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NON-EVERYDAY SCHOOL LIFE OF STUDENTS IN GRADES 1–3 DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC. CHILDREN'S CREATION OF SOCIAL LIFE IN A CRISIS SITUATION*

Introduction: The crisis brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic has induced numerous changes in the living and developmental environment of children. They have had to recognize and interpret these changes and engage in various new activities to cope with the extraordinary challenges.
Research Aim: The aim of this study was to describe and understand how early primary school students experienced changes in the crisis situation within their home environment and remote education, as well as how they adapted to these unusual conditions.
Method: The research employed a qualitative approach rooted in the paradigms of social constructivism and symbolic interactionism. The primary research method used was focused group interviews (focus groups) conducted with groups of students from both first and third grades in schools in Warsaw.
Results: The results indicate that children experienced social isolation as a strong, multidimensional pressure that triggered negative emotions, a sense of confinement, inaction, and emptiness. In response to remote learning at home, they developed new routines, constructed workspaces, asserted their privacy, and valued the nurturing functions of their homes. They perceived remote learning as lacking in personal relationships, agency, a sense of learning, tiring, and dull, which led to their passive participation. Consequently, they expressed resistance and creatively sought ways to endure the school time with their peers in the "virtual courtyard".
Conclusions: Analysis of children's discourse unequivocally reflects a negative assessment of emergency online education. It led to the depersonalization of the child, a sense of invisibility, voicelessness, and passivity during lessons, as well as a lack of personal learning experiences. Children's reflections and needs should be taken into account in ensuring the effectiveness of digital learning strategies.

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INTRODUCTION

The crisis triggered by the SARS-CoV-2 virus pandemic has induced alterations in the human living environment, without undermining its material foundations. Safeguarding the health and lives of citizens necessitated the implementation of numerous restrictions, including social isolation and limitations on the time and scope of mobility. Consequently, the environment for the lives and development of children underwent radical transformations. The accumulation of challenging and life-threatening events, coupled with their dynamic nature, evoked feelings of losing control over "one's world", a sense of helplessness, anxiety, disorientation, doubt, and more. The home, which had previously served as a "haven of everyday life", became "exposed" to unpredictable external impulses originating from afar, intruding into the space of daily life and disrupting its routines.

In his latest book published in 2022, titled *Powidoki codzienności. Obyczajowość Polaków na progu XXI wieku*, Sulima states:

> One could say that the pandemic is a kind of laboratory, and often a dramatic experiment in self-discovery, in which everyday life reveals itself and imposes itself, but also, in a para-methodical way, its essence is being discovered. The pandemic, especially in its initial phase, made all of us practicing anthropologists of everyday life. (p. 38)

In a similar role, children – students in early education – also found themselves having to recognize and interpret the changes occurring in their daily lives due to the crisis and undertake many new actions to meet these unprecedented challenges. Their school education was also extraordinary, as they actively participated in shaping it as social actors. Describing and understanding the complexity of children's experiences necessitates at least a brief reminder of the semantic scope of the categories of "everyday life" and "extraordinary circumstances". These categories lack clear-cut definitions and are present in both common understanding and various scientific disciplines. Similarly, the concept of "everyday life" as a pedagogical category is neither unequivocal nor new (e.g. Janowski, 1995; Bochno, 2004; Bruner, 2006; Dudzikowa and Czerepaniak-Walczak, 2010). Education and school learning within the institutional dimension do not exist separately from everyday practices but are integral components of every student's daily life. Due to the unprecedented changes in everyday life brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, we can rediscover it in a new social and educational context. Therefore, briefly, how should we understand "everyday life" as a scientific category and relate it to early education?

