



The multi-hazard risk perception of young professionals and students in Geography and Tourism amid the Covid-19 pandemic

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Multi-hazard risk perception represents a research subject that has been gaining momentum in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, based on the interaction between management practices aiming to reduce infection rates and to reduce the impact of other co-occurring natural hazards. The concurrent hazards proved to be the source of many hurtful, high-cost, but still invaluable lessons that should be capitalised on by the new generations to progress towards improved multi-hazard management strategies, and to a more sustainable, resilient and equitable society, as proposed by the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. However, such high-level orders cannot be obtained without an adequate understanding of the new challenges posed by multi-hazard risks.

This paper aims to investigate the multi-hazard risk perception of young professionals or students who follow education programmes that aim to develop knowledge and skills related to the very subject of perception (i.e., natural hazards and risks). Zooming in, the paper focuses on the specialization and study level-dependent differences concerning multi-hazard risk perception and hazard-related education insights of future potential specialists in natural hazard-induced risk management and tourism reconstruction. The most prominent research questions (What is the perception of the students and graduates regarding the extent to which the Covid-19 pandemic has amplified the impact of other risks?, Are there differences in the perception of Geography/Tourism students and graduates about the impact of different natural hazards on social and economic activities?), as well as secondary aspects of the inquiry were addressed by applying a multi-level questionnaire on 547 students and graduates of Geography and Tourism specializations from two universities in Iași City (Romania) and Novi Sad (Serbia).

The implementation of the t-test pointed out that the main specialization-dependent differences concerned the perception level of certain natural hazards at different sales, the estimation of the impact of different hazards on socio-economic activities (including tourism), and the estimation of the positive effects of hazard-related education. These differences are complemented by the ones that depend on the level of study, which were analyzed through ANOVA and referred the scale of the impact specific to biophysical hazards, the amplification effect of the pandemic on different hazard and vulnerability types, and the different education cycles that the Curriculum upgrade

should be performed at. It should be noted that no statistically significant differences emerged between Geography and Tourism students and graduates regarding the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on training / career. On the other hand, Bachelor and Master level participants reported to be more affected by the pandemic than respondents from the highest tier of university education.

This study represents the first of its type, as it offers valuable insights on the multi-hazard risk perception of students and graduates that may acquire future decision-making, hazard-related research or teaching jobs. Understanding the opinions formed in their training years or in early-career stages provides important cues about tomorrow's hazard management, and tourism reconstruction practices.