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GCET Lives

Alessandra Souza Melo Queiroza; Fernanda de Lima Cândidob; Priscila Fernandes Carvalho de Meloc; Adriana Brambillad

ABSTRACT: One of the consequences of the social isolation caused by the COVID19 pandemic caused was that it discouraged many students from continuing with studies. This fact was identified by the members of the research group, and it is a situation faced by many people. In view of this scenario, GCET came up with the idea of creating a Lives project, to encourage learning during the pandemic. This study aims to encourage students and teachers, and society in general, to continue teaching, performing research and complementing studies during the period of social isolation, through the organization of weekly Lives – live videos transmitted on the Instagram platform. The first step in the project was to conduct bibliographic and documentary research, seeking the necessary background for the construction and elaboration of the themes to be addressed. Weekly meetings were held, via videoconferencing, to plan the Lives and facilitate communication and preparation of the advance planning to achieve the project objective. The email addresses and Whatsapp accounts of the research group were also used for correspondence, to answer questions, receive suggestions, and conduct surveys on the issues to be addressed during the Lives. Reports on the Lives were prepared and made available on the YouTube, Podcast and Instagram accounts of GCET. This support was essential for the success of the Lives, and for the satisfaction of the public. The project was carried according to the following steps: identification of the problem, theoretical input, weekly planning, survey, distribution of themes and technical support. The project aired a total of sixteen Lives in the period April 17 to July 9, analyzing the ability to meet specific needs and social inclusion. The Lives were held once a week addressing different themes, according to the theoretical findings and the demands of the target audience, resulting in the construction of knowledge and providing new skills to society, encouraging and motivating the practice of scientific knowledge. The experience of the GCET Lives project impacted not only the external participants but also its creators, as it became a motivational tool for scientific knowledge during social isolation. The project demonstrated that technology can be used for different purposes, enabling a new restructuring of scientific knowledge.

KEYWORDS

Social isolation GCET Lives Interdisciplinarity Tourism Research group

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^aMaster in Tourism and Hospitality - UFPE alessandra queirozz@outlook.com

^bGraduated in Tourism - UFPB

^cMaster in Tourism and Hospitality - UFPE

^dPHD in Cultural Studies - University of Aveiro/Portugal

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INTRODUCTION

With the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, which caused social isolation and made it impossible to carry out on-site classes, the Tourism Culture and Studies Group (GCET) of the Federal University of Paraíba (UFPB), comprised of graduation and post-graduation volunteer members, decided to launch the GCET Lives project, in order to motivate students, teachers, researchers, and society in general. The main objective of the project was to create and make available a schedule of Lives on the Instagram platform, to stimulate teaching and research and complement studies during the period of social isolation. The Lives were aired on Thursdays at 9:00 p.m. on Instagram @grupogcet.

For a better understanding of the GCET Lives project, its problems and relevance and the methodological procedures that was used as the foundation are presented below. After the methodology, the results of the project are presented, giving the location, research and the target audience, offering as much information as possible so that the reader can understand this stage of the project. Finally, some practical implications and final considerations are presented, highlighting the importance of the project and its impacts and originality.

Problem and Relevance

The atypical scenario caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, aimed at controlling the activity of the virus, led to social isolation in various countries around the world. This isolation has been a huge challenge for people's mental health, making them more vulnerable to stress and anxiety and affecting their productivity. Many people are currently facing a lack of encouragement to continue with their learning processes, although everybody reacts differently to this kind of limitation. Consequently, GCET envisioned the creation of the Lives project to encourage the remote continuation of studies and research. The project was aimed at positively impacting its viewers by stimulating learning through the themes presented. The Lives were the means used to achieve the proposed objective. The themes of the GCET Lives covered issues related to tourism, the hotel trade, accessibility, tourism marketing and sustainability. Weekly articles offered information about the Lives (APPENDIX B) and were published on websites, blogs and social networks of the Federal University of Paraíba, which supports the project. The question that guides this research was how to create and make available a program of Lives that will stimulate teaching, research and complementation of studies during the period of social isolation resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic.

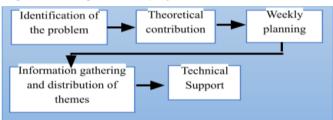
METHODOLOGICAL ASPECTS

Initially, bibliographic and documentary research was carried out on national and international scientific books and articles, through search platforms that address issues related to tourism, hospitality, accessibility, tourism marketing and sustainability, which are the focus of discussion in the Lives. According to Malhotra (2011), as in the case of scientific articles obtained from reliable search platforms, secondary data offers advantages over primary data. To develop the weekly Lives, bibliographic and documentary research was carried out on the themes to be addressed; based on this framework, scripts were created addressing the program content. During this process, bibliographic research supported the construction of scientific knowledge through a theoretical deepening on a specific theme (RODGERS; KNAFL, 2000), since new theories and possibilities for discussion and critical analyses emerge out of this process (VOSGERAU; ROMANOWS-KI, 2014), and consequently, advances are made in relation to the research (BOTELHO; CUNHA; MACEDO, 2011).

