

## IMPACTS OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON THE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF FLESH STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF KARA (TOGO)

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**Abstract:** Like most countries in the world, students at the University of Kara in northern Togo have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic crisis. The purpose of this article is to highlight the impacts of the Covid-19 health crisis in the decline in the academic success rates of students in the Faculty of Letters and Human Sciences (FLESH) of the University of Kara. The methodology adopted is mixed, combining documentary research, direct observations, and surveys by questionnaire with 216 learners. The results show that the low average annual success rate (18%) between 2014-2019 dropped to 11.60% between 2020 and 2022 (period of the Covid-19 health crisis). This decadence is due, among other things, to the increase in inequalities within the student world. These are manifested by the difficulties experienced by vulnerable respondents to meet their basic needs but also by the lack of the necessary tools (computers, Android) for the success of virtual learning. There is also a lack of adequate monitoring that could have helped learners in the technical manipulation of educational platforms and in carrying out their work.

**Keywords:** Impacts, Covid-19 pandemic, results of FLESH students, University of Kara.

## IMPACTS DE LA PANDÉMIE DE COVID-19 SUR LES RÉSULTATS ACADÉMIQUES DES ÉTUDIANTS DE LA FLESH DE L'UNIVERSITÉ DE KARA (TOGO)

**Résumé:** A l'image de la plupart des pays du monde, les étudiants de l'Université de Kara au nord Togo ont été affectés par la crise pandémique de Covid-19. Le but de cet article est de faire ressortir les impacts de la crise sanitaire de Covid-19 dans la baisse des taux de réussite académique des étudiants de la Faculté des lettres et sciences humaines (FLESH) de l'Université de Kara. La méthodologie adoptée est mixte, combinant la recherche documentaire, les observations directes et les enquêtes par questionnaire auprès de 216 apprenants. Les résultats montrent que le taux moyen de réussite annuelle faible (18%) entre 2014-2019 a chuté à 11,60% entre 2020 et 2022 (période de la crise sanitaire de coronavirus). Cette décadence est due entre autres à l'accroissement des inégalités au sein du monde étudiant. Celles-ci se manifestent par les difficultés éprouvées par les enquêtés vulnérables à satisfaire à leurs besoins fondamentaux mais aussi par le manque des outils nécessaires (ordinateurs, Android) pour la réussite des apprentissages virtuels. Il est constaté également une insuffisance de suivi adéquat qui aurait pu aider les apprenants dans la manipulation technique des plateformes pédagogiques et dans la réalisation de leurs travaux.

**Mots clés :** Impacts, pandémie de Covid-19, résultats des étudiants de la FLESH, Université de Kara.

## Introduction

The crises, whether socio-economic, political, natural or health-related, have many social consequences. The educational system, being a societal sub-component, is undoubtedly impacted by the transformations brought about by certain crises, leading to the closure of schools over a more or less long period of time (Mastercard foundation 2020, pp.2010-2017). At the beginning of 2020, the whole world is informed of the appearance of a pandemic disease in a province of China which spreads very rapidly. This is the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic, a disease which, by putting the whole humanity in mourning, is handicapping the organisation, social structuring and development of States. Since the detection of the very first case of contamination in February 2020 in Egypt, the immediate closure of the entire educational chain, including public places, was recommended. Educational institutions were hastily forced to stop all teaching as a response. As a result, the educational approach of classroom training was outlawed in favour of distance learning. UNESCO in June 2021 points out in an article on education in Africa at the time of Covid-19 that: "Africa has been the only continent where countries have opted for a national shutdown of schools, thus putting millions of pupils and students in a situation of academic deprivation. For the first time in the history of independent Africa, pupils and teachers were on forced holiday"). Although the need for distance learning was apparent at the very beginning of the pandemic, it was also very complex to reach pupils and students effectively. Conferences, seminars, examinations, sporting and cultural events that are central to school and academic life have all been suspended. The pandemic has brought an unprecedented shock to educational systems, disrupting the lives of nearly 1.6 billion pupils and students in more than 190 countries in all continents (United Nations, 2020, p.2.). In order to keep learners in a learning situation and to continue educational programmes, several alternative measures have been taken by governments. At the primary and secondary school level, television and radio education have taken over from face-to-face schooling. African universities have resorted to digital teaching platforms in order to save the academic year, and universities that were once packed with students have become a human desert. At the University of Kara in Togo, the Covid-19 pandemic has enabled the adaptation and innovation capacities in terms of response to a greater extent, including distance learning. Digital platforms such as Telegram, Moodle, Teams, the Learning Management System and certain technological tools have been used to ensure the continuation of teaching in times of containment. These measures have repercussions on the educational fabric, especially as they were adopted without any prior preparation of the students. It should also be noted that the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic have also contributed to the drop in students' academic results. The reduction in the volume of teaching time, the suppression of certain teaching methods such as brainstorming, presentations and practical exercises have created a gap between students and teachers. According to 67.20% of education stakeholders, distance education is not adapted to the Togolese context because it risks aggravating inequalities related to access to quality education for all.

