

EDU WORLD 2022**Edu World International Conference Education Facing Contemporary World Issues****RESILIENCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION-FACTORS**

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Abstract

The present article is intended to measure the perception of university professors on their own behaviour in certain contexts or university educational environments that require their direct, active involvement. In this regard, the following categories of contexts were considered: academic behaviour during online teaching activities, attitudes towards changes in education, especially during the pandemic of COVID 2, epistemic interest and curiosity, willingness to try new things, tolerance of ambiguity / uncertainty. In the context of university education, we define resilience as the ability of members of the academic community to effectively manage stress, academic failure, and other negative personal events that may influence personal and professional development and academic progress. The research on the process of "resilience in higher education" encompassed the following explanatory paradigm: an increased level of resilience of the academic community is considered a predictor related to increasing in academic performance; In the context of university teaching activities, two categories of professors can be identified, as it follows: a category of professors demotivated by the stress of university teaching activities due to the lack of academic performance of the students and another category of those motivated by academic success. The research is aimed at identifying the factors that influence emotional resilience within university education. The research is quantitative, conducted on a sample of 80 university professors. Research findings: emotional resilience in university education is closely correlated to individual factors: self-control, tenacity, perseverance, patience, reason, tolerance, empathy.

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1. Introduction

Resilience is an intense topic discussed especially lately; the pandemic context urged humanity to identify the best solutions needed to adapt and overcome the various types of crises installed. All areas of activity required people to identify solutions to ensure their efficiency and productivity at work (Nyaupane et al., 2021; Nielsen & Faber, 2021) Education has been exposed to extensive challenges and transformations (Raghunathan et al., 2022) Rethinking of the educational environment was needed, along with a reconfiguration of university pedagogical practices, of curricular reconstructions. It was the period when professors and students worked together to outline the best solutions to support the development of the educational process. The beginning was provocative, marked by enthusiasm, solidarity, empathy, the unitary desire to overcome the moment. The prolongation of the period of development of higher education online has gradually led to the appearance of problems, difficulties, imbalances in terms of educational efficiency and effectiveness. Lack of physical interaction, low physical mobility, spending a very large number of hours in front of the computer led to psychological, social and somatic effects. Mentally, the most common disorders encountered were: irritability, anxiety, mental fatigue, attention and concentration disorders, and slow pace of work, neurosis and depressive disorders. At the somatic level, sedentary lifestyle has led to the association of changes in the body such as: weight gain, decreased resistance to exercise, eating disorders, exacerbation of other types of pre-existing conditions. Socially, the absence of social interactions led to isolation, depression, social anxiety, agoraphobia. The informal and formal group was set up in online environment that professors perceived as an impediment to strengthening academic interpersonal relationships. The adaptation of university practices was on the one hand an effort of professors to rethink the prospects of curriculum reconstruction using the virtual environment and virtual tools, and on the other hand to efficiently manage the time and resources needed to conduct a quality education process. This required effort, adaptability, openness to the new, the drive to improve, tenacity and perseverance in the face of the challenges of online education. Higher education has also been developing in the context of challenges of the academic environment for professors to face new perspectives on approaching the educational process, to develop academic patterns of behavior that shall meet quality indicators in education, to solve university tasks efficiently and effectively. Efficiency and effectiveness in higher education are components of increasing the quality of education. The challenge related to this topic also encompass the good practice of how we can develop resilience in university education.