For the planning, development and accomplishment of the GCET Lives project, it was necessary to use videoconferencing platforms during the weekly planning meetings, due to restrictions on movement that prevented face-to-face meetings. In this context, Barbosa, Viegas and Batista (2020) highlight that we are increasingly witnessing technological advances to solve our problems or achieve our desires. Thus, technology is on of the few allies left to us in the face of the social isolation that has been thrust upon the world. The authors also report the importance of continuing the teaching and the students' learning process, despite the face of difficulties of pedagogical adaptation.

Even knowing that difficulties could arise along the way, GCET members chose to continue their activities online. Therefore, besides the videoconferencing, other means of communication were used to facilitate the development of the ongoing activities. Thus, Whatsapp and Messenger groups were created, since advance planning was essential to achieve the project objectives. Figure 1 below shows the stages in the implementation of the project.

Figure 1 – Stages of the project



Source: Research data, 2020

The identification of the problem emerged out of a troubled period that mankind is currently going through. The Covid-19 pandemic has led to the cancellation of many on-site classes, making personal interaction and mutual learning difficult or impossible. So GCET decided to break new ground and use the available technological resources, as its on-site activities were also canceled.

Initially, the necessary theoretical support was sought under different theoretical perspectives capable of contributing to the elaboration of tools to enable the continuity of academic learning for students and teachers. Based on this theoretical foundation, GCET members performed the weekly planning, gathering information on the themes to be addressed in the Lives, always on matters related to tourism and hospitality. The choice of these themes was also based on the research lines of GCET, i.e., management and marketing, sustainability, accessibility and senior citizens, as well as covering topics related to the difficulties and experiences faced by students and teachers in the academic environment. Subsequently, the themes were discussed with group members and external participants according to the level of affinity between the theme and students and teachers, providing more concise conversation and greater theoretical deepening. The invitation was extended to individuals not related to the group or to the university, in order to bring different views on the themes addressed. These other participants were selected based on their personal and professional experiences in the areas to be discussed in the Lives. The group members also gave technical support to each Live, controlling the time and the script and schedule, organizing questions to be asked, and assisting the invited guests.

Interactivity with the public was encouraged during the Lives, and both previously submitted questions and those asked "live" were answered. Since Instagram limits the duration of a Live to 60 minutes, the answers to questions not answered during the session were made available on the GCET social networks. The group's email address and Whatsapp account were also given, to answer any further questions, receive suggestions and carry out surveys about the next topic to be presented. Lives reports were made available on YouTube and Podcast, and summaries of topics were made available on Instagram. This support was essential for the success of the Lives and the satisfaction of the public. Evaluations made it possible to obtain positive feedback for the following Lives.

Activities were structured by the project coordination, with the main role of designing didactic structures that would allow both the project participants and the target audience to develop an autonomous learning process.

RESULTS

The GCET Lives project, which started on April 17 and ended on July 9, 2020, was intended to stimulate the students' interest during the period of social isolation and contribute to the creation of new educational knowledge. Due to the success achieved, in August 2020 the project GCET LIVES II was started, keeping the same dynamic. In order to implement this project, members of the Tourism Culture and Studies Group - GCET, coordinated by a teacher from the Tourism course of the Federal University of Paraíba -UFPB, were supported by the Post Graduate Continuous Flow (Fluxo Contínuo de Extensão) - FLUEX of UFPB. Thus, the partnership between the University Post Graduate Units and the research group enabled students to develop relevant academic works related to the problems experienced.

As a result of the project, 16 Lives were aired (APPENDIX A), 5 of which focused on research, 4 on themes related to the importance of maintaining studies even during isolation, 5 on tourism, and 2 in the field of Law. The audience that watched and interacted with the lives was mostly composed of students and teachers from the fields of tourism and hospitality, but other professionals also participated, from areas such as Law, environment, administration and marketing, demonstrating that capacity of the project to interact with other areas. The experiences gained during the project generated interdisciplinarity and established communication with other disciplines, with the aim of unifying concepts that could contribute to the resolution of shared problems or studies, according to Berti (2007) and Lenior (2008). In this sense, interdisciplinarity was found through Lives debaters, professionals from the tourism, hospitality, law, business administration and marketing areas, including undergraduates, postgraduates and those with master's and doctorate degrees.

