UNIVERZITA PALACKÉHO V OLOMOUCI

PEDAGOGICKÁ FAKULTA

English section studies and research

Bachelor's Thesis

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Impacts of COVID-19 on reading and education

Olomouc 2022   Supervisor: Mgr. Jiří Flajšar, Ph.D.

Prohlašuji, že jsem bakalářskou práci zpracoval samostatně a použil jen prameny uvedené v seznamu literatury. Souhlasím, aby tato práce byla uložena na Univerzitě Palackého v Olomouc v knihovně Pedagogické fakulty a zpřístupněna ke studijním účelům.

V Horce and Moravou dne 2. 12. 2022 ....

podpis

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Mgr. Jiří Flajšar, Ph.D. for his help, advice, tips and time he could give me during the development of my bachelor thesis.

Marek Adamec

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Abstract

This bachelor thesis deals with the impact of COVID-19 on reading and education. In addition to the impacts, it also focuses on comparing the pre-COVID era with the COVID era. In addition to these things, the thesis also discusses how various countries have dealt with the renewal of learning and how the environment, absenteeism and the stress affects learning. The aim of the thesis is to find out how reading habits have changed and specifically what aspects have affected them, or what the influence is associated with.

List of abbreviations

MHRD	Human Resources and Developments
COVID/COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
ICD	Intercultural dialogue
LHP	Learn-At-Home-Programme
FME	Federal Ministry of Education
ERE	Emergency Remote Education

Introduction

This thesis focuses on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on reading and education. The topic was chosen last year when the situation was considerably worse than now. During 2020 and 2021, several measures were introduced that changed the form of teaching for face-to-face to online and vice versa, several times. With the state of emergency and the immediate move to online environment came problems and difficulties in managing the situation on the part of students and pupils as well as on the part of teachers. Online learning brought new challenges that people were not prepared for, which was reflected, for example. In the various international tests that tested skills during COVID-19 and compared them with those just before COVID. The time of the coronavirus crisis came not only with the change in the form of teaching and the additional difficulties associated with it. Almost all people also faced socio-cultural changes. People had to spend their leisure time in a different way due to government restrictions, and their hobbies changed as well. This is exactly how my choice of this topic for my bachelor thesis was chosen. During the covid pandemic, I notice a genre shift in my reading and out of curiosity, I searched the internet to see if this type of genre shift affected anyone else and found that it id. So, I decided to find out how much these changed affected people and also to focus on the topic more from an educational perspective by looking at how the covid pandemic affected students.

A major part of the bachelor's thesis will be comparing the pre-covid era to the covid era, and eventually the lockdown. Many of these comparisons are supported by graphs and percentage changes to better illustrate the change in the situation. As this bachelor thesis concerns a relatively new issue, it has been approached globally. The thesis therefore covers not only Europe, but also some countries in the Americas, as well as some countries from the continents of Asia and Africa.

The main source of this was mainly university studies related to reading and education in the coronavirus era. Printed sources were mainly focused on the beginning of COVID-19 and the reactions of different countries to the outbreak.

1. Coronavirus crisis

A coronavirus crisis can be described as the impact of a coronavirus disease on social, cultural environmental and economic levels, thus is more than a global health problem.

According to the World Health organization (WHO), the first coronavirus infection was confirmed in Wuhan, China. The WHO identified the first disease outbreak on 5 January 2020 and later named it as SARS-CoV-2. The disease was later given the designation of pandemic status on 11 March as it affected a huge number of people in different parts of the world.

1.1.   Social impacts of COVID-19

The most common social responses included fear, moralizing, blaming and othering (Dingwall et al., 2013; Strong 1990; van Loon 2005; Bjørkdahl and Carlsen, 2019).

The impact of coronavirus on social life has been largely influenced by the political response. Many countries have taken a different policy approach and responded differently. On that basis, these social impacts have varied. Examples of countries that failed to respond in a timely manner include the UK (Scambler, 2020) or also the USA (Rocco et al., 2020; Thomson, 2020) and Brazil (Maltha et al., 2020). In contrast, some countries have addressed preventing the spread of coronavirus through lockdown and other restrictions such as travel bans out of the country. Examples of these countries include Taiwan, New Zealand, Vietnam, Australia, South Korea, and Singapore (Dalish, 2020, Afashi et al., 2020). The third group includes, for example, Sweden, which has chosen to "stain" its country's population and gain immunity by contracting the disease.

The most significant changes have occurred in countries that have addressed the prevention of coronavirus transmission through lockdown. The aforementioned travel bans have contributed to the changes, as have the closure of schools and businesses. Restrictions on freedom of movement and psychological isolation during forced quarantines have also been imposed (Brown, 2020). The aforementioned changes varied among countries depending on the socioeconomic situation, access and quality of the health system.

1.2. ICD and community relations during COVID-19

"[ICD (Intercultural Dialogue) is the] process undertaken to realize transformative communication that requires space or opportunities for engagement and a diverse group of participants committed to values such as mutual respect, empathy and a willingness to consider different perspectives" (Mansouri, 2020, p. 3).

The major problems during the COVID-19 pandemic were (i) – Rise in social inequalities and vulnerability, (ii) – Rise in xenophobia and ethno-cultural racism, (iii) – Rise in gender-based violence, (iv) – Rise in discrimination against foreigners.

1.2.1. Rise in social inequalities and vulnerability

People with financial disadvantage had inadequate access to social services, were less socially protected or were despised based on age, gender, race, ethnicity, religion, or other forms of discrimination. These people had little or no political influence, low incomes, and limited opportunities to adapt.

According to (Lupton, 2021), even in the U.K., people who were either delivery drivers, public transport workers and warehousemen or porters and other low-paid jobs in which minority ethnic groups often work were at much higher risk of coronavirus infection.

1.2.2. Rise in xenophobia and ethno-cultural racism

The COVID-19 crisis has been used by many government leaders and senior officials to promote hate, racism, or xenophobia directly or indirectly against anti-China rhetoric. Many political parties and groups in the UK, Italy, Spain, Greece, France, and Germany have used the COVID-19 crisis to promote anti-immigrant, white supremacist, ultra-nationalist, anti-Semitic, and xenophobic conspiracy theories.

Discrimination has not only targeted Asians and their descendants, but there has been a significant increase in discriminatory behavior against minority groups in many countries. In addition to racist attacks, these groups were also on the front lines of the pandemic, at the greatest risk of becoming infected (Covid-19 Fueling Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia Worldwide, 2020).