2. Problem Statement

Defining the concept of "resilience" imposes a number of limitations on its explanation (Beltman, 2020; Cajigal Molina, 2022; Vidal-Meliá et al., 2022; Wang, 2021). Thus, resilience is considered to be associated with a person's ability to adapt quickly to different situations. In this process we can identify three stages, namely: dealing with the new situation, understanding the problem, adapting / accepting, the concern to learn how the situation can be overcome, identifying solutions and deciding on the implementation of solutions. It is considered that the specificity of the context of adaptation to different situations and overcoming crises directly influences the definition of the concept (Métais et al., 2022;

Waxman et al., 2003). The concept of resilience can be better understood if the context of its occurrence is delimited (Liddle, 1994). Self-esteem, self-confidence, the ability to easily adapt and develop interpersonal relationships are the precursors of an effective process of resilience. Other definitions of resilience include: “the ability to successfully overcome challenges and cope with change, which provides experience and opportunities for learning and growth” (Moya & Goenechea, 2022, p. 1). Resilience in higher education can operate with a multitude of variables (Rahi, 2019) such as: calm (the tendency to take things as they are, reducing extreme reactions and having a balanced outlook on life), perseverance (persistence despite adversity, keep fighting, stay involved, don't give up, show self-discipline), self-confidence (the ability to count on yourself, to know your strengths and limitations), the ability to make sense (to achieve that in life there are goals to be achieved, that there are things worth living for), existential loneliness (the presence of a sense of freedom and uniqueness, in the sense that a person's life is unique, and if some situations are shared with others, there are and other situations, which you have to deal with yourself, well), altruism, optimism, hope, proactive attitude, looking for opportunities for development and improvement (professional, personal), adaptation to new, pre-conscious mindfulness-mindfulness, maintaining a realistic attitude towards things, accepting change, seeking help.

Resilience can take many forms depending on the context in which the change occurs. Emotional resilience (Eldeleklioglu & Yıldız, 2020) refers to the situation when an individual can recover or adapt to different stressful situations, restores his emotional balance (Athota et al., 2020; Bowling et al., 2022; Brassington & Lomas, 2021; Yu et al., 2022). It is estimated that resilience is quite difficult to measure in research as long as there is no consensus on the operational definition and the attributes that define it (Fletcher & Sarkar, 2013). In what follows we will focus on analyzing resilience from an emotional perspective. We thus define emotional resilience, the ability of the individual to manage negative and positive emotions in the context of actions designed to bring about change at the individual level.

3. Research Questions

Higher education is constantly exposed to the need to adapt, innovate and rethink the educational practices. In terms of existence, individuals may face different types of personal or collective problems that can lead to crises. That is why the following questions come to the front: in the context of affecting the existential plan of individuals, to what extent do they show a willingness to change and successfully go through different crisis situations? At the social level, public and social policies consider interventions in terms of social change in the context of recovery and resilience programs. The education sector stands no better than the other sectors of activity. A number of questions arise: What are the factors that directly influence the adaptation of individuals to different crisis situations? What are the factors that influence resistance / resilience in certain situations / conditions? How exactly do professors perceive the need to adapt to different social and educational transformations? What are the factors that can change the level of resilience measured?

4. Purpose of the Study

The following explanatory paradigm is considered: an increased level of emotional resilience of university professors directly influences academic performance and increasing the quality of education. The aim of the research was to measure the level of emotional resilience among professors in the university environment and its analysis in the context of contextual factors. We define emotional resilience among university professors as the ability to effectively manage emotions and deal with specific situations that are considered difficult in order to make the best decisions that can influence the quality of education.

5. Research Methodology

The present research is aimed at measuring the perceived level of emotional resilience by higher education professors in certain contexts or university educational contexts that require their direct, active involvement. The research is quantitative and based on the method of a structured questionnaire survey. In this regard, the following research variables were identified: academic behavior during online teaching activities, attitudes towards changes in education, especially during the COVID 2 pandemic, epistemic interest and curiosity, willingness to try new things, tolerance of ambiguity / uncertainty. The measurement of the research variables was performed by means of an edge scale of the Likert type with 5 steps. The investigated group consists of 80 university professors, who work at present. The research variables were analyzed and interpreted in correlation with the variables of the target group: sex, age, university teaching degree (Table no.1). The interpretation of the data was done with the help of statistical-mathematical methods offered by the SPSS program.

