

Symbolic Coping: Young People's Perspectives during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Three Central European Countries (Regina Scheitel, BA, MSW, MA)



Background:

- COVID-19 Pandemic 2020, challenges to social, economic, healthcare, education, etc. dimensions
- Higher rates of distress from the pandemic associated with younger age, less resilience, high perceived stress (Hajdúk et al., 2022)
- Young adults between the ages of 18-29 are in a critical developmental phase known as emerging adulthood, which comes with various challenges and transitions (Arnett, 2015)
- This period of adulthood is associated with both stress but also coping, including symbolic coping (Wagner et al., 2002; Arnett, 2004)



Participants:

- University students (N=172) from the University of Zlin (Czech Republic), University of Trnava (Slovak Republic), & University of Applied Sciences Burgenland (Austria)
- Snowball sampling also utilized to recruit participants meeting age criteria
- Ages: 18-29
- Participants were interviewed during the second COVID-19 wave, from November 2020-December 2020



Research Questions, Data Collection Methods, Method of Analysis

Research Questions:

- How do young people interpret their lives in the pandemic?
- What interpretive repertoires are involved?
- What actions do these allow?
- What language tools do they use?
- What cultural sources do they refer to?
- Are any of these repertoires dominant?
- Do the repertoires used help them cope symbolically with the situation?

Data Collection Methods:

- Data collected using: Free writing method, Online interview using semi-structured questionnaire, Online focus groups, Online dramatization

Methods of Analysis:

- Data transcribed and analyzed using Atlas.ti
- Trial-independent coding used to increase and ensure intercoder reliability
- Methods of analysis followed critical discourse analysis (Locke & Budds, 2020) & Edley (2001) utilizing internal repertoires

Results