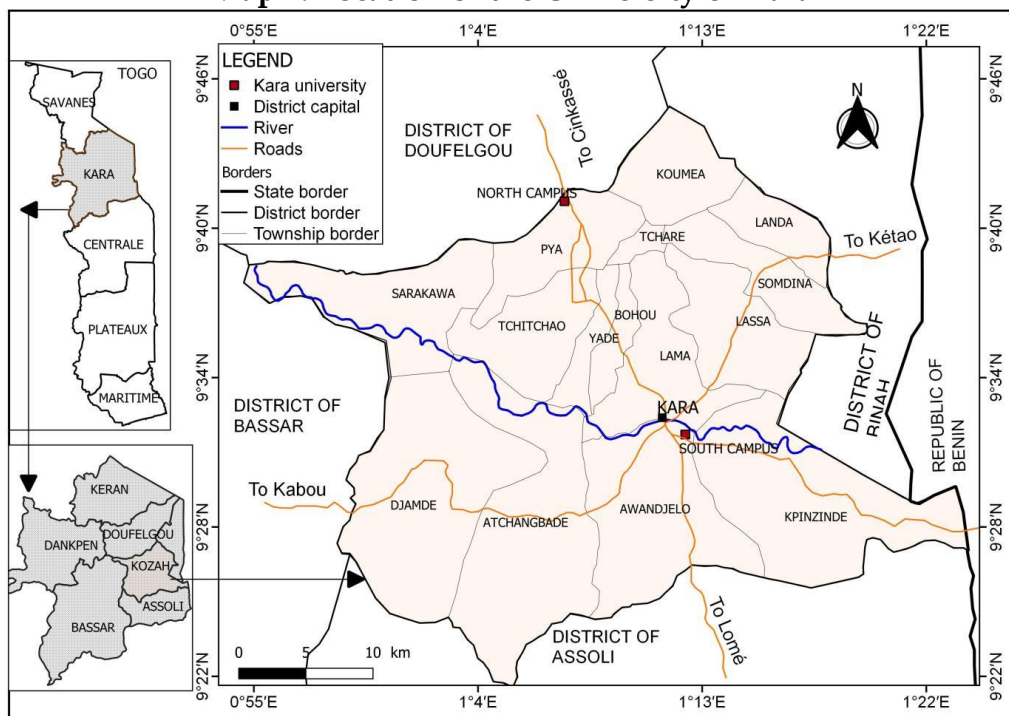
As a result, it is deplored that the end-of-year results of FLESH students, like those of the University of Kara, are declining. The problem of the decline in the success rates of these learners raises a fundamental question: what impact does the Covid-19 pandemic have on the academic results of the students of the faculty? The main objective of this study is to determine the impact of this health crisis on the academic performance of learners in this institution. The plan of the work is summarised in the geographical and methodological framework, the results obtained and finally a discussion.

## 1. Geographical and Methodological Framework

### 1.1. Presentation of the University of Kara

The University of Kara is a higher education institution located in the city of Kara in northern Togo. The city is located between 1°9' and 1°15' East longitude and between 9°31' and 9°35' North latitude, 413 km from the capital city, Lomé. Created by decree N° 1999-011 of 21 January 1999, the University of Kara opened its doors in January 2004 with 1300 students, the second public university in Togo, and will experience a meteoric growth of its annual enrolment to reach 21,000 students in 2021. The institution is spread over two sites: the first, called the South campus, includes three faculties: FLESH (Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences), the largest in terms of numbers; FASEG (Faculty of Economics and Management); FDSP (Faculty of Law and Political Science). The second site, called the North campus, houses the FAST faculty (Faculty of Science and Technology) and is located at Pya about 20 km north of the South campus (Map 1).

