

AMURCON 2020
International Scientific Conference

**THE RISKS AND POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES OF A PANDEMIC
FOR CITIZENS**



Beksultanova Aybika Imranovna (a)*, Sadueva Malika Abdullovna (b),
Gaysumova Liza Dzhunidovna (c)

*Corresponding author

(a) Chechen State University, 32 Sheripova St., Grozny, Russia, adamovaaybika@mail.ru

(b) Grozny State Oil Technical University Named after Academician M.D. Millionshchikov, 100 Kh. Isaeva Ave.,
sadueva.m@mail.ru

(c) Chechen State Pedagogical University, 33 Kievskaya St., Grozny, Russia, gaysumova-69@mail.ru

Abstract

The quarantine, which is global in nature, has a devastating impact on the world economy and has undoubtedly led to a significant decline in many industries. No one can say exactly how long this situation will last, but our life will gradually get back to normal in the post-crisis period, although the world will exist in new conditions. The crisis unfolding before our eyes is unique. Never before had so many states introduced measures at the national level that were aimed at limiting economic and social activity and isolating people. Thanks to such actions, a positive result was obtained and it was possible to avoid a critical decline in consumption and reduction of income. At the same time, there is a risk that the economy may collapse after such a long pause since due to failures and changes in business activities, some enterprises will not be able to receive the same income. As a result, the reduction of workplaces and production will begin. Some companies will be able to keep employees waiting for a better time for a while. Many possible scenarios depend on the further response of the Government and the society to the pandemic and its consequences. In any case, we expect significant changes in our lives, both for the better and for the worse. Thus, the coronavirus pandemic carries not only risks but also opportunities for ordinary citizens, authorities, and businesses.

2357-1330 © 2021 Published by European Publisher.

Keywords: Eisks for citizens, opportunities, pandemic



This is an Open Access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 Unported License, permitting all non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited.

1. Introduction

At the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, the world economy was hit simultaneously by two crises: the coronavirus pandemic and the collapse in prices for hydrocarbons, primarily for crude oil (Dynkin & Telegina, 2020). The imposition of a double external shock, namely the coronavirus pandemic and the global economic downturn, on the accumulated problems and contradictions in the world makes it necessary to evaluate carefully the justified and unjustified ideas and solutions of the past (Fituni & Abramova, 2020).

The large-scale epidemiological and subsequent socio-economic crisis could not but lead to a deterioration of the financial situation of the population. At the same time, the residents of megacities and large cities, where a significant proportion of workers are employed in the informal sector, have experienced a reduction in labor income.

The reduction of income has affected families with children and families consisting of working-age people to a greater extent than families consisting of the retired who have a stable source of income in the form of retirement payments paid in full.

Countries are providing support to the population in the form of compensation for lost earnings with unemployment benefits or through the preservation of employment, as well as direct payments to the population under social insurance programs and non-insurance social protection instruments. The general challenge is the threat of mass poverty which is due to the suspension of economic activity as it is superimposed on differences in the structure of the economy, the level of economic development, informal wage employment (including the most affected sectors of the economy), and the spread of self-employment, the pre-crisis models of social policy, as well as the risks of poverty and the profile of the poor (HSE Analytical Bulletin..., 2020).

Modern society is facing radical and brutal changes that can only be compared to those that occurred during the Industrial Revolution. These transformations would have happened anyway, but the coronavirus pandemic turned out to be the catalyst (Mir posle koronavirusa: vozmozhnyye..., 2020).

Firstly, many employees start working from home. Secondly, the corporate sector is massively transferring routine organizational and business operations, meetings, and negotiations to video conference modes (Kopytin, 2020)

To prevent or at least slow the mass spread of the virus, it was necessary to organize testing available to the general public and ensure the isolation of patients and contact persons. If it is not possible to identify and localize individual outbreaks of infection, a slowdown in the spread could be achieved by limiting face-to-face communication between people as a whole (national or local quarantines). Most Western countries have used all three tools to fight the pandemic. South Korea coped with the first wave of the pandemic only by testing and isolating patients and contacts, having avoided a national quarantine. China used a strict local quarantine to contain and overcome the epidemic in Wuhan, turning to mass diagnostics only to identify the latest cases of the disease (No new COVID sufferers..., 2020).