Please note that this translation maintains the academic and scientific tone of the original text, while striving to convey its meaning accurately. The concept of "everyday life" (*everydayness*) is a fluid and highly generalizable category that can be applied across various fields of knowledge. Anthropologist Sulima, in his book *Antropologia codzienności* (2000), wrote, "everyday life is inevitable, like the weather. [...] Everyday life is practiced and does not need a definition" (p. 7). Similarly, Sztompka (2008) described the semantic scope of everyday life, stating that it is "the most obvious, present in direct experience, the most real, overwhelmingly imposing itself on our perception of existence" (p. 25). However, in his book *Powidoki codzienności...* (2022), Sulima now asserts that the metaphor "everyday life, which is inevitable like the weather, loses its power to interpret our everyday experiences" (p. 36). As a result, he introduces a distinction between "daily life" as a form of an individual's social existence and "everydayness" as a category for reflecting on the ways or style of human life (p. 38). He writes about "everydayness" as an idea, while also including it in the realm of everyday language, where everyone has "their" everyday life and can describe it. According to Sulima (2022), "everydayness is a highly predictable context of human behaviour" (p. 415), yet its social content and functions change depending on socio-cultural processes and changes.

Everyday life constitutes the unique world of an individual, always belonging to someone and having its subject, but what makes up this daily life is always social and cultural (Mateja-Jaworska and Zawodna-Stephan, 2019). This implies that the act of self-creation and shaping one's own world involves producing an idiosyncratic (distinctive) reality by combining what is repeatable and universally accessible in life (Abrahams, 2011). It may seem that everyday life primarily concerns the ordinary personal and family world and does not encompass the study of institutionalized practices. However, Giddens (2003) explains that everyday life does not constitute some "fundamental reality", a "foundation upon which more intricate social relations are built" (p. 332). There is nothing socially "above" social practices. In other words, both the level of the social system, structures, or institutions, and the level of individual actions are shaped by everyday practices and are carried out by reflective subjects in social practices. Only subjects – social actors – in different circumstances and environments, utilizing various tools at their disposal, including institutional ones, can create everyday social practices and act as an "integrating moment" (Shove et al., 2012). While social action follows rules, it is not programmed by them; the creative nature of human action leads to the transformation of structures, and social actors, including children, act with a sense of agency and autonomy. Thus, an integral part of studying everyday life includes institutionalized social practices, which children also co-create as social actors. They, too, as social actors, possess significant knowledge about the conditions and consequences of their actions in daily life and can discursively describe their activities and the reasons guiding them. The disruption of the coherence of the

everyday world, its order, as seen during crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, renders everyday life problematic, resistant, and demanding of subject reflexivity for the creation of new, extraordinary practices. This was the case during the crisis caused by the COVID-19 virus pandemic.

The term "crisis" is commonly used in everyday language to describe various situations when something undergoes a sudden change, often accompanied by negative emotions. Crisis is also associated with many practical areas of human activity and can primarily refer to threats to political systems, territorial integrity, economic stability, people's lives and health, and the environment (Otwinowski, 2010). Giddens (2003) defines *critical situations* as "circumstances of radical unpredicted rupture that affect a significant number of individuals, situations that threaten the certainties of institutionalized routines or destroy them" (p. 102). For Giddens, critical situations are linked to the disruption of the basic security system and the "rupture" of routine daily activities, which can cause people to feel anxiety, tension, a loss of autonomy, uncertainty, a lack of future orientation, and difficulty in planning, among other things. Constituent characteristics of a crisis include, among others: a sense of uncertainty about the future, sudden disruption of routine ways of acting, a subjective feeling of incapacity to live and perform basic functions, a sense of existential emptiness, prolonged emotional tension, the necessity to change one's previous mode of functioning, and more (Badura-Madej, 1996; Sacuk, 2010).

The crisis brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic can be categorized as a random factor related to changes in the external environment that pose threats to people's health and lives. These factors were the reason behind institutional and social actions that introduced changes in individuals' social existence, "disrupting everyday life", especially in terms of space, time, interactions, activities, norms, and the rules of institutional order. These changes included social isolation, the restriction of children's micro-worlds of play and learning, and the implementation of "emergency" remote education (Leal Filho et al., 2021), without replicating the school ecosystem. Consequently, a qualitatively new environment for the development and upbringing of children emerged, and the home became a space not only for private life practices but also for school-related activities. Thus, the content of everyday life encompassed not only aspects related to a child's domestic life but also their education, the virtual world, interactions with peers, and the daily life of the school class. However, the question of everyday life is not about what constitutes it, but rather about the relationships between its constituent elements. This includes examining how these relationships among people, time, space, social goods, symbols, rules, and resources are sustained and reproduced in social practices (Löw, 2018). Concentrating on studying these phenomena can encompass bodily practices (as performance) and discursive practices, including the relationships between practices and material elements, material infrastructure, and the transfer and attribution of meanings (Shove et al., 2012).