Map 1: Location of the University of Kara



Source: National Geographic Institute, map produced by K. Avouglu, 2022

Since its creation, the results of the students in the various examinations have always been encouraging. The University has always been able to achieve one of its main objectives, namely the improvement of the quality of education with a view to training competent executives for the public and private sectors. However, the introduction of the BMD system (Bachelor-Master-Doctorate) from 2009 onwards, and especially the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic crisis, have led to a sharp decline in the academic results of learners. Indeed, the average success rates of the 4 faculties (FLESH, FASEG, FDSP and FAST) between 2004 and 2009, which were 64.61%, dropped to minus 28% between 2010 and 2019 (Direction of Academic Affairs and the Schooling (DAAS), 2022).

### ***1.2. Methodological Approach***

To carry out this study, a methodology was adopted. It is based on documentary research, direct observation, interviews and field survey. In the process of collecting second hand data, the central library of the University of Kara as well as some of its services such as the DAAS were visited without forgetting the internet network which was the object of a very large exploitation. The articles, books, reports and syntheses consulted, in relation with the study theme, provided an overview of the education system in times of pandemic crisis in Africa and around the world. In terms of observation, a decrease in the number of students requesting their provisional transcripts was noted, as well as those who had to register at the secretariat of the various departments for tutorials. In short, the number of students who used to come to the FLESH has decreased. Interviews with the teaching/administrative staff, in particular, the director of the DAAS, the Dean of the FLESH and the person in charge of digital pedagogy focused on the availability of teaching materials in the context of virtual courses. These discussions also concerned the upgrading of teachers and students for the proper use of the new technologies for dispensing teaching units. The assessment of the results of the students of the faculty over the last 9 years was also part of the interviews. By means of the interview guide, 5 teachers, including 2 in the Geography department, 1 in History, 1 in English and 1 in Sociology, were approached for discussions on the effectiveness of the new teaching tools used and the student adherence to these new deals during the coronavirus crisis.

The quantitative survey focused mainly on the collection of statistical data. It is a socio-educational expertise that took into account the students of the FLESH of the University of Kara which includes 8 departments. Out of a parent population of 14,400 students (DAAS, 2022), 216 were interviewed (i.e. a quota of 1.5%) on the basis of purposive random sampling. These students were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. The different headings of socio-economic and educational life targeted in the questionnaire were living conditions, the ability to assimilate the knowledge conveyed by teachers, the handling and effectiveness of the new teaching tools used and the assessment of academic results. The number of students sampled varies from one department to another (table1).

**Table 1: Distribution of respondents by department**

Departments	Number	Specimen	Percentage (%)
English	3006	45	20.83
Geography	3665	55	25.46
History	2803	42	19.44
Applicable foreign languages	110	2	1
Modern literature	2563	38	17.60
Educational Sciences	989	15	7
Language Sciences	351	5	2.30
Sociology	913	14	6.37
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,400</b>	<b>216</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field survey, November 2022

According to the data in Table 1, more than 66% of the respondents come from the departments of Geography, English and History. The less represented departments are particularly Applied Foreign Languages (1%) and Language Sciences (2.30%).

### 1.3. Data Processing

The processing and analysis of the collected information is done with some software such as: SPSS, MS Excel spreadsheet, MS Word 2013.

## 2. Results

The results are structured around the factors of the regression of the end of year results of the FLESH students of the University of Kara and the appreciation of these learners of the alternatives taken for the unfolding of pedagogical activities during the pandemic crisis.

### 2.1. Determinants of the Decline in Academic Results

These are the introduction of the BMD system and the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic.

#### 2.1.1. The BMD System and the Suppression of Catch up, Factors of Decadence of Academic Performance

Before the emergence of the pandemic, the University of Kara, like some universities in the sub-region, had introduced some reforms in the guise of quality assurance. On the other hand, two reforms have had negative effects on academic results. Since the start of the 2008-2009 academic year, Togo's universities have entered the dynamics of the Anglo-Saxon education system, with a 3-level architecture, namely Bachelor-Master-Doctorate (BMD). From the classical system, the institution is switching to a new system that it considers best suited for quality training. This system requires the student to validate all the teaching units. After the adoption of this new system, the average success rates which were 64.61% before 2009 at the University of Kara dropped to 27.54% from 2010 (DAAS, 2020). According to 71.5% of the respondents, the classical system that was used had a number of advantages that allowed for easy success in studies. It simply took into account the arithmetic average

of the grades of the different teaching units of the year to declare a student admitted or deferred.

