Cambio en la organización de los procesos educativos durante la pandemia COVID-19: análisis de las experiencias del profesorado de educación infantil

Changes in the organization of the educational process during the Covid-19 pandemic period: analysis of pre-school teachers' experiences

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RESUMEN.
La pandemia COVID-19 ha tenido un gran impacto en la educación y en la enseñanza, en relación a las maneras de aprender, enseñar, comunicarse, y colaborar entre y con la comunidad; y afectando al alumnado, sus familias, profesorado, equipos directivos de los centros educativos, así como a la comunidad en general. El propósito de este estudio es analizar las experiencias de los profesores de preescolar sobre los cambios en la organización del proceso educativo durante la pandemia covid-19 (en Lituania). Se eligió la estrategia de investigación cualitativa para el estudio, se entrevistó a 15 maestros de educación preescolar de la ciudad de Klaipėda. El estudio reveló que los maestros no cambiaron el contenido de los programas educativos, buscaron mantener la continuidad de la educación y desarrollar todas las competencias de los niños en edad preescolar. Los participantes del proceso educativo experimentaron una variedad de emociones y perturbaciones. Los maestros echaron de menos una acción más decisiva de la institución. Muchos maestros señalan que era difícil administrar el tiempo y organizar actividades para los niños. Aunque los participantes en el proceso educativo experimentaron dificultades, la educación a distancia permitió a los maestros desarrollar competencias temáticas y mejorar su capacidad para utilizar las TIC en el proceso educativo.

PALABRAS CLAVE.
COVID-19, Educación a distancia, Educación infantil.

ABSTRACT.
The COVID-19 pandemic has had a major impact on education and teaching systems. It has fundamentally changed the way we learn, teach, communicate and collaborate within and between our education and teaching communities. This has affected learners, their families, teachers, heads of

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institutions, as well as the wider community. The purpose of this study is to analyse the pre-school teachers' experiences about changes in the organization of the educational process during the covid-19 pandemic period (in Lithuania). The strategy of qualitative research was chosen for the study, 15 Klaipėda city pre-school education teachers were interviewed. The study revealed that teachers did not change the content of education programs, sought to maintain the continuity of education and develop all the competencies of preschool children. Participants of the educational process experienced a variety of emotions and disturbances. Teachers missed for more decisive action of the institution's administration. Many teachers note that it was difficult to manage time and organize activities for children. The opinion of educators discovered during the research helped to highlight advantages and disadvantages of distance pre-school education. Although the participants of the education process experienced difficulties, distance education enabled teachers to develop subject competencies and improve their ability to use ICT in the educational process.

KEY WORDS.
COVID-19, Distance education, Organization of pre-school education.

1. Introduction.

The global spread of COVID-19 has led to unprecedented disruptions in education around the world that have animated increased interest among policymakers, educators, researchers and the general public in knowing about how education systems have responded to the pandemic and how educational process and teachers' and children's' experiences have changed.

As indicated in the United Nations Publication Policy Brief: Education during COVID-19 and beyond (2020), the COVID-19 pandemic has created the largest disruption of education systems in history, affecting nearly 1.6 billion learners in more than 190 countries and all continents. The crisis is exacerbating pre-existing education disparities by reducing the opportunities for many of the most vulnerable children, youth, and adults. On the other hand, this crisis has stimulated innovation within the education sector. There were innovative approaches in support of education and training continuity: from radio and television to take-home packages. Distance learning solutions were developed thanks to quick responses by governments and partners all over the world supporting education continuity.

On the basis of the conducted studies, J. Bertling, N. Rojas, J. Alegre and K. Faherty (2020) claim that a vast body of research has shown that the use of digital learning technologies is associated with learning gains. However, evidence suggests that learning technologies in pre-school education are most effective as supplements to other modes of teaching, rather than as replacements for more traditional approaches (Donohue, Johnson, Lucas, Lynd, Mukerjee, Thouvenelle, 2020).

The purpose of this study is to analyse the pre-school teachers' experiences about changes in the organization of the educational process during the covid-19 pandemic period (in Lithuania). Methods: analysis of scientific literature and documents, qualitative research (interview), qualitative content analysis.

2. Theoretical approach to distance pre-school education.

As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, so do the risks we face. The COVID-19 pandemic has not stopped at national borders. During the pandemic, remote learning became a lifeline for education but the opportunities that digital technologies offer go well beyond a stopgap solution during a crisis. Digital technology offers entirely new answers to the question of what people learn, how they learn, and where and when they learn. Technology can enable teachers and pupils to access specialised materials well beyond textbooks, in multiple formats and in ways that can bridge time and space (Schleicher, 2020).