Also, according to (Lupton, 2021), Asian Americans have faced an increase in Violence. Even before the pandemic, where a quarter of Asian Americans experienced institutional forms of racism (such as unequal pay, problems with promotions, or even housing discrimination, and about a third of Asian Americans reported individual forms of discrimination (such as racial or ethnic slurs, negative or offensive assumptions and remarks about their race and ethnicity) (McMurtry et al., 2019).

During the outbreak of the covid pandemic, nearly 39% of Asian Americans felt that people around them were uncomfortable because of their race, and 31% of Asian Americans experiences racist comments and jokes, as did 26% of Asian Americans fearing potential threats or physical attack.

1.2.3. Rise in gender-based violence

Gender-based violence has also experienced a significant spike. Both domestic and sexual violence, as well as child abuse and other forms of gender-based violence showed a higher risk. The number increased especially during lockdown, when it was more difficult for victims to seek help and address the problem in an effective way. Gender-based violence is a major issue because it can have consequences even after the end of the coronavirus crisis and could have an intergenerational impact affecting both current victims and their children. Women with disabilities and indigenous women are among the most affected victims of this problem through forms of gender oppression. Particularly due to social marginalization and economic disadvantage.

1.2.4. Rise in discrimination against foreigners

Migrants, refugees, and international students faced increased discrimination during the pandemic. In many countries, for example, migrant workers encountered people who blamed them for spreading the disease. Among the most at-risk groups were refugees and asylum seekers who were in refugee camps. Those most at risk were particularly those, that were overcrowded. International students could also face exclusion from social support. Despite government and education institutions trying to help international students, international students faced difficulties in the areas of healthcare and housing, as well as the inability to leave the country and return home due to travel restrictions.

1. 3. COVID-19 impacts on education

A study (Osman, 2022) investigates how the government of India, Kenya, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, Tanzania and Zambia have attempted to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on education. This study also involved the survey of education ministers, teachers, and parents. The following research questions were used in the questionnaire:

1. What impacts has COVID-19 had on education from pre- to post-schooling sectors?

2. What mitigation strategies were used to keep the education sub-sector functional?

3. Which methods will be needed to manage the lifting of the lockdown (in countries where the lockdown was implemented) in the educational institutions? What supporting measures need to be put in place to make this happen?

4. What training needs to be included for all role players in the return process in institutions to help with educational recovery?

1.3.1. Impacts of COVID-19 on education in India

In India, a 21-day lockdown was imposed on 25 March 2020, during which educational institutions (school, universities, and training institutions) were temporarily closed. Private schools were not allowed to collect school fees during the lockdown due to the financial and economic crisis caused by the pandemic. For these reasons, many teachers and support staff were concerned about the potential loss of their jobs. To mitigate the impact, the Ministry of Human Resources and Developments (MHRD) announced a comprehensive digital campaign targeting online education and the availability of all materials online

1.3.2. Impacts of COVID-19 on education in Kenya

In Kenya, the first infection occurred on 13 March 2020 with gradual spread across the country. The Ministry of Education created a coordination team consisting of state and non-state actors in education. The ministry of Education has been working together with this coordinating team in an attempt to instigate various effects to mitigate the impact of the pandemic od education including teaching classes through television, radio and education cloud. Among other things, the Ministry of Education also worked with the coordinating team to develop the COVID-19

Responsibility and Recovery Plan. The plan ensured learning and promoted the health, safety, and well-being of pupils (students), teacher, and education officials during and after the COVID-19 crisis.

1.3.3. Impacts of COVID-19 on education in Nigeria

In Nigeria, the first human infectious case of COVID-19 was recorded on 27 February 2022 and less than a month later, the federal government imposed a lockdown (26 March 2020). Under the leadership of the Federal Government of Nigeria, the education sector was managed by the Central and State Governments together. The Nigerian education sector was led by various stakeholders. Through the coordination of the Federal Ministry of education with other government corporations, departments, ministers, private organizational sectors including UNICEF whose main objective was to appropriately respond and strategize a plan for the continuation of learning, the learn-At-Home Programme (LHP) was made through this. The response to the continuation of learning in a risk-free environment, the renewal of the education sector, the normalization of the education cycle was also linked to this goal of the Nigerian Sector COVID-19 Plan. Television broadcasts were the main for of teaching. Various school subjects were taught at specific times according to FME's (Federal Ministry of Education) site.

1.3.4. Impacts of COVID-19 on education in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka, the closure of schools by the Ministry of Education due to the COVID-19 disease occurred on 12 March 2020. As in Nigeria, the country used television as the main teaching platform. In Sri Lanka, they specifically used a channel called Guru Gedara which was dedicated to pupils for learning. The Ministry announced the return of public schools in 4 waves, with pupils and academic staff phased back into schools at roughly 7-day intervals from 29 June to 27 July.

1.3.5. Impacts of COVID-19 on education in Tanzania

In Tanzania, the first confirmation of infection with COVID-19 occurred on 16 March 2020. The government has responded with several preventive measures, including a ban on public events and gatherings, closure of educational institutions from preschool to tertiary level, and suspension of sporting and social events. Despite these measures, the government has not imposed a lockdown or curfew to suppress the virus, instead citizens had to follow health guidelines such as wearing face masks, washing their hands a distancing.