The second reform concerns the abolition of make-up sessions and the introduction of compensations, which significantly reduced the pass rates from 27.54% to 20.15% (DAAS, 2020).

### 2.1.2. Impacts of the Covid-19 Pandemic on FLESH Students

The closure of universities as a result of the health crisis had an impact on students in the socio-economic and educational spheres.

#### 2.1.2.1. Social Impacts

The Covid-19 crisis which had negative effects on the living conditions of the population did not spare the students of the University of Kara. The institution, with its "one student, one computer" scheme, which consists of offering machines at more or less acceptable prices to learners, has played a key role in distance learning. However, the increase in social inequalities caused by the crisis means that 37.5% of students do not have personal computer equipment (computer or Android) or lack suitable working space (unhygienic housing, overcrowding, etc.) to follow the lessons. Some of them ask their friends, classmates or parents for these teaching tools in order to be part of the virtual course. This situation creates frustrations or inconveniences among the learners (table 2).

**Table 2: Reasons for student frustration**

Reasons for frustration	Number (n =216)	Percentage (%)
Precarious living conditions	176	81.48
Gender-based violence	105	48.61
Malaise	205	94.90
Isolation	114	52.80

Source: Field survey, November 2022

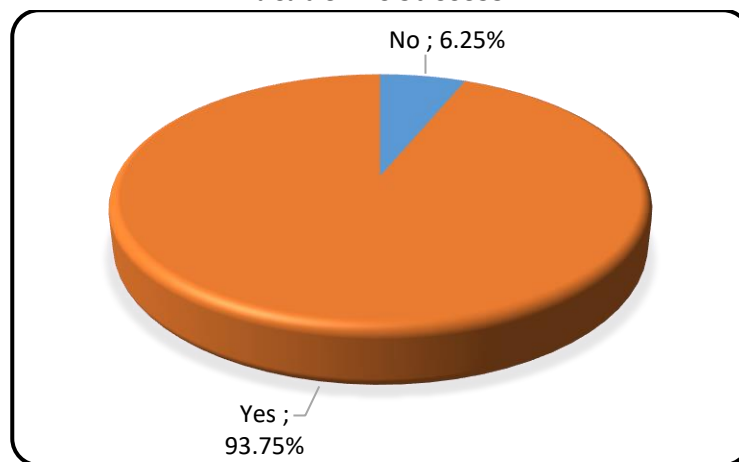
According to this table 2, 4/5ths of the students admitted that the pandemic has led to a growing instability in their living conditions which is reflected in the inability to adequately meet their basic needs (food, shelter, education and health care etc.). More than 9/10ths of the respondents felt uncomfortable because of the general psychosis due to the disease and the difficulties in following the virtual training courses (evaluation methods, addition of academic work, cancellation of practical work and some tutorials). About half of the respondents highlighted either isolation (lack of physical contact with parents and teachers) or gender-based violence (harassment and forced marriages due to the fact that the restrictions imposed by the coronavirus force individuals to stay at home) as direct impacts of the pandemic crisis. With regard to these conditions, it is therefore obvious that the academic performance of the students enrolled in 2020-2022 is less good than that of the promotions before and after the health crisis.



### 2.1.2.2. Economic Impacts

In order to mitigate the effects of the coronavirus and facilitate access to education for all, the Togolese authorities have decreed free school fees for secondary school students and the abolition of registration fees for the various examinations at an estimated cost of 1.9 billion CFA francs (Togolese Republic, 2021). While nothing has been done to relieve students of the shift to distance learning, registration fees have increased from 22,500 to 27,500 CFA francs and bus tickets from 50 to 150 CFA francs. The purchase of course materials, which has become an obligation in contrast to face-to-face courses, and the high cost of the internet connection have led to an unprecedented deterioration in the financial situation of students, while only 8.40% of respondents receive grants and 36.50% receive aid. With the closure of the university canteen, students who do not live with their parents are forced to buy their own food, which is often much more expensive, making meals less balanced and sometimes insufficient. The economic and social instability caused by the health crisis has increased the risk of students marrying and limiting their ability to negotiate safe sex, as evidenced by the increase in pregnancy cases in the faculty from 7 between 2017-2019 before the crisis to 13 between 2020-2022 (Dean's Activity Report, 2022). These student frailties are often reflected in the decline in their academic performance. The respondents' views on this issue are presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Opinion of students on the effects of the Covid-19 crisis on their academic success**