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From the onset of the pandemic, teachers at every level of education were immediately tasked with implementing distance learning modalities, often without sufficient guidance, training, or resources. In many contexts, teacher professional development has moved online or been disseminated via telephone and video applications. Web-based meetings and messaging applications have become useful tools and new ways of communicating with their learners and the education community (Policy Brief: Education during COVID-19 and beyond, 2020). Teachers across the globe were largely unprepared to support continuity of learning and adapt to new teaching methodologies. Even in contexts with adequate infrastructure and connectivity, many educators lack the most basic ICT skills, meaning they will likely struggle with their own ongoing professional development, let alone with facilitating quality distance learning (International Task Force on Teachers for Education 2030, 2020). The COVID-19 crisis has highlighted that both initial and in-service teacher education are in need of reform to better train teachers in new methods of education delivery (Education Sector Issue Note 2.2, UNESCO, 2020). F. M. Reimers (2020) claims that the COVID-19 situation and changes in the reality of education raise key questions in the professional perspective of educators. The key questions from this perspective are, given a new set of curriculum objectives and expected pedagogies, what the capacities necessary to teach this curriculum are, and what the gap between the current level of teacher capacities and those capacities which are necessary is. Education sector specialists need to work with their existing skill sets for crisis-responsive programming but also need to develop new skills since we are all working under new conditions – specifically driven by social distancing parameters. N. Brown, K. Te Riele, B. Shelley, J. Woodroffe (2020) assure that teachers are well versed in designing purposeful learning experiences that align to clear curriculum goals and assessment. However, it does take time, and specific expertise to move curriculum to an online mode. While there are many examples of teachers and schools who have been able to quickly adapt and provide engaging online learning for pupils, the speed of the change has been challenging, and will continue to be so if more curriculum content needs to be moved online.

Ch. Donohue, A. Johnson and others (2020) state, that in order for distance learning experiences to be most meaningful for children, teachers need to be able to use the technology to create a sense of community. A well-designed online learning environment can provide a high quality and personalised learning experience for pupils. At the outset it is critical to recognise that such an environment is not simply translating what happens in a face-to-face environment online, nor does it primarily provide content for which the learner can engage with minimal support.

Effective online learning employs a children-cantered approach to learning, that necessarily incorporates interactivity and opportunity for feedback, not only with the material presented online, but with the teacher, and where possible with peer learners. Such a design is informed by social constructivist and connectivism theories and extends what is known about learning in the classroom into an online environment (Brown, Te Riele, et al., 2020). Constructive feedback is critical for all learning situations. However, with distance learning, feedback is even more critical.

Group projects are often a major component of early childhood education courses and should be included when applicable in on-line courses to allow children to learn about working in collaboration with others. An on-line Preschool Education program should include courses with a field experience component. This provides children with the opportunity to work with other children, families. Technology can enable teachers and pupils to access specialised materials well beyond textbooks, in multiple formats and in ways that can bridge time and space. Moreover, technology does not just change methods of teaching and learning, it can also elevate the role of teachers from imparting received knowledge towards working as co-creators of knowledge, as coaches, as mentors and as evaluators (Schleicher, 2020).

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For preschool-aged children, socio-emotional connections (to teachers and peers) have been shown to be linked to better performance at school (Brown, Te Riele, et al., 2020), so building a sense of community needs to be an important component of any online environment. This needs to occur within a secure environment such as a learning management system or an enterprise communication system. Time that parents spend with their children on productive or educational activities are important determinants of childhood development. Yet, clearly, parents and caregivers cannot replicate the roles and functions of teachers or provide the infrastructure resources available in schools within the home. Education systems need to be mindful not to add yet another item to parent's already long list of things they "should" or "have" to be doing, while also encouraging potentially meaningful suggestions (Brown, Te Riele, et al., 2020).

Real change often takes place in deep crises, and this moment holds the possibility that we won't return to the status quo when things return to "normal". While this crisis has deeply disruptive implications, including for education, it does not have predetermined outcomes. It will be the nature of our collective and systemic responses to these disruptions that will determine how we are affected by them (Schleicher, 2020). The current crisis has tested ability of educators to deal with large-scale disruptions. Teachers and other adults should build as its legacy a more resilient society.

