

Editorial

Navigating the Pandemic and Future Crises

Insights From Developmental and Educational Psychology

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I have thought a lot and I am a different person now. My view of the world has changed and I have found myself.
(Secondary school student from Austria reflecting on the pandemic after the third lockdown, April 2021)

COVID-19 has challenged societies and our educational systems in particular, with dramatic changes to established practices and imposing new challenges. As a consequence, vast differences emerged in how individual students, teachers, and parents, different schools, and different educational systems managed to cope with this unprecedented crisis. As we can see from the quote of the student above, some individuals succeeded in this endeavor, but many others did not. The scientific community quickly responded to the crisis with a surge of pandemic-related studies and research papers, also broader known as the “COVID-ization” of research (Brainard, 2022). This global shift of attention by researchers helped to fill knowledge gaps but also produced many poor-quality studies as many researchers worked outside of their main expertise and less rigorous peer review processes allowed for rapid dissemination of knowledge. Recent publication trends showed that these increased publication activities decreased together with the decreasing severity of the pandemic (Brainard, 2022) while many meta-analyses and systematic literature reviews emerged (Daumiller et al., 2023).

From our perspective, this is now a good time to focus on what we can learn from this global pandemic and ensuing economic crisis and how to support educational policies in steering and mitigating such crises in the

future. This topical issue brings together current research on the effects of the pandemic and possible coping mechanisms from both developmental and educational psychology perspectives – a promising combination to focus on the effects of various phases of the educational career (Spiel et al., 2022). Following a systematic meta-review on the existing state of research and research deficits, this topical issue entails four empirical papers with longitudinal designs investigating parents, teachers, adolescents, and university students from Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom.

This topical issue starts off with a systematic meta-review by Daumiller and colleagues (2023, this issue), which focuses on the effects that the pandemic had on education as a whole. The review brings together evidence on multiple topics (including school closures, e-teaching and learning, mental and physical health), populations (students, teachers, parents), and levels of education. The summary and evaluation of 55 systematic reviews and meta-analyses published until November 2022 provide a comprehensive narrative of how the pandemic affected education and what can be learned moving forward while highlighting the challenges and opportunities of research during such crises.

Turning to the empirical papers, Steinmayr and colleagues (2023, this issue) investigate whether distant teaching activities increased between school lockdowns during the second quarter of 2020 and the first quarter of 2021 and whether the frequency of distant teaching activities was related to students’ outcomes during distant learning. Relying on a large sample of German parents,

the authors concluded that distant teaching activities greatly increased between the school lockdowns. However, distant teaching activities varied strongly in both elementary and secondary schools. Moreover, distant teaching activities, children's characteristics, and social background were independently related to students' outcomes (motivation, competent and independent learning, perceived learning progress).

In the third paper, Helm and Huber (2023, this issue) explore the effects of the pandemic on school quality in a longitudinal study (between 2016 and autumn 2020) with a large sample of German school teachers. The authors consider different aspects of school quality such as school climate, collective teacher efficacy, teacher cooperation, and distributed leadership. Using multiple-group multiple-indicator univariate latent change score modeling, they largely did not find differences in the development of teachers' perceptions of school quality during the pandemic compared to developments that occurred prior to the pandemic. Notable exceptions are adaptive teaching which increased more than before the pandemic and social support between teachers which decreased more than before the pandemic.

The fourth paper by Schoon and Henseke (2023, this issue) draws on a nationally representative study (YEAH) of 16- to 25-year-olds conducted in the United Kingdom between February 2021 and June 2022 to investigate if school-based career preparation activities can support the development of career adaptability of young people in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors show that career adaptability is malleable and confirm the importance of school-based career preparation activities in supporting adaptive career-related cognitions and life satisfaction in times of economic uncertainty and upheaval. This is a crucial finding as young people have to navigate an increasingly uncertain and precarious employment market.

The issue concludes with a paper by Pelikan and colleagues (2023, this issue) who explore longitudinal effects between university students' satisfaction of their basic psychological needs (competence, autonomy, and social relatedness), intrinsic motivation, and self-regulated learning using a cross-lagged panel model. Findings from a large sample with four waves between April 2020 and July 2021 showed that surprisingly all measured constructs remained stable. The satisfaction of basic needs was cross-sectionally related to intrinsic motivation. The authors did not find cross-lagged effects on intrinsic motivation. Furthermore, self-regulated learning showed small but significant cross-lagged positive effects on intrinsic motivation at all waves,

suggesting an important role of self-regulated learning in shaping intrinsic motivation during the introduction of distance learning.

Each of the five articles contributes to a better understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on different aspects of the education system. Moreover, the findings encourage further research on how to cope with future crises as more scientific knowledge is necessary to inform theory, politics, and practice.

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