

The Emergency Remote Teaching during the COVID-19 Pandemic from the Perspective of Higher Education Students in Portugal

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[https://doi.org/10.35609/gcbssproceeding.2022.1\(63\)](https://doi.org/10.35609/gcbssproceeding.2022.1(63))

ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic led, in Portugal as well in other countries, to an abrupt transition to online classes in higher education, with no consideration for the specific students' conditions. Therefore, this study aims to assess the students' perspective on online learning classes carried out during the lockdown in 2020. The analysis is based on 2,107 valid answers from students of seven Portuguese higher education institutions that took synchronous online classes. Principal component analysis and binary logistic regression were the main quantitative methods used. This study identified five factors that, in all cases, significantly explain the students' perspective on the transition to online classes. These factors include not only pedagogical matters (teachers' overall quality) but also elements related to personal or motivational students' characteristics (performance and autonomy; constraints and obstacles to socialization; self-confidence while attending online classes) and technological issues (Internet access conditions). Notwithstanding, self-confidence is not a relevant factor for students that had technical limitations in what concerns infrastructural matters. Therefore, besides confirming the factors behind the success of online classes, this research is relevant for highlighting the need to assure that students have the proper conditions regarding technical infrastructures to improve the overall quality of online classes.

Keywords: COVID-19, emergency remote teaching, higher education, technical infrastructures, students' perspective.