3. Methodology.

In order to determine the challenges and opportunities faced by pre-school education teachers while organizing distance education during the Covid-19 quarantine, methodology of qualitative research was chosen (Creswell, 2014; Žydžiūnaitė, Sabaliauskas, 2017). The interpretative paradigm (Cohen, Manion, Morrison, 2007) and the constructivist approach (Berger, Luckamann, 1999) were used to justify the research. They are adapted in order to provide an interpretive, holistic view of the analysed situation, the "experiences" of persons involved, and an explanation arising from the analysis of the situation. A semi-structured interview method was chosen. Research was carried out in June 2021. A targeted, criteria selection of research participants was applied. The main criterion was the pre-school education teachers, who worked remotely during the Covid-19 quarantine. An invitation to participate in the research was sent to all Klaipėda city educational institutions providing pre-school education. 15 pre-school education teachers of the Klaipėda city (Lithuania) agreed to participate in the research. Demographic characteristics of the research participants: all research participants were female, whose average age was 51 years, average pedagogical experience of teachers was 28 years. Of these, there were four teachers, four senior teachers, and seven teacher-methodologists.

Data collection and analysis. Research participants were sent a consent form, which contained all the information about the organization of the research: aim of the research, process, assurance of confidentiality, duration of the research, etc. After receiving signed consents, research time with each participant was agreed upon. Conversations were conducted remotely using the ZOOM application. Conversations were recorded and transcribed. Confidentiality is maintained, personal data of research participants were depersonalized and the research material is available only to the researchers. Research data were processed using qualitative content analysis. The text is divided into key units, which are represented by phrases, sentences, keywords, directly related to the phenomenon under analysis, key units are grouped in order to combine them into an overall structure. After the research report was

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prepared, informants were offered to get acquainted with it. Informants provided no comments. In presenting research results, statements were presented in coding, e.g., M1, M2, etc. The language of the teachers' speeches was not corrected. Research data were systemized according to 3 aspects: the situation of education in the educational institution after the announcement of quarantine: the initial reaction and adaptation of the administration and teachers of the educational institution; peculiarities of the distance education process; experiences of participants of education, advantages and disadvantages of distance pre-school education.

4. Research results.

The research sought to find out how pre-school education teachers assessed the situation of education in their educational institutions after the announcement of quarantine in Lithuania due to COVID-19. The research revealed that a distant organization of pre-school education was a challenge for all participants of education: administration of institutions, teachers and parents. The analysis of the obtained data highlighted a different assessment of the situation of education of pre-school education teachers after the announcement of quarantine in Lithuania. Some educators assessed the situation in terms of negative aspects: gone through negative emotional experiences – felt stress (8), fear, tension (2), shock (1), confusion (1); the situation was unclear to them with time perspective – uncertainty (11); surprise and misunderstanding (5); teachers were not prepared for such a situation (5); normal rhythm of the day was unbalanced (1). Other educators assessed the situation as neutral or positive: reconciliation with the current situation (6); challenge, fun (4); quick decision making, adaptation (1); calm emotional response (1). In order to assess circumstances in the educational institution after the announcement of quarantine in more detail, interest was taken in how administration and employees responded to the changed situation. The following actions of the administration and teachers of the educational institution became apparent (Fig. 2).

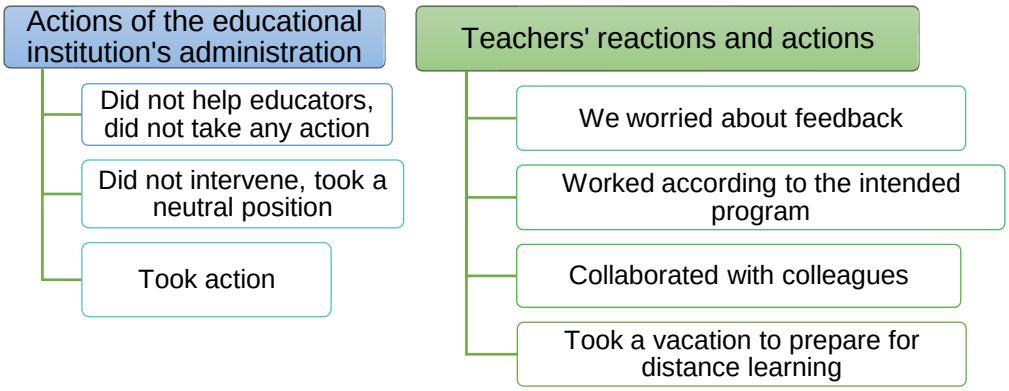

Figure 2. Actions of the administration and teachers of the educational institution after the announcement of quarantine.

