stemming from unmet expectations and the stark contrast between anticipated outcomes and the actual reality (Kee 2021). From the study of Chokheli (2023) it was also confirmed that some students were absolutely devastated from the fact that their expectations didn’t meet the reality as mentioned above.

In the research conducted by Dodd et al. (2021: 24-25) among university students in Australia, it was shown that 84.6% of participants agreed that socializing with other students became more challenging during the pandemic. Similarly, the implementation of new COVID-19 regulations has imposed limitations on the ability of students residing in Prague to engage in social activities and interact with their fellow classmates.

Furthermore, a significant number of first-year students were unable to physically interact with their classmates prior to transitioning to online learning. Consequently, it seemed unfamiliar to acquaint themselves with their colleagues and engage in virtual social activities (Chokheli 2023). Simply online contact made reaching out to them for group initiatives and presentation tougher. A French respondent highlighted the challenge of initiating conversation with other students, stating that as freshmen, they had difficulty due to their unfamiliarity with one another (Chokheli 2023: 31-32). The communication difficulties faced by those who became students prior to the pandemic were distinct. It proved challenging to sustain touch with other students, since the connections were suddenly halted and suspended until the eventual return and reunion with classmates.

3 Analysis of interviews

This section is devoted to depict the answers of participants to a certain question. Commonalities as well as different opinions will be highlighted within the whole sample group. Hence, the first category of questions are related to the *personal impact and adaptation*.

3.1 Personal impact and adaptation

The 1st question regards the “Living environment during lockdown, who did participants see in their close proximity, and with whom they were in contact online/virtually?”

Participant 1: “We lived in a block that consisted of two rooms of 3 people each. Virtually kept in close communication with my parents all the time” (reference to April 2020).

Participant 2: “I flew by plane from Belarus, on arrival at the dormitory I had to spend 3 days in the quarantine zone and again on arrival I had to do a PCR test. I lived alone, because my roommate was Czech and at that time it was forbidden for non-foreigners to live in the dorms. I was in direct physical contact with my dorm neighbors. Virtually I communicated with my family....” (reference to March-April 2020).

Participant 5: “Online I was in contact with my friends and classmates. With my close friends I called them steadily twice a week, but there was no substitute for face-to-face meetings.” (reference to March-May 2020).

Participant 6: “I lived in my house, as I do now with my parents. With my mom and dad on one floor, and my grandmother and grandfather on the second floor. I was only in direct physical contact with mom and dad. Just to be safe, we had no contact with grandma and grandpa so as not to put them in danger...” (reference to March-May 2020.)

Participant 8: “I was living at the dormitory; at that time, I was mostly surrounded by Erasmus students and yes, I was in close contact because it was a dormitory. But surprisingly one of the people who brought Covid to CZ was a professor from my university, luckily, he was not in my faculty” (reference to March-April 2020).

Participant 10: “I rented the apartment with my brother, but my brother was back home at that time when Covid-19 started in Czech Republic. He flew to Kazakhstan for the “New Year” which we celebrate. I was alone at home” I kept in touch with my family and friends, via Telegram and What’s AP.” (reference to March – May 2020).

The rest of the participants answered pretty much the same way, that they lived in rented apartments (3, 9, 10), or the dormitory (1, 2, 7, 8). Those participants (4, 5, 6) who were Czechs, lived in their house with the family (4, 5, 6). Most of them (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) were in a physical contact with their roommates and relatives via online platforms (WhatsApp, Telegram), except for participants (4, 5, 6) who were mostly in direct contact with the family members since they are Czechs and lived at home.

Overall, if I analyze the narratives, they show variations in living arrangements during lockdown, including dormitory living, renting apartments, and residing with family. Virtual communication was common among all participants, but those (Czech) living with family had more direct physical contact with family members. The narratives highlight the importance of adapting to new circumstances and utilizing technology for social connections during challenging times such as Covid-19.

The 2nd question focused on behavior, attitude towards health and whether it has changed after the lockdown. I also applied the probing technique in this question. If something was unclear, I asked the participants to explain their opinion and experiences they had:

Participant 1: “I think my behavior has changed. I've always been an introvert and it's always been difficult for me to get in touch with people, and now it's even more difficult. Attitudes towards health have not changed.”

Participant 4: “I think the attitude towards health has changed, for example, I started paying attention to my health. I started taking vitamins, washing my hands more often. I also started to want to socialize with people more. Especially right after the lockdown, I wanted to share my impressions with friends, because we were all apart for so long.”

Participant 8: “In some ways yes, my behavior has changed. I became more social with the people around me since we had nowhere to go. Anyone who was living in the dormitory at that time. Would know what exactly I'm talking about. Ironic because it was a time where we were supposed to be anti-social and keep a small group. I wouldn't say that my behavior has drastically changed, but I did start to take care of myself better. Honestly, I don't think that had anything to do with the lockdown.”

Participant 9: “No, my behavior didn't change at all, neither my attitude towards health. As far as I remember, I didn't believe that it was actually happening in Czech Republic. I heard about Covid-19 in December or November, and the fact that it all started in China. However, I

still didn't believe in this thing (the author's explanation: virus and illness)" – (referring to the beginning of the lockdown 2020).

According to the answers of participants (4, 7, 8, 10), they wanted to socialize more. The behavior towards health had changed. Several participants said they started washing hands more often (3, 4, 5, 6) and taking vitamins (4, 10, 7). Participant 2 actually was so positive about the vaccine that was in the process and also started taking all the necessary means of protection (wearing masks, washing hand and etc.). However, several participants said they were indifferent, and their attitude didn't change at all towards health (9, 7, 1, 2).

Overall, the narratives reveal a spectrum of responses regarding behavior and attitude changes during post-lockdown. Some participants embraced changes, such as increased socialization and improved health practices, while others remained indifferent or skeptical. Additionally, Participant 2 stood out for her proactive approach to health protection, including vaccination and adherence to preventive measures. These varied responses reflect individual differences in adapting to the challenges and uncertainties brought about by the pandemic.

The 3^d question regarded the individual's concentration and whether it was changed due to lockdown.

Participant 2: "I can tell you that my concentration hasn't changed in any way. And online learning has just been more convenient for me. I liked the online format and the fact that I could manage my own time".

Participant 3: "It was difficult to go back offline after the online format. I had to get used to a normal daily routine. In my case, by that I mean that I had to get back to early rising, eating three meals a day and going to bed early. During the pandemic I went to bed whenever I could, sometimes staying up all night watching TV shows. Also to be honest, I felt that teachers did not control us in any way and therefore I often did not prepare for classes. So, to answer the question if my concentration changed after the pandemic, yes. Thanks to all of the above, I became lazy about absolutely everything and my motivation to study decreased as well. I would say all routine activities like reading turned into a torture and after reading three lines my thoughts flew away."

Participant 4: "Yes, when we had online classes I was always distracted by my phone. Especially when I was studying on my phone and I got notifications. I can also (inaudible...) it

(inaudible...) to my depressive state, I would just stare at the wall and I couldn't think about anything, my concentration suffered a lot.”

Participant 5: “... when you take your laptop and you are still in bed, it is very hard to concentrate. I can honestly admit that sometimes I could turn off the camera and start doing my own thing. Concentration has always been a problem for me, but honestly when I'm in a classroom with people around me it helps.”

Participant 6: “Yeap, my concentration has decreased towards education for sure, I even started skipping online lectures...”

Participant 9: “Yes, concentration wise has certainly decreased in terms of studying. But the in terms of the rest, I don't remember...(inaudible) ...cooking a lot...”

In terms of concentration, several participants (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10) claimed losing their concentration in regards of study, apparently, and online learning wasn't efficient for them. Other participants (1, 2, 8) claimed that their concentration didn't change much and even more, participant 2 claimed that her concentration actually improved, especially for online learning “...it was more convenient for me...”

Overall, my analysis shows a general trend of decreased concentration for studying among several participants during lockdown, particularly during online classes. Distraction through technology, changes in routine, and emotional states like depression were cited as contributing factors. However, some participants didn't experience significant changes in concentration or even found online learning more convenient. These varied responses highlight individual differences in adapting to the challenges of remote education during the lockdown.

