

## The impact of online teaching on teachers' evaluation during the pandemic

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### Abstract

This study examines the impact of the pandemic on teacher evaluation and explores challenges and opportunities for improving evaluation practices in online teaching contexts. Although teacher evaluation is recognized as a critical mechanism for professional growth and instructional improvement, the shift to remote learning created significant disruptions. The existing literature indicates that evaluation systems often struggle to adapt to online settings, yet empirical evidence on this issue remains limited. To address this gap, a quantitative study was conducted with 312 participants, including 240 teachers and 72 school leaders, who completed the Teacher Evaluation Profile adapted for online teaching. Findings reveal that evaluations during this period were conducted at average levels, with greater reliance on self-assessment, student achievement, and review of teaching materials. School leaders reported difficulties in adapting to new evaluation procedures, indicating a lack of structured frameworks suited to digital teaching environments. The study underscores the need for more systematic, professionally managed evaluation practices that integrate diverse data sources, enhance teacher professionalism, and support the effectiveness of teaching in changing instructional contexts. These results carry implications for policymakers and school administrators seeking to refine evaluation systems to ensure resilience and relevance in both traditional and online education.

**Keywords:** academic publishing; faculty development; manuscript preparation; research design; scholarly writing.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

During the period March 2020–September 2021, teaching in Albanian schools shifted firstly to complete online (distance) learning through platforms like Academia, Zoom, Moodle, e-mails, and WhatsApp. After the first period, the teaching was combined between physical and online. When physical teaching occurred, the timetables were changed from 45 minutes to 20 minutes, and the number of pupils/students in a class was reduced according to the class size and COVID-19 precautions.

During this time, teachers had to adapt to new technologically-based teaching methods that were either not at all or only marginally popular in our nation. This was because technological equipment, particularly computers, was being used more as aids for presenting teaching materials than as the sole method by which teachers should promote learning. The attainment of educational goals has been the focus of the work of teachers and school leaders, and the commitment of all educational structures has been at its highest during this period, in addition to the problems and obstacles faced by the school during this time. Thus, the report published by the Ministry of Education and Sports and Youth (MASR) and the Quality Assurance Agency for Pre-university Education (ASCAP, 2020) on the perception of online learning by students, teachers, and parents states that: "Engaging teachers in online learning has faced new challenges for them. They must adapt their teaching styles, taking into account the needs and abilities of students, and must possess knowledge and skills in the use of technology. Despite the challenges, online learning is the future for 21st-century schools and, despite the immediate confrontation of teachers and students with this type of learning, it will serve in the future as an important resource in the learning process" (ASCAP, 2020)

But one of the biggest challenges faced by the school and school leaders was the evaluation of teachers during this period. Teacher evaluation is a complex process in terms of classroom development, and in this new reality, this process has been even more challenging for school leaders and teachers. Teacher support through evaluation procedures was to be of primary importance in these conditions, to help teachers adapt to virtual teaching and then shift teaching where the teaching time was 20 minutes.

Teacher evaluation involves a series of activities and procedures that determine the extent to which they solve professional problems with the appropriate competence and teaching skills (Contreras et al., 2024). The techniques need to be sensitive to the particular teaching assignment of the instructor being assessed or evaluated, as well as the context in which the teaching takes place (York University Senate Committee, 2021). In the new situation, where teachers had to use online platforms and software that they had not used before, their evaluation to achieve the most effective teaching would change the standard procedures and activities. The difficult situation in which society and the school found themselves demanded that teachers not be stressed during this period. Nonetheless, the public obligation of the schools was for the students to learn in the most effective way possible, as the consequences of ineffective teaching fall on students, their formation, their future, and society as a whole.

According to Kremer-Hayon (1993), the overall purpose of teacher evaluation is to protect and improve the quality of teaching so that teachers can collaborate to improve classroom teaching practices. Various scholars, such as Rebore (1991), Stanley & Popham (1988), Kremer-Hayon (1993), and Bridges (1986) have outlined how this goal can be achieved by:

- Improving learning by fostering self-development and peer support.
- Identification and evaluation of staff development activities.
- Ensuring a communication link between the school system and the teacher.
- Decision-making regarding the position of the teacher.
- Protecting students from incompetent teachers by bringing structured help to them.
- Spotting ineffective teachers and encouraging personal growth.

