



# EDUCATIONAL ECONOMICS

The effect of the pandemic in student engagement and spending.

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## ABSTRACT

The COVID-19 pandemic has severely impacted the student life and spending habits of students all over the world. Virtual classes through the computer screen rather than in a real classroom, extended lockdowns resulting in isolation and large sums of saved pocket money were all consequences of the pandemic. In this paper we are going to investigate and quantify the impact of the pandemic in student engagement, grades and spending habits that emerged during the lockdown.

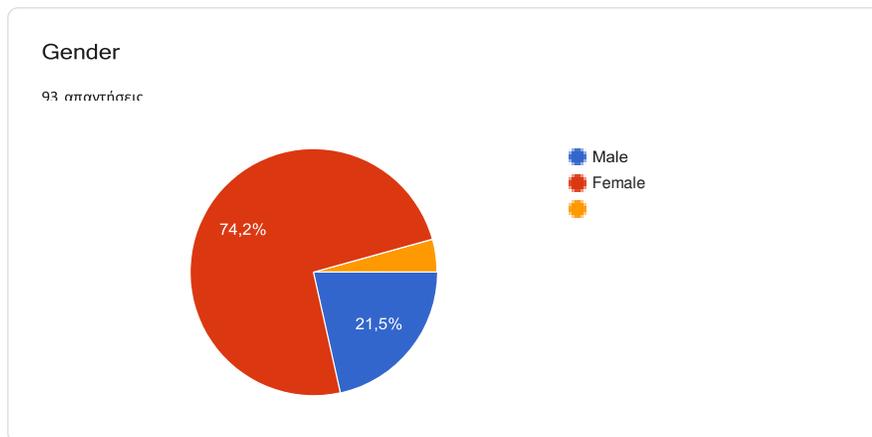
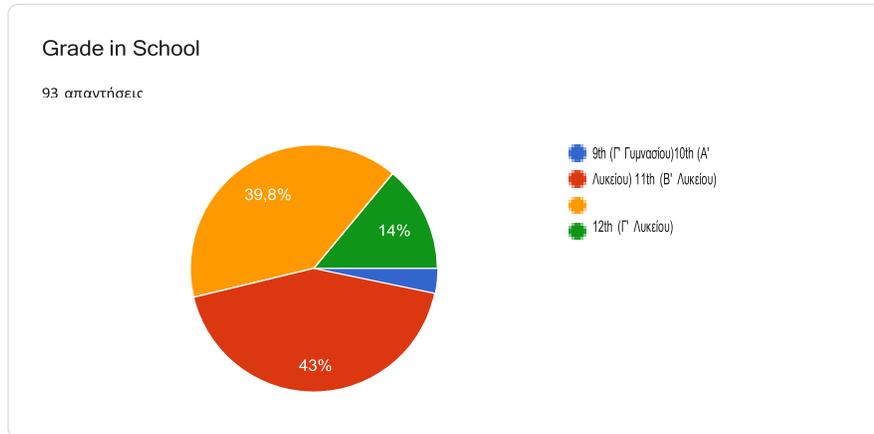
## INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 impacted the economic and educational life of students. Educational economics focuses on, in part, economic conditions impact on educational outcomes. This field could also study the intersection of financial spending habits before, during, and after an economic crisis with student classroom performance and earned GPA. This interdisciplinary subject area is particularly relevant in the 2020-2021 academic year given the global pandemic which began in January 2020 and continues today. This research project has particular importance to the members of the research team as we have been directly affected by the pandemic as current high school students. Our desire to better understand the experiences and impacts on our peers is driven by our need to find, through research, lessons to be learned from this once in a lifetime global pandemic. Given our study is made up of various high schools in Athens, this gives us a unique opportunity to see how educational systems have handled COVID-19 and to what extent student experience has similarities and differences in adjusting, both in their educational achievement and economic decision making and conditions, over the past year and a half.