The 4th question was focused on “how the relationship with the friends and families has changed due to lockdown?”

Participant 3: “With parents have not changed in any way, as in time, and now we call 3 times a week. Only my grandmother started calling me more often during the pandemic. She was very worried about me, told me to dress warmly and take care of myself.”

Participant 5: “Because of the fact that we were in constant contact with my mom at some point we started fighting all the time, I think we just got tired of each other. Well and with many friends I just stopped communicating because we had a forced communication (for example, with some acquaintances from the university or acquaintances with whom we attended

a common circle, and because of lockdown were forced to stop) on this we stopped communicating with these people.”

Participant 7: “I started to value them more...called more than usual and spoke with mom and dad over what’s ap.”

Participant 10: “Well, I lost my dad because of Covid–19, and (inaudible)...about the rest of the family.”

The relationships of family ties and friends didn’t change much for the participants (1,2,3,4,6,8,9). However, participant (3) got contacted by her grandmother more often, as she further thinks that her grandmother was worried. Participant (5) said that “with my mom at some point we started fighting all the time.... I think we just got tired of each other...” She also lost the communication with her friend. Participant 7 started valuing his parents more and frequently called them via what’s app. Participant 10, unfortunately lost his father because of Covid–19. For the time of interview, the part of record was (inaudible, see above) but I believe he mentioned being “worried more about the rest of the family.”

The participants’ responses regarding changes in relationship can have several common themes and differences emerge. For example, across most participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9) there is a “maintained communication” seen with their family members, particularly with parents, which suggests that the lockdown fostered as sense of closeness and reliance of familial support for many individuals. Several participants expressed “increased concerns and support” from family members. Participant 3 noted increased contacts with her grandmother, indicating a deeper level of care and worry for her well-being. Participant 7 also demonstrated a newfound appreciation towards his parents, resulting in more frequent communication. Unfortunately, Participant 10 experienced the loss of father. This tragic event underscores the devastating impact of pandemic on families and individuals. However, it also becomes clear of why restrictions had been announced. However, the words of Participant 5 revealed strain in the relationship with her mother, leading to frequent arguments during lockdown. Additionally, Participant 5 ceased communication with certain acquaintances and friends, suggesting a negative impact on her social circle due to the forced interaction cessation from lockdown measures. This contrasts with other participants who reported maintaining stable relationships with family and friends.

The 5th question was focused on “some hobbies before the pandemic, tell me how they were affected by the pandemic”?

Participant 2: “Before the pandemic I studied Czech in courses, as soon as the courses became online, I stopped going to them. Unfortunately, I also stopped doing any physical activity.”

Participant 3: “I used to go dancing and even after the pandemic ended, I stopped going, I just gave up this hobby. I used to go to the gym for yoga and I resumed only recently in March 2023.”

Participant 8: “Yes, I used to do sports such as; going to the gym and learning how to swim and that was completely ruined when the pandemic started.”

Most of the participants (1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) stopped their hobbies due to lockdown as most of the public places were closed including (gyms, cinemas, yoga classes, basketball courts). However, some of the participants started new hobbies like (9) “...playing online games with my friends...”, (5) “...I’ve switched to painting...” or (4) “...I started learning Spanish ... actually...repeating it...”

Overall, the narratives demonstrate a widespread disruption of hobbies due to the pandemic, with participants facing challenges in maintaining their regular activities. However, there were also instances of resilience and adaptability, with some participants embracing new hobbies or finding alternative ways to engage in their interests. These narratives underscore the dynamic nature of leisure pursuits and the importance of flexibility and creativity in navigating disruptions caused by pandemic.

The 6th question focused on “buying food/ordering food during the pandemic?”

Participant 1: “I just went to the grocery store, and I always took my receipt with me in case I was stopped by the police to show them that I went to the store...”

Participant 3: “I used both options, going to the supermarket and Dame Jídlo¹.”

Participant 4: “My mom was and still is responsible for grocery shopping and food...”

Participant 8: “In the supermarket with mask on.”

Most of the participants (1, 2, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) used both options, ordering food via online platforms and went to the shops with the masks or respirators on. Participant 4 said:

¹ Food delivery company in the Czech Republic.

“My mom was and still is responsible for grocery shopping...” Based on the experience of the participant 1, he even took the receipt to make sure he won’t be taken by the police. Participant 1 demonstrated an extra level of precaution by carrying their receipt when going to the grocery store, possibly as evidence in case they were questioned by police. This suggests that the person was possibly affected by some news (Novinky.cz 2020). This contrasts with other participants who may not have felt the need to take such measures. The narratives illustrate a pragmatic approach to food purchasing during the pandemic, with participants utilizing a combination of online ordering and in-person shopping while adhering to safety protocols. Family involvement in grocery shopping is evident, with some participants (4, 5, 6) delegating this task to parents or other household members. While there were differences in the extent of precautionary measures taken, such as carrying receipts, the overarching theme emphasizes the importance of adaptability and responsibility in navigating challenges associated with accessing essential supplies during a public health crisis.

3.2 Societal and Global Impact

The next classifications of questions are focused on the *societal and global impact* that includes various topics, see section 1.1.3.

The 7th question focused on the “effect of pandemic/virus on the behavior in public places?”

Participant 1: “As I said, I am generally introverted by nature, and since the pandemic I think I have found it even more difficult to cope with social interactions...it felt too loud...people frightened me...it was hard to look people in the eyes...to communicate with them.”

Participant 3: “I started to pay attention to people with signs of acute respiratory infections and stay away from them... I even had to admit that sometimes I was overly rude to people and told them that if they were sick, they should stay home and not infect everyone around them. So, I experienced a bit of aggression and anger.”

Participant 4: “Yes, it has changed, I can definitely say that my behavior in transport has changed. When I ride the bus, I try not to touch the handrails and immediately after the ride I wipe my hands with antiseptic or wash them with soap. And it's not just the coronavirus, (inaudible)...it made me think (inaudible)... different infections.”

Participant 5: “I also felt terribly anxious in public places, I always wore a mask and in fact.... I can still wear it today.” (date of interview: 05. 09. 2023)

The behavior of some participants was absolutely different, for example Participant 8 said: “...I socialized a lot in my dormitory with the rest of the students, ironically...”

Participants (4, 5, 9, 10) said “being anxious in public places...paid much attention on their surroundings”. (1) claimed that she “has been frightened by people around her... hardly looked people in the eyes”. (2, 3, 6, 7) claimed that they started paying more “attention of signs of acute respiratory infections and stayed away from such”. (3) “experienced aggressiveness and anger” and accused “somebody who had potential signs of Covid-19, for not staying at home.”

The narratives highlight the diverse ways in which individuals responded to the pandemic's impact on behavior in public places. While many experienced heightened anxiety and caution, leading to changes in social interaction and increased attention to health indicators, others found ways to maintain social connections and adapt to the new normal without experiencing significant emotional distress or aggression. These varied responses underscore the complexity of human behavior and the diverse ways in which individuals cope with challenging situations.

The 8th question focused on the “mandatory mask wearing and how did participants react to such mandatory rules?”

Participant 5: “It was not hard for me to do it at all, I thought, and I think it is quite normal. As I said before, I wore and sometimes still wear a mask and I truly believe that they help. I don't like to break the rules.”

Participant 6: “I was and still am positive about masks. I have always adhered to this rule. It's protection and first and foremost respect for other people.”

Participant 9: “I was cautious pretty much everywhere I went...paid too much attention to people...but at the same time felt the stare of people on me as well... All of us were slightly scared due to the virus...the funniest part was when the minister of healthcare, I believe it was Prymula...had visited the restaurant and didn't wear any masks...however, he resigned as far as I remember...”

Participant 10: “Since it was a mandatory rule... I had to adopt and wore the masks all the time... but to be honest, I didn’t like it...especially in the supermarkets and in places of massive gatherings...”