During the period of online learning, as well as during teaching under normal conditions, teacher evaluation, as a process that affects the professional development of teachers, aims to effectively develop teaching practices (Stavermann, 2025; Bastian et al., 2025). While the teaching practices during the development of teaching in normal conditions are defined and the teachers are prepared in school for the recognition and implementation of these practices, during online teaching, the teachers had to apply

previously unknown and untreated practices in schools that prepare teachers or provide training for their continuous development. Helping to improve individual teaching practices and decisions about how to teach under normal teaching conditions comes in the form of two types of assessment: formative or summative, which should also be applied in online teaching, perhaps with a changed ratio. Through these evaluations, teachers are assisted by school leaders in organizing, designing, planning, and conducting the lesson. In this way, teachers can have a positive perception of evaluations and improve their professional skills by increasing the quality of teaching even in online teaching conditions; acquiring and creating their teaching practices, which will further serve in their professional life, and well-being (Stark & Daulat, 2025).

According to Halawah's (2005) study on the relationship between effective communication between high school principals and the school climate, effective principals distinguish between the unique styles and the needs of teachers and help them achieve their performance goals. To improve professional practices and individual teacher growth, Marshall (2013) suggests that leaders change the amount and quality of supervision and evaluation using multiple mini-observations through face-to-face conversations to improve teaching in each classroom.

The teacher and the teaching process are key elements in the education process. Teaching is the essence of education, and there is a universal agreement among researchers that teachers have a huge impact on student performance (Li et al., 2024; Weisberg et al., 2009). Consequently, a mechanism to ensure the quality of this teaching is a vital part of the education system. This mechanism should also work to build quality instruction within the classroom to improve student achievement (Weems & Rogers, 2010).

There are three main approaches to evaluating teachers that show average validity to demonstrate efficiency:

- classroom observations by colleagues, supervisors, or external evaluators
- models that assess student achievement
- assessments by students

The evaluation process usually involves preparation, observation, data collection, reporting, and completion. Data collection normally requires a formal observation, preceded by a pre-conference and then followed by a post-conference. Using formal observations does not mean ignoring informal observations, as unannounced visits are usually more effective than notified controls. However, this method has its limitations. According to Hayon (1990), unannounced visits do not give a clear view of the coherence, depth, and breadth of curriculum content; the teaching techniques used; the quality and variety of materials used; the types and frequency of student assignments; the quality of the tools used to assess students; or their suitability for individual students and the context of the class as a whole, (Hayon, 1990).

Again, according to Darling-Hammond (2015), such a system brings appreciation and opportunity for teachers to learn, along with other elements, into an integrated whole to promote teaching performance and improvement at every stage of their career, and it is important to link the two because evaluation alone improves practice.

Learning opportunities should be preceded by productive feedback, encouraging teachers to continually define the areas where they want to work, specifically supporting professional development and supervision, as well as opportunities to share the experience as part of getting to know the strengths and needs of teachers. Similar arguments have been put forward by other researchers, seeing teacher evaluation as a broader and more coherent "infrastructure" of teacher learning, improvement, and accountability across career spaces (Kaufman & Moss, 2010; Kennedy, 2010).

These dimensions of assessment practices should certainly be applied during teacher evaluation during online teaching, but with the primary aim of supporting teachers in the process and providing concrete feedback on how to develop the process. Brow (2020), in her article "Evaluating Teacher Performance in a remote learning environment, says that it's important to develop ways to evaluate teacher effectiveness in a new environment. As you receive state guidance and plan your teacher evaluations, here are a few considerations to keep in mind:

- Communicate expectations
- Simplify the rubric
- Minimize the impact of student outcomes
- Examine a portfolio strategy.
- Let evaluations spur growth rather than serve as a source of stress.

These dimensions of assessment practices should certainly be applied during teacher evaluation during online teaching, but with the primary aim of supporting teachers in the process and providing concrete feedback on how to develop the process.

Likewise, Nittler & Saenz-Armstrong (2020), in the article: Teacher evaluations and support during COVID-19 closures, emphasize that: *It is clear that some measure of evaluation of teachers' performance is required, not only to make sure that teachers are being as effective as possible in teaching the country's students but also to provide support during this time of upheaval.* The learning process that teachers face is very steep in this era of remote instruction; it is all new, and there are no tried and true methods anymore. The many new issues cropping up are challenges teachers have never had to deal with before.