1.3.6. impacts of COVID-19 on education in the European Union Member States

The Covid crisis has not only affected the countries in the Commonwealth system, but also the countries of the European Union. A Report by the European Commission (Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (European Commission), 2022) addressing the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on student well-being, education achievement and possible long-term consequences, found that although student well-being and learning were adversely affected, the pandemic did not have as much of negative impact as expected, mainly due to the actions taken by individual EU member states.
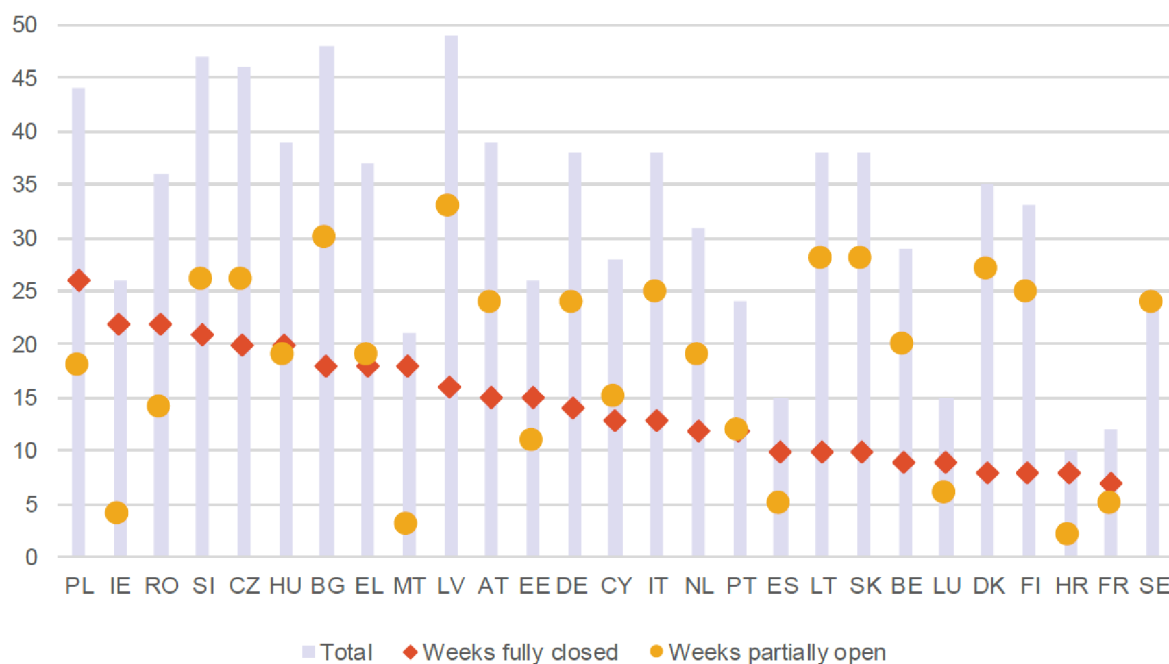
Figure 1: School closures duration (Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (European Commission), 2022)

The actions undertaken by each Member State were not the same during the pandemic. The countries reacted differently to the oubreak of COVID-19, which was reflected in the closure of schools.

Poland was the country that chose to close its schools for the longest period of time, being completely closed for about 26 weeks. Sweden, in contrast, chose not to close its schools, with only a partial closure or more precisely opening.

1.3.7. Positive impacts of COVID-19 on education

Although the COVID-19 pandemic has had a primarily negative impact on society and people, there have been positive impacts that have advanced the society.

One major change has been the integration of new technologies into the educational environment. Although this inclusion was not optional, but rather forced, it is a very important advance in education. The integration of new technologies into the classroom does not automatically mean that the interaction between teacher and pupil will improve (or that the pupil will receive the material presented by the teacher better than without it), but it is a new option that, when used correctly, can be beneficial for both sides (Magomedov, 2020).

1.3.8. Negative impacts of COVID-19 on education

With the pressure to move the face-to-face form to an online environment and to use new technologies comes also negative impacts. As will be mentioned several times later, among the most affected are those who are unable to move their education activities to the online environment, for example due to the inability of having the required technology (computer, tablet, mobile), and thus their educational process halts.

With distance learning comes not only the need to use a phone, tablet, or computer, but also the need for a stable internet connection. The second problem associated with distance learning and the use of new technologies is the ability to use these technologies or software sufficiently (Magomedov, 2020).

2. Importance of reading

According to (Moawad, 2019), reading develops thinking skills, attention and creativity. Reading also helps to develop ideas, personality and helps to understand the feelings of others (empathy).

A survey (Perrin, 2016) found, that people from the United States read more books as they acquire more education. People who have the highest level of high school education have read a book in the past 12 months at only 45%. In contrast, people who successfully completed university read a book in the last 12 months in 81%-86%.

This research also found that people who earn more money read more in general. Only 65% of people who earn less than 30,000 dollars have read a book in the last 12 months. On the other hand, 81% of people who earn more than 75,000 dollars have read a book in some form in the last 12 months.

Lockdown in the UK has also had a major part in getting people to read more. According to research (Flood, 2020), 41% people have started reading more often than before the lockdown. The most commonly reported reason was due to a more time. But some people started reading for the aforementioned reason of escaping the crisis, whereas others started reading to entertain themselves. The online questionnaire also found that people spent almost double the amount of time they spent on reading books before the lockdown, from an average of 3.5 hours to 6 hours. Only 10% of respondents said they had started reading less.

2.1. How exactly are learning gaps and reading achievement (reading skills) related?

According to a study (Ludewig, 2022) investigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on reading achievement, specifically the average differences in reading achievement during the years 2016-2021, the average differences in student control and the differences in achievement across student sub-groups (e.g., immigration, socio-culture, gender), reading achievement gaps have also been documented in Germany. As in the other countries, students` declines were mainly moderated by parents during online learning and their support was required more than during face-to-face lessons. In particular, reading literacy was one the most important

competences, as it affects achievement in other subjects and enables pupils to participate in society throughout their lives. As in other European countries, the sudden shift from face-to-face to emergency remote education (ERE) was a problem for both student and teacher. For teachers, mainly due to the lack of pedagogical skills in the areas of digitalization and for students to access and to use digital devices (e.g., computer, tablet).

Reading literacy is also important for pupils to be able to extract, understand and use relevant information from narratives and informational texts in written texts. In Germany, there was a 62% decline in reading during the first lockdown (spring 2020) and by 42% during the second lockdown (autumn, winter 2020/2021) than before the lockdown. Notably, the lockdown was associated with more time spent on screens (such as TV etc.). There was a 21% increase on screens during the first lockdown and a 34% increase during the second lockdown. Children in families without a college degree spent an average of 1 hour more on screens than children in households where either parent had a college degree. These numbers may also have affected pupils' reading achievement (Ludewig, 2022).

2.2. Issues and possible solution of the assigned reading

During the late 1970s, at least 60% of high school students read a book or magazine every day. In 2016, it was only 16%. (Twenge, 2018) Many of today's students don't read at all. One of the biggest problems is assigned reading. Many teachers solve this problem by letting students choose their book. On the other hand, if the book is challenging, it helps improve the student's comprehension and reading proficiency. Therefore, many teachers try to find a balance by letting students choose from multiple books that are difficult and provide a challenge for students.

2.3. Reading decline among pupils during and after the coronavirus crisis

The high drop rates also apply to pupil's reading. The major impact occurred mainly during the lockdown, when schools were closed, and students were taking online classes. This was especially a problem for first grade elementary school students. As reading is reflected in the other subjects already mentioned. A study (Sucena, 2022) that dealt with the effects of

coronavirus on the reading of second grade students in Portugal found a significant drop due to lockdown. The study focused on second graders who had only experienced online classes in their first year. The socio-economic status of the pupils played a prominent role. The highest declines were especially for pupils whose parents could not support them.