Most of the participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7) followed the governmental measures such as wearing masks, washing hands frequently, staying home in case of feeling sick and the like. However, two participants (8, 9) were hesitant about governmental decisions. Participant 8 said: “...It just didn’t make any logic... the mask cost like 10-15 CZK at that time... why bureaucracy was present in case of global emergency... didn’t make any sense...”, whereas Participant 9 claimed: “I was cautious pretty much everywhere I went... paid too much attention to people... but at the same time felt the stare of people on me as well... All of us were slightly scared due to the virus... the funniest part was when the minister of healthcare, I believe it was Prymula²... had visited the restaurant and didn’t wear any masks... however, he resigned as far as I remember... “ Participant 10 “didn’t like the mandatory wearing of masks.”

Generally, while most participants adhered to mandatory mask-wearing rules and viewed it as necessary for public health, others expressed skepticism, discomfort, or frustration with the measures. These varied responses reflect individual attitudes towards government mandates, perceptions of risk, and experiences during the pandemic.

The 9th question focused on the “effect of pandemic on work/study?”

Participant 4: “I remember an extremely negatively feeling... I was just in a state that I didn't want to do anything... studying on my own was not interesting for me at all. There was no motivation to learn at all.

Participant 5: “Unfortunately, my studies were affected quite a lot, I was planning to go to Japan and do research there, so unfortunately everything was cancelled. Covid and the pandemic had a big impact on mobility... I stopped working when the pandemic started, I had worked in a restaurant...”

Participant 10: “It was ok... I adapted... At least I saved my time on the way to university. It usually takes me 45 minutes to get there but distant learning was advantageous...”

² Prymula, the minister of health care, was at a restaurant on Wednesday (6.5.2020) despite the ban. Opposition called on him to resign. Available at: <https://www.e15.cz/domaci/prymula-byl-ve-stredu-v-restauraci-navzdory-zakazu-opozice-ho-vyzyva-k-rezignaci-1374433>

luckily for me... I was working as an AP³ assistant... in terms of work... I would sometimes just watch movies...instead of working... but the work load wasn't that big either..."

Participant 9: "In some way yes... I spent too much of my free time on video games... sometimes it distracted me from finishing my thesis..."

The respondents can be divided into three groups, those (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 9) who have been negatively impacted by the pandemic and lockdown. (10, 7) found the positive impact of pandemic on "distant learning" and "spent time on watching movies." Participant 7 mentioned: «read a lot of books..." Other participants (6, 8) claimed "no change whatsoever..."

The narratives reveal a spectrum of experiences and responses to the pandemic's impact on work and study. While some participants grappled with disruption, loss, and challenges, others demonstrated resilience, adaptation, and proactive engagement with the new realities imposed by the pandemic. Additionally, a subset of participants experienced minimal disruption, indicating varying degrees of impact based on individual circumstances and coping mechanisms. These narrative perspectives provide a rich tapestry of human experiences in navigating the complexities of work and study during a global crisis.

The 10th question focused on the "the leadership of university and how universities reacted?"

Participant 4: "I remember sending supportive emails, I can't remember anything else, but it was nice."

Participant 7: "Yes, we had all the necessary equipment, except library. Sometimes I really missed the books because of lack of information required to pass the tests or exams in presentations we were seeing in MS Teams."

Participant 10: "We received supportive emails with my classmates...But I never read them to be honest...I was interested on how we are going to pass exams...The university managed it quite efficient..."

All the participants had received supportive emails (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10). Two participants (6, 10) claimed that they received supportive emails from their supervisors and words of encouragement to finish thesis on their own, because those teachers had health problems. Overall, the narratives reflect a generally positive perception of university

³ Accounts payable – Accountant.

leadership's response to the pandemic, characterized by supportive communication, resource provision, personalized support, and efficient management of academic processes.

The 11th question focused on the “online experience at universities... adaptation process... technical equipment and satisfaction level with the learning?”

Participant 1: “Because I lived in a dormitory and everyone needed internet, it was very slow. I didn't even have a computer, I did all my assignments from my phone, it was hard. But the teachers were very helpful... I can't say that I was satisfied.”

Participant 2: “Adaptation was quite hard, as I said the training system was completely different from what I was used to. In general, I had a lot of questions and misunderstandings, and I did not know who I could turn to for help... Eventually it was ok, I adapted...”

Participant 4: “Our classes were through Microsoft teams, zoom. I can say that it was harder to learn, there was a lot of homework, a lot of things were not clear... I had a laptop and a phone... In general, I was not satisfied with this kind of learning...”

Participant 9. “Online experience was slightly terrible because we had quite mature teachers... I mean over 50 years old and it wasn't a problem for students to get online but it was so problematic for teachers to get a hold of us all... We had MS teams... I personally had laptop... Overall, it was ok...”

The answers of participants vary, for example, participants (1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10) claimed that the teachers very helpful during the pandemic. Whereas participant (2) needed some time to adapt. Participants (4, 8, 10) had lots of homework. Participant 8 said: “I remember not catching up with the homework... failed one subject because of insufficient scores...” Participant 3 said: “I was satisfied overall... didn't have any issues...” The narratives reflect a range of experiences and challenges associated with online learning at universities. While some participants faced difficulties with technical equipment, adaptation to new learning formats, and dissatisfaction with the learning experience, others found support from their teachers and expressed overall satisfaction (5, 6, 7). These varied perspectives underscore the complex nature of online education and the importance of addressing technological, pedagogical, and support-related factors to ensure the success of remote learning initiatives.

The 12th question focused on the “most important changed that are associated with the pandemic on you and on a global scale?”

Participant 3: „Well, I'll start with an important but negative factor. If it wasn't for the lockdown, I would have had a much better level of Czech. I had almost no practice, no live communication. Only online lectures and no other practice, and I had no desire at all... People still wearing masks in different places...”

Participant 4: “I started paying more attention to my health... spend more time with my family... I believe that Covid-19 united people and nations around the world.”

Participant 5: „Immobility is the first association that come to my mind... I think people get much angrier because of Covid-19 and lockdown...”

Participant 6: “I started treasuring my family more than ever... I spent a lot of time of social media... Now it seems like I just wasted my time back than... I think on a global scale, the travelling was just insanely hard to plan...”

Majority of participants (1, 2, 5, 7, 10) claimed that immobility to travel was unusual. Participant 9 said: “...I believe that people started treasuring family members more than ever...” The narratives illustrate the multifaceted impact of the pandemic, encompassing changes in language learning, emotional well-being, priorities, and societal dynamics. While individuals faced challenges such as restricted mobility and disruptions to daily life, they also found opportunities for personal growth, reflection, and strengthened relationships with family and community. These changes resonate both on an individual level and on a global scale, reflecting the profound and far-reaching effects of the pandemic on society as a whole.

The 13th question focused on the “subjectively positive aspects of lockdown?”

Participant 2: “Shifts to online platforms... vaccination as mentioned earlier...”

Participant 4: “I saved a lot of money because I didn't have to go to university, because my parent bought food and mom cooked it for me. I had a lot of time for myself...”

Participant 9: “Working from home... I think that most companies realized that distance working is absolutely cost-free... I even read the OECD report that the numbers of WFH⁴ increased by 20% globally.”

Participant 10: “I actually noticed that the air pollution literally decreased... I also loved the leisure time... Watched a lot of movies and slept a lot...”

⁴ Working From Home.

Two participants (5, 10) claimed that they felt a much cleaner air. Participants (1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 10) stated that people got united and realized the importance of following the rules. Participant (8) said: “...*The only positive thing I could say is that I got to know more people...*” The narratives reveal a variety of subjectively positive aspects of the lockdown, ranging from practical benefits such as financial savings and increased personal time to environmental improvements and a sense of unity among communities. Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, individuals found opportunities for growth, connection, and appreciation amidst adversity.

The 14th question focused on the “remembering government’s behavior during lockdown and worldwide pandemic the most?”

Participant 2: “I did not like the imposition and obligation to vaccinate absolutely all people...”

”Participant 5: “... During the whole pandemic and lockdown, we changed four health ministers. Sometimes the rules were completely unclear and changed at the speed of a light...”

Participant 8: “Panic everywhere as the death toll was rising.”

Participant 10: “I didn’t like the fact that we had to be vaccinated at my work, when the second wave started...”