RESEARCH PROBLEM AND GOAL

In my own research, I draw upon the discourse of children to seek answers in the article to the following questions: What image did early primary school students create of the crisis situation and remote education? What adaptive actions did they undertake? Particularly, I inquire about the meanings children attributed to the crisis reality, how they constructed a mental map of the world during the pandemic, their experiences with remote education, the actions they took at home in relation to remote learning, how children formed peer relationships, and the characteristics of their adaptation to the extraordinary conditions of life during the pandemic.

METHOD AND SAMPLE

The results presented in this article are part of a broader research project titled "Changes in the Educational Environment in the Context of Remote Learning – Children's Everyday Experiences in Grades 1–3". The project received ethical approval from the Ethics Committee for Scientific Research of the Faculty of Pedagogy and Psychology at the Jan Kochanowski University in Kielce (No. 1/2021). The research was conducted by members of the research team initiated by Prof. Dr. Habil. Józefa Bałachowicz, Chair of the Elementary Education Section at the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN). The research team included: Dr. Habil. Zuzanna Zbróg, Prof. at the Jan Kochanowski University of Kielce (team leader); Prof. Dr. Habil. Józefa Bałachowicz, Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw; Dr. Habil. Jolanta Bonar, Prof. at the University of Łódź; Dr. Habil. Małgorzata Głoskowska-Sołdatow, Prof. at the University of Białystok; Dr. Habil. Janina Uszyńska-Jarmoc, Prof. at the University of Białystok; Dr. Edyta Nowosielska, Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw; Dr. Aldona Kopik, Jan Kochanowski University of Kielce; Dr. Agnieszka Koterwas, Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw; Dr. Anna Witkowska-Tomaszewska, Maria Grzegorzewska University in Warsaw. The research team's findings will be presented in a multi-authored monograph edited by Józefa Bałachowicz and Zuzanna Zbróg (2023), and this article refers to the team's own contributions contained therein.

The research had a qualitative nature and was situated within the paradigm of social constructivism and symbolic interactionism, which emphasizes the ontology of social interaction and social practices. The primary research method employed was focused group interviews (focus groups), allowing for the consideration of the social context in which the participants' views, opinions, and arguments were formed (Barbour, 2011). The fundamental technique used was a partially structured (non-directive) interview, for which the research team jointly developed a customized tool containing key research topics. Furthermore, to deepen

the "focus", projective techniques were employed, encouraging participants to engage in group discussions and serving as concluding points in various stages of the research (Zbróg, 2023).

The selection of research groups was purposeful, considering the level of education and the age of the children. The study included 10 six-member groups from selected urban schools: 5 groups of students from Grade 1 (children aged 7–8) and 5 groups of students from Grade 3 (children aged 9–10). Each group consisted of six children (3 girls and 3 boys) from the same class, which means that the relationships between the children were established before the research began, following the principle of contextualization (Kubinowski, 2011). In the article, I utilize the research results from schools in Warsaw, where I participated as a researcher. Fieldwork was conducted in May–June 2021, in 2–3 sessions, during the period when Grade 1–3 students attended school.

DATA ANALYSIS

All the statements made by the children were recorded and then transcribed in accordance with the set objectives. The method of textual material analysis employed in this study was developed within the framework of critical discourse analysis by Wodak (2011) and also presented by Krzyżanowski (2011). Within this approach, an in-depth content analysis was conducted, examining two levels of textual representation: thematic analysis and in-depth analysis. In interpreting the results presented in this article, I refer to the statements of children, which have been anonymized, paying attention to how they reproduce and create meanings and what they say about their discursive practices and actions (bodily practices). This approach aims to understand the sense of constructing a "personal world" by children and their ways of adaptation in extraordinary conditions.