According to (Azubuike et al., 2021; Andrew et al., 2020; Bol, 2020) pupils from disadvantaged families received much less academic support from their parents than pupils from socially stronger families. In particular, online learning tools such as a tablet or computer. Access to the internet itself was also a problem, which according to (Machado et al., 2021), along with the necessary equipment, 4 out of 5 pupils did not have access to.

According to research (Jæger and Blaabæk, 2020; Reimer et al., 2021) based on borrowing books from libraries it was also found that there was a greater impact on pupil 's reading in families that did not read to pupils on a daily basis. Despite the fact that reading books to children is not a substitute for how to read, they had much lower losses than pupils who were not read to during the pandemic.

Table 7 Percentage distribution according to the SES (N = 446).								
	Average SES				**Low SES**			
	T1		**T2**		**T1**		**T2**	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
≤P10	40	20	21	10.5	74	30.1	38	15.5
>P10 ≤ P30	46	23	24	12	48	19.5	37	15
>P30	114	57	155	77.5	124	50.4	171	69.5

Figure 2: Percentage distribution according to the SES (N =446). (Sucena, 2022)

In the figure, we can see the difference in the number of correct responses (P) between students from average socioeconomic status (Average SES) and low socioeconomic status (Low SES) before the school intervention (T1) and after the school intervention (T2) can be seen.

The figure shows that more pupils from lower socioeconomic status had 10 or fewer correct responses. Whereas 30 correct responses were more than 10% more by pupils from socio-

economic average status. The SES was made based on the type of school and the students were tested for reading skills using a test – Screening test for reading (TRL). The test consisted of 30 incomplete sentences which the reader had to read and fill one of the 4 options using multiple choice option.

Also, according to (Spector, 2021), among the most affected grades are second and third graders, who are "behind" about 30 percent of expectations in normal years.

"It's quite likely that lower-achieving schools are dealing with a whole battery of problems that educators in more affluent districts aren't facing," said Dominique. (Spector, 2021)

In general, the lower the socioeconomic status, the higher the percentage of decline in reading skills.

Also, according to (Thompson, 2022) there is much less reading literacy in countries that are developing than in countries that are developed. In low- and middle-income countries that have faced school closures, 70% of 10-year-olds remained reading illiterate, while in the pre-pandemic period it was only 53%.

Worsened reading literacy was also evidenced in the United States in 2021 as well. In places like Texas, California, or Colorado 2/3 of children in third grade were tested as a grade below in math. In 2019, it was only ½ that amount,

In Brazil, 3 out of 4 children are behind in reading. Before the pandemic it was only 1 in 2.

Besides the loss of education, the children often faced problems with mental health, food, or the previously mentioned abuse. In terms of mental health, this includes an increased number of children suffering from anxiety or depression. Girls, adolescents, and those living in rural areas are among the most affected.

The survey in US states (Dorn, 2021) also found that 24 percent of parents surveyed were concerned about their children 's mental health. School absenteeism had also increased, by 12 percent.

Number of students chronically absent, millions   ■ Before pandemic ■ 2020−21 school year

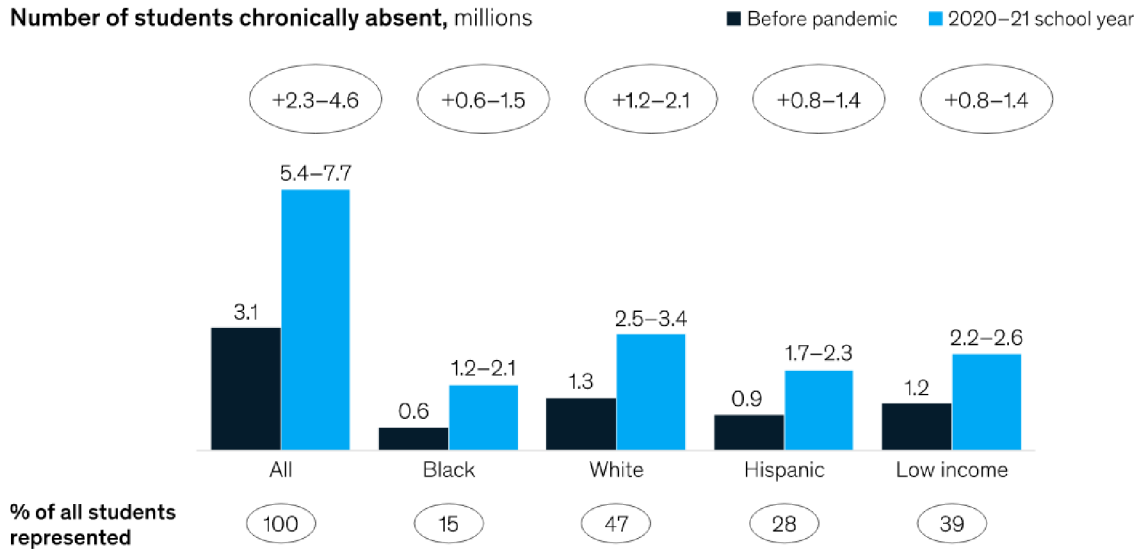|	All	Black	White	Hispanic	Low income
	+2.3−4.6	+0.6−1.5	+1.2−2.1	+0.8−1.4	+0.8−1.4
Before pandemic	3.1	0.6	1.3	0.9	1.2
2020−21	5.4−7.7	1.2−2.1	2.5−3.4	1.7−2.3	2.2−2.6
% of all students represented	100	15	47	28	39

Figure 3: Absenteeism among students in eight through 12th grade before pandemic and during 2020-2021 school year (Dorn, 2021)

The figure shows a rapid increase in school absenteeism among students in grades 8th through 12th grade. The numbers have nearly doubled for most ethnicities, which is also reflected in the overall numbers.

Absenteeism has a drastic impact on students and their future success.

17% of students who were planning to attend post-secondary education decided to cancel their plans to either start working or did not have enough money to pay for college. These numbers are even higher for students from lower income families, where the percentage was around 26 percent primarily due to financial reason. Students from high-income families, on the other hand, are more likely to reapply for college the following year or join a gap-year program.

The impact of not completing a degree will also have longer-term consequences. It is estimated that K-12 students (Kindergarten to 12th grade) could earn an average of $49,000 to $61,000 less over their lifetime than before the pandemic. These numbers vary between ethnicities. While White students could lose only 1.4 percent of their lifetime income, for Hispanics and Black it could be 2.1 and 2.4 percent, resulting in GDP loss of between $128 billion and $188 billion (Dorn, 2021).

