

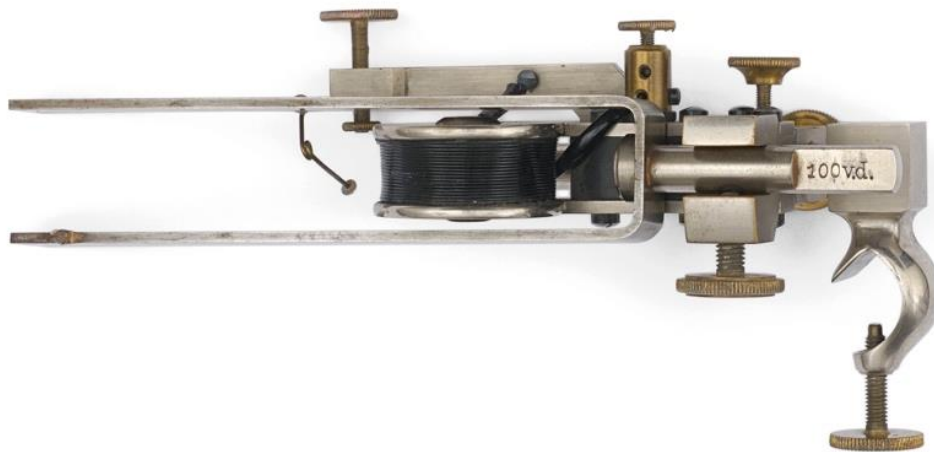
XXVIII SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCE

# EMPIRICAL STUDIES IN PSYCHOLOGY

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FACULTY OF PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF BELGRADE

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Seven major themes were extracted: 1. Quality time with family; 2. Tensions between household members; 3. Missing close friends; 4. Missing social life; 5. Re-evaluating the role of others; 6. Benefits of romantic relations; 7. Connecting with the community. Ten emerging adults noticed improvements in family relations, as an increase in mutual support and closeness. However, for teens who used to go out frequently pre-pandemic, the lockdown led to tensions between household members. Most codes related to missing friends and their emotional support, attainable online to some extent. Other participants longed for their social life and group interactions (e.g., cafes, school), unattainable online. During this time, participants re-evaluated the role of others in their lives, concluding that social contact was necessary, although its absence could prove beneficial. Moreover, social distance helped some realize who their true friends were. Few participants who reported being in a romantic relationship found spending time with partners valuable during the pandemic. Relationships with the community also improved, in terms of increased empathy toward vulnerable groups, complying with proposed measures, and even volunteering. In accordance with the results of similar studies concerning Covid-19 pandemic, physical distancing affected young peoples' quality of contact with significant others, their relational values and expectations. They mostly appreciated alone- and family- time, as well as exchange via social media, while simultaneously dealing with hardships of reduced live contact with peers. Young peoples' relationships during crisis represent an important research field, due to the relevance of social support for realization of their developmental potential.

**Keywords:** youth, Covid-19, relationships, qualitative study, narratives

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## HOW DID THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ALTER THE FUNCTIONS OF MUSIC AND NIGHTLIFE FOR YOUNG ADULTS?

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Young adults' lives have been severely affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Their social lives have been particularly impacted by the cancellations and restrictions of social gatherings such as concerts, parties and other forms of nightlife. Socio-cultural theory as well as empirical studies suggest that cultural elements such as music and music events can serve as valuable resources in dealing with challenges in times of crises and personal transitions. The aim of our study was to understand whether, and in what manner, the functions of music and nightlife have changed for youth during the pandemic. Moreover, we explored the ways in which nightlife restrictions affected young people and their habits. We conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with thirteen young people (seven male, aged 18-29). The interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis. Themes were identified by both researchers independently, with the final set of themes being a product of joint discussion on the overlaps and inconsistencies in the interpretation of data. In some aspects, music was employed in the same manner as before the pandemic, particularly as background for daily tasks, as well as a resource for creating and maintaining relationships and identity development. On the other hand, during the pandemic, music had a greater retrospective function and was used to reminisce on periods of "normality". Music was also used more often as a way to dissociate and normalize one's experiences, particularly pathological

emotional states such as anxiety. However, during lockdown some emotional states were too overwhelming, thus limiting this function of emotional regulation. Restrictions of public gatherings unveiled the multiple functions parties can have for youth as an irreplaceable multimodal experience. As most participants refrained themselves from going out, they reported a loss of a valuable resource for connecting with others and managing stress. Interestingly, parties organized in accordance with public measures did not provide the participants who attended them with the typical benefits as they reported dissatisfaction and the inability to “feel normal”. Four participants continued to attend illegal parties and gatherings that they used as a resource for managing stress related to the pandemic. Illegal party-goers also emphasized feeling a greater level of connectedness with other attendees than at pre-pandemic parties. The findings suggest that nightlife can serve functions that are hard to substitute, thus helping us understand some of the underlying motives behind young people’s noncompliance with necessary restrictions.

**Keywords:** COVID-19 restrictions, illegal nightlife, youth, emotional regulation, qualitative study

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## HOW ADOLESCENTS REPORT ABOUT THEIR EDUCATION EXPERIENCES DURING COVID-19?

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The Covid-19 pandemic has significantly affected everyday life activities, relations, experiences and well-being of students. This paper is a part of a broader study in which the adolescents’ narratives about their experiences during the pandemic were collected online. Adolescents were asked to write about their experiences during the pandemic. Unlike studies that explicitly deal with the interruption of formal schooling caused by pandemic, the aim of this work is to investigate if and in what context adolescents spontaneously mention organizational changes in schooling during pandemic. From the initial sample which consisted of 70 adolescents’ narratives, only those which contained educational experiences were selected for further analysis. Thus, the final sample included 36 participants (5 male and 31 female) aged 14-25 ( $M = 20$ ), both high school (18) and university students (18). Writing about their different experiences participants cited benefits of online study / teaching related particularly to organizational changes in schooling such as reduced amount and complexity of school requests, more efficient studying (e.g. enough time for preparation, higher grades), more comfort (e.g. taking online exams). Thus, they emphasized having more free time for non-formal learning, hobby practicing, reading, watching TV. Focus on education was also a coping strategy they used for dealing with uncertainty and disruption caused by pandemic. Only one student mentioned on-line schooling as protection from Covid-19. However, negative estimation of organizational changes in schooling were more prominent in adolescents’ narratives. Participants reported that online learning was more stressful, complicated and demanding due to online communication, lack of teachers’ skills and too compressed timetable of exams. They also reported problems with concentration and self-efficiency as well as grief about missed opportunities, worry about the future of their education and lack of company in the school setting. In comparison university students’

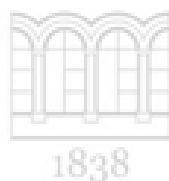
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