In this regard, I identified four thematic areas: constructing meanings related to understanding the crisis situation caused by the pandemic, constructing meanings related to remote education, adapting the practices of daily life to remote education, and peer relationships. Answering the question about the characteristics of children's adaptation to new conditions of daily life during remote education required interactive mediation between the levels of specific details of the reality created by children, the thematic level, and abstract knowledge (Lybeck, 2020).

RESULTS

People, in order to act, must interpret events and grasp the nature of the situation within which their current activity is embedded (Wygotski, 2002). Similarly, for

a child, the developmental environment is significant when they accurately recognize and actively participate in it: by acting, cooperating, interpreting, understanding, reproducing, and redesigning (Corsaro, 2005; Ernest, 2009; Nelson, 2007; Rimm-Kaufman and Wanless, 2015). Therefore, children attempted to understand the new situation they found themselves in, identify the causes of the pandemic and the factors threatening people's health and lives, and construct a picture of the extraordinary reality to cope with challenges, changes in daily life, and the crisis in a flexible manner, engaging in subjective actions.

The COVID-19 pandemic was a novel phenomenon, unknown to the generation of grandparents, parents, and especially children. Knowledge about its causes, processes, and mechanisms of virus spread, like adults, children acquired during the crisis from media, social messages, and family experiences. Even Grade 1 students correctly identified the main cause of changes in daily life, citing the appearance of the dangerous virus: "Covid causes diseases, people can die or get seriously ill; there's no other way, you have to befriend it and stay at home".

Third-grade students similarly pointed out the causes of changes in their immediate environment due to the appearance of the virus but noticed its broader impact on changing the environment of life, saying, "the pandemic is a problem; well, it's a crisis"; "well, it's a situation... well, things will be a bit bad". First-grade students blamed the SARS-COV-2 virus for disrupting their daily lives, personifying it and directing their feelings directly: "I got angry at this virus"; "the pandemic is stupid"; "it's disgusting". For third-grade students, knowledge about the pandemic had a rational significance and served in guiding their behaviour. When asked whether it's better to know about the virus or not, a student responded: "To know, so that you can prepare. Don't go without a mask and don't travel and don't blow on anyone". Children also noticed the connection between the behaviour of others and the spread of the pandemic, expressed their critical opinions, showed interest in information provided by mass media, and rationally indicated how to behave to avoid infection.

In general, the emergence of an unknown virus and the situation caused by the pandemic contained many stressors inherent in the environment (Doucet et al., 2020; Lewandowska, 2020; Jaskulska et al., 2021). First-grade children expressed their experiences in various ways, but they mainly revolved around negative experiences:

"I was scared when I found out about this disease... I even cried".

"I had feelings like crying, anger".

"When I think about the coronavirus, I get »schizo«".

"Sorrow, crying, and everything worst in the world".

Similarly, third-grade students expressed their negative experiences:

"The pandemic is loneliness and sadness because we have to isolate from each other".

"Sorrow, despair, fear, anger, uncertainty, pain".

Children explained the reasons for their anxiety, which stemmed from concerns about the lives of their loved ones, their own fate, as well as their health and life. For example, a first-grade student said, "I was scared because my whole family got infected, and I would have to go to an orphanage instead of being with my parents". The influx of information about the threat to health and life disrupted the sense of security and triggered feelings such as *sadness*, *despair*, *fear*, *anger*, *uncertainty*, and *pain*. Overall, it was a time of existential anxiety, and this anxiety permeated children's personal experiences and social relationships, which had previously been part of their daily routine. Furthermore, the introduction of the obligation of social isolation deepened the experience of crisis and strongly affected children's daily lives, the quality and nature of their activities.