Source: Field survey, November 2022

According to Figure 1, only one (1) out of sixteen (16) students said that the pandemic did not negatively affect their academic performance. These are among the group of learners whose parents provided them with the necessary equipment for virtual training. However, nine (9) out of ten students attributed the decline in academic performance to the economic impacts of Covid-19. These respondents believe that the crisis has reinforced the educational gap within the student body. Those who do not have adequate pedagogical tools are forced to improvise as motorcycle-taximans or labourers in various sectors in order to have the necessary financial resources to comply with the new requirements of distance learning. In doing so, they are no longer consistent in following the digital pedagogy and this can only weaken their performance.

### 2.1.2.3. Educational Impacts

The coronavirus crisis has had a profound effect on the educational sector with the closure of educational institutions. The University of Kara, in order to maintain the continuity of educational activities, has introduced hybrid pedagogy. It consists of a combination of 80% virtual and 20% face-to-face learning for basic degree students and the reverse for masters students. However, the university authorities, the teaching staff but also and above all the students are not sufficiently ready for this mode of teaching. The teaching staff essentially lacks capacity building and professional development in the use of technology in digital education. For example, the lack of physical contact means that some teachers and students see class time as a time for distraction. The pandemic has led to a clear disorganisation of teaching at the University of Kara. These problems have resulted in "learning poverty" and the dropout or abandonment of 18.30% of learners, according to the dean's statement between 2020 and 2022. An overwhelming majority (98.5%) of respondents acknowledged that this metamorphosis of the educational fabric has contributed immeasurably to the decline in their academic performance.

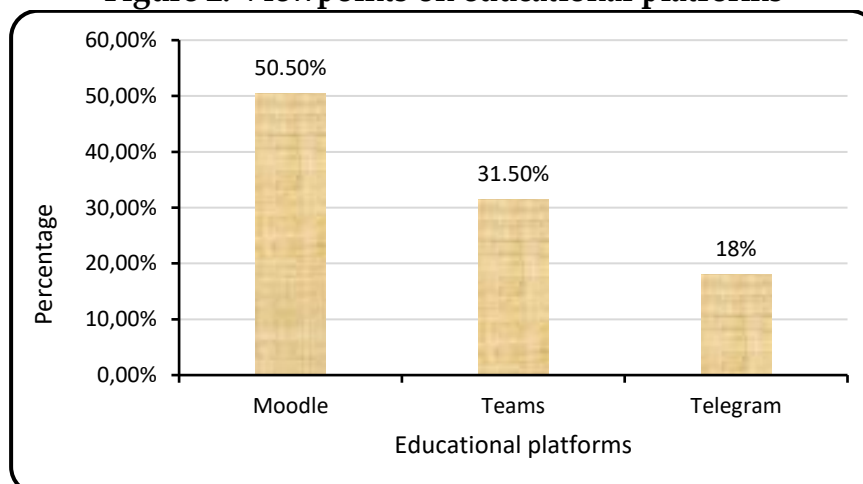
## 2.2. State of Play of Distance Education at the University of Kara

In Togo, in response to the pandemic crisis, schools, universities and vocational training institutions closed their doors on 20 March 2020 by decision of the government. The closure of schools affected nearly 2,800,000 learners in the various educational cycles, universities and training centres. Before this situation, some teaching tools were put to use at the University of Kara.

### 2.2.1. Pedagogical Platforms Used at the University of Kara

The university authorities implemented three learning platforms to ensure the smooth running of teaching during the health crisis in Covid-19 (Figure 2).

**Figure 2: Viewpoints on educational platforms**



Source: Field survey, November 2022

The first alternative made available to students in 2020 is the platform called "Telegram". About one (1) student out of five (5) according to figure 2 claims to be satisfied for reasons of ease and the possibility of access to previous sessions. On the



other hand, they deplore the fact that it is gluttonous for internet packages in case they take the initiative to revisit a course already passed but also it gives opportunities for distraction like WhatsApp.