Similar results that came out of a survey in Portugal (Sucena, 2022) came out of the U.S.

Also, from the analysis carried out (Dorn, 2021) a large gap was found especially in math and reading. However, the problem is not only that pupils affected by coronavirus have a learning

loss compared to pupils before the pandemic, but also that they get to the next grade without the "basics". With this comes success – school choice and later work and income. Students lose not only the skills, but also the manners and mindset they need to achieve their dream school or job.

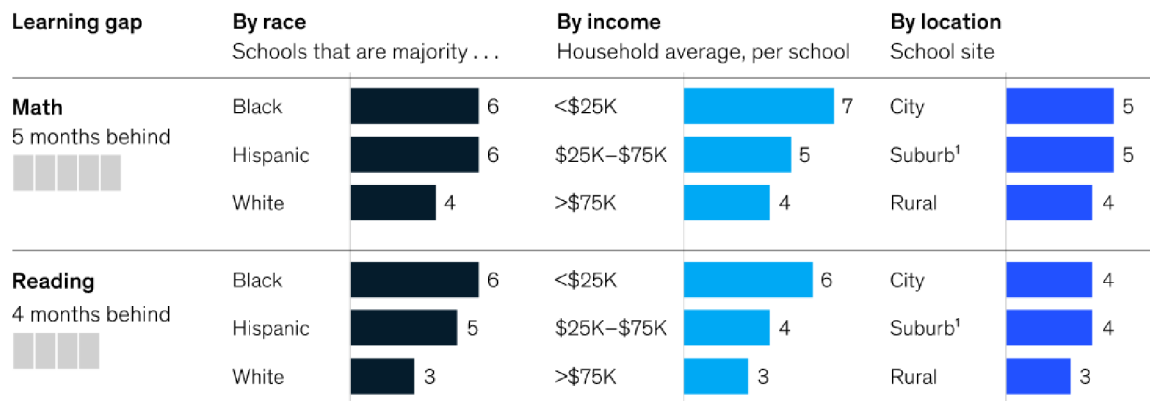| Learning gap	By race Schools that are majority . . .		By income Household average, per school		By location School site	
Math 5 months behind	Black	6	<$25K	7	City	5
	Hispanic	6	$25K–$75K	5	Suburb[1]	5
	White	4	>$75K	4	Rural	4
Reading 4 months behind	Black	6	<$25K	6	City	4
	Hispanic	5	$25K–$75K	4	Suburb[1]	4
	White	3	>$75K	3	Rural	3

Figure 4: Cumulative months of unfinished learning due to the pandemic by type of school, grades 1 through 6 (Dorn, 2021)

The figure shows the average gaps in subject knowledge for pupils in years 1 to 6 by ethnicity, income and location.

The figure shows that, like the graph (Sucena, 2022), pupils from socio-economic better classes have an advantage. On the other hand, a greater gap appears for pupils with low socio-economic status. In general, it can also be concluded that White students were less behind in reading and math compared to Hispanic and Black students.
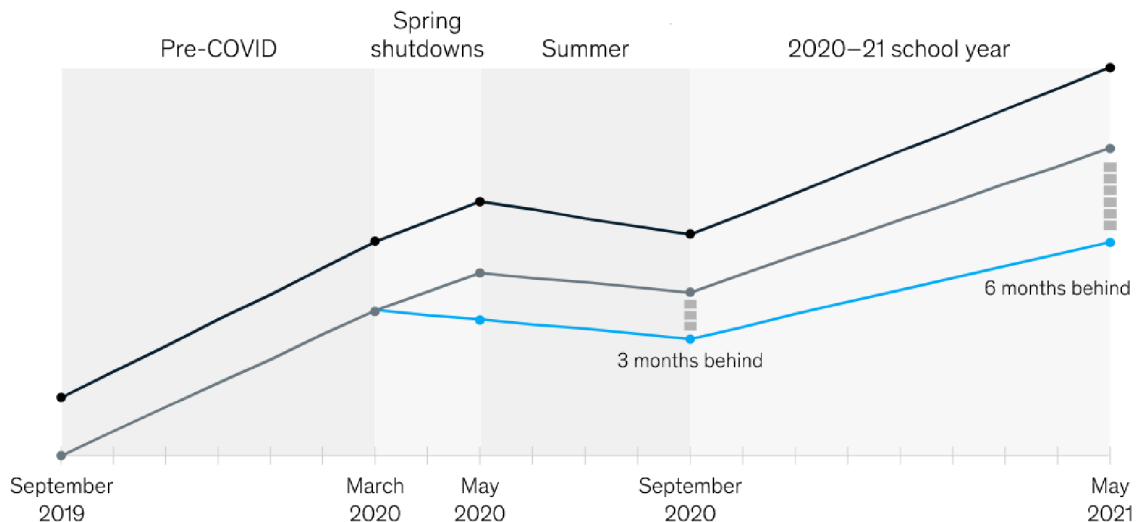
Figure 5: Unfinished learning in black schools (grades 1 through 6) in comparison to historical average (Dorn, 2021)

The black line shows the overall historical average.

The grey line shows the historical average in majority Black schools (>50% Black people).

The blue line shows the historical average in majority Black schools during COVID-19 (>50% Black people).

The figure shows that even outside of the pandemic, Black schools were behind the overall historical average, but during the COVID the number appears to have nearly doubled.

Parents have also contributed considerably to the impact on learning gaps. Specifically, whether or not parents were able to work remotely ant thus could not support their children during online classes.

Similar research (Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture (European Commission), 2022) addressing the impact on education also indicates that children from lower socio-economic backgrounds were more negatively affected during online learning than children from higher socio-economic backgrounds. A major issue is the "peer effect," among other things. While children before the pandemic came into contact with children from various socioeconomic backgrounds and could learn from each other, this was not possible during distance learning. As mentioned earlier, parents had a huge effect on children's learning during distant education, as children received less support from teachers and thus required more support from parents, which was often connected to whether parents teleworked, which was also linked to whether parents were "essential workers" and did not have the option of working

from home and thus helping children during distance learning. Among other issue affecting pupils were stresses at home, such as job loss, overcrowding at home, problems with internet connectivity or poor digital devices allowing online learning, as well as quiet time for learning and the need for space.

3. Reading popularity among people

There is probably no universal genre in the world which all people like. Each person has their own favorite genre or genre that they prefer. According to (Boucher, 2020), people tend to change genres during stressful times. Based on this, some genres are then read more than others.