According to teachers, administrative staff took the following steps: trusted the educators, supported and comforted them (2), e.g.: "administration supported us <...> even comforted, that girls be calm, we will manage with everything, we will do it" (M4); reacted quickly, created a joint group, offered to participate in trainings (4); endorsed the teachers' suggestions, discussed, provided recommendations

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(2), e.g.: "The director of the institution <...> created a "Classroom" group on the Google platform, where we, educators, received all the information about remote activities: getting acquainted with the orders of the Minister of Health, filling in questionnaires, use of information technologies, links, access to seminars – Webinars, conferences for teachers on the "Zoom" platform, and the involvement of educators, and sharing of various activities that took place in Lithuania" (M7).

However, there were teachers, who lacked the initial more decisive actions of the institution's administration. Some educators claimed that the administration of the educational institution did not help and did not take any actions: did not help, did not provide recommendations (3), there was no system created in the institution (2), e.g.: "The administration, to tell you the truth, left the employees behind <...>. They didn't help us much, we just expected more of that, advice, how to do, what to do, and we were left to our fate, they advised that maybe do everything remotely and that's all" (M2). One informant stated that the administrative staff of her educational institution did not intervene and left the pre-school education process to chance (1).

The analysis of the initial reaction and actions of educators highlighted the following circumstances (Fig. 1): emotional reaction of educators: worries about pre-school children's achievements and feedback in order to qualitatively prepare for learning at school (1), e.g.: "We were worried a lot <...> that there would be no feedback from parents, but we received, of course, not one hundred percent, but that anxiety gradually subsided" (M3). In their speeches, teachers emphasized that they had collaborated with colleagues, and that was particularly important at the beginning of distance learning (5); worked according to the intended program (1); one educator mentioned that she took a vacation to prepare for distance learning, e.g.: "Somehow, we friendly agreed upon who was on vacation, who was working <...>. A colleague took a vacation" (M4).

It was sought to determine whether educational goals have changed, what were the main tasks set during the period. Changes in educational goals and tasks are shown in Figure 3.

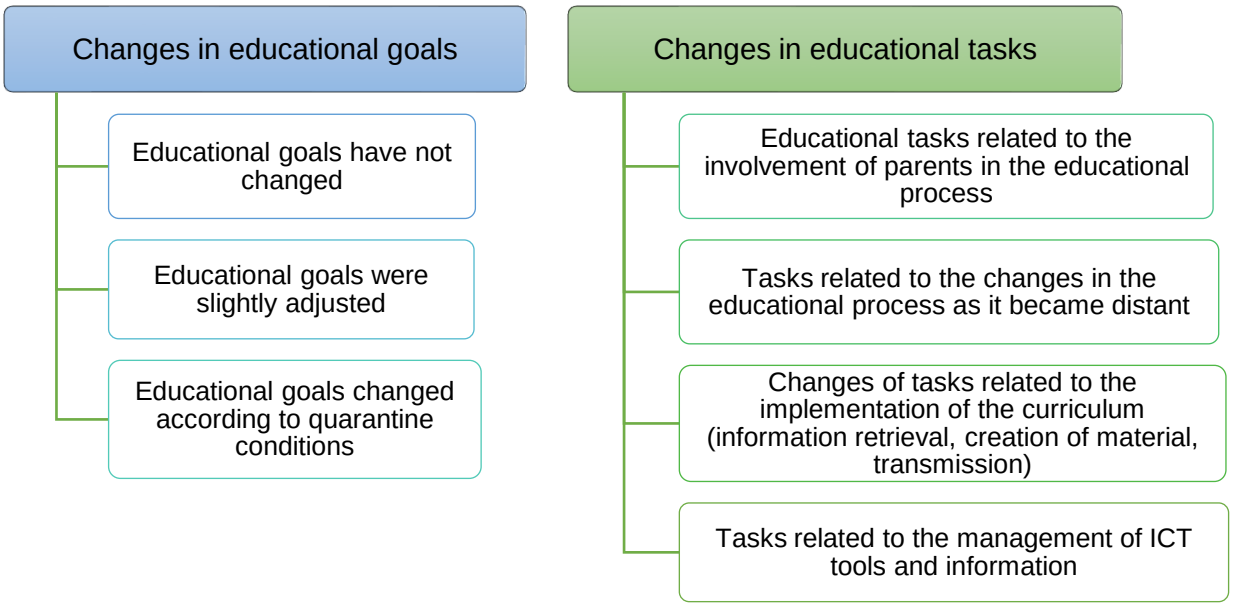

Figure 3. Changes in educational goals and tasks after the transition to distance learning.