Majority participants (1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9) stated that the governmental decisions were strict, however effective. Participant 3 said: “...at times the behavior of the authorities was terribly unprofessional...” While some participants acknowledged the effectiveness of governmental decisions in addressing the pandemic, others highlighted issues such as inconsistency, panic-inducing messaging, and discomfort with vaccination mandates. These narratives underscore the complexity and varied experiences of individuals in response to government actions during the pandemic, reflecting a range of perspectives and concerns.

3.3 Emotional and Mental Health

The next classifications of questions are focused on the “emotional and mental health.” Even though most of the questions were already answered in a detailed way, some answers of participants have repetitive manner which should be taken into consideration.

The 15^h question focused on the “participant’s state of mind during the pandemic and how they managed to go through hard times. Did they seek any professional help?”

Participant 1: “Morale was not the best. I was constantly crying, very tired of my neighbor. I went smoking just to be alone for a while. I did not seek professional help, I just cried a lot, I was scared. I didn't know how long it would last and when I would be able to see my family. I was also afraid for my parents' health”

Participant 2: “Of course it was hard for me, but I didn't ask for help, although I knew that at the university you can ask for psychological help for free, but because of the language barrier I didn't do it.”

Participant 5: “I can describe my state as a waiting mode, I just sat and waited... Sometimes I was absolutely angry at the circumstances... just the fact of being locked drove me crazy.”

Participant 9: “I actually don't remember... I think I just tried to focus on something else, as said before, watching movies... YouTube sort of helped me to pass the hard times...”

Participants (2, 4, 5) did ask any help. Respondents (4, 5) didn't quite need the help, however (2) had language barrier to express herself. Participants (8, 9) focused on different aspects of life. Participant 7 said: “...I was depressed to some degree. I do not like being restricted! And we were under a lot of restrictions at the time...” Participant 10 said: “I had a lot of support from my mom, from my friends. With my friends we called each other and supported each other.” Overall, the narratives reveal a range of emotional experiences during the pandemic, with some participants facing significant distress and others employing coping strategies or relying on social support networks. The discrepancies in seeking professional help underscore the need for accessible and culturally sensitive mental health resources during times of crisis.

The 16th question focused on the “attitude to vaccination? Have you been vaccinated? If not, why not?”

Participant 4: “The government came up with the idea of vaccination as something compulsory, if you wanted to leave the house, to be able to travel between cities for example, as in my case, you had to be vaccinated. Of course, we weren't sure how safe it was for our bodies we just had to do it for a "normal" life. So, I didn't want to be vaccinated, but I just had to... I also think that the Czech government insisted and promoted exclusively Pfizer for some reason, but I did Johnson. And in general, it was very strange to me, what difference does it

make to the government what vaccine I got... In conclusion, I can say that it made me angry and I didn't like the government's pressure about vaccination at all”

Participant 5: “I have been vaccinated twice, I believe and hope that it was supposed to help. In fact, I had no choice as it was compulsory. I can't say whether it is bad or good, but I think it is wrong to impose something on people or to force people to do something.”

Participant 7: “Yes, fully vaccinated. I was agreed, I believe in science, and my aunt is intensive care unit worker, so she clearly explained to me how it was important.”

Participant 8: “Even though I was vaccinated, I had strong feelings about the vaccine... time passed by the vaccine became less effective.”

Actually, all participants were vaccinated, based on the interviews and only one of them was positively saying about vaccination; Participant 2 said: “...Vaccination was the only option to recover much faster...” The rest of the participants (1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10) felt some sort of pressure because of vaccination.

The narratives reflect a mix of attitudes towards vaccination, with some participants expressing trust in the process while others feeling uneasy about the perceived lack of choice or autonomy. Despite these differences, all participants ultimately chose to get vaccinated. Indeed, even though the vaccination wasn't compulsory, eventually, people didn't have much choice but to get vaccinated.

3.4 Health and Lifestyle Changes

The 17th question focused on the “the amount of time spent online or on social media; has the time increased since the pandemic? How has it changed? Why do you think so?”

Participant 4: “Oh, I'm sure my screen time has increased a lot. Well, first of all it was because of online education, because of which I had to spend half of the day in class and then I had to do my homework well and communication was with friends exclusively online and because of that I was on my phone or computer all day long and it's horrible.”

Participant 5: “I spent definitely more time online than usual, but then I started to gradually reduce the amount of time I spent on social media and now I hardly use social media at all...” (interviewed on 05.09.2023).

Participant 7: “Yes, it grew up. What else we got to do, except watching serials and scrolling Instagram?”

Participant 8: “Yes, it had. No activity outside leads to too much activity online”

The narratives of participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10) claimed their time has increased on different social media platforms. Participant (9) said: “...I didn’t use social media a lot... but used to play a lot...” The pandemic significantly altered participants' online habits, with most experiencing an increase in digital engagement. Whether driven by educational demands, limited recreational options, or shifts in daily routines, the pervasive impact of pandemic-related restrictions on digital behavior was evident. Despite some individuals making efforts to reduce screen time, the overarching trend underscores the pivotal role of digital platforms in navigating the challenges of lockdowns and social distancing. This collective shift towards heightened online activity reflects a broader societal adaptation to the constraints imposed by the pandemic.

The 18th question focused on the “alcohol or tobacco use increased during the lockdown? If so, by how much and why?”

Participant 2: “Alcohol I drank on the contrary less, because my neighbors did not drink it. And with smoking it was the opposite, as I have already said. Smoking was my outlet, just an excuse to go outside to finally be alone with myself.”

Participant 4: “Nothing has changed for me, I have never smoked, and I drink alcohol only on holidays and in minimal quantities.”

Participant 5: “I stopped drinking alcohol and smoking hookah because I stopped working in the restaurant. I didn't have any kind of temptation or any desire to do it in general. During the whole pandemic I had a couple glasses of wine twice during online chat with friends...”

Participant 8: “My alcohol consumption increased... I drank at every opportunity, sometimes 4-5 times a week. In this way I was relieving stress and keeping myself occupied. But along with the loosening of restrictions, alcohol consumption also decreased.”

The responses to the question regarding changes in alcohol or tobacco use during the lockdown varied among participants. Participants (1, 4, 6, 7) reported no change, indicating minimal alcohol consumption only on holidays and in small amounts. In contrast, participants (2, 9, 10) noted a decrease in alcohol consumption but an increase in smoking, using it as an outlet to find solitude outdoors. Participants (3, 5) mentioned a cessation of alcohol and tobacco use due to a shift in work circumstances, with occasional wine consumption during online

gatherings with friends. Conversely, participant 8 reported a significant increase in alcohol consumption during the lockdown, attributing it to stress relief and occupation. These diverse experiences reflect individual coping mechanisms and lifestyle adjustments amid the challenges posed by the pandemic.

The 18th question focused on the “feeling about that time of the pandemic and the lockdown?”

Participant 1: “I treat this time as an experience, but a lot of online platforms have come up. More of a positive attitude, something to remember and tell my grandchildren.”

Participant 2: “In general, I can say that the time of the pandemic coincided with my move from Belarus to the Czech Republic and plus I was immediately faced with exams, questions with documents and language barrier, just everything at once, so it was so hard for me.”

Participant 4: “Oh, it was a really hard time for me, I don’t think about it often and I try not to remember it at all. I just hope it never happens again. To date, if someone says they have Covid, I would just say ok, get well and be home. The attitude towards this disease has completely changed and now to me Covid is like a common seasonal virus. Looking back, it seems to me that a lot of the government restrictions were unhelpful and overly strict.”

Participant 8: “It was one of the worst times of my life, the only reason I got through it all was because of the people I was surrounded by.”

The responses to the question about feelings during the pandemic and lockdown reveal a range of experiences and perspectives. Participant 8 described it as one of the worst times of his life but emphasized the support of others as crucial for getting through it. Participant 4 expressed a strong aversion to recalling that period, associating it with significant hardship and excessive government restrictions. In contrast, Participant 2 recounted the challenges of moving to a new country amid the pandemic, highlighting the overwhelming nature of multiple stressors. Participant 1 offered a more positive outlook, viewing the time as a learning experience and noting the emergence of new online platforms. These varied narratives underscore the complexity of individual experiences reflecting differing coping mechanisms that participants implemented.