In the guide of the Center on Great Teacher & Leaders at the American Institutes for Research, provided strategies to adapt educator evaluation and support system policies and practices to support virtual learning (Griffin, 2020). The logistics for how school leaders can conduct virtual observations, the challenges with observing and providing feedback virtually, and resources for professional learning focused on virtual learning environments are provided in this guide to facilitate the process of teacher assessment during the pandemic.

### **1.1. Purpose of study**

The purpose of this study is to examine how the COVID-19 pandemic affected teacher evaluation practices, with a particular focus on the challenges and opportunities of adapting evaluation systems to online teaching contexts. Specifically, it seeks to analyze how evaluation methods were implemented during remote instruction, the difficulties faced by teachers and school leaders, and the implications for developing more effective, supportive, and resilient evaluation frameworks in both digital and traditional learning environments. The study addresses two research questions:

- How were teachers evaluated throughout the period of online teaching?
- What influence did this evaluation have on efficient teaching?

The objectives of the research are as follows:

- To give a realistic picture of the evaluation of teachers in our country during the pandemic period
- To analyze the procedures and quality of this evaluation.
- To analyze expectations and feedback from teachers and principals.
- To examine the suggestions of teachers and principals themselves to improve the assessment system.
- To bring new perspectives on teacher evaluation in Albania.

## **2. METHODS AND MATERIALS**

For this study, a quantitative method with randomly selected APU teachers and leaders was used. Teacher Evaluation Profile (TEP), prepared by Stiggins & Duke (1988) and revised by Rindler (1994), and modified for the Albanian context, was used to survey teachers and principals.

### **2.1. Participants**

The sample of this study is made up of 312 respondents, namely 240 teachers and 72 school leaders, during the period November -December 2021, from 50 different schools in Albania.

*Teacher and school leaders' distribution by gender.* The information in this study was obtained from 240 teachers and 72 school principals in Albanian schools. Gender distribution of teachers was that most of them, with 83.2% were female, and 16.8% were male, and from the school leaders, 41.7% were male, and 58.3% were female.

*Teacher and school leaders' distribution by location:* According to location, a significant part of teachers, 83.1% taught in urban schools, while only 25% of school leaders were from urban areas.

*Teacher and school leaders' distribution by age:* Most teachers, 56%, and the school leaders, 50%, were between 45-55 years old, while young teachers and school leaders were fewer, accordingly 11% and 4%.

## **2.2. Data collection instruments**

In addition to the analysis of the literature review, part of this study is also the analysis of the two questionnaires, each consisting of five sections. The questionnaire for teachers has five sections:

*Section I:* Information about respondents' age, gender, location, and education

*Section II:* Teacher's evaluation during the pandemic

*Section III:* Evaluation features ranking

*Section IV:* Feedback features of the last evaluation

*Section V:* Teacher's opinion regarding the evaluation process during online teaching

The questionnaire for school leaders includes the following sections:

*Section I:* provides information about respondents' age, gender, and location

*Section II:* The impact of the evaluation on the performance of the teacher, the pupils, and the school.

*Section III:* Sources of information for teacher evaluation

*Section IV:* Feedback features the school leader provided during your most recent evaluation experience:

*Section V:* School leaders' opinion regarding evaluation during online teaching

## **2.3. Procedure**

The information gathered through the questionnaire was analyzed through the computer program Excel to obtain a more complete and professional analysis. The questionnaires were filled out by 240 teachers and 72 school leaders during the period November-December 2021, using the Google form platform for the purpose of ensuring quick information. Data obtained from school principals and teachers were compared to see how teacher evaluation was conducted and whether the procedures followed by principals were helpful and supportive to teachers, based on self-reports. In this study, the respondents' anonymity and freedom of expression were respected.

