

23 - 25 October 2026

Geneva, Switzerland

# Student Perspectives on The Rapid Transition to Virtual Classrooms

Isidor Kokalari<sup>1</sup>, Johan Muka<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Department of Mathematics, Informatics & Physics, Faculty of Natural Sciences, University of Gjirokastra, Albania

<sup>2</sup> Department of Statistics and Applied Informatics, Faculty of Economics, University of Tirana, Albania

## Abstract

The emergency transition to remote instruction transformed teaching and learning dynamics across higher education. This study investigates student perspectives during this shift, focusing on the interplay between technological access, pedagogical engagement, and institutional communication. Methodologically, the study employs a quantitative, retrospective comparative survey across multiple institutions, prompting respondents to evaluate their virtual learning experiences against an in-person baseline. Findings highlight crucial infrastructure constraints, which obstructed active participation despite favorable evaluations of learning platforms. Pedagogically, results reveal a notable discrepancy between physical attendance and cognitive focus, where stable virtual presence masked diminished concentration. While instructor-student communication adapted effectively, peer collaboration and administrative interactions experienced significant disruption. The analysis underscores a central paradox of distance education: technological interfaces represented a primary operational hurdle, yet proactive instructor engagement served as the main driver of student success. Looking toward post-pandemic models, students largely rejected fully remote instruction, expressing a strong preference for face-to-face learning alongside demand for structured hybrid frameworks. These insights offer guidance for educators and instructional designers seeking to build student-centered blended learning environments.

**Keywords:** Digital Pedagogy; Distance Learning; Educational Infrastructure; Higher Education; Student Engagement