3.5 Interview with the dormitory worker

The interview took place on 28.11.2023. with the receptionist worker from Pardubice Dormitory, section C. All answers demonstrated below are provided by participant 11.

The 1st question focused on “whether the receptionist worked in the Pardubice dorm during the coronavirus and lockdown period?”

“Yes, I worked during that period. I remember those rules as being very strict and restrictive. In some places, there were really overly strict and unnecessary rules. That’s my opinion. From the measures taken, immediately the chairs and tables that stood in our hall at the reception were taken away so that students did not gather in groups. There was also disinfection liquid everywhere, and everyone was obliged to wear masks. Also, students were forbidden to gather in groups or to call guests. It was forbidden even in their private rooms.”

The 2nd question focused on “Please tell what you can remember from that time, what were the safety rules?”

“Everyone wore masks, there was disinfection everywhere, and of course the rules of social distance. I have a funny story about that too. A colleague of mine went outside to smoke and the police came up to her and started scolding her for not wearing a mask. And she put on the mask and tried to pull the cigarette smoke through the mask and told them: “Dear policeman, it doesn’t work like that, I can’t smoke like that. And they said, “So take the mask off, inhale the cigarette and put it back on right away.” Can you imagine the nonsense? We laughed a lot, but after that they left and didn’t give any fine.”

Probing question – (What did you yourself have to do?)

“The hostel staff was obliged to give everyone who came to the hostel a special document to fill out, which contained questions such as: Have you been in contact with someone who has the coronavirus? Do you have a disease? And so on and so forth like that.”

3rd question was focused on “whether the participant felt good to work full time at the reception?”

“Yes, I would even say that I was happy to work rather than stay at home on a permanent basis... Let’s put it this way, I wasn’t afraid of getting sick, of course I don’t deny the fact that many people got sick and died. It all depended on many factors of immunity and everything else, but I had absolutely no fear of getting sick and as I said the importance of the

disease and the limitations were greatly overestimated for me. I can't imagine how hard it was for those who stayed home and found themselves closed up. For me, being locked up at home is the worst thing that can happen."

Probing questions "What can you say about student behavior at that point in time? Was there any trouble, did everyone obey the rules? What did you do about those who did not obey?"

"It is difficult to say something concrete here. I personally did not ask the students how they felt and what they thought. But what was clear was that the students were very scared and downcast. Mostly everyone just followed the rules and waited and hoped for the best. I gave the example of Erasmus students breaking the rules and what followed. I don't remember any other examples of similar situations..."

The 4th question focused on "How did you buy or order food?"

"Students have always ordered and are still ordering food, but during lockdown periods, if a student was in a red zone, quarantined, the delivery person would bring the food to the front desk to us and then we, the front desk staff, would take the food to the door, knock on the door, leave the food on the floor and run away to avoid contact with the sick person. There was also a story with one guy, if memory serves me right, he was from the Ukraine. He was in the red zone and his mom carried him food, exactly the same system. Only she brought him food in plastic containers, so first we would bring it to him, and then he would leave it on the floor in the hallway and we would pick it up and give it back to his mom."

The 5th question focused on the behavior "How did you and your colleagues behave?"

"We, the reception staff, had to keep order, ensure that students wore masks and that there were no strangers on the territory of the hostel, and as I said above, we helped with the delivery. In the case of students deviating from the rules, we were obliged to give a fine. But it was in the most extreme cases, and I told you about one of such cases. In general, everything was calm."

The 6th question was focused on "naming positive aspects of the lockdown that you noticed during Covid period?"

„I can't name any positive aspects, life came to a standstill, people were afraid, sick and dying, the economy was in a very bad situation."

The 7th question was focused on "naming negative aspects of the lockdown?"

“The deaths of people of course, the restrictions that many, as I said completely unnecessary. Just because of some of the chaos and disorganization. I felt terribly sorry for those students, as I said before, who just got together on the corridor and subsequently received such a terrible and, to me, unjustified punishment... I think it was overly-monetized, there was just chaos going on in the media space. My personal opinion is that it was overblown. Yes, people did die, but how many elderly people die every year just from a cold because their heart is failing or from the flu. Forced vaccination to me is something I don’t agree with and will never agree with. We don’t know the effects of a vaccine that has been developed in such a short time. But the pharmaceutical companies got rich...”

The 8th question focused on “delivery to reception options, what were the rules?”

“Also, in general the whole delivery worked as it does now, students would order something online, then the courier would bring it to reception and then, if the student was in isolation, we would bring the package right under his door and run away...”

The 9th question focused on “thoughts about the pandemic overall and if any conclusion was extracted from that period?”

“Well, it’s a really great experience for all of us. Unfortunately, this situation has shown once again that people simply cannot get together in such critical situations and make some adequate decisions. They immediately start to panic and take some categorical decisions and measures. That’s all I can say about this overblown disaster”.

During the interview, the receptionist at the Pardubice dormitory provided a detailed account of their experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. She described the stringent safety measures implemented at the dormitory, including the removal of communal areas and the enforcement of mask-wearing. Despite finding some rules excessive, she emphasized the importance of adherence to safety protocols. The receptionist recounted anecdotes about colleagues encountering police enforcement of mask-wearing regulations, highlighting the challenges faced in ensuring compliance. She also discussed their responsibilities, which included distributing health-related documents to incoming visitors to uphold safety measures. Expressing contentment with working full-time during the pandemic, the receptionist reflected on the psychological toll of isolation for those confined at home. She observed widespread compliance with safety regulations among students, with few instances of rule violations. Regarding food delivery, the receptionist described protocols for minimizing contact when delivering meals to quarantined students. Her duties included enforcing safety measures,

managing deliveries, and addressing rule violations, albeit infrequently. While struggling to identify positive aspects of lockdown, the receptionist expressed frustration with perceived unnecessary restrictions and media sensationalism. She voiced skepticism about rushed vaccine development and criticized pharmaceutical companies for profiteering. Describing standard procedures for receiving and delivering packages, the receptionist outlined protocols for minimizing contact with isolated students. In conclusion, her responses reflected on the pandemic as a challenging yet instructive experience, critiquing societal responses characterized by panic and hasty decision-making.

3.6 Theory of Planned Behavior

In this section, I demonstrate how the *Theory of Planned Behavior* is applicable, based on a sampling group of 10 people. As mentioned earlier, the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen 1991) is influenced by intentions, which are determined by three factors: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. It is also possible for external factors to directly force or prevent behaviors, regardless of the intention, depending on the degree to which a behavior is actually controlled by the individual, and the degree to which perceived behavioral control is an accurate measure of actual behavioral control. Here I take as an example the question 4.

Attitudes: Participants' attitudes toward maintaining communication with family members during the pandemic seem positive overall. Most participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9) expressed a desire to maintain contact with their family members, indicating a positive attitude toward familial relationships.

Subjective norms: Social norms and expectations also play a role in participants' behavior. Two participants (3, 7) described increased contact with family members, suggesting that societal norms around family support and care were reinforced during the pandemic.

Perceived behavioral control: Participants' perceived ability to maintain relationships during the pandemic varied. While some participants (1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8, 9) reported no significant changes in their relationships, others faced challenges. Participant 10 experienced the loss of a family member, highlighting a lack of control over the situation. Participant 5 faced strain in their relationship with their mother and ceased communication with friends, indicating a perceived lack of control over social interactions during the lockdown.

In summary, the narratives align with the principles of the theory of planned behavior by illustrating how attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control influence individuals' behavior and relationships during the pandemic. The findings highlight the

importance of familial support, societal norms, and individual coping mechanisms in navigating challenging circumstances.

3.7 Theory of planned behavior and wearing masks

Generally, while most participants adhered to mandatory mask-wearing rules and viewed it as necessary for public health, others expressed skepticism, discomfort, or frustration with the measures. These varied responses reflect individual attitudes towards government mandates, perceptions of risk, and experiences during the pandemic. However, if I consider wearing masks context to the theory of planned behavior, it could be interpreted as the following:

Attitudes: Individuals' attitudes toward wearing masks during the pandemic can be influenced by various factors. For instance, individuals may perceive mask-wearing as an effective measure to prevent the spread of COVID-19, which in my study, participants (1,2,3,4,5,6,7) thus having a positive attitude toward it. This positive attitude may be reinforced by information from health authorities, personal experiences, or social norms promoting mask-wearing as a responsible behavior.