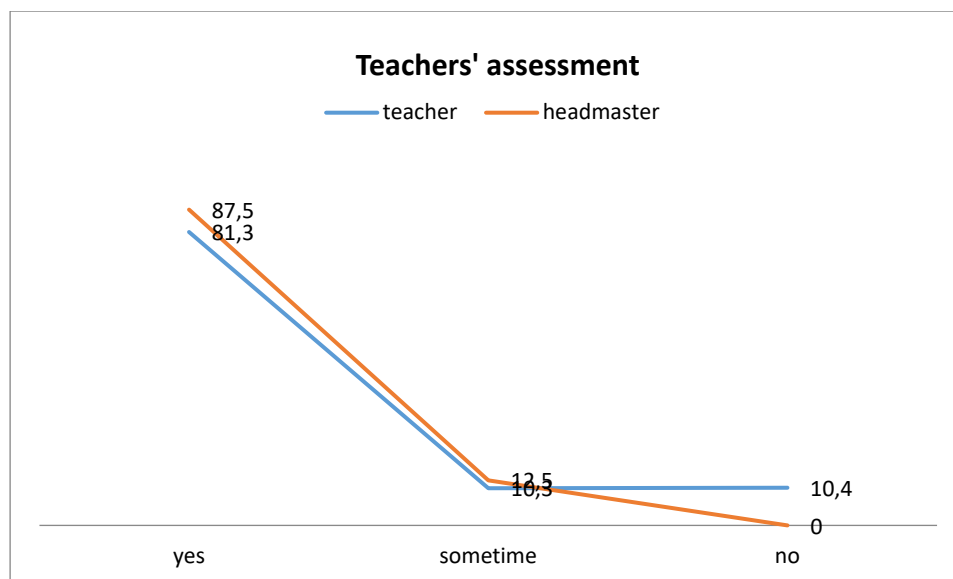
## **3. RESULTS**

The purpose of the study as a whole and the purpose of the questionnaire were to provide a clear picture of teachers' perceptions of their evaluation during the online teaching period and the impact that the online teaching during the pandemic has had on their evaluation and their professional development.

The data indicate that during the school year 2020-2021, 81, 3% of the teachers were evaluated for their teaching, while 8.3% of the teachers claimed that they were not evaluated at all during this period. Data obtained from the survey of the school leaders show that 87.5% of the principals have conducted regular teacher assessments during the online learning period, and 58.3% of them report that this assessment has been extended throughout the period of online learning or working shifts. The remaining 10.4% admit that the leaders of their school have assessed them in some cases, but that the assessment of their work has not been continuous and correct. The data are presented in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Level of assessment of the teachers during the online period*

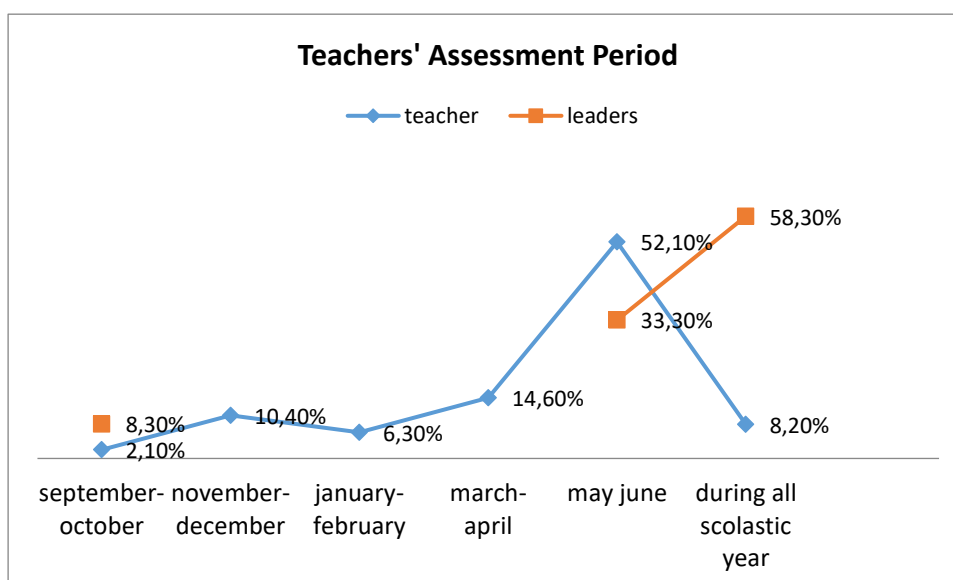


As the teacher assessment is a planned process in the tasks of the school directorate and required by the dispositions in force for the PuE (Pre-university Education), this level of evaluation, in a large percentage indicates problems in the implementation of internal evaluation by the school leaders, and negligence, especially in conditions when teachers have needed more clear guidance and support in their teaching practice.