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Informants stated (4) that educational goals did not change significantly, e.g.: "No, educational goals did not change" (M4). However, they were adjusted by taking into account the existing situation (9), e.g.: "We adjusted the goals by taking into account that we could not implement all the activities…" (M3). A small number of educators (2) indicated that the goal did change, e.g.: "The educational goal had changed, as parents had to get actively involved, participate in performing various tasks. There was no longer direct communication with children" (M7).

The main tasks indicated by the majority of informants (8) were the involvement of parents in the educational activities and the interest of children and parents in the educational process and tasks provided (6), to adapt to the needs of parents, to establish a sincere connection with them (11), e.g.: "One of the tasks: to convey most comprehensive learning materials to parents, to assign enough tasks so that everyone can select them according to their individual needs and develop properly" (M10). Some informants (5) pointed out that, first of all, it was necessary to find the most appropriate ways to contact and maintain constant connection with parents, provide them with information about the continuity of the educational process, consult on issues related to education, in individual cases provide pedagogical psychological assistance, as well as help manage stress (3), e.g.: "The most important thing was to be able to organize everything, be able to communicate and cooperate with parents, pupils of the group […] to ensure the continuity of pre-school education at a distance, so that there is mutual sincere feedback from parents and children" (M11).

Educators adjusted the content primarily with regard to the fact that parents would be able to transmit educational tasks to their children, and that the process of children's education would be continuous and purposeful in order to achieve outcomes provided in the General Curriculum Framework for Pre-school Education.

The majority of educators used the pre-school education toolkit "Opa Pa" (11), e.g.: "…we used the "Opa Pa" toolkit, […] we were guided exactly by the "Opa Pa" program" (M3). Some educators used this tool, but adjusted the order of topics (5), duration of education (3), e.g.: "…we have expanded some topics up to two weeks. It turned out that it was necessary to work longer" (M9), adapted tasks to home conditions (9). Teachers consulted with parents on how to work remotely (5), searched for examples of tasks (2), selected tasks so that children could perform them independently (2), e.g.: "…since it was already the beginning of spring […] we simply selected […] tasks that children could perform independently" (M4), prepared integrated tasks (4), e.g.: "According to the topic chosen for the week, we offered to perform simple exercises, tasks for developing fine motor skills, as well as to perform mathematical tasks in developing children's logical thinking" (M11).

Informants state that they prepared tasks by collecting and systemizing information from various sources, searched for technical solutions (14), used video materials, made video clips, created short films and educational games (10), e.g.: "We adjusted the content to make it interesting for children. We searched for short films on the topic, systematized information" (M5). Teachers sent parents information on how tasks should be completed (5), e.g.: "We searched for different ways of contacting parents so that they would understood how to perform activities, would complete them" (M5), suggested parents to make use of the available home spaces (1), tried for the tasks to be interesting for both children and parents (14), e.g.: "When choosing the content of education (topics, activities), I sought to make them clear, fun, interesting for everyone – not only for educators, but also for the family, and especially for children" (M15). Educators sought to develop all children's competencies, thus got together and worked as a team: educator, speech therapist, teacher of arts and non-formal education (5), e.g.: "Speech therapist sent the exercises" (M11). "The non-formal education teacher joined in: PE teacher showed exercises to be performed outdoors. We collaborated with other teachers and music teacher and others, we worked as a team" (M9).

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High workload and working time related to the necessity to prepare and provide teaching materials in a distant way, were distributed by educators in a variety of ways. Some educators joined together in groups, distributed topics, prepared teaching materials and tasks, and shared them with each other (7), e.g.: "We've divided among 3 groups who would prepare what material: nature, mathematics, hand training, reading, etc. We shared accumulated and prepared materials. Jointly to make it easier" (M8). Other educators worked individually and prepared all the educational material on their own (3).

Some educators (7) did not perform activities directly with children, e.g.: "There was no direct contact with children. We communicated with parents. We carried out distance education through them" (M5). Educators prepared teaching materials, tasks, and sent them to parents daily (4) or once a week at a specified time (6), others connected directly once a week (6), e.g.: "Our distance lessons were held at 4 p.m. By that time, parents had already finished their work. We agreed upon that, we sought that, we wanted them to help their children. Because parents were really benevolent" (M6). Some educators connected several times during the whole period of quarantine (2). The nature of communication with parents and pupils is illustrated in Figure 4.