Subjective norms: Social norms play a significant role in shaping individuals' behavior. During the pandemic, individuals felt pressure (8, 9, 10). Additionally, government mandates, public health campaigns, and cultural norms may reinforce the importance of mask-wearing, further influencing individuals' subjective norms regarding this behavior.

Perceived behavioral control: The perceived ability to engage in mask-wearing behavior can vary depending on factors such as access to masks, comfort level with wearing masks, and situational factors. Individuals who have easy access to masks, feel comfortable wearing them, and believe they can effectively use masks in various situations are more likely to perceive high behavioral control over mask-wearing.

3.8 Theory of "Habitus"

Based on the context of pandemic, habitus can influence how individuals respond to and cope with the challenges posed by the pandemic in many ways across my research. Let me discuss a few of them.

Health related behavior: Several participants (3, 4, 5, 6) started washing hands more often and taking vitamins (4, 10, 7). Individuals with the habitus of prioritizing personal health and well-being may be likely to adopt preventive measures and follow the public health recommendations consistently. Participant 5 acknowledged the fact that she still wears masks in

public places, although the interview took place on 05.09.2023, which is way-off from restrictions and lockdown.

Technological usage behavior: Habitus exerted a notable influence on individuals' comfort levels with digital technologies and online platforms. Students approached online learning from varied viewpoints, encompassing both favorable and unfavorable experiences. For instance, technologically adept participants (4, 5, 6) relied on their habitus to navigate the digital landscape seamlessly when necessary. Conversely, a student (2) lacking prior experience had to adapt to and familiarize herself with platforms such as MS Teams, including learning functions like logging in. Over time, this process contributed to the formation of habitus even among those initially unfamiliar with such technologies.

Increased reliance on social platforms: Individuals with a habitus of frequent social media use tended to rely more heavily on these platforms during the pandemic. With limited physical interactions due to lockdowns and social distancing measures, social media served as a primary means of staying connected with friends, family, and the wider community.

Conclusion

The research findings shed light on the multifaceted impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students' lives and well-being in the Czech Republic. Through a comprehensive theoretical framework encompassing the Theory of Planned Behavior and Bourdieu's concept of Habitus, coupled with empirical insights gathered via narrative interviews, several key conclusions emerge.

Firstly, the pandemic has disrupted traditional educational structures, necessitating a rapid shift to online learning platforms. This transition has not only posed logistical challenges but has also altered students' perceptions of daily life and restricted their socialization opportunities.

Secondly, the emotional toll of the pandemic has been profound, with students experiencing heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and loneliness. The disruption of social connectedness, coupled with concerns about health and well-being, has significantly impacted students' mental health, based on the answers of participants. However, there are positive aspects found within empirical part, where students claimed advantageous situations (e.g. shifts to online learning, having more of a leisure time, exploring new hobbies).

Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of familial communication and adherence to health guidelines in shaping students' behaviors and attitudes during the pandemic. The Theory of Planned Behavior offers valuable insights into the factors influencing mask-wearing behaviors and communication with family members amidst the crisis.

Moreover, the concept of habitus provides a lens through which to examine how societal structures and cultural norms intersect with individual experiences during the pandemic. It underscores the significance of understanding the socio-cultural context in shaping students' responses to the crisis.

Despite the richness of the insights gleaned from the research, several limitations must be acknowledged. The small sample size and lack of diversity among participants may limit the generalizability of findings. Additionally, reliance on self-reported data and the potential for recall bias may introduce inaccuracies into the analysis.

In conclusion, this research underscores the importance of a nuanced understanding of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on students' lives. By integrating theoretical frameworks with empirical evidence, it offers valuable insights into the complex interplay of individual,

societal, and global factors shaping students' experiences during this unprecedented crisis. Moving forward, further research is warranted to explore the long-term implications of the pandemic on student well-being and educational outcomes.

Reference List

Abouk, R., B. Heydari 2021. *The immediate effect of COVID-19 policies on social distancing behavior in the United States*. Available at:

<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0033354920976575> [28. 02. 2024].

Ajzen, I. 1991. The theory of planned behavior. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 2: 179-211. Available at: [https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(91\)90020-T](https://doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(91)90020-T) [15. 02. 2024].

Ajzen, I., M. Fishbein 1980. *Understanding attitudes and predicting social behavior*, in W. D. Crano, R. Prislin (eds.), *Attitudes and persuasion*, 283–311. New York: *Psychology Press*. Available at:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/264156918_Atitudes_and_the_prediction_of_behavior [23.02.2024].

Ajzen, I., M. Fishbein 2010. *Predicting and changing behavior: The reasoned action approach*. Psychology Press. Available at:

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263227940_Predicting_and_Changing_Behavior_The_Reasoned_Action_Approach [27. 01. 2024].

Allegrante, J., M. E. Auld, S. Natarajan 2020. Preventing COVID-19 and its sequela: “There is no magic bullet...it's just behaviors.” *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* 2: 288-292. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.amepre.2020.05.004> [18. 01. 2024].

Andersen, M. 2020. *Early evidence on social distancing in response to COVID-19 in the United States*. SSRN. Available at: <http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3569368> [29. 01. 2024].

Aristovnik, A., D. Keržič, D. Ravšelj, N. Tomažević, L. Umek 2020. Impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on life of higher education students: A global perspective. *Sustainability* 12. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/su12208438> [16. 01. 2024].

Barzilay, R., T. M. Moore, D. M. Greenberg, G. E. DiDomenico, L. A. Brown, L. K. White, R. C. Gur, R. E. Gur 2020. Resilience, COVID-19-related stress, anxiety and depression during the pandemic in a large population enriched for healthcare providers. *Translational Psychiatry* 10: 291. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41398-020-00982-4> [15. 01. 2024].

Beck, A. 1976. *Cognitive therapy of the emotional disorders*. New American Library.

Birditt, K. S., A. Turkelson, K. L. Fingerman, C. A. Polenick, A. Oya 2021. Age differences in stress, life changes, and social ties during the COVID-19 pandemic. Implications for psychological well-being. *The Gerontologist* 2: 205-216. Available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33346806/> [22.02.2024].

Birmingham, W. C., L. L. Wadsworth, J. H. Lassetter, 2023. COVID-19 lockdown: Impact on college students' lives. *Journal of American College Health*: 1-15. Available at: <https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/facpub/6976/> [19.03.2023].

Bourdieu, P. 1979. *La Distinction. Critique sociale du jugement*. Minuit, Paris. English trans. 1984, *Distinction*, translated by Nice, R. Harvard UP, Cambridge.

Bourdieu, P. 1986. *Habitus, code et codification*. Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales. House of Human Sciences, France.

Bourdieu, P., P. Collins 2019. *Habitus and Field: General Sociology*, 2 (1982-1983). Polity Press Cambridge, UK.

Bryman, A. 2016. *Social Research Methods*. Oxford, Oxford Press.

Cassidy-Bushrow, A. E., M. Baseer, K. Kippen, A. M. Levin, J. Li, I. Loveless, L. M. Poisson, L. Schultz, G. Wegienka, Y. Zhou, C. Cole Johnson 2020. *Social distancing during the COVID-19 pandemic: Quantifying the practice in Michigan - a "hotspot state" early in the pandemic-using a volunteer-based online survey*. *Research Square*. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.21203/rs.3.rs-47709/v1> [12. 01. 2024].

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention 2021. *United States COVID-19 cases and deaths by state*. Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/us-cases-deaths.html> [10. 01. 2024].

Česká Tisková Kancelář 2020. *Prymula byl ve středu v restauraci navzdory zákazu. Opozice ho vyzývá k rezignaci*. Available at: <https://www.e15.cz/domaci/prymula-byl-ve-stredu-v-restauraci-navzdory-zakazu-opozice-ho-vyzyva-k-rezignaci-1374433> [16. 02. 2024].