Slightly more than half of the respondents claim that the assessment conducted was focused on the period May-June, a period that corresponds to the end of the school year, and the preparation by the principals of the required documentation for the end of the school year. While 58.3% of school leaders claim that this assessment was conducted throughout the year (Figure 2).

**Figure 2**

*The assessment time frame during the online period*

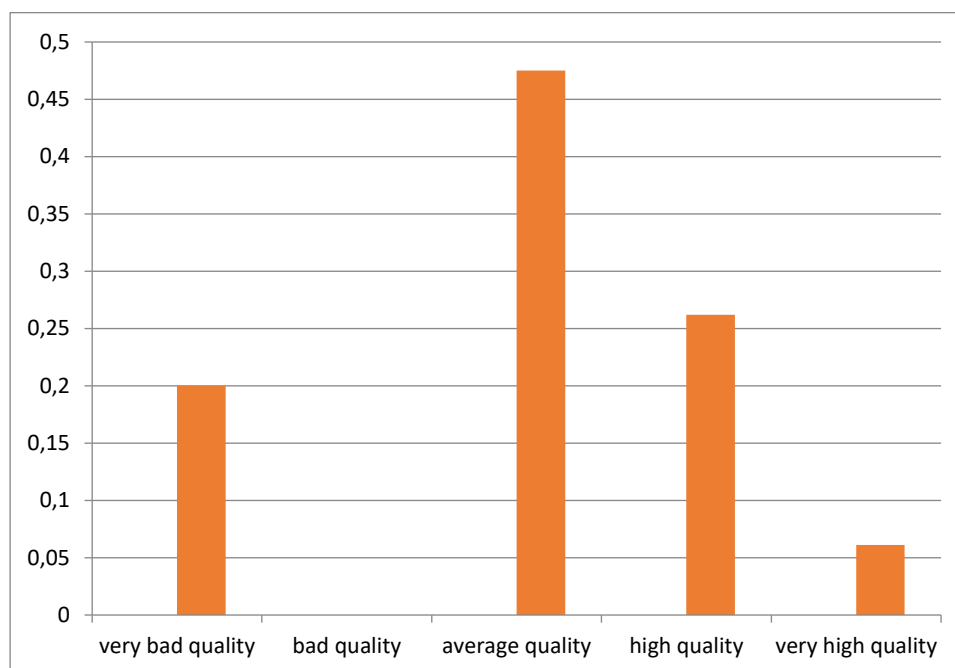


Source: Compiled by authors.

The data in the graph above shows non-corresponding data regarding the teacher assessment period. Nevertheless, the period in which the assessment was mostly focused was the period May-June, which

corresponds to the end of the school year and the preparation of documentation for the end of school, while the most intensive periods should have been at the beginning of online learning, for teachers to rely on the use of online platforms for teaching, student assessment, and presentation of teaching materials. The fact that 41.7% of principals claim that their teacher assessment took place in September-October and May-June clearly shows a lack of continuity in their work and non-performance of teacher assessment almost throughout the year. Regarding the data on the quality of the assessment, they are presented in Figure 3:

**Figure 3**  
*The assessment quality*



Approximately half of the surveyed teachers claim that the quality of evaluation has been at average levels, while 70.8% of school leaders claim that the quality of assessment procedures performed by themselves has been average. Online teaching changed the conception of the lesson. Teaching in a virtual environment and then for a limited time (20 minutes) caught the teaching staff unprepared. The above data show that teachers adapted very quickly to this reality, while school principals, in their self-declarations, show that the quality of teacher evaluation procedures should have been higher.

As seen from Figure 3, the overall quality of the assessment procedure is average. At the same level is the impact that assessment has had on the professional practice of teachers during this period, where 54.2% of teachers claim that the assessment has had an impact on the average level of their professional practice, a figure that is lower in the perception of leaders, 75% of whom think that their assessment has had a moderate impact on the professional practice of teachers.

