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LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES OF SERBIAN STUDENTS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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During the past and the current school year, educational systems worldwide have faced the challenge of COVID-19 virus pandemic. Schools, their employees, students and parents had a common task adapting to the new situation. The main change that lockdown brought was the relocation of teaching from school buildings to student's homes. Our research aimed to examine how students' learning experiences have changed, and the most significant challenges they have faced. For that purpose, we adapted the OECD questionnaire from PISA 2022 Global Crises Module (OECD, 2020). The questionnaire contains 62 questions, and 8 of them are focusing on challenges and difficulties with distance learning in the lockdown situation. Students were asked to report how often they had specific problems with completing schoolwork (e.g., "Problems with Internet access"; "Problems with finding a quiet place to study") while the school building was closed due to COVID-19. The sample collected by the snowball method was convenient, comprising 192 primary school students - 5th to 8th grade (64% of girls; $M_{\text{age}} = 14$; $SD_{\text{age}} = 3.284$), and 152 high school students of all four grades from Serbia (70% of girls; $M_{\text{age}} = 17$; $SD_{\text{age}} = 4.444$), who took part in an online survey. Conducted ANOVA showed statistically significant differences between primary school and high school students regarding challenges in distance learning. High school students are reporting more problems in understanding school assignments ($F(1, 342) = 7.315$, $p = .007$; $M_{\text{score}} = 2.48$, $SD_{\text{score}} = .976$; $M_{\text{score}} = 2.21$, $SD_{\text{score}} = .251$) and low motivation to do schoolwork ($F(1, 342) = 9.860$, $p = .002$; $M_{\text{score}} = 2.97$, $SD_{\text{score}} = 1.067$; $M_{\text{score}} = 2.60$, $SD_{\text{score}} = 1.097$). Problem with motivation for distance learning have proved to be the biggest challenge for both groups of students. It suggests that students from all educational levels need help to raise learning motivation within an online learning context. The results are further discussed considering other scales and questions from the OECD questionnaire and compared with the results of the other research that examined this topic.

Keywords: learning experiences, COVID-19 pandemic, distance learning, motivation for learning

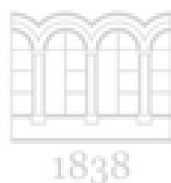
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