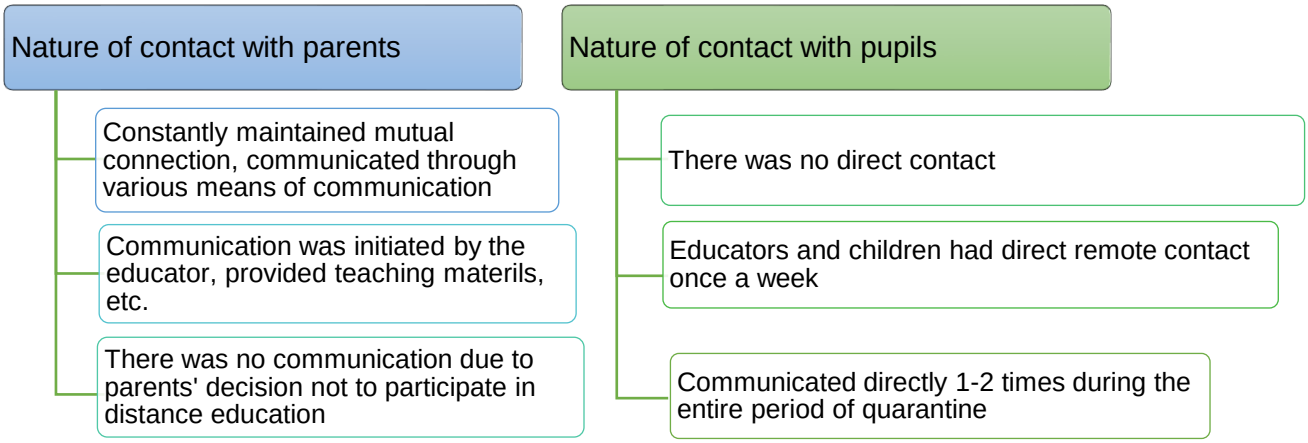

Figure 4. Nature of contact between the educators and pupils and their parents during distance learning in the period of quarantine.

Educators claimed that they were accessible to parents by various means, remotely provided individual consultations: by phone, email, Skype, Messenger, Viber, and other means (7), e.g.: "We chose easier-to-manage conference calls by Messenger, Skype programs. With their help we shared insights, observations, explained what is good, what was successful, and what still needs to be improved" (M12), "Individual conversations were held using Viber, Messenger, Zoom platforms" (M11).

Some educators (3) mentioned that they conducted parents' surveys, during which they found out that parents would like to receive a curriculum, teaching materials and assignment for a week, e.g.: "A parent survey was conducted on what is better for them…" (M5). Educators received feedback from children's parents on the outcomes of education, completed tasks, children's works, in various ways. Some educators indicated that they had a hard time doing that (4), e.g.: "But somehow the number of participating parents and children started to decrease…" (M1). However, a larger part of respondents

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was happy with the parents' activity and encouraged them to provide feedback by posting their children's works and completed tasks on the Padlet board (2), parents themselves shared their children's works in a closed Facebook group (3). During quarantine, there were individual cases (2) when the educational process was interrupted by the parents' decision while they were in quarantine, e.g.: "Only one family was not connected. They said they had no means, were self-isolating and would not participate" (M6).

Several educators mentioned that during this difficult period, they participated in republican projects (2) and carried out an international project (1), e.g.: "Parents together with children participated in project activities. There were republican projects, children with parents participated in projects: "Mommy is a part of my heart", "My mommy is the most beautiful". International project "Where the Easter egg will roll", in which children of my group participated. Participants were from England, America" (M13).

The research sought to reveal the advantages and disadvantages that can be singled out by the educators when assessing distance education. The analysis of research data allowed to distinguish advantages of distance learning from three aspects: children, educators and parents (Table 1).

Table 1. Teachers' opinions on the advantages of distance learning.

Group of responses	Excerpts from interview texts (informants)
Children	
Individualized education: children could choose the pace, tools and time of learning	<...> individual education, which is more effective than group one, as every child receives attention and can adapt activities to the pace of one's own work (M10).
	Mhm, advantages are, for example, for the child oneself, he can more, when he works alone, he can choose one's own pace, tools (M1).
Education took place in a safe home environment for the child	And at home that environment is safer, cosier. For a more sensitive child, for example, it may be even more fun to study at home (M1).
Children learned to use ICT, to apply them in the process of teaching/learning	Children easily take the tablet in their hands and can boldly sometimes teach us how to use that technology. Children also learn more how to find that material, examine it. Use not just for games, but also to learn something, show, enjoy that they know, find educational material (M5).
	Another advantage – diversity of education, because IT tools are used. While working in a group, we don't have the right audio or video tools to diversify our work. All the more, there is no possibility to carry out interactive tasks on a computer screen (M10).
Educators	
New experience, interesting	It was very interesting for me, well creative and I like this kind of work, to make that result interesting and beautiful for myself (M1).
A more positive approach to various situations	Distance forced us to look at those things differently: to look at what is happening in a more positive way (M5).
Improved competencies in working with ICT	We used ICT more, got acquainted with various applications (M7).
	One of the major advantages is that we got acquainted with and learned to use a variety of information technologies (M9).
Participated in trainings, improved qualifications, developed	Advantages are that it really made us improve, learn something, get to know, be more interested <...> (M4).