Regarding the sources of assessment, the data are presented as follows:

**Figure 4**  
*The assessment sources*



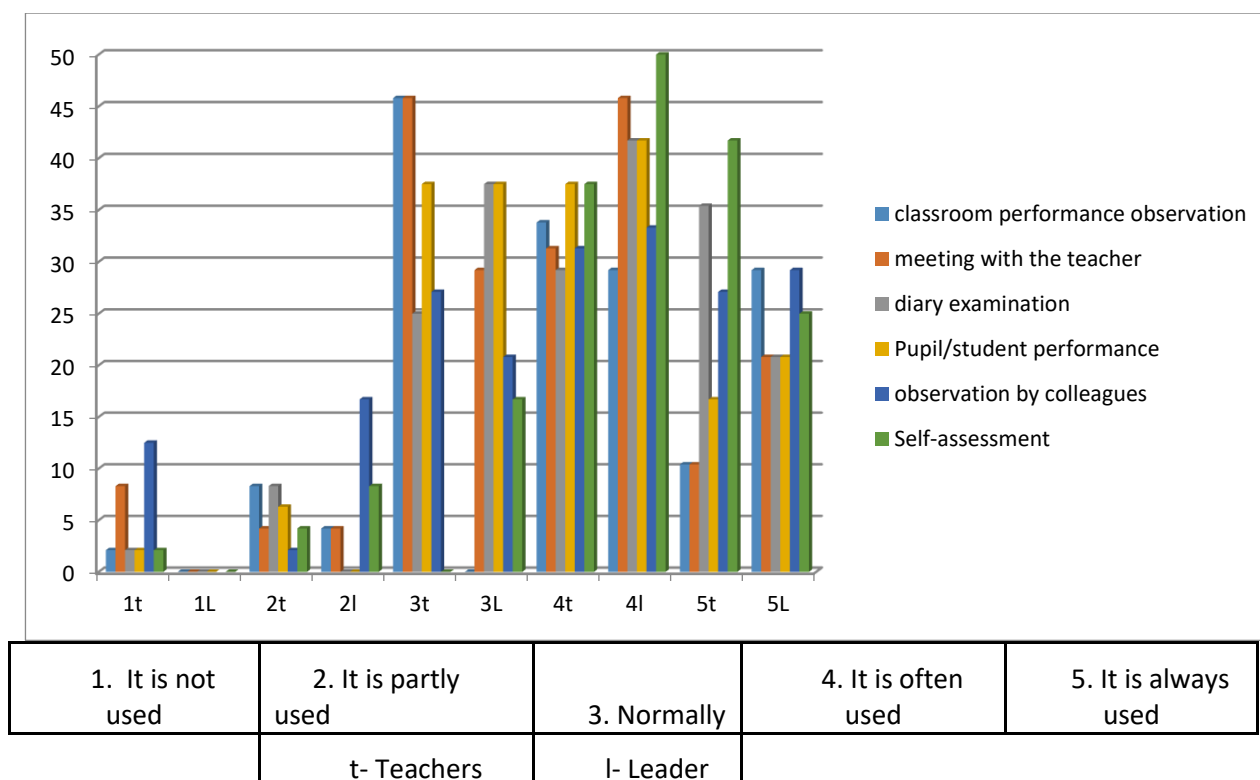


Figure 4 above shows data on the use of information sources and their frequency during the teacher assessment process during the online teaching period. The data show that self-evaluation is the most used source of information during this period, followed by student performance, meetings with the assessor, and diary examination of teaching materials. Meanwhile, lesson observation and peer assessment were used less. These data speak of the negligence of the school leaders in the observation of lessons, as a very important source of information for the teacher evaluation, as self-evaluation as a source of information carries in itself subjectivism.

Some of the respondents, the principals, and the teachers claim that formal and informal observations were made in the classroom/platform, which lasted from 5 minutes to 20 minutes and the feedback received from teachers during their assessment experiences for the online teaching period turns out to have been mostly at the average level for 41.7% of respondents and the depth of information obtained was at normal levels for 43.8% of respondents.

The specifics of the information obtained are also presented at these levels (41.7% of respondents). Feedback was generally received at normal times and not delayed, and only 14% of respondents claimed that this feedback did not serve to improve their work, while the rest claimed that the feedback received served to improve their work and their professional practice.

In terms of the feedback features they have provided, the depth of information, the specificity of the information gained, and the time, the data are as follows:

Eighty percent (80%) of leaders think that the amount of information provided by their feedback is at high and very high levels, while the depth of information and the specificity of information obtained for 50% of respondents are at high levels. Even in terms of the time of providing information, over 50% of them claim that it was normal. Over 60% of respondents claim that the information provided during the feedback greatly helped the teachers in their teaching practice during the online teaching period.