This research was conducted through the CLC educational institute. The research team consisted of five tenth and eleventh grade students working remotely across multiple educational institutions. A seventeen question google form survey was made, of which all questions were either multiple choice or short answer. The seventeen questions were created in an attempt to understand the economic decisions and conditions of students during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the survey questions also sought to gather data on student academic achievement and motivation prior to and throughout the COVID-

19 pandemic. All five team members sent out the survey to their individual school populations in the final week of April. A two-week period was given for survey responses.

The raw data survey results were then turned into graphs for analysis.

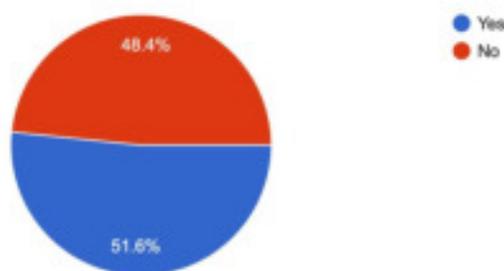


## THE EFFECT OF THE PANDEMIC ON GRADES AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

The covid-19 lockdown has affected all of us in multiple ways. Some were affected at work, others at personal relationships but plenty of people were affected at school. Of course, while college is one thing, high school is another. Being a teenager is difficult, especially when at the years that are supposed to be the most memorable of your life, you are in lockdown. A factor that is also fundamental in those years, is school and our grades, since they affect our future in a big grade. That's why we did a research from students at high school. High school in Greece is three years unlike America, which means that the students need to study more in a smaller amount of time to get the grades they wish. Since before the first lockdown in June 2019, the GPA of most students was above 17, with a few exceptions... However, most students had normal to high scores, for example 18.7, 19.8, 17.1. Furthermore, the GPA in January 2020, before lockdown, was resembling the scores of June. Of course, before the lockdown everybody's lives were normal and most of teenagers had a schedule or a routine that they followed. Everybody had a program that helped them stay focused. Nevertheless, a pandemic does not care if it's going to affect you or not. Everyone had to stay home and safe, not only for their protection, but for the safety of others too. There enters online school; for some it is a blessing, for others a curse. Still, adjustments needed to be made for the sake of our health. In June 2020, during lockdown, most students' GPA had been lowered a lot, some stayed the same and others got higher. Lots of people gave unsatisfying responses such as 15, 16, 17, 16.3, 14. Of course some people had a decent GPA of 18.5 or 19.8. Nonetheless, during January 2021, this lockdown's GPA resembled the other lockdown's scores. Thus, what we understand

from this situation, is that it is difficult for a student to have a stable score, since the environment has changed multiple times in various ways. We need to get in the students' shoes and at least try to understand that there is a difference in sitting in front of a school desk next to our classmate, having our professor explain a question eye to eye, watching an experiment or even getting yelled at. Online school took it all away, leaving the students doubting if they will be able to make it; to understand what they were taught, to learn how to listen, to experience class. School, in general, is not made to test one's intelligence but teach one how to think. That is why online school has failed most students. Moreover, before lockdown most students studied almost 2.5 hours or less, while others studied up to 3,4,5 or even 10 to 20 hours of studying. During lockdown people studied a lot less with 1 hour of studying or 3,4 to 18 hours. This makes enough sense for teenagers who spent almost all day at home being distracted by the smallest things. When in lockdown, most students were feeling the urge to get out and do something different than being inside all day studying. That is why most of us missed school!

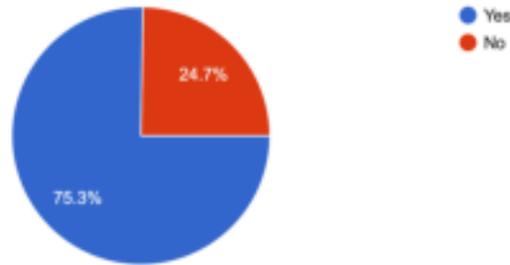
Do you actively engage in class when lectures are conducted online?  
93 responses



We also asked the students this question: "Do you actively engage in class when lectures are conducted online?". 51.6% answered "Yes", while the other 48.4% answered "No".