2. Problem Statement

The world has faced one of the major humanitarian challenges of the past decade. The complicated situation with the mass spread of the COVID-19 carries systemic risks for sustainable socio-economic development, and, most importantly, for the health and life of a society. A key feature of the study is to consider general risks from the coronavirus pandemic allowing the Agency to form a set of proposals to reduce the negative consequences and realize opportunities in the current situation. To solve this problem, the Agency launched a project for the collection and verification of expert opinions.

3. Research Questions

Key risks (except for medical ones) were considered to determine the safety of savings, unemployment risks, further reduction of disposable income, the possible rise of prices for goods caused by the current situation for the main groups of citizens. The opportunities offered by the situation, for example, lower housing prices investing in cheaper financial market assets; opportunities for new employment formats (distance) for the older generation were also highlighted. Thus, the consideration of issues related to the risks and opportunities triggered by the consequences of the pandemic, suggests ways and means of reducing (hedging) risks (except for medical ones) for the main groups of citizens.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to put forward a set of proposals to reduce the negative consequences and realize the opportunities for citizens and the society in general which were triggered by the coronavirus pandemic.

5. Research Methods

The paper contains the results of the survey of 418 expert opinions from all over Russia on the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on citizens including risks and opportunities from the consequences of the pandemic. The methods of the given research contain theoretical and empirical parts, survey methods, and descriptions supplemented with graphic methods of data illustrations.

6. Findings

The Agency for Strategic Initiatives, established and operating with the support of Russian President Vladimir Putin, identified the main risks from the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic in Russia and the opportunities that the pandemic could provide.

Below is an analysis of the expert opinions based on the top 20 highly rated opinions for each category and discussion section. A total of 418 opinions were included in the survey.

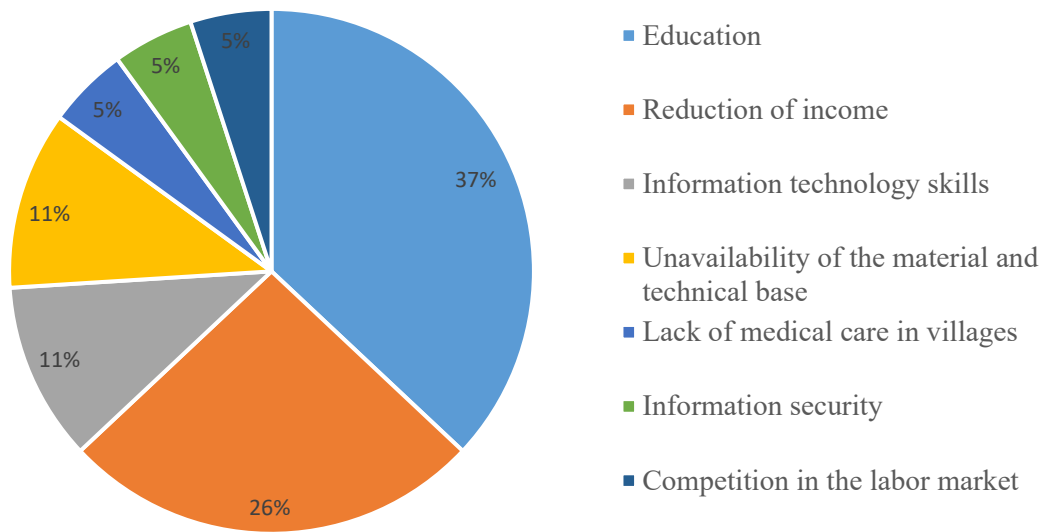


Figure 1. The risks for citizens

6.1. The risks for citizens

6.1.1. Distance learning/ education

Within the framework of this topic, the experts wrote about:

- personnel problems associated with the high average age of teachers;
- non-applicability of the distance learning format to technical specialties,
- lack of live communication;
- lack of necessary equipment for students;
- inability for many parents to attend online lessons;
- poor academic performance of students;
- students' health problems due to a sedentary lifestyle;
- students' loss of skills in additional education;
- unavailability of material and technical base and educational programs for distance education;
- students' increased workload.