Regarding the opinion of teachers about their assessment during the online teaching period, about 20% of teachers think that the assessment was correct and served their professional practice, while the rest say that the assessment was formal. From the students' achievements, the assessment process was difficult to carry



out, leaving much to be desired, and there are even teachers (4.2%) who claim that during this period, no evaluation was performed by the leaders.

Several teacher perspectives focus on the improvement of assessment procedures. Reported suggestions include the need for assessment to be more encouraging and motivating in order to enhance professional performance, the unification and improvement of assessment formats, and the organization of team meetings by school leaders to identify and address potential problems at an early stage. Such meetings, combined with regular monitoring, are considered to have the potential for greater effectiveness.

With respect to online learning, school leaders acknowledged that evaluation during this period was challenging and that teacher assessment was conducted with consideration of contextual difficulties. In terms of future improvement, greater emphasis was placed on the necessity of providing teachers with additional training opportunities.

Given the rapid development of society, socioeconomic conditions, and technological advancement, teaching practices are constantly evolving. In this context, teacher assessment should be continuous and uninterrupted, since the improvement of instructional quality cannot be achieved if teachers are not consistently updated with curricular innovations and technological applications (Leka, 2017). Within the specific situation of online learning, the ability of teachers to engage with technological innovations becomes even more critical.

Survey findings demonstrate that assessment procedures were generally conducted at an average level, as reported by both teachers and school principals. Consequently, the impact of assessment on professional practice during online learning was limited and fell short of expectations. Furthermore, discrepancies emerged between teacher and school leader reports regarding the frequency of feedback provided to teachers.

The results further indicate that approximately half of the teachers recognized the importance of evaluation in professional development. Nevertheless, these respondents emphasized that the teacher evaluation system should prioritize authentic and meaningful assessment practices. Teachers also highlighted the necessity of training programs and opportunities for experience sharing. School principals were identified as playing a central role in facilitating teacher growth.

In addition, both teachers and school leaders expressed the need for training on the use of online platforms and strategies for developing effective online learning. Clearer and more concrete communication of evaluation outcomes was also considered essential. Particularly significant were the proposals to involve experienced teachers in presenting model practices and sharing concrete examples, as well as the request for broader access to relevant information.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study provide important insights into how teacher evaluation was conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic in Albania, highlighting both the persistence of existing practices and the emergence of new challenges within online and hybrid learning environments. The results show that although a large majority of teachers (81.3%) were evaluated, the evaluation process was perceived as largely average in quality, with many teachers describing it as formal rather than formative. This is consistent with concerns raised in the MASR and ASCAP (2020) report, which emphasized that teachers needed clearer guidance, support, and adaptive evaluation mechanisms during the rapid shift to remote learning.

In line with international studies (Contreras et al., 2024; York University Senate Committee, 2021), our findings confirm that teacher evaluation is inherently complex and must be sensitive to context. During the pandemic, the evaluation process in Albania, like elsewhere, was constrained by limited preparation time, technological unfamiliarity, and shortened lesson formats. Similar to what Nittler and Saenz-Armstrong (2020) found in their analysis of teacher evaluation during COVID-19 closures, Albanian school leaders struggled to maintain continuity in evaluations, often focusing them at the end of the school year rather than using them to provide ongoing support during the critical early months of online teaching.

Interestingly, while school leaders reported that feedback was timely and helpful, a considerable proportion of teachers regarded it as insufficiently deep or practical. This discrepancy between leaders' and teachers' perceptions echoes findings from Darling-Hammond (2015), who noted that evaluations improve practice only when feedback is specific, supportive, and linked to professional learning opportunities. Similarly, the gap aligns with Kaufman and Moss (2010) and Kennedy (2010), who argue that evaluation systems should be integrated with broader teacher development infrastructures, rather than being reduced to administrative compliance.

Regarding sources of evaluation, self-assessment emerged as the most used method, while peer assessment and classroom observation were less frequent. This reliance on self-assessment parallels Brow's (2020) recommendations for adopting more flexible, teacher-centered approaches in remote environments. However, it also reflects the risks of subjectivity highlighted in Kremer-Hayon (1993), suggesting that evaluations may have lacked sufficient objectivity and triangulation of evidence. Moreover, the relatively limited use of peer and direct observation contrasts with Marshall's (2013) emphasis on frequent, short observations as a means of fostering improvement, indicating a missed opportunity to adapt these practices virtually.

