

IPSDS in times of Corona

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This report summarizes the results of a survey sent to students of the IPSDS study program in May 2020. The survey focused on the changes related to the coronavirus crisis for the students, especially regarding the work environment of students and the available time for study. While some of the students are now tied up in childcare, others have more free time. Adjustments in deadlines and the like were used by the course instructors/program management to relieve the burden on the students under a lot of pressure.

Contents

Research Question.....	1
Students' Work situation	2
Available time.....	2
Students' Additional Responsibilités	3
Summary	4

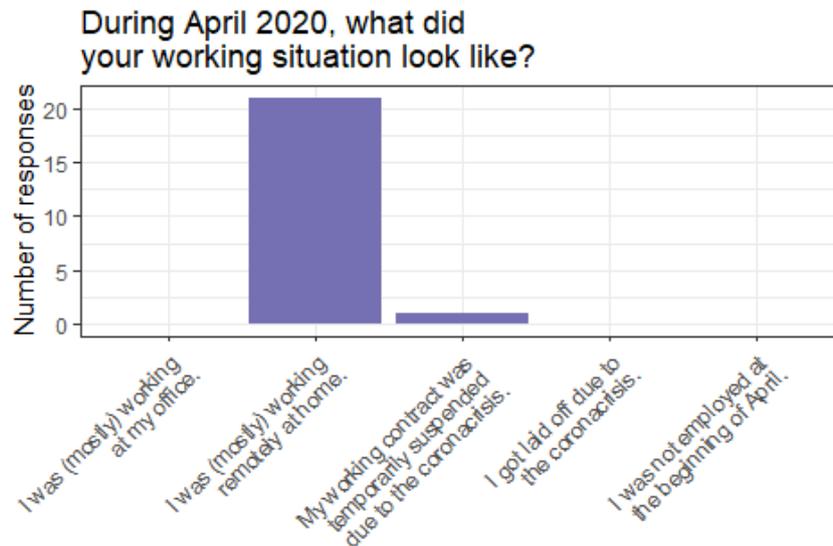
Research Question

The International Program in Survey and Data Science is a project sponsored by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research. It develops an education program in the field of data collection and data analysis. The international study program with almost 60 participants from all over the world is conducted exclusively online.

The Corona crisis had far-reaching consequences for the everyday life of most people. Although IPSDS is an online program, it is plausible that changing living environments during the crisis will also impact the study behavior of IPSDS students. For this reason, a survey was conducted to understand these effects. The survey consisted of four questions about the situation of IPSDS students during the corona crisis (April 2020). Students could answer the survey between May 1 and May 20, 2020. The invitations were sent out to the students by email. 24 of 59 invited students took part.

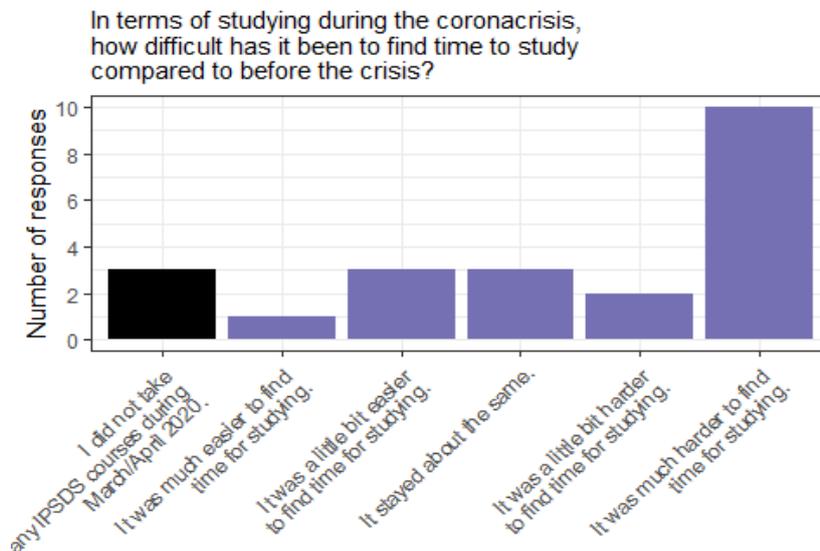
Students' Work situation

The IPSDS program is mainly attended by young professionals. Therefore, the first question is related to the students' work situation. Except for one student whose working contract was temporarily suspended due to the coronacrisis in April 2020, all other students worked remotely. Working remotely at home was not without its challenges for the IPSDS students, as we will see in the following.