Česká Televize 2020. *V Česku jsou tři lidé nakaženi koronavirem. Předtím byli v Itálii*. Available at: <https://ct24.ceskatelevize.cz/clanek/domaci/v-cesku-jsou-tri-lide-nakazeni-koronavirem-redtim-byli-v-italii-53063> [12. 02. 2024].

Chirikov, I., K. M. Soria, B. Horgos, D. Jones-White 2020: Undergraduate and graduate students' mental health during the COVID-19 pandemic. *SERU Consortium*. Available at: <https://hdl.handle.net/11299/215271> [28. 02. 2024].

Chokheli, L. 2023. *Covid as a Cultural Phenomenon: Changing Perceptions and Daily Life Among International Students in Prague, Czech Republic*, Bakalářská práce. Available at: <https://dspace.cuni.cz/handle/20.500.11956/182853> [27. 12. 2023].

Collins, C., D. Haase, S. Heiland, N. Kabisch 2022. Urban green space interaction and wellbeing - investigating the experience of international students in Berlin during the first COVID-19 lockdown. *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening* 70: 1-9. Available at:

https://www.static.tu.berlin/fileadmin/www/10002356/Publikationen/2022_Collins_et_al_2022_UGS_Covid19_UFUG.pdf [11. 03. 2023].

Dodd, R. H., K. Dadaczynski, O. Okan, K. J. McCaffery, K. Pickles 2021.

Psychological wellbeing and academic experience of university students in Australia 29 during COVID-19. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 3: 886. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18030866> [12.01.2024].

Frouzová, K. 2020. *Na pomoc všem, kteří přišli kvůli koronaviru o příjem, uvolníme až bilion korun, řekl v projevu Babiš*. Available at: <https://archiv.hn.cz/c1-66747930-stav-nouze-potrva-do-kvetna> [14. 02. 2024].

Gunawardena, C. N., M. S. McIsaac 2013. Distance education. In: *Handbook of research on educational communications and technology*: 16-37. Routledge.

Available at:

<https://www.scirp.org/reference/ReferencesPapers?ReferenceID=1043144>

[12. 02. 2024].

Hapsari, C. 2021. Distance learning in the time of Covid-19: Exploring students' anxiety. *ELT Forum: Journal of English Language Teaching* 1: 40-49. Available at:

<https://doi.org/10.15294/elt.v10i1.45756> [12. 02. 2024].

Harker, R., C. Mahar, C. Wilkes 2001. *An Introduction to the Work of Pierre Bourdieu: The Practice of Theory*. Palgrave Macmillan, England.

Honigsbaum, M. 2009. *Pandemic*. Available at:

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(09\)61053-9/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(09)61053-9/fulltext) [21. 12. 2023].

- Horálek, A., Z. Bauerová, Hicl, Š. Macek, V. Sluková, A. Vrkoslavová 2021. *Life and mental health of University of Pardubice students during the pandemic COVID-19 research report*. University of Pardubice. [Accessed Internally]. [12. 12. 2023].
- Horesh, D., A. D. Brown 2020. COVID–19 response: Traumatic stress in the age of COVID-19: A call to close critical gaps and adapt to new realities. *Psychological Trauma: Theory Research, Practice and Policy* 4: 331–335. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1037/TRA0000592> [14. 02. 2024].
- House, J.S., K. R. Landis 1988. *Social relationships and health*. Available at: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/3399889/> [22. 12. 2023].
- Huang, Y., N. Zhao 2020. Generalized anxiety disorder, depressive symptoms, and sleep quality during COVID-19 outbreak in China: a web-based cross-sectional survey. *Psychiatry Research*: 16-19. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0165178120306077> [13. 02. 2024].
- Husky, M. M., V. Kovess-Masfety, J. D. Swendsen 2020. Stress and anxiety among university students in France during COVID-19 mandatory confinement. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*: 102-191. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342884668_Stress_and_anxiety_among_university_students_in_France_during_Covid-19_mandatory_confinement [22. 02. 2024].
- Imai, H. 2020. *Trust is a key factor in the willingness of health professionals to work during the COVID-19 outbreak, Experience from the H1N1 pandemic in Japan 2009*. Available at: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1111/pcn.12995> [11. 01. 2024].
- Iron, D. 2020. Covid’s impact on UK society. *The British Academy*: 78-90 Available at: <https://www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk/documents/3238/COVID-decade-understanding-long-term-societal-impacts-COVID-19.pdf>. [12. 02. 2024].
- Karademas, E. C. 2007. Positive and negative aspects of well-being: Common and specific predictors. *Personality and individual differences* 2: 71-81. Available at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0191886906004879> [14. 02. 2024].

Kee C. E. 2021. The impact of COVID-19: Graduate students' emotional and psychological experiences. *Journal of Human Behavior in the Social Environment* 1-4: 476-488. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10911359.2020.1855285> [28. 02. 2024].

Lechner, W. V., K. R. Laurene, S. Patel, M. Anderson, C. Grega, D. R. Kenne 2020. Changes in alcohol use as a function of psychological distress and social support following COVID-19 related university closings. *Addictive Behaviors* 14-17. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2020.106527> [23. 02. 2024].

Limeira, F. I. R., F. da Cruz. A. R. da Costa Andrade, A. B. G. Neto, D. C. Arantes 2022. Depression, anxiety and stress among dental students during COVID-19 pandemic and distance learning, *Revista da ABENO* 2: 1-12. Available at: <https://revabeno.emnuvens.com.br/revabeno/article/view/1563> [23. 02. 2024].

Marler, E. K., M. J. Bruce, A. Abaoud, C. Henrichsen, W. Suksatan, S. Homvisetvongsa, H. Matsuo 2021. The impact of COVID-19 on university students' academic motivation, social connection, and psychological well-being. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology*: 8-16. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/353415647_The_impact_of_COVID-19_on_university_students'_academic_motivation_social_connection_and_psychological_well-being [26. 02. 2024].

MVČR 2020. *Nouzový stav*. Available at: <https://www.mvcr.cz/mvcren/docDetail.aspx?docid=22239753&doctype=ART> [06. 03. 2024].

MZČR 2022. COVID-19, *aktuální data*: Available at: http://www.mzcr.cz/dokumenty/koronavirus-2019-ncov-aktualni-data_18455_4122_1.html [07. 03. 2024].

MZČR 2024. *Onemocnění Aktuálně* MZČR: Available at: <https://onemocneni-aktualne.mzcr.cz/COVID-19> [07. 03. 2024].

Novinky 2020. Žena šířila koronavirus, soud ji poslal do vazby. Cestovala i taxíkem. Available at: <https://www.novinky.cz/clanek/krimi-zena-sirila-koronavirus-soud-ji-poslal-do-vazby-cestovala-i-taxikem-40324224> [08. 03. 2024].

- Odriozola-González, Planchuelo-Gómez, Á, Irurtia, M. J., de Luis-García, R. 2020. Psychological effects of the COVID-19 outbreak and lockdown among students and workers of a Spanish university. *Psychiatry Research* 2: 34-35. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.psychres.2020.113108> [14. 03. 2024].
- Parlament České republiky, Poslanecká sněmovna 2020. 47. schůze, 11. hlasování, 28. dubna 2020, 19:49, *Návrh na vyslovení souhlasu PS s prodloužením doby nouzového stavu*. Available at: <https://www.psp.cz/sqw/hlasy.sqw?g=72860&l=cz>. [08. 03. 2024].
- Passavanti, M., A. Argentieri, D. M. Barbieri, B. Lou, K., Wijayaratna, A. S. Foroutan Mirhosseini, F. Wang, S. Naseri, I. Qamhia, M. Tangerås, M. Pellicciari, C. H. Ho 2021. The psychological impact of COVID-19 and restrictive measures in the world. *Journal of Affective Disorders*: 36-51. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jad.2021.01.020> [28. 02. 2024].
- Pirodsky, J. 2020. Breaking: *Czech PM nixes face mask regulations established by Health Ministry yesterday*. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20201015104603/https://news.expats.cz/weekly-czech-news/breaking-czech-pm-nixes-face-mask-regulations-established-by-health-ministry-yesterday/> [08. 03. 2024].
- Pirodsky, J. 2020. *Czech Republic coronavirus updates, October 8: new record with 5,000+ cases, more restrictions coming tomorrow*. Available at: <https://www.expats.cz/czech-news/article/czech-republic-coronavirus-updates-october-8-new-record-with-5-000-cases-more-restrictions-coming-tomorrow> [01. 02. 2024].
- Pirodsky, J. 2020. *Czech Republic coronavirus updates, September 10: 1,161 new cases, masks back on, travel restrictions*. Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20200918190918/https://news.expats.cz/coronavirus-in-the-czech-republic/czech-republic-coronavirus-updates-september-10-1161-new-cases-masks-back-on-travel-restrictions/> [08. 03. 2024].
- Prabhakaran, P. 2020. Entrepreneurs - Turns Massive Challenges (Covid 19) In: *To Meaningful Change* 2: 159-162. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/366221362_Entrepreneurs_-_Turns_Massive_Challenges_Covid_19_In_To_Meaningful_Change [01. 01. 2024].