Interaction among students during the Lives was seen in the questions asked before and during the live broadcasts, which stimulated debate and participation.

The project is characterized according to values that can be found in the experience of social technology. One of the factors involved in the construction and development of this experience is its ability to meet specific needs, since the project meets a demand from students and teachers who are socially isolated. Another is the direct participation of the population and in this process, the project managed to capture the attention not only of students and teachers, but also that of the population in general.

Reducing the sense of social inclusion was another factor. Everyone could participate in the Lives, and

review them afterwards by accessing the YouTube platform at any time. Collaboration in the learning process was another factor, as the project explored a new way of learning, through the use of digital resources. Thus, the choice of this type of technology is justified by the fact that it can reach a larger number of people, since the Instagram social network is often used by students and teaching staff of educational institutions, and also because the application software enables people to interact in real time.

The project considered distance learning as a model for development and design, due its low cost, requiring only an internet connection for transmission. It can therefore be easily replicated by other research groups. It is worth mentioning that the project not only contributed to the viewer audience; those involved in its organization also had the opportunity to participate in interdisciplinary teaching experiences with digital tools, as well as interacting with the public in a more dynamic and creative way.

The first Live of the project was held on April 17th. This first contact of the research group with Instagram audiences provided positive feedback. The theme of this live was to encourage students, teachers, and society in general to continue studying and seeking personal growth through the creation of a daily routine. This theme was considered very appropriate, due to the suspension of classes.

The theme of the second Live of the project related to the research groups and their importance in academic life. It addressed the theoretical findings and surveys carried out in the first stage of the project, explaining the importance and benefits of joining a research group. The third Live clarified and dispel doubts about the MBA – Master in Business Administration, and its importance for the academic and professional life, once again aiming to encourage the continuity of studies.

The theme of the fourth Live was also considered opportune and of great value, not only for students but also for teachers in the process of adapting to the new dynamic adopted by most Brazilian educational institutions. Thus, aspects of the challenges of distance learning during social isolation times were addressed. The fifth Live was held on May 9 at 9.00 p.m. and continued the theme of the MBA and its importance in the academic and professional life, as this was a subject of great interest to the audience. Due to requests from viewers via WhatsApp, the sixth Live of the project aimed to simplify the methodological design for TCCs and dissertations.

The seventh Live addressed the topic of the Animal Law in times of coronavirus. This theme was chosen due to requests from GCET followers on Instagram and the theoretical basis carried out at the beginning of the project, addressing the interdisciplinarity exercised by tourism. This theme was also linked to a situation oc-

curring in many Brazilian states where, according to Soares and Pinto (2020), the Covid 19 pandemic led to increasing numbers of abandoned pets by Brazilian families who feared contamination, as they believed animals to be one of the main contaminating agents, although this has not been confirmed.

The eighth Live discussed the professional activity performed on a cruise ship. The main objective of this approach was to enable viewers to learn more about the jobs performed on cruise ships, and to discuss some of the challenges and benefits of such work.

The ninth Live was conceived and developed, once again in response to requests from Instagram followers, addressing in more depth the aspects of the research group and its importance for the academic and professional life. The tenth Live, which was transmitted on June 4, covered the theme of postgraduate studies, aiming to contextualize challenges and achievements in this process experienced and desired by many individuals. The eleventh Live discussed the Film commissions and their benefits for tourism; the main aspects of this theme were analyzed through literature, to provide viewers with a better understanding of the subject.

Ordinary wines and harmonization was the theme of the twelfth Live of the project, held on June 12, aimed at providing knowledge about an important discipline of tourism and hospitality courses, Food & Beverage, in a more dynamic and casual way. The thirteenth Live focused on scientific research through a report of experience of the Institutional Volunteer Research Program (Programa Institucional de Voluntariado em Iniciação Científica - PIVIC, addressing the importance of participation in the program and its benefits for students' academic and professional development. Multidisciplinarity in research groups and their challenges and opportunities was the theme of the fourteenth Live, which informed viewers about the way the lines of research in the GCET group are worked on, and how each line has been addressing its themes.

GCET's fifteenth Live was conceived and elaborated with the aim of giving viewers a perspective of the new tourism trends after COVID-19, with relevant and current issues on the prospects of activities in the tourism market getting back to normal. The sixteenth Live completed the first stage of the Lives cycle, focusing on movie-induced tourism and its applicability. It aimed to clarify for viewers the importance of this segment for the tourism sector and the good results it has been bringing for the sector over the years, focusing on a differentiated and little studied segment in the tourism field.

It should be noted that some of the Lives did not take place on Thursdays due to impediments on the part of the participants. Instead, they often took place on Wednesdays and Saturdays, always with prior communication and widespread dissemination to the target

audience.