The study further demonstrates that evaluation during online teaching did not fully achieve its intended role of supporting professional growth. While 54.2% of teachers acknowledged a moderate impact on their teaching, this figure is lower than the 75% reported by school leaders, pointing again to differences in perception. Similar divergences have been documented in earlier research on teacher evaluation (Halawah, 2005; Li et al., 2024), where leadership perspectives often overestimate the effectiveness of supervisory practices compared to teachers' lived experiences.

Nonetheless, both teachers and leaders in this study recognized the importance of evaluation in improving professional practice, echoing the broader literature on its role in enhancing instructional quality and student learning (Weems & Rogers, 2010; Weisberg et al., 2009). Teachers' requests for clearer, more constructive feedback and for professional development opportunities through training and experience-sharing meetings are consistent with the recommendations of Stark & Daulat (2025) and Stavermann (2025), who emphasize formative and supportive evaluation as central to improving teaching effectiveness under both normal and extraordinary conditions.

Taken together, these findings suggest that while teacher evaluation in Albania during the pandemic maintained its formal function, it fell short of serving as a meaningful developmental tool. Compared to best practices outlined in international research (Griffin, 2020; Darling-Hammond, 2015), the Albanian system showed a limited capacity to adapt evaluation procedures to the realities of online learning. This underscores the need for rethinking evaluation frameworks to ensure they provide ongoing, formative, and context-sensitive support that empowers teachers rather than burdens them, particularly in times of crisis.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The primary purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the perceptions of teachers and school leaders regarding the process of teacher assessment, as well as to determine how this process can be improved in relation to professional development, teaching performance, and the preparation of future generations of both teachers and students.

In addition, the study provides a comprehensive overview of teacher evaluation within the national context during the pandemic period. Findings indicate that the process of teacher assessment during this period was carried out at an average level. Moreover, information sources relied predominantly on teacher self-evaluation, student achievement, and diary review of teaching materials, whereas lesson observation, whether through online platforms or in the classroom, was not considered a primary source of information for teacher evaluation.

Furthermore, assessment procedures generally did not provide meaningful assistance or support to teachers, despite the significant adjustments required by the changing environment and the new modalities of instruction. Although teachers demonstrated considerable commitment and faced an increased workload

in lesson preparation and delivery, the quality of evaluation and feedback received nevertheless remained at an average level.

According to teachers and school leaders, additional training and greater institutional support should have been provided during this period to strengthen the preparation of teaching materials, lesson development, and adaptation to the new educational reality. Consequently, teacher assessment, as a process intended to enhance professional practice and increase the effectiveness of instruction, requires systematic organization and appropriate development. This process should contribute to professional growth rather than function as a mechanism for labeling teachers as effective or ineffective.

For teacher evaluation to accurately contribute to the improvement of instruction, assessment procedures must be systematic, contextually grounded, and carefully designed, particularly in relation to online learning. More than ever during the pandemic period, teacher evaluation was expected to prioritize support for teachers. By providing constructive feedback and guidance, evaluation could have facilitated improvements in online teaching practices and contributed to long-term professional growth applicable in classroom settings. Therefore, lesson observation should serve as the primary source of information for teacher evaluation; however, such observation must be carefully designed. In particular, online lesson observations should have been assigned greater importance in the evaluation process during this period.

## 6. RECOMMENDATIONS

To conclude, for a better practice of teacher evaluation, firstly, a list of indicators that highlight best teaching practices in remote settings is needed. Furthermore, teachers and evaluators need a Remote Learning Lesson Planning Template, which guides both. As observations are the primary factor in teachers' annual ratings and give educators valuable feedback, the virtual visits reflect the need to update classroom observations for the remote-learning era. As the world is still under this pandemic, a teacher evaluation system for online learning should be adapted.

Based on the good experience of the respondents, online platforms can also be used during the scholastic year. It would be very important to create virtual labs that can be used by school leaders and teachers to move away from a paper-based approach that frequently results in delays and makes it challenging to monitor progress. Furthermore, a more accurate and efficient process is produced via an online system, and all records are saved in one location, so this can be more fruitful.

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