An example of this is the COVID-19 lockdown that has happened globally. During this time, people tended to change the type of genre when reading. Genre is not the only thing that changed during the lockdown. The amount of time people spent on reading also changed, although surprisingly, due to a disability to maintain concentration while reading. Thus, people tended to read for longer periods of time, but inefficiently due to a failure to concentrate. This change in genres was not the same for all people. People could be divided into two groups. Whereas the first group saw the change of genre as an adventure, the second group preferred to reread books they had already read, which was most often related to their financial situation. The first group tended to change genre mainly for the reasons of escaping reality and exploring at least through reading books due to lockdown.

3.1.   Reading habits

A survey carried by (Hirchberg, 2020a) filled out by Canadians from March 30 to April 9, 2020, found that 58% of people had started reading more, with 39% reading the same as before and 4% reading less than before the pandemic. The most common response was more time or the need to be entertained. Many people commented that the reason they started reading more was because they did not have to commute to work, but this worked the other way around for some people and as they did not have to commute to school or work by train or bus or other means of transport, they did not fill their time with reading (Hogan, 2021).

People may have started to read less for several reasons. Many people had mental health issues, as well as problems with concentration or finding motivation, and even if they did get to a book, they had trouble keeping focused.

For Canadians, the type of books they read has not changed dramatically either. 62% of them were reading what they were reading before the pandemic. Only 38% started reading a different kind of book. 22% started reading more informative books and 16% more entertaining books.

The closure of libraries and bookshops has made people shift to other types in terms of audiobooks or e-books. E-books became 33% more popular and audiobooks 23% more popular.

The most common responses were fear of infection by coronavirus or the previously mentioned closure of libraries and bookstores.
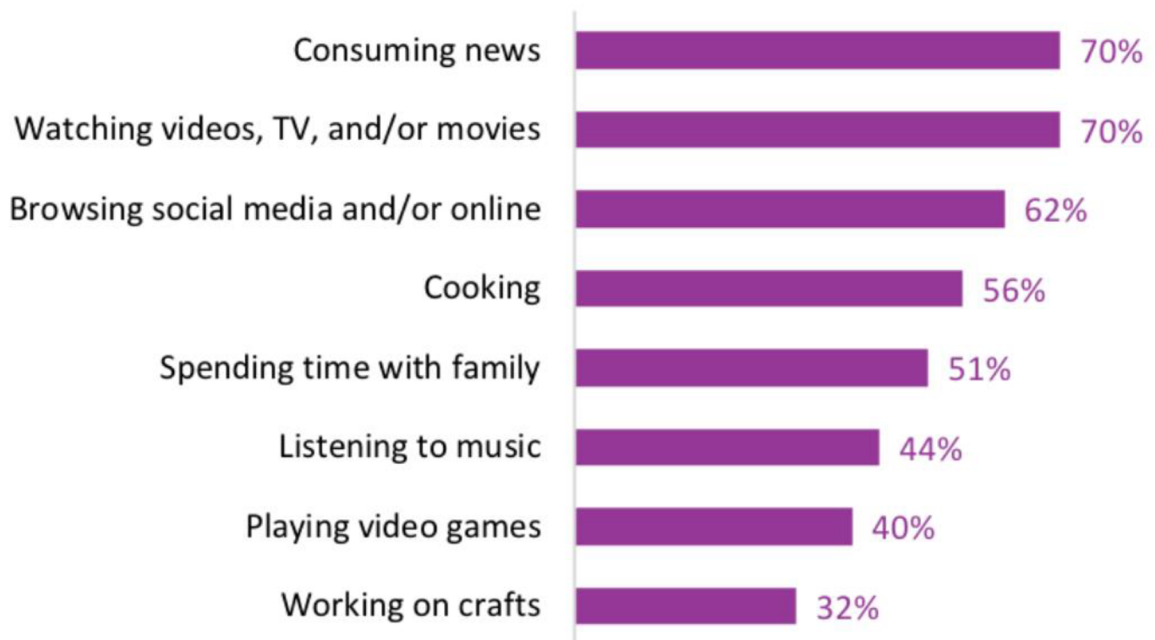

Figure 6: Activities Canadians were doing more (Hirchberg, 2020a) (The graph is based on data between 30 March to 9 April 2020)

The figure shows that the three most popular activities were watching news, videos, television, or movies along with social media, which was most likely due to staying informed and staying updated with what was going on in the world or the country.

Similar results were recorded in a survey from Nigeria, specifically in Lagos State.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
To eradicate boredom	327	78.6
Entertainment	85	20.4
General information/knowledge	129	31.0
Information on COVID-19	360	86.5
Examination/academic studies	254	61.1
Research	106	25.5
Pleasure	193	46.3

Figure 7: Purpose for reading during COVID-19 (Adeyemi, 2020)

The data were collected from a questionnaire that was distributed over an 11-week period from April to June 2020. The questionnaire was available on WhatsApp, Twitter and Facebook.

The figure shows that the top 3 reasons were research or academic studies, getting rid of boredom, but the most frequent reason was looking for information about covid.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Textbooks/monographs	247	59.4
Fictions	318	76.4
Magazines	142	34.1
Notebooks	286	68.8
Phone	407	97.8
Journal	179	43.0
Computers/laptops	225	54.1
Newspapers	109	26.2
Others	91	21.9

Figure 8: Materials/devices used to read during COVID-19 (Adeyemi, 2020)

The figure shows that most people read on their mobile phones, but fiction (books) or reading from a notebook was also very popular.

There was also a significant change in the frequency of reading.

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1–2 hours/day	347	83.5
3–4 hours/day	55	13.2
5–7 hours/day	9	2.1
More than 7 hours per day	5	1.2
Total	416	100.0

Figure 9: Time spent on reading before COVID-19 lockdown (Adeyemi, 2020)

Variables	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1–2 hours/day	132	31.7
3–4 hours/day	163	39.2
5–7 hours/day	91	21.9
More than 7 hours per day	30	7.2
Total	416	100.0

Figure 10: Time spent on reading during COVID-19 lockdown (Adeyemi, 2020)

In the figure, can be seen the significant change in read frequency during the lockdown. People started reading for considerably longer periods of time than before the lockdown. Specifically, the variable 1-2 hours changed tremendously. This number decreased by over 50% due to the fact that many people started reading more. All other variables increased many times as well. Particularly interesting are the values of 5-7 hours/day and more than 7 hours/day. These numbers have quadrupled.