Table 1. Target group structure

University Degree	Gender	Age	Valid	
Professor PhD	Female	39-49	Valid	3
Associate Professor PhD	Male	39-49	Valid	20
	Female	49-59	Valid	21
Lecturer PhD	Male	59-69	Valid	5
	Male	39-49	Valid	6
Assistant PhD	Female	39-49	Valid	8
	Male	29-39	Valid	9
	Female	29-39	Valid	8

6. Findings

The investigated group consists of 80 university professors, who work and are active at the university.

The research variables were analyzed and interpreted in correlation with the variables of the target group: sex, age, university teaching degree. The interpretation of the data was done with the help of statistical-mathematical methods offered by the SPSS program.

The analyzed questions are part of a larger research on resilience in the university environment.

The analysis and interpretation of the results considered the following variables of emotional resilience: negative emotions (negative ideas, pessimism, distrust, despair) and positive emotions (confidence, optimism, realism, perseverance, self-determination). According to these projections, two questions were correlated in order to analyze the level of resilience perceived by professors in certain conditions (contexts) under the influence of different factors.

The following factors were considered: internal (emotions, feelings, feelings resulting from academic experiences) and external (educational reforms, educational policies, norms, managerial decisions, quality criteria, academic procedures) (Hascher et al., 2021). First, their own perception on how they react to transformations in education and their attitude were measured.

The answers obtained were correlated with the answers provided by the respondents on the importance they perceived regarding the new transformations in education. The distribution of answers can be analyzed in Table no. 2. I have the tendency to observe more the bad parts rather than the good ones from the educational system (Q1) I believe that the changes in Education represent progress (Q4).

Table 2. Transformations in university education: perception vs. importance

		Q3.	Q8
N		Valid	3
Professor PhD	Mean	1.33	4.00
	Median	1.00	4.00
	Mode	1	4
	N	Valid	46
Associate Professor PhD	Mean	2.22	3.85
	Median	2.00	4.00
	Mode	1	3
	N	Valid	14
Lecturer PhD	Mean	2.07	4.21
	Median	2.00	5.00
	Mode	2	5
	N	Valid	17
Assistant PhD	Mean	1.24	3.94
	Median	1.00	5.00
	Mode	1	5

We can see the following: as in the case of the most part of the professors, the distribution of answers has the following value $m = 1$, for university professors, associate professors and university assistants, which shows us that professors tend to develop positive constructive attitudes towards new transformations in education, excluding negative emotions and fear of failure. This fact is also correlated with the logic of reason, dominant at the level of the perceived importance. We find that the value with the highest frequency on the perceived importance related to the attribution error relative to progress, $m = 4$, correlates major, in the context of the Likert-type scale, with the value of the mode from the previous question. The conclusions we draw are the following: university professors have a positive attitude towards constructive transformations in education and are aware of their importance. Emotionally, the

changes in the field of education do not seem to lead to the installation of fears, anxieties, anxiety, indicating thus an increased level of emotional resilience in the face of new changes in education. The aspects that capture the professors' behaviour in front of the academic responsibilities, their attitudes towards the university tasks were also measured. In accordance with this perspective, the following categories of variables were analyzed face to face: “ignoring new challenges in education” and “academic overload”.

The respondents' answers were configured as shown in Table no. 3. I have a tendency to ignore educational changes (Q3); As a professor, I am an active element in the implementation of positive change specific to the academic environment (Q8).