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Parents	
Saw the real potential of their children	Parents became more aware of children's possibilities in mastering educational materials. They themselves noticed that children do not easily learn, perform the given tasks (M7).
	<...> parents saw the real potential of their children, how much they are capable of, what they are capable of, and how much work needs to be put in, so that they do something, that they improve, that they learn something new (M2).
A closer relationship between parents and children	Abundant and sincere feedback from parents and children, by receiving photos, video materials (M14).
Became more active participants of education, became more involved in the educational process, cooperated with each other	Active participation of all parents, cooperation both with teachers and with each other (M13).

The analysis of teachers' statements about the positive impact of distance education on children, highlighted main advantages: education is more individualized – children could choose the pace, means and time of completing tasks that was most convenient to them (7); children learned to use ICT and learned to use ICT not only for games, but also for learning (7). One educator noted that learning was carried out in a child-safe home environment (1).
Educators identified the improved competencies of working with ICT as the most significant advantage of distance education in their work (7). According to educators, the fact that teachers had more opportunities and participated more in trainings, improved their qualifications, was also important (5). One educator noted that distance education was a new and exciting experience (1).
The analysis of advantages of distance education in relation to parents showed that educators saw more active than usual parental participation in children's education, greater involvement in the process of children's education, cooperation between parents (5), cognition of their children – their real potential (2), noticed a closer relationship between parents and children (1).
The opinion of educators about the disadvantages of distance learning was divided into three aspects: disadvantages from the point of view of children, educators and parents (Table 2).

Table 2. Teachers' opinions on the disadvantages of distance learning.

Group of responses	Excerpts from interview texts (informants)
Children	
Children lacked contact (attention, emotional connection) and motivation	And there was a lack of that kind of communication with each other. Joking, fooling around with each other in a group (M2).
	The disadvantage of distance learning is the lack of motivation, because learning in a team is more fun. Social skills also suffer, children begin to lack communication with friends (M10).
Distance learning is not suitable for children of this age	For children of this age to work with the application, it needs to be turned on, for them to see, be able to do the task together. Adult assistance is required (M5).
Not all children were involved in distance learning	Actually, only about half of the parents and children participated. We didn't receive answers from others about how they were doing (M9).

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Educators	
Educators lacked contact with children	And the disadvantages, well it seems to me that contact is necessary for children in kindergarten. <...> You see it in their eyes whether he understands or you need to repeat. <...> And when you talk to the camera, you teach everything you have to say, and maybe the child is gone long ago, doing something else, he is not interested in that topic at all (M1).
Did not know how to manage time, overestimated their strengths	It is that disadvantage, overestimation of one's strengths and then such a burnout appears (M1).
	We worked I would say from 8 a.m. to even 9-10 p.m., I even had to communicate and get in touch with parents, so I would say that job was hard enough. <...> Already after a month, a holiday was needed (M4).
Did not see the individual work of the child	The first major disadvantage, <...>, that we cannot see the individual work directly, how the child understands, how much he needs to be explained, how it is explained to him, because we carry out the lesson by broadcasting and that's all, we just don't see how the work goes on, how much time one eventually spends doing that task (M2).
Technical issues, lack of ICT knowledge and tools	The Internet connection was bad (M6).
	In the beginning, we didn't have enough knowledge about information technology. The lack was really great. We didn't know how to work with those applications. How to use them properly (M8).
Lack of information from the administration	The administration must provide recommendations for distance learning (M14).
Felt the negative effects of distance working on the health	Its [distance work] disadvantage, well and yet it affects the vision (M2).
	Sitting in front of a computer is bad for health (back pain, itchy eyes) (M12).
Parents	
Could not distance themselves from professional activities	And the disadvantage <...> is the inability of parents to plan their time, inability to distance themselves, maybe from work activities (M3).
Lack of information for families with children with special needs	Distance learning has negatively affected those families, where children have behavioural disorders and couldn't accept their parents as teachers, who were unable to work with their children. Those families hired teachers during the summer. Today I hear that they, 2 children, have special educators (M6).