It can be said that this project was able to boost teaching through the proposal of new methodologies, with the use of digital tools for transmitting and complementing the content, allowing digital media to be incorporated into the disciplines (MORAN, 2013), and providing an important support tool for the teaching and learning process. In this case, the Lives on Instagram provided a means of obtaining information, but also for producing knowledge and dispelling doubts, generating an excellent opportunity for study and research in college education. Universities must keep up with the demands of a society connected by social media, which is currently part of its routine, and these media must not be excluded from the teaching process.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The GCET Lives project comes at a time when the world is forced to suddenly stop its activities and remain in social isolation due to the COVID19 pandemic, preventing the continuity of people's routines. Thus, in the midst of the pandemic, the project aimed to encourage teachers, students and the population in general to expand their field of study through new technologies and give GCET members the opportunity to overcome their limitations in relation to new technologies, improve their oratory skills, reflect on discussions inherent to their field of study, and build a reliable information base

The project encouraged other teachers and students from different areas to discuss the topics that had been suspended at universities due to the temporary interruption of classes. The Lives provided not only quick dissemination of information, reaching people everywhere, but also visual encounter, motivating interest in continuing academic studies during the lockdown period, and contributing to the creation of new educational knowledge. This research was characterized as a case study, using the methodology of applied research which, according to Prodanov and Freitas (2013), seeks to solve social problems. It is considered innovative, as it uses technological advances to continue academic learning, thus seeking, through the resource provided by the Instagram platform, to interact with the academic public. Although Instagram had already been used, the innovative factor refers to the fact that this social network is used for academic purposes related directly to teaching, research and extension courses.

Instagram was chosen for the Lives as it is a social network with great participation, with an estimated number of 64 million active accounts in Brazil, and able to reach the target audience. According to Boyd (2014), contemporary society seeks innovative and dynamic ways of transmitting knowledge and the choice of In-

stagram for the Lives project fulfilled this role, as it is already part of most people's routine, contributing to greater participation and involvement. It was therefore possible to present theoretical and practical content with the engagement of the target audience. The insertion of new technologies contributed not only to the encouraging students, but also to the educators' personal and professional growth. Since science involves a constant search for production and socialization of its results, other forms of publication have been disseminated, with the important role of spreading knowledge in diverse cultural spheres, which also important for the process of knowledge production (MEIRA, 2016). Therefore, Instagram is an effective tool to facilitate learning, as well as contributing to scientific dissemination and providing networked learning. The interactivity experienced in the Instagram Lives provides an opening for greater communication, exchanges and participation (MEIRA, 2016).

Therefore, the project demonstrated that learning is possible even amidst adversities that can occur in the world, with the use of convenient resources available to mankind. Scientific studies have long demonstrated the importance of technological advances for human beings, but few studies have addressed these advances in the formation of new academic teaching mechanisms. Even those who do address this theme start from a systematic bias, restricted to new possibilities that can be contemplated, in a world where modernity is talked about and thought about in a retrograde way. Thus, the GCET Lives project demonstrated that it is possible to maintain studies and build a knowledge base even in the face of the difficulties of social isolation due to COVID-19.

Finally, the project was able to encourage the continuity of group research even during the pandemic. The project fulfilled its teaching role in that each Live brought a topic to be exposed and debated, providing not only rapid dissemination of information, reaching people everywhere, regardless of their physical location, but also providing a "visual" encounter and the opportunity for debates that often take place in classrooms.

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APPENDIX A - GCET LIVES LIST

ТНЕМЕ	DATE	TIME
How to keep on studying during the social isolation due to covid-19	04/17	09:00PM
Research group and its importance in academic life	04/23	09:00PM
MBA and its importance in academic and professional life	04/30	09:00PM
The challenges of distance learning in times of social isolation	05/07	09:00PM
MBA and its importance in academic and professional life	05/09	09:00PM
Simplifying the methodological design for final graduation papers and dissertations	05/13	09:00PM
Animal law during coronavirus times	05/21	09:00PM
Living on board - All about the professional activity performed on a cruise ship	05/28	09:00PM
Research group and its importance in academic life 9	05/30	09:00PM
Postgraduate studies between challenges and achievements 10	06/04	09:00PM
Film commissions and their benefits in tourism 11	06/11	09:00PM
Ordinary wines and their harmonization 12	06/12	04:00PM
Scientific research an experience report through PIBIC 13	06/17	09:00PM
Multi-disciplinarity in research groups - challenges and opportunities in practice	06/25	09:00PM
The resumption of tourism - perspectives and trends	07/02	09:00PM
Movie-induced tourism between understanding and applicability	07/09	09:00PM

Appendix B - BANNERS OF GCET LIVES