6.2. Reduction of income

Within the framework of this topic, the experts pointed out the loss of work by older teaching staff, job losses due to the closure of enterprises, the general reduction of income, the loss of income connected with accounting fraud and false accounting.

6.3. Emotional health

Within the framework of this topic, the experts wrote that older education workers will feel useless; children will lose communication skills due to the switch to online education. The experts noted the

possibility of panicky feelings due to the unreliable information, increased family conflicts, decreased interest in life, stressful situations due to the lack of communication, depressive states due to the information from the media, stress due to the reduction of income, increased anxiety due to the lack of information and uncertainty, the lack of a collective sense of unity.

6.4. Additionally, the following issues were mentioned:

- the problems of the older generation related to the use of information technologies and the lack of confidence of the older generation in using them;
- the lack of distance learning equipment in many schools and families;
- the vastness of rural areas and the lack of medical facilities in them;
- the risk of data leakage and unauthorized access to them when working from distance;
- the increase of competition in labor markets among young professionals and cost reduction of goods.

6.5. Possibilities for citizens

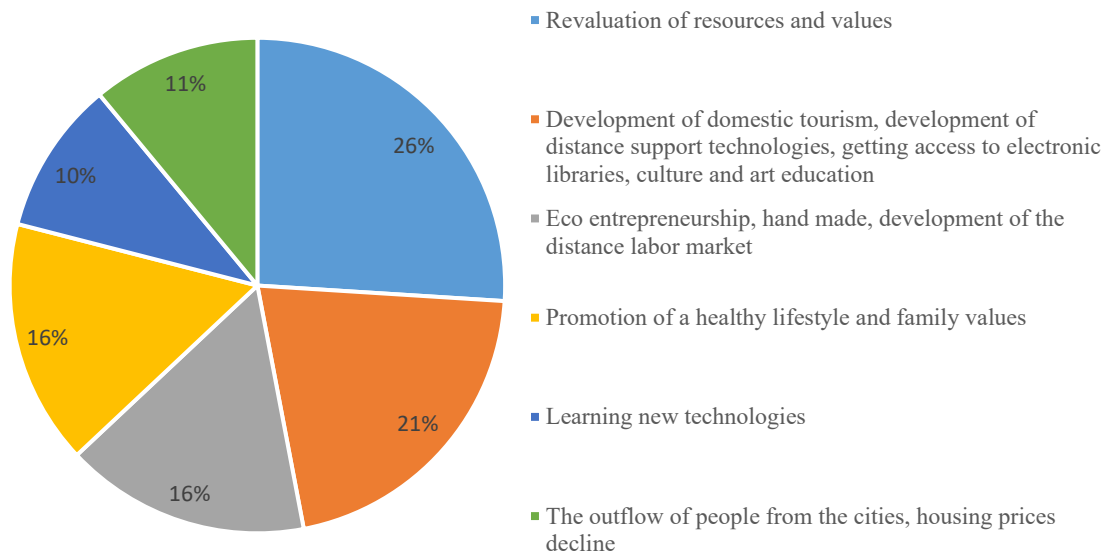


Figure 2. Possibilities for citizens

6.5.1. Reevaluation of resources and values

Within the framework of this topic, the experts wrote about the reevaluation of values, the rejection of the consumer attitude to life, responsible resource planning, and the revision of the attitude to nature.

6.5.2. Development of domestic tourism, development of distance support technologies, getting access to electronic libraries, culture and art education

Within the framework of this topic, the experts pointed out the possibility of creating training courses in literature and art, broadcasting such courses on television, getting access to electronic libraries during self-isolation, and the development of domestic tourism in the post-crisis period.