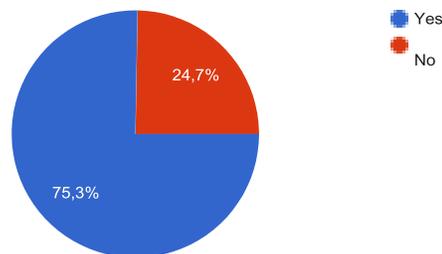
Now, the difference is small, yet understandable since not every student can concentrate while being in front of a screen, trying to learn new information or gain knowledge in general.

Do you feel that the lockdown has affected you negatively in terms of zeal for learning?  
93 responses



Another question we asked was: "Do you feel that the lockdown has affected you negatively in terms of zeal for learning?". 75.3% answered "Yes", while the remaining 24.7% answered "No". This question can explain in a simple way, that even if most students study, they do not do it because they want to the do it because they must. Online school had become a necessity if you needed to pass the class, it was not for certain though, the courage or the boost the students needed.

Do you feel that the lockdown has affected you negatively in terms of zeal for learning?

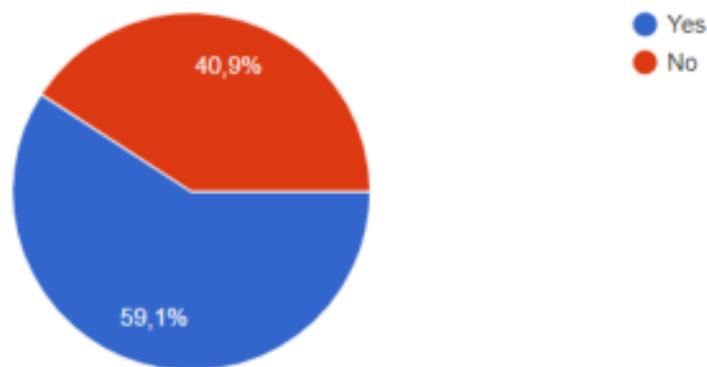


## THE EFFECT OF THE PANDEMIC ON SPENDING HABBITTS

This graph presents the relationship between online shopping and the lockdown. Based on the responses received there is a clear tendency to spend more money on shopping during the pandemic rather than with conventional shopping in the stores. Approximately 60% of the respondents spend more on online shopping. There are multiple ways to explain this phenomenon. Firstly, the convenience and facilitation of the procedures reduce the time spent. This is crucial, as it gives more people the opportunity to shop. Whereas, conventional shopping is more time-consuming, which is a preventative factor for the majority of the modern working citizens. Often a trip to the mall is a special occasion that is planned beforehand. Moreover, the buyer has access to a wide variety of stores simultaneously, which enhances the shopping experience and improves their cost management skills.

Do you feel you spend more with online shopping than before lockdown?

93 απαντήσεις



Nonetheless, 40% of the respondents have not observed any changes in their shopping preferences. On that note, we should bear in mind the advantages of traditional shopping,

such as the ability to physically come into contact with the product and the immediate possession of it after the purchase. On the contrary, modern-day online stores due to the technological progress and globalization have collected a significant amount of data to ensure that the buyer is satisfied by the sizing and the fit of the product-if referring to clothing- and that it is delivered within a few days. All in all, weighing the benefits and costs of online and traditional shopping it is reasonable enough that in the face of the lockdown the respondents were interested in investing more money through online purchases.