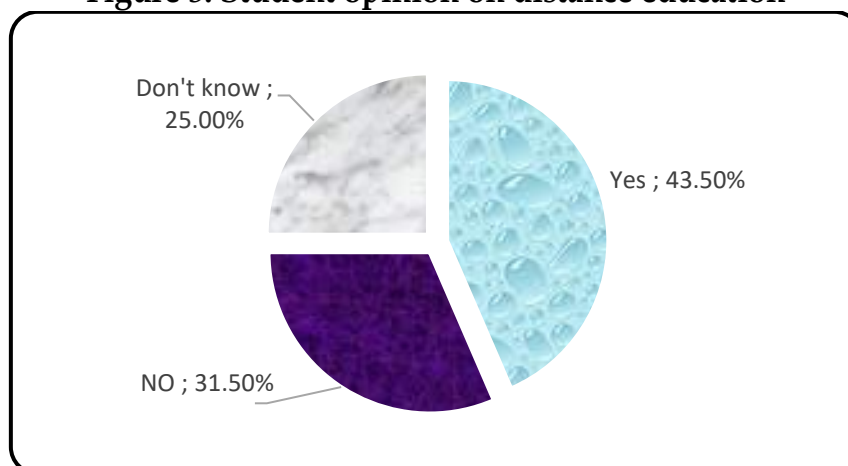
In 2021, in order to improve the quality of virtual courses, "Telegram" was abandoned in favour of a new platform called "Moodle" which is used at universities in the West African sub-region. Despite a rather stammering use at the beginning, half of the students believe that it is the best platform for distance learning, both asynchronous and synchronous.

However, since the beginning of the academic year in September 2022, due to certain problems with updates, "Moodle" has been temporarily suspended in favour of "Teams" until it is operational at the beginning of 2023. One (1) respondent out of three (3) appreciates "Teams" because of its easy access but regrets the disruption of courses by untimely interventions by students without being designated by the teacher. They think that it is better suited for business activities than virtual learning.

### 2.2.2. Strengths and Weaknesses of Virtual Learning

The University of Kara, enrolled in a quality assurance process since 2016, has emphasized the need to refocus teaching on the learner, their skills to be acquired and the progressive integration of information and communication technologies in learning. However, their operationalisation has not sufficiently taken into account African specificities, nor the experience of students and teachers. This has led to varying degrees of satisfaction with the results (Figure 3).

**Figure 3: Student opinion on distance education**



Source: Field survey, November 2022

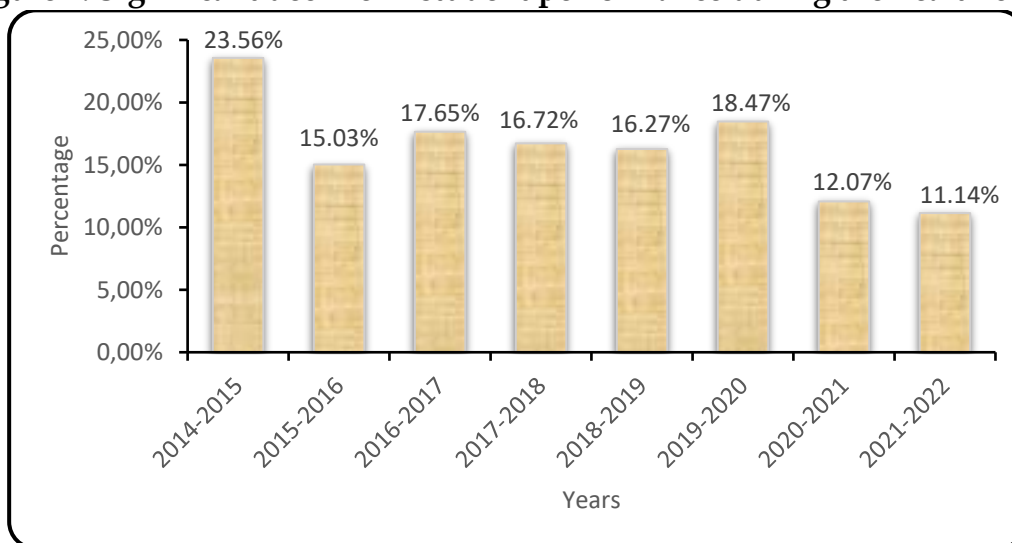
According to Figure 3, one third of respondents felt that virtual education was a good experience to prescribe to students. Students reported being very open to the digital world, which helped them to develop a sense of independent learning. The advent of distance learning in the wake of the health crisis has also enabled students to become more proficient in the use of information and communication technologies and to discover the possibilities of obtaining scholarships abroad. They perceive educational platforms as the most suitable for a university education because they break the barrier of "distance" and give students great freedom to express themselves without the