6.5.3. Development of the distance labor market, eco entrepreneurship, hand made

Within the framework of this topic, the experts noted that:

- it is necessary to support family entrepreneurship, the state needs to organize a platform to unite these people and their contacts with business;
- the pandemic and self-isolation are excellent incentives for starting work from home, and the development of the distance labor market; self-isolation gives people time to learn all the necessary technologies.

6.5.4. Promotion of a healthy lifestyle and family values

Within the framework of this topic, the experts wrote about the use of non – working days to rethink the attitude to one's health; about the opportunity to rest and sleep more; to understand that a healthy lifestyle is the best protection against diseases; the experts also pointed out the need to promote a healthy lifestyle.

6.5.5. Additionally, the following issues were mentioned:

- opportunities to use non-working days to learn new technologies that can help people to find a new source of income later;
- outflow of people from megacities to towns resulting in housing prices decline ("Pandemic Opportunities" on..., 2020).

According to the final report of the Agency for Strategic Initiatives (ASI) about the future after the coronavirus, the agency's specialists were worried about the consequences of the pandemic for businesses most. And the risks (and opportunities) for citizens and the whole society, in general, took only the second and third positions.

According to the ASI experts, the main risks for citizens were primarily the decline in education quality, which was conducted online. 37% of the experts surveyed agreed with this opinion.

For example, due to personnel problems connected with the high average age of teachers who do not trust information technologies, the quality of online education will decline. Besides, for some specialties, the distance learning format is not applicable at all, for example, for technical disciplines. In such subject areas where the distance-learning format is applicable, students do not have the necessary material and technical base, and proper software equipment. Moreover, there is a lack of live communication (this fact, in particular, was mentioned in the newspaper "Real Time" by the representatives of Tatarstan companies who were forced to work from home during the quarantine").

As a result of these and other factors, students' academic performance may become poor; skills that have been previously acquired may be lost, and a passive lifestyle can lead to health problems. And educational organizations may lose older teachers because such employees will feel useless while children will lose their communication skills due to online education. The experts suggest extending preferences for small innovative enterprises at universities.

In general, the ASI study concludes that the switch to distance learning has been quite successful, but there is an understanding in society of the need to switch to online education. Besides, distance education provides an opportunity for parents to attend on-line lessons.

In particular, it is proposed to provide financial assistance to low-income and large families to purchase computers for using online services and distance learning, and to connect to the Internet and online educational platforms of all educational institutions free of charge.

A third of the ASI experts considered that in addition to visible problems, which are expressed in the level of unemployment or financial indicators, long self-isolation can lead to problems of emotional health, disunity of people, "digital escapism", and even to a "regression of the value system", as there will be a rejection of many values in favor of the most basic ones, which are associated with biological survival.

On the other hand, the ASI experts speak about the opportunities that quarantine days of self-isolation can give: 26% pointed out the opportunity for people to reevaluate values and resources, 21% pointed to the development of distance learning technologies, domestic tourism, culture, and art education, and getting access to electronic libraries. Another 16% considered opportunities in the development of the distance labor market. Among the industries that are more likely to prosper than lose from the lockout, experts named agriculture (13%), medicine (17%), and online services (13%).

Speaking about some pros, the ASI specialists showed considerable optimism, concerning the refusal of a part of the population (or the entire population) "from a consumer attitude to life, a revision of the attitude to nature, a rethinking of values, and responsible resource planning."

The coronavirus pandemic should also lead to a "fair distribution of wealth", for which two measures are proposed to be taken. Firstly, it is necessary to abolish housing payments, and secondly, introduce a progressive personal income tax scale. Some experts believe that in addition to issuing interest-free loans to small and medium-sized enterprises to pay salaries, the state should also pay for non-working days from the budget.

The state should make the delivery of food to people with limited mobility and the retired for the period of self-isolation. For a fair distribution of wealth, it is necessary to solve the problem with Internet access in remote areas concerning the high cost and low speed of the Internet, as well as to subsidize the cost of car shops and fuel purchasing in rural areas. To support the population the ASI experts suggest adding to the list of measures payments for school meals, subsidies for mobile communications and the Internet connection (for all the citizens), and the allocation of funds to higher education institutions to purchase the necessary equipment for distance learning ("Pandemic Opportunities" on....., 2020).