In the following graph the average monthly spending during the three summer months of 2019 and 2020 are portrayed and compared. It is important to note that 2020 was the summer, when most countries had imposed certain restrictions due to the surge in the victims of covid-19. Contrary to 2020, 2019 was a “covid-free” summer. There are specific variations in the two graphs, although the differences between the monthly expenditures are not that distinct. 24% of the respondents spent 0-50€ during summer 2019, which increased by 4% in 2020. A slight percent increase was observed in the 51-100€ category, that of 2%. Moreover, the percentage of the respondents that spent more than 100€ decreased significantly. During summer 2019 33%, which is the majority, spent 101-500€, whereas in 2020, only 28%. Accordingly, instead of 20%, as in 2019, 18% spent more than 500€ in 2020. In a nutshell, there is a general decreasing tendency of the expenditures, bearing in mind that the data given by the respondents are approximations of the true amount of money spent. This phenomenon could be explained by the limitations in vacationing, shopping, and recreation caused by the quarantines and the pandemic. Despite that there is not such a visible alteration in the graph, because of the multiple

alternatives offered to all the provisions that people were deprived of. For instance, online instead of conventional shopping or vacations in a remote and luxurious hotel instead of a crowded island.

To evaluate the potential change in pocket money caused by the lockdown, we are going to examine the data gathered for the monthly pocket money before lockdown and the one during lockdown. According to the information in the pie charts there is a visible decrease in the pocket money the respondents received because of the lockdown. More specifically, before quarantine 46% got 0-50€ as pocket money, which increased by 23% in the following chart. Correspondingly, the percentage of respondents that received 51-100€ and 101-200€ reduced by approximately 10%. Lastly, there is a decrease in the category of 201-500€. Nonetheless, it is deemed less significant as the percentage was initially low (9% to 5%). There is one main explanation to this observation. Bearing in mind the areas of utilization of the pocket money by teenagers that are 14-18 years of age, there were few alternatives. Entertainment, traditional shopping, and outward activities were limited if not completely unavailable. Hence, it is reasonable to infer that the spending of teenagers decreased proportionally and so did the supply of pocket money by their parents. This proportionality explains why there is a drop in all 4 categories.

As elaborated further, in the previous set of charts, it is generally a fact that during lockdown there were significant limitations to the activities of the people; thus, their spending dropped. In the previous graphs we evaluated the change in the supply of money to the teenagers. In this set, we can observe the alterations in the amount of money spent by the respondents before and during lockdown, excluding summer 2020. Most of the respondents (40%) spent 0-50€ per month before the quarantine, a percent that increased

by 22% during lockdown. Once again, in all the remaining 3 categories we saw a decrease, with the most visible one being in the sector of 101-300€. These two charts successfully portray our initial research hypothesis, namely that during the quarantine the abilities to spend money were restricted. As a result, it was rarer that people would spend more than 50€ per month.

## CONCLUSION

Nowadays, an era where a global pandemic takes place, everyone's life has change, either in a greater or a smaller extent. Based on this research one of the groups that was and still is highly influenced by covid-19 is students. Students in either school or university level have gone through many difficulties and had to adapt in a new reality. For an extended time-period, school, colleges, and academic centers have stopped the in-person teaching and operated through online platforms. Another major change that occurred during the covid-19 global pandemic was the closure of the retailing and service sectors. The only way for someone to buy a good during the closure of the retailing sector was only through e-commerce. Based on this study, those major changes, the physical closure of the academic and retailing sectors has changed the behavior of teenagers significantly. Based on the results, 59% of the people participated in this study indicated that they have increased online shopping when compared to the era before covid-19. The average monthly spending during the summer of 2020 has slightly dropped when compared to the summer of 2019. Based on the questionnaire, that was conducted for this study, the overall spending of teenagers decreased proportionally and so did the supply of pocket money by their parents. This is reasonable because the alternatives to spend money have also decreased in a great extent. Students due to the global pandemic were forced to adapt in a new everyday

reality of online learning. Based on the results of this study a big percentage of people stated that they do not actively engaged in online classes. Furthermore, based on the results of the questionnaire the vast majority, 75.3%, feel that the lockdown has affected their GPA and the zeal of learning in a negative way. Finally, we can conclude that there is a trend that indicates the proportional decrease in the hours of studying by the students.

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