Prague Morning 2020. *Could Czech's Measure to Fight Coronavirus Save Thousands of Lives?* Available at: <https://praguemorning.cz/could-czechs-measure-to-fight-coronavirus-save-thousands-of-lives-2/> [24. 3. 2023].

Praha.eu 2020. *Emergency measures put in place from the 12th to the 25th of October.* Available at: https://www.praha.eu/jnp/en/important_notice/emergency_measures_put_in_place_from_the.html [08. 03. 2024].

Remix News 2020. *Almost 400 Czech teachers have caught COVID-19 since schools reopened.* Available at: <https://rmx.news/article/almost-400-czech-teachers-have-caught-COVID-19-since-schools-reopened/> [08. 03. 2024].

RPI Radio Prague International 2020. *Coronavirus: Czech schools close, large events banned.* Available at: <https://english.radio.cz/coronavirus-czech-schools-close-large-events-banned-8105998> [08. 03. 2024].

RPI Radio Prague International 2020. *Coronavirus: Czechs returning from Italy to stay in two-week quarantine.* Available at: <https://english.radio.cz/coronavirus-czechs-returning-italy-stay-two-week-quarantine-106228> [08. 03. 2024].

Rusu, M. L. 2020. *Social distancing in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. International Conference Knowledge based Organization 2:* 333-341. Available at: <https://sciendo.com/article/10.2478/kbo-2020-0100> [21. 12. 2023].

Salari, N., A. Hosseinian-Far, R. Jalali, A. Vaisi-Raygani, S. Rasoulpoor, M. Mohammadi, S. Rasoulpoor, B. Khaledi-Paveh 2020. Prevalence of stress, anxiety, depression among the general population during the COVID-19 pandemic: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Globalization and Health* 16: 1–11. Available at: <https://www.scirp.org/reference/referencespapers?referenceid=2870984> [08. 03. 2024].

James D. Wright (ed.) 2015. *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences* 484-489. Oxford: Elsevier. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/304193388_Habitus_History_of_a_Concept [22. 02. 2023].

- Savage, M. J., R. James, D. Magistro, J. Donaldson, L. C. Healy, M. Nevill, J. Hennis 2020. Mental health and movement behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic in UK university students: Prospective cohort study. *Mental Health and Physical Activity* 100-357. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mhpa.2020.100357> [28. 12. 2023].
- Seznam 2020. *Zemřela zdravotní sestra z Thomayerovy nemocnice*. Available at: <https://www.seznamzpravy.cz/clanek/v-cesku-je-2663-nakazenych-koronavirem-96462> [20. 02. 2024].
- Sherry, L. 1995. Issues in distance learning. *International journal of educational telecommunications* 4: 22-25. Available at: <https://lcsberry.org/publications/issues.html> [28. 12. 2023].
- Shrier, D. L. 2021. From Shock to Awe: How the pandemic crisis has opened up the dialogue 40 for a true reinvention of education. *Horizons: Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development* 19: 64-73. Available at: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/48617354> [25. 12. 2023].
- Stavrakaki, C., B.Vargo 1986. The relationship of anxiety and depression: a review of the literature. *The British Journal of Psychiatry* 1: 56-61. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.149.1.7> [21. 02. 2023].
- Tasso, A. F., N. Hisli Sahin, G. J. San Roman. 2021. COVID-19 disruption on college students: Academic and socioemotional implications. *Psychological Trauma: Theory Research, Practice and Policy* 1: 3-8 Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348139223_COVID-19_disruption_on_college_students_Academic_and_socioemotional_implications [25. 12. 2023].
- Testa, A. 2020. Where have the gatherings gone? Reweaving the social fabric in the time of pandemic and interpersonal distancing. *Social Anthropology* 2: 10-13. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/342171873_Where_have_the_gatherings_gone_Reweaving_the_social_fabric_in_the_time_of_pandemic_and_interpersonal_distancing [25. 12. 2023].
- UNESCO 2020. *School closures caused by coronavirus (COVID-19)*. Available at: <https://covid19.uis.unesco.org/global-monitoring-school-closures-covid19/> [25. 12. 2023].

Válková, H. 2020. Nezájem lidí, méně laboratoří. Proč o víkendech a svátcích padá počet testů. Available at: https://www.idnes.cz/zpravy/domaci/testovani-Covid-test- vikend-velikonoce-volno-pacient-koronavirus.A200413_170147_domaci_hv [02. 12. 2024].

Vláda ČR 2020. *Nouzový stav*. Available at: <https://vlada.gov.cz/cz/harmonogram- uvolnovani-opatreni-ve-skolach-podnikatelskych-a-dalsich-cinnosti-180969/> [21. 02. 2024].

Wilczewski, M., O. Gorbaniuk, Giuri, S. 2021. *The psychological and academic effects of studying from home and host country during the COVID-19 pandemic*. *Frontiers in Psychology*: 1-8. Available at: doi:10.3389/fpsyg.2021.644096 [25. 12. 2023].

WHO 2014. *Mental health: A state of well-being*. Available at: http://www.who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/ [18. 03. 2023].

WHO 2020. *Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID19 March 2020*. Available at: <https://www.who.int/director-general/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---11-march-2020> [25. 12. 2023].

List of Appendix

1. Appendix 1: List of Interview Questions

1. Where did you live during lockdown?
Whom were you seeing – in your physical vicinity - the most during the pandemic? With whom were you in close contact online/virtually?
2. Do you think your behavior changed in any way after lockdown? If yes, in what way?
Do you think your attitude to health has changed? If yes, in what way?
3. Do you think your concentration has changed in any way since the pandemic? If yes, in what way?
4. How have your relationships with your friends and family changed? If yes, how?
5. Perhaps you had some hobbies before the pandemic, tell me how they were affected by the pandemic?
6. How did you buy/order food during the pandemic?
7. Do you think the pandemic or the virus itself has had any impact on your behavior in public places?
If yes, in what way?
8. Tell me about how you felt when the mandatory wearing of masks was introduced, when was it? Did you always adhere to this rule? Why did you adhere? If you did not adhere to them, why not?
9. How do you think the pandemic conditions affected your studies or your work?
10. What can you recall about the behavior of university leadership during the lockdown period?
11. Please tell me about online learning at the university.
How did you adapt to it? What kind of help did you have? Did you have access to all the necessary technical equipment? Were you satisfied with this kind of learning? If not, why not?
12. What are the most important changes in your life which you associate with the pandemic? Which changes in the world do you associate with the pandemic?
13. Can you name any subjectively positive aspects regarding pandemic and lockdown?

14. What do you remember about the state's behavior during lockdown and the worldwide pandemic the most?
15. What was your state of mind during the pandemic that helped you through those hard times? Did you perhaps seek professional help? If yes, what kind?
16. What is your attitude to vaccination? Have you been vaccinated? If not, why not?
17. Do you think the amount of time you spend online or on social media has increased since the pandemic? How has it changed? Why do you think so?
18. In your case, do you think alcohol or tobacco use increased during the lockdown? If so, by how much and why?
19. How do you feel about that time, the time of the pandemic and the lockdown?