Table 3. Responsibility vs. academic attitude

	N	Valid	Q3	Q8
	N	Valid	3	3
Professor PhD	Mean		2.00	1.00
	Median		2.00	1.00
	Mode		2	1
	N	Valid	46	46
Associate Professor PhD	Mean		2.09	3.04
	Median		1.50	3.00
	Mode		1	1
	N	Valid	14	14
Lecturer PhD	Mean		1.79	2.21
	Median		2.00	2.00
	Mode		2	2
	N	Valid	17	17
Assistant PhD	Mean		2.47	2.41
	Median		2.00	3.00
	Mode		2	1

It is clear that members of the academic community do not ignore the new transformations in education, but they are not a priority either. This is evidenced by the mode level (the value with the highest frequency of a distribution). In the researched case, for this variable, the mode takes values of $m = 3$ in the case of university professors. We can draw the following conclusion: the higher the didactic degree, the more the preoccupations regarding the transformations in education are present. For the category of university lecturers, they do not ignore any transformation in education. There is also a high level of resilience to the various university tasks. accountability, work, devotion. University education in the online environment has exposed professors to effort and involvement in achieving academic success. (Table no. 4) (I am a professor who doesn't give importance to the negative impact on learning which online schooling has- Q2); -Q6); The difficulties I encounter, I transform them in challenges and opportunities.

Table 4. Effort academic vs. success academic

	N	Valid	Q2	Q6
Professor PhD	N	Valid	3	3
	Mean		5.00	3.00
	Median		5.00	3.00
	Mode		5	3
Associate Professor PhD	N	Valid	46	46
	Mean		3.70	4.09
	Median		4.00	4.00
	Mode		5	5
Lecturer PhD	N	Valid	14	14
	Mean		3.86	4.00
	Median		4.00	4.00
	Mode		5	4
Assistant PhD	N	Valid	17	17
	Mean		4.35	4.12
	Median		5.00	4.00
	Mode		5	4

The professors did not focus on pandemic issues. It can be seen from the perspective of the frequency of answers, the module takes the value of 5 for all university professors, which proves self-control, reason and organization. In this context, negative emotions are not present, and the level of emotional resilience is at its maximum. Correlating the value of the mode for the two variables has revealed that they have close values which confirms the increased level of resilience. This aspect derives from the following explanation: the approach from the perspective of scientific knowledge greatly influences the capacity for positive adaptation. The academic context significantly influences emotional resilience. The investigated target group was also asked to respond on how it perceives the need for involvement and accountability for new academic tasks. In this situation, the level of perceived importance is projected as follows (table. No. 5) (Q5- Often, I feel dominated by specific problems that seem to have no solution; Q7- Obstacles are meant to create for us new abilities that we may not be aware of.

Table 5. Attitude towards change

	N	Valid	Q5	Q7
Professor PhD	N	Valid	3	3
	Mean		4.00	2.00
	Median		4.00	2.00
	Mode		4	2
Associate Professor PhD	N	Valid	46	46
	Mean		4.57	1.85
	Median		5.00	2.00
	Mode		5	2
Lecturer PhD	N	Valid	14	14

	Mean		4.00	2.93
	Median		4.00	3.00
	Mode		5	1 ^a
	N	Valid	17	17
Assistant PhD	Mean		3.88	3.18
	Median		4.00	4.00
	Mode		4 ^a	4

It is found that in the age group 49-59, the willingness for responsibility and involvement of professors is much higher than the age group 59-69. The value of the median (the value of a variable that divides the series ordered into two equal parts) is 4 for university assistants, university lecturers and university professors and 5 for university lecturers. The high values of the average, the median and the mode prove the awareness of their role in the academic context. This implies increased self-esteem, balance, proactive attitude. All these may demonstrate an increased level of emotional resilience among professors.

7. Conclusion

Resilience in university education is influenced by context. The academic context integrates aspects related to the implementation of the educational process, the attitude and behaviour of professors, their emotional reaction to different types of challenges (from those interested in educational policy to those aimed at academic success). Emotional resilience is influenced by individual factors (self-esteem, self-determination, progressive beliefs, reason) by external factors (a good knowledge of educational policies, the demands of academic environment). The increased level of emotional resilience supports the process of adaptation and positive functioning of university professors. Emotional instability, fears, anxieties decrease the quality of teaching and alter the level of quality in university education.

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