Teachers noted that distance education is unsuitable for pre-school children due to the peculiarities of children in this age group: it is difficult to maintain children's attention, the teacher does not see and cannot monitor the individual work of the child, the number of hand training tasks is reduced (5). Educators noted that children were particularly lacking contact with teachers and peers, attention, emotional connection and motivation (4). Some teachers claimed that not all children were involved in the distance learning (2).

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Educators emphasized that not only children, but they themselves also lacked direct contact with children (7). In analysing their performance, teachers realized that they did not know how to manage time, overestimated their strength in certain situations, and some experienced burnout (4). Distance working was hampered by technical problems: there was no internet connection, teachers lacked knowledge in working with ICT and ICT tools (3). Some educators noticed that they have felt a negative impact on their health: their vision was impaired, they had to sit in front of a computer for a long time (2), there was lack of information from the administrative staff (1).
The analysis of disadvantages of distance learning from the point of view of parents, as participants of education, revealed the following categories: parents could not distance themselves from their professional activities (2), which made it hard for them to get involved in the process of children's education; there was lack of information for families with children with special needs (1).

5. Findings and discussion.
The organization of distance education, after the announcement of quarantine in Lithuania, posed new challenges for all participants of pre-school education: administration of educational institutions, teachers, parents. The initial reaction of teachers to the situation is associated with the expression of negative emotions and feelings, and reconciliation, decision-making. Some teachers lacked leadership of the heads of the educational institution in making responsible decisions about the organization of distance education. Other teachers claimed that the administration of the educational institution had taken actions, provided recommendations. The initial reaction of teachers to the situation was expressed in worrying about achievements and feedback, and in the initial actions: cooperation with colleagues and preparation for distance learning during a vacation.
Educators tried not to change the goals set in the General Curriculum Framework for Pre-school Education and to achieve them, but adjusted educational tasks by taking into account the changed situation in terms of quarantine. Educators were able to quickly master digital programs, manage information flows, cooperate with colleagues and parents, maintain the continuity of pre-school education, individually respond to the situation of each child. Teachers used ICT and traditional tools for distance learning. Educators adjusted the content, first of all, with regard to the fact that parents would be able to transmit educational tasks to their children, and the process of education for children would be continuous and purposeful. In order to provide feedback to parents, teachers used various ways that were most easily managed and accessible to parents: online platforms, social networks, virtual environments, emails, communicated via direct audio and video connections. Teachers constantly provided individual consultations for parents on all issues related to their children's education.
It was possible to identify the advantages and disadvantages of the organization of distance education in three directions: in relation to children, educators and parents. Both teachers and children have improved their ICT application competences. For educators, distance learning was a new experience, they more than usual participated in various trainings. Children were able to study in a safe home environment, work at a time and pace acceptable to them. The relationship between parents and children has strengthened, parents were able to see the real potential of their children, were more than usual involved in the process of education. The most significant negative aspects of distance learning are related to the lack of contact between the teachers and the pupil, and the resulting consequences. Educators were not able to manage time, felt a negative impact on the health, were hindered by technical problems in the use of ICT. Parents could not distance themselves from professional activities, there was a lack of information for families with children with special needs.

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The analysis of the experiences presented in the article is important in understanding how quickly the education sector and pre-primary education teachers and parents can adapt to isolation and / or other abrupt changes and continue the educational process successfully. These experiences allow the educational science community and pedagogical practitioners to pay attention to the factors that are important in organizing pre-school education in the context of global change.

6. Research limitations and possibilities for research continuity.

The research was conducted in the context of an ongoing pandemic, so interviews were conducted through remote contact platforms (Zoom and Teams). This resulted in a limited emotional connection with the subjects, which may have influenced their speeches. The results of the study presented in the article cover only a part of the data of the whole study, therefore only the default part of the studied phenomenon is revealed. This may have affected the overall picture of the results presented. The limitation of the qualitative research is related to the inevitable subjectivity in the qualitative research. Even though when planning and conducting the following research requirements for this type of research were met, the generalization of results and possibilities of their application are limited in part by the small number of research participants. It is the results of qualitative research that are unique and specific to the individuals involved in the research. It would be incorrect to apply the findings of the research to all pre-school education institutions, but it is likely that the opinion expressed by the participants of the following research provides an understanding of the challenges and opportunities of distance pre-school education faced by participants during the Covid-19 quarantine. Research results allow to predict continuity of the further research on the following phenomenon in order to find out the opinion of parents and single out the most important steps in organizing distance education.

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