A survey in Spain over the period from 11 April to 19 April 2020 (Arfe, 2020) also showed an increased frequency of reading. Overall, Spanish people started reading for over an hour more per day than before the lockdown. Specifically, from 4 hours and 35 minutes to 5 hours and 45 minutes per day.

The time spent on leisure reading also increased by almost half an hour. People started reading more comics, blogs, and magazines. Before the pandemic, they spent around 56 minutes/day on them, but during the lockdown, the time spent on leisure reading increased, from 1 hour and 14 minutes/day at the beginning (1st and 2nd week) to 1 hour and 21 minutes/day (3rd and 4th week).

Similar increases in reading time were observed also for reading news in newspapers, magazines, websites, and Twitter, as well as an increase in average reading time on social media (Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp), and reading time dedicated to work and studies (reports, websites, documents), whether the increase was the least, with only 9 minutes.

On average, more women than men started reading for longer periods of time.

3.2. Change in popularity of genres among readers before and during COVID-19 crisis

There were also some major changes within the genres.

Fiction	Percent change
Romance / Romantic Comedy	280%
Fantasy / Urban	153%
Thrillers / Crime	34%
Romance / Clean & Wholesome	17%
Science Fiction / Collections & Anthologies	12%
Non-Fiction	**Percent change**
Games & Activities / General	432%
Sports & Recreation / Basketball	360%
Education / General	132%
Psychology / Cognitive Psychology & Cognition	129%
Language Arts & Disciplines / General	121%

Figure 11: Positive percentage change in the popularity of book genres (Hirchberg, 2020b)

The figure shows that from fiction, romance and romantic comedies became very popular along with fantasy. Among non-fiction, games, and activities along with sports were the most popular.

It is important to consider that the percentages may be slightly misleading due to the sales of a few titles that were very popular among readers (bestsellers).

Fiction	Percent change
Mystery & Detective / Private Investigators	-86%
Thrillers / Political	-85%
Thrillers / Legal	-81%
Romance / New Adult	-77%
Thrillers / Military	-65%
Non-Fiction	**Percent change**
Humor / Topic	-87%
Travel / Europe	-87%
House & Home / Cleaning, Caretaking & Organizing	-86%
Travel / United States	-85%
History / Holocaust	-85%

Figure 12: Negative percentage change in the popularity of book genres (Hirchberg, 2020b)

The figure shows a big decline in mysteries and crime fiction, but especially all thrillers except those involving crime, which were a bit more popular during the pandemic. New Adult Romance has also experienced a big decline. Among non-fiction, humor or overall travel was very unpopular, including books related to housecleaning, organizing, or caretaking. Unpopular were, among other titles, historical books relating to the Holocaust.

4. Libraries and its impact during COVID-19 crisis

On March 17, 2020, the American library Association (ALA) released a statement that libraries should not be open to the public (Goek 2020). As a result of this statement, libraries closed to the public during March and April, indefinitely (Grassel 2020; Public Library Association 2020). This decision also affected most of the other countries facing lockdown (Ćirić and Ćirić 2021; Garner et al. 2021; Tammaro 2021). Libraries thus began to address the problem with alternative services. According to a Public Library Association survey of libraries in the US between March 24 and April 1, it found that 22% of libraries do curbside pick-up an 6% do home delivery (Public Library Association 2020).

During the lockdown, libraries were very important to students and their online learning, as well as the public. For example, they helped with Wi-Fi access options for the public (Garcia-Ortiz 2021; Real 2021; Riggs 2020), assisted with social services such as mobile assistance or printing forms for patrons (Carberyet al. 2020; Guevara 2021), and helped with paperwork. In addition, libraries also helped with financial and employment matters.

Libraries worked with other council departments and organizations to provide services such as outdoor activities (Grassel 2020; Santos 2020, 73), health services and other information (Carbery et al. 2020; Freudenberger 2021; Garner et al. 2021).

A very significant change was the change to online mode during the pandemic. Libraries engaged in a variety of virtual programming and events (Carbery et al. 2020; Goddard 2020; Grassel 2020; Hadidi and Linscot 2021; Johnson 2020; Public Library Association 2020; Tammaro 2021). Examples could be be online stories (Grassel 2020; Jones 2020; Matthews 2020; Real 2021) or instructions on the digital platform YouTube (Cowell 2020; Grassel 2020), or webinars (Hadidi and Linscot 2021; Oyelude 2020). Stories for children were a very popular service. Several libraries collaborated with other institutions or services, for example with museums or galleries (LaPierre 2021). Electronic services were also very popular, especially e-books (Carbery et al. 2020; Ćirić and Ćirić 2021; Grassel 2020; Hoffert 2021; Johnson 2020; Jones 2020; Tammaro 2021), which were particularly popular among young readers (Goddard 2020).

According to The Yarra Plenty Regional Library (YPRL) in Melbourne, Australia, e-Loan downloads have increased by 206%. A survey of public libraries in Connecticut also found that 68% of respondents had begun to prefer digital materials over physical ones (Real 2021), which

is why libraries decided to invest more in e-books during the pandemic (Freudenberger 2021; Real 2021; Santos 2020).

Libraries had to deal with the big problem of active membership. Many people have stopped being active members of libraries, either because of unavailability (libraries closing during the lockdown) or because of the financial situation of patrons. The figure below shows the number of active library members during the previous years. An active member includes anyone who has borrowed at least one physical or digital item during the year. Qualitative research was used for the survey – Freedom of Information (FOI) in the country of UK.

2018–2019	2019–2020	2020–2021
12,733,293	12,236,668	5,138,630

Figure 13: Active members per year (McMenemy & Robinson, & Ruthven, 2022, p. 8)

Figure shows a significant drop in 2020, creating a drop of 7.5 million active members compared to previous years.