slandrous gaze of their peers. Finally, they largely solve the problem of overcrowding in lecture halls.

However, two (2) out of five (5) students are against virtual courses and call for a return to face-to-face learning. In the context of teaching, they feel that tutoring does not seem to play an important role. Furthermore, the digitalization of content and learning resources was carried out in a blended learning scenario. The supervision of learners was limited to face-to-face sessions, which represent 20% of the total, while online sessions represent 80%. When asked about this, these respondents pointed an accusing finger at the lack of regular support that could have helped them to get to grips with the technical side of the platform and to complete their work. In other words, the technological tool and the face-to-face supervision could not compensate for the lack of distance tutoring. As a result, some courses and tutorials were poorly assimilated by learners.

One (1) student out of five (5) does not know whether to continue with the hybrid courses or to return to face-to-face learning. This view is motivated by the fact that they are torn between the advantages of blended learning, a real window for the traceability of knowledge (knowledge and know-how), and the weakness of the academic returns. Blended learning following the health crisis significantly reduced the performance of FLESH learners, despite the fact that assessment methods have not changed much (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: Significant decline in student performance during the health crisis**



Source: Field survey, November 2022

Analysis of Figure 4 shows that the already annual low average pass rate (18%) of learners in the faculty who completed their course between 2014-2019 dropped to 11.60% between 2020 and 2022, the period of the Covid-19 pandemic crisis.

### 3. Discussion

In the era of globalization and digitalization, the Covid-19 pandemic crisis has given a new impetus to the socio-economic and educational integration of the African continent. However, it has occurred quite suddenly without the public authorities

having the time to concoct an appropriate response, and has turned all sectors of activity, including the education system, upside down.

At the University of Kara in northern Togo, the crisis is acutely felt by the student body, as it is by other learners in Africa. Thus, after the first case of coronavirus detected in Togo on March 6, 2020, the Togolese government, in order to reduce the spread of the pandemic, decreed on March 20, 2020, the closure of schools and universities and all vocational training centres until further notice throughout the national territory. This closure of schools affected nearly 2,800,000 learners in the different cycles of education, universities and training centres with various consequences. Similar decisions have been taken by almost all countries in the world. In other words, most of the 88 member states and governments of the Francophony were also forced to close all their schools and vocational training institutions in order to curb the spread of the coronavirus. In the space of a few days, learners in more than 95% of the French-speaking world were forced to stay at home and miss out on face-to-face education, often to the surprise of the population, which was suddenly aware of the seriousness of the situation. Regardless of their geographical location, their economic indicators or their geopolitical situation, containment throughout their territory has imposed itself on the vast majority of countries, often caught unprepared, as the most effective barrier to the potentially devastating effects of the coronavirus pandemic (Parliamentary Assembly of the Francophony, 2020, p.6). In the same perspective, the Association of African Universities (AAU, 2020, p.1) observes with growing concern the developments related to the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. This potentially life-threatening disease is having a significant impact on education systems worldwide, particularly in African countries. Many of Africa's Institutions of Higher Education (IHEs) and other educational institutions have been ordered to close in order to stop the spread of Covid-19. UNESCO's follow-up estimates (2020) indicate that 776.7 million children and young people worldwide will be disabled by school closures as a result of the pandemic.