7. Conclusion

We must learn some lessons from the crisis to formulate a strategy for further development of the social protection system of the population

Firstly, certain vulnerable social groups were not covered by sufficient social support (e.g., informal sector workers, young people, families with school-age children), thus this problem makes the need to create a social Treasury more urgent, allowing us to quickly provide targeted support to citizens.

Secondly, one of the most vulnerable groups is senior citizens with limited self-care. Dependence on regular care from the outside and concomitant age-related chronic diseases increase the risk of infection and death. Thirdly, most of the additional social support measures were provided on a non-targeted basis, that is, without taking into account the social neediness. The presence of an effective targeted system would make it possible to provide social support to those in need either at a lower price for the state (saving budget funds), or on a larger scale for recipients (higher number of benefits).

Fourthly, institutional reforms and the formation of a broad market of social services to the population are important, the subjects of which, in addition to the state, should become business and the non-profit sector, including nonprofit organizations, public associations, and the volunteer movement (Avksentiev et al., 2020).

References

- Avksentiev, N. A., Agranovich, M. L., Akindinova, N. V., Aldoshina, T. L., Alieva, E. F., Asmolov, A., & G., Baikov, A. A. (2020). Sotsial'naya podderzhka naseleniya [Social support of the population]. In V. A. Mau, & G. I. Idrisov (Eds.), *Society and Pandemic: Experiences and Lessons from COVID-19 Fighting in Russia* (pp.141-143). Moscow. [in Russ.].
- Dynkin, A., & Telegina, E. (2020). Pandemicheskiy shok i mir posle krizisa [Pandemic shock and the post-crisis world]. *World economy and international relations*, 64(8), 5-16. <https://doi.org/10.20542/0131-2227-2020-64-8-5-16> [in Russ.].
- HSE Analytical Bulletin on the economic and social consequences of coronavirus in Russia and in the world. (2020). <https://www.hse.ru/mirror/pubs/share/366632986.pdf>
- Fituni, L., & Abramova, I. (2020). Razvivayushchiesya strany v politicheskoy ekonomii postkoronavirusnogo mira [Developing countries in the political economy of the post-coronavirus world]. *World economy and international relations*, 64(9), 5-14. <https://doi.org/10.20542/0131-2227-2020-64-9-5-14>[in Russ.].
- Kopytin, I. (2020). Mirovoy rynek nefi: pandemii priblizyat mirovoy pik sprosa na nefi' [World oil market: pandemics will bring the global peak in oil demand closer]. *World economy and international relations*, 64(9), 26-36. <https://doi.org/10.20542/0131-2227-2020-64-9-26-36> [in Russ.].
- Mir posle koronavirusa: vozmozhnyye sotsial'no-ekonomicheskiye posledstviya [The world after coronavirus: possible socio-economic consequences]. (2020). <https://bitcryptonews.ru/analytics/mir-posle-koronavirusa-vozmozhnyie-sotsialno-ekonomicheskie-posledstviya>. [in Russ.].
- No new COVID sufferers, 300 asymptomatic, after Wuhan-wide tests. (Reuters. 2 June 2020). <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-china-wuhan/no-new-covid-sufferers-300-asymptomatic-after-wuhan-wide-tests-idUSKBN23915R>
- Sotsial'no-ekonomicheskiye posledstviya pandemii [Socio-economic impact of the pandemic]. (2020). <https://www.vesti.ru/finance/article/2416548> [in Russ.].
- «Vozmozhnosti pandemii» ot strategov Putina: podruzhit'sya s Zapadom i nayti spetsialistov v malye goroda ["Pandemic Opportunities" from Putin's Strategists: Making Friends with the West and Finding Specialists in Small Towns]. (2020). <https://realnoevremya.ru/articles/172411-vozmozhnosti-pandemii-ot-strategov-putina-podruzhitsya-s-zapadom-i-nayti-spetsialistov-v-malye-goroda> [in Russ.].