Conclusion

The impact of COVID-19 on reading and education has varied in terms of how different countries have dealt with the outbreak and what measures they have taken, and consequently whether or not they have been able to respond in time. The most significant changes have occurred in countries that have chosen to limit face-to-face contact through government restrictions and where there has been a shift to distance learning. Even greater changes then occurred in countries where a complete lockdown was introduced and where, in addition to the suspension of face-to-face teaching, some jobs that allowed it, began to have home offices. During the pandemic, there was also a rise in inequality, racism, gender-based violence and discrimination. Most minority groups that worked particularly in low-paying jobs were at the greatest risk of infection. Up to 39% of Asian Americans experienced some form of racism during the pandemic. In addition to racism and inequality, there was also increased domestic violence against not only women but also children, especially during lockdown, where it was more difficult to seek help or address these issues effectively. International students also faced challenges in the areas of health and housing during the pandemic, as well as leaving the country to return home due to travel restrictions. The effects of the COVID-19 crisis on education in the member states of the European Union were very different due to the way they chose to deal with the COVID pandemic in general. Although the pandemic was expected to have more negative impacts, this was not the case due to the actions taken by individual member states. The impact of COVID-19 on education also varied across Commonwealth member countries. While in some countries educational institutions were closed and were addressed by digital campaigns where online education and distribution of all possible materials online were undertaken, in other countries, such as Nigeria, television was the main source of learning with different school subjects being broadcast at different times. In addition, some countries, such as Kenya, also introduced a recovery plain that supported students, teachers and education staff both during and after the COVID-19 crisis.

With sudden shift of teaching to an online environment and the use of new technologies also came problems. Among the most common problems were the lack of devices that would allow participation in the lessons or problems with stable internet. In addition, there was also the problem of using new software and using it correctly. Although this integration of new technologies into the educational environment seems to be more of a negative impact, in the long-term it is also an opportunity to improve teacher-student interaction.

Reading has also experienced a major decline. Reading helps to develop thinking, attention, creativity, but it also helps to develop ideas, personality, and empathy. It is also one of the most important competences as it influences results and achievements in other school subjects. Although people in the UK, Canada, Spain and Nigeria read about 40 % more than before the pandemic, this was not the case in all countries. In Germany, on the other hand, there was a 62% decline in reading. In Portugal, there was also a decline in reading. A study looking at the decline in reading as a function of a student's socio-economic status found that a student's socio-economic background greatly influences a student's reading. A significant decline was also noted compared to 1970. In 2016, only 16% of students read every day. In 1970, the numbers were 44% higher. Reading declines have also occurred in developing countries, where up to 70% of 10-year-olds remained reading illiterate, compared to 53% before the pandemic. Even in Brazil, an average of 3 out of 4 children were behind in reading, compared to only 1 out of 2 before the pandemic.

In addition to the reading decline, reading habits have also changed, and with them the popularity of genres. Due to government restrictions, people began to spend their leisure time differently, thus changing their hobbies and leisure time in general. 38% of Canadians started reading a different genre. As in Germany, there was increased time spent on screens. Of the fiction, romance and romantic comedies were very popular, along with fantasy. Among non-fiction, games or sports were very popular. On the other hand, the biggest decline was in books with crime themes or also in most thrillers.

With the closure of libraries, the popularity of e-books and audiobooks also increased. Before the pandemic, libraries were an important place to find materials and a place to study. Although libraries were inaccessible in most countries during the covid pandemic. They helped the public with access to Wi-Fi or mobile assistance including paperwork. Many people began to prefer digital materials over physical ones. During the pandemic, libraries faced a major financial problem due to a decrease in the number of active members who borrowed books In addition to the reading decline, there was a decline in mental health among students, including absenteeism, which was almost twice as high during the covid pandemic during the covid pandemic. A large number of pupils who had planned to go to post-secondary education once they finished school cancelled their plans, either because they decided to work or because of lack of money. Parents were a major factor influencing mental health as well as school success. During distance education, children received less support from teachers and thus required more support from parents. Their achievements were also very influenced by whether the parents

worked from home, whether or not a parent lost their job, which was associated with more stress, overcrowding at home or problems with the internet or devices that allowed learning.

Resumé

The thesis focused on the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on reading and education. It addressed these impacts by comparing the pre-COVID era with the COVID era. It also dealt with the aspects that influenced the impacts. It can be stated clearly that COVID-19 had a rather negative impact on reading and especially on education. Although it can be stated that the impacts were not only negative, in most aspects they were. As a positive in education, it can be mentioned that students and teachers have gained more experience with the online form of teaching and thus with new technologies and software. As a negative impact, the learning gap that has arisen during online learning can be mentioned, and therefore the government has often created a form of recovery plain in an attempt to cover the curriculum. Whether it was minority groups who faced additional racist attacks or lower wage groups who were at greater risk of contracting the coronavirus, it can be stated that mental health worsened during the pandemic. Mental health and stress were also greatly affected by lockdown and government restrictions that limited freedom of movement. In particular, pupils and students of lower socioeconomic status experienced a greater learning gap. Parents were a big factor as well as financial backgrounds, which involves space sufficient devices for learning and stable internet. The reading results were very diverse. Although studies from some countries showed a greater increase in reading, other studies from other countries claimed the exact opposite and reported rather a decline in reading. A major change occurred in genres, where people tended to change the type of book during the covid. People started to avoid books with dark themes and became more interested in more positive themes such as romance and comedy. In the last section, the role of libraries during the COVID-19 pandemic was mentioned, as before the pandemic, libraries were very important for the students due to a place to study or also for finding materials.

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Annotation

Jméno a příjmení:	Marek Adamec
Katedra:	Ústav cizích jazyků
Vedoucí práce:	Mgr. Jiří Flajšar, Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby:	2022

Název Práce:	Dopady COVID-19 na čtení a vzdělávání
Název v angličtině:	Impacts of COVID-19 on reading and education
Anotace práce:	Bakalářská práce porovnává čtení a edukaci v dobách před COVID-19 krizí, během průběhu COVID-19 krize a následně po ní. Kromě porovnání se v práci objevují I dopady na čtenářství, čtení a edukaci. V Práci je také uvedeno, jak různé státy nakládaly s edukačním sektorem a jakým způsobem se rozhodly řešit mezeru ve vzdělání, která vznikla ve většině zemích následně po uvalení vládních restrikcích. Poslední část práce se týká knihoven, které měly před covidem důležitou funkci, jelikož byly pro studenty možností prostoru k učení a půjčování si důležitých materiálů.
Klíčová slova:	Čtenářství, porovnání, dopady, čtení, edukace, vzdělání, restrikce, knihovny, učení, covid
Anotace v angličtině:	The bachelor's thesis compares reading and education before, during and after the COVID-19 crisis. In addition to comparisons, the thesis discusses the impact on reading, reading and education. The thesis also outlines how various countries have approached the educational sector and how they have chosen to address the education gap that has arisen in most countries following the restrictions imposed by the government. The last part of the thesis focuses on libraries, which had an important function before

	covid, as they provided a learning space for students to study and borrow important materials.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	comparison, impact, reading, education, restrictions, libraries, learning, covid
Přílohy vázané v práci:	0
Rozsah práce:	41s
Jazyk práce: :	Angličtina