The University of Kara for the continuity of education during the health crisis has implemented three platforms namely Telegram, Moodle and Teams, which are variously appreciated by the learners. A proportion of 18% of the students appreciate Telegram, 31%, Teams and 50% are in favour of Moodle, but they deplore the fact that the first one gives possibilities of distraction like WhatsApp and the last one, the disruption of the course by the untimely interventions of students without being designated by the teacher. Moodle, on the other hand, has been less criticised. Similar measures have been taken in almost all countries. In France, among the tools most commonly used for distance learning, e-mail is in first place (88%), followed by the Moodle e-learning platform, which is integrated into the university's digital working environment (71%), and the Zoom videoconferencing software (63%). The preponderance of email and Moodle shows support for existing tools that have already been mastered in order to deal with an unprecedented situation (A. Messaoui, C. Redondo et al, 2021, p.8). In Brazil, too, public universities have adopted the distance learning modality to continue their activities and allow students to continue their studies in compliance with health regulations, even to the point of confinement.

Within the autonomy system, each Brazilian university has made choices about how to implement distance education. In the Brazilian context, as in the rest of the world, this unprecedented process of pedagogical and administrative adaptation has brought about changes in the way teachers and students carry out their activities (V. L. Xavier de Andrade and J.-C. Régnie, 2021, p.2).

The socio-economic impact of the Covid-19 health crisis is reflected in increased inequalities among learners. Thus, 81% of the respondents had difficulties in satisfying their basic needs (food, housing, education and health care). This situation has exacerbated the risks of dropping out of school due to lack of motivation, failure, early marriage or pregnancy. Several authors, including the United Nations (2020) and FAGE (2020), have made the same observation. The pandemic crisis has had a significant impact on learners. The problems are numerous: isolation, malaise, growing insecurity, digital divide, inequalities in living conditions during periods of confinement. All of these problems reinforce and aggravate the already existing inequalities, but also create dramatic situations. Many of the most vulnerable children, young people and adults (those living in poor or rural areas, girls, refugees, people with disabilities and forcibly displaced people) are at risk of not returning to school. The lost learning time not only harms the current generation but could reverse decades of progress, especially in terms of girls' and young women's access to and retention in education. More than 23.8 million learners could also drop out of school or be denied access to education due to the economic impact of the pandemic alone.

One of the major consequences of the Covid-19 crisis is undoubtedly the decay in the performance of FLESH students at the University of Kara. The already annual low average pass rate (18%) of students who validated their courses between 2014 and 2019 has dropped to 11.60% between 2021 and 2022. Many studies have pointed to the health crisis as the cause of this situation. D.G. Espinar and J.J. Lévy evaluated the impact of the lockdown on academic life. The vast majority of students reported that their university had failed to make the shift to virtual learning, although courses maintained a pedagogical level equivalent to that of face-to-face learning. Many also considered their academic performance to be worse than before the pandemic and that of previous years, which is reflected in the average assessment scores. The comments collected report the difficulties encountered in the online course process. The evaluation of the lecturers indicates a variety of profiles, with some continuing to maintain teaching quality while others seem to have lost interest in the courses and the students. In terms of future employment, this study suggests that for this population the pandemic will have a negative effect on the future labour market, which is already well marked by unemployment (<https://journals.openedition.org/efg/13144>). In a similar vein, UKAID (2020, p.4) argues that while the need for distance learning was evident at the start of the pandemic, the access to students effectively has been more complex. Universities have had to cope with what they can and their responses have varied according to their resources and ingenuity. At the primary and secondary levels, priority was sometimes given to ensuring continuity of teaching for examination classes, especially those whose students were sitting the primary and secondary school leaving examinations.

But for the most part, neither students nor teachers had prior experience of teaching and learning outside the classroom. Government responses were varied: many offered educational programmes on television and radio, sometimes in partnership with the private sector, but not all were well organized. It soon became apparent that for the majority of learners, sophisticated technological approaches were not always the solution, and learner performance declined.

### **Conclusion**

As in other parts of the world, the coronavirus health crisis which led to the closure of schools and universities also had important repercussions on the students of the University of Kara. In order to ensure the continuity of teaching, three pedagogical platforms were used with mixed results. In addition to the difficulties faced by learners in satisfying their basic needs, distance learning, which was implemented in the faculties, has revealed new inequalities within the student population. The availability of the necessary equipment (computer, Android etc.) and the mastery of information and communication technologies have become essential factors for successful higher education learning. The absence of regular support to help students with the technical handling of the platform and the completion of their assignments is the greatest weakness of hybrid courses. The combination of these weaknesses results in a decline in the annual average success rate of FLESH students who have completed their courses between 2020 and 2022. However, some learners seem to be benefiting from the pandemic as it has allowed them to become more open-minded in the digital world.

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