Available time

The second question related to available time and time organization during March/April 2020: While three students did not attend courses in the IPSDS program in March/April 2020, more than half (12) of the responding students felt that it was somewhat (2) or much more (10) difficult to find time to study. For a few (3) students, there were no significant changes, and for some students (4) it was much easier to find time to study.

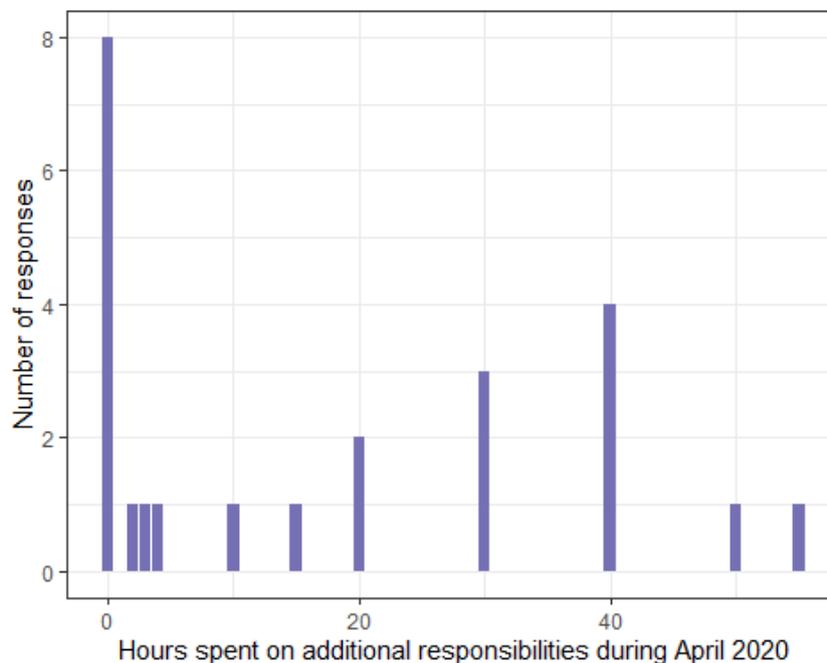


Students' Additional Responsibilities

The students were also asked an open-ended question whether they had to alter their learning routines during April 2020 due to the coronacrisis. We would like to summarize this information in the following:

- Nine students reported that they had to spend additional time on childcare for their children. In particular, homeschooling children was mentioned several times.
- Three students reported a sharp increase in workload during the corona crisis.
- Three students said they find working remotely from home pleasant, as they no longer have to commute to the office.
- Two students did not have any significant changes in their daily routine, as they had worked remotely from home before and do not have any underage children.

The students were additionally asked about hours spent on additional responsibilities (e.g., homeschooling children, taking care of vulnerable persons, etc.) during a week in April 2020. Again, the results show clearly that the situation among the students is very heterogeneous. While some have no additional obligations, 13 students have considerably less free time (≥ 10 hours).



Summary

The corona crisis has affected the participants of the IPSDS program, but not all students to the same extent and in the same way. While some had less time to study due to additional commitments, the crisis even made it easier for others to find time to study. The additional burdens were mainly family-related; the absence of commuting to work provided relief in some cases. In order to make it easier for students under high pressure, extensions of deadlines were granted in some spring and summer courses. Even though the program management noticed that registrations for courses did not decline significantly and a large number of students were able to successfully complete the courses even in the summer of 2020, the team will continue to closely follow developments and make appropriate adjustments if needed.