Firstly, these changes pertained to space as the locus of interaction, the available social objects for children, as well as the time and opportunities for engaging in social activities. A child's world was confined to the home environment, limiting the available places for social interactions where they could satisfy their social and emotional needs, learn and develop competencies, engage in physical activity and play. Consequently, children experienced social isolation as significant, multidimensional pressure that caused disintegration in their perception of the world, themselves in that world, their autonomy, and their ability to act. This is corroborated by a segment of discourse from the first-grade students:

"I still felt isolated. I feel isolated from the whole world".

"Locked in a cage".

"Complete stillness, just at home. And that's it. I didn't go outside, and that was all".

"It reminds me of prison because I can't go to school, and at school, I can go into the hallway, but at home, only in my room, and that's why it reminds me of prison".

Children expressed their sense of limitation as psychological confinement, separation, absurdity, immobility, a feeling of emptiness, and even used metaphors such as *cages*, *prison*, and *cinema*. The experiences described by children can be characterized as a sense of "existential emptiness" (Sacuk, 2010, p. 65). This state is vividly illustrated by a segment of discourse from third-grade students:

"For me, it was boring because when I turned on the computer, I just kept sitting and sitting, and I was just in my room all the time, not doing anything, no movement, just sitting".

The first-grade students sought ways to change the situation by suggesting the possibility of getting rid of the virus:

"Because we will make a machine that will destroy Covid!"

"That will pour alcohol from a pipe".

"We will destroy it so that there are no more online classes; they are so silly, they are dumb!"

Meanwhile, the third-grade students looked for rational ways to cope with the situation, considering the possibility of vaccinations and the invention of effective medicines.

Overall, in the opinion of early primary school students, the crisis brought about a "gigantic change", and the quintessence of this change was the "transition to online". The new form of school activities was perceived as a move to another world, a sense of absurdity in which they had to learn. First-grade students said:

"It's abnormal, unreal, for two years now, this virus has been here, and for two years, there hasn't been a normal world".

"Complete stillness, just at home. Not going outside, wearing masks, hmmm, and having lessons via computer. Online lessons and not leaving the house".

Everything that was experienced in real life before the pandemic has now lost its normalcy. One of the third-grade students described functioning in the new unusual situation as follows:

"It's a strange feeling, that you are somehow in class, but this is my home, but still, it's school, this tearing between these two things".

The child expressed their mental and existential difficulties in simultaneously functioning in different spaces: the private and institutional ones, each with its own rights and social expectations towards the child and student. During remote learning, the place of action for students was no longer the school space but their home space; for example, their home desk became their school desk. The school space and the home space had become intertwined. When asked about places associated with remote education, first-grade students most often mentioned rooms in their homes:

"Bedroom, kitchen, living room, hall, and also the wardrobe. So, almost the whole house except for the basement".

"The hall, and then I go to my room for lessons, then it's break time".

"For me, it's the bedroom and the kitchen".

Third-grade students pointed out their rooms and their own desks with gathered supplies, where various things and toys are present. Additionally, they highlighted having a comfortable chair at home. However, they also mentioned that it could be a bed where they could lie down and "just listen while the teacher was reading".

Being at home was an important argument cited by the youngest students in favour of remote education. In the discussion, a first-grade student expressed it this way:

"I definitely prefer remote learning because I felt more at home, in my own house".

"I have an idea of why it's worth doing remote learning! Because you don't have to wait for your mom; you just finish all the lessons, then you're immediately at home, [...], you just close the computer and say, »Mom, I finished my lessons!«"

The home provided the basics of existence and a sense of being "at my own place" because remote education "came home". Children felt like hosts at home, managing their time, space, and creating their own place for school activities, giving it individual characteristics, and developing their daily rituals. They particularly emphasized the caretaking function of the home. Children regulated meal times independently. First-grade students argued:

"Learning at home is fun for me because you can go downstairs, have something to eat, and you can also talk to your parents".

Due to remote education, children easily changed their morning ritual of getting ready for school, appropriate clothing, and presentation in social space:

"And if we were going to school, you have to get up earlier, eat right away, and get dressed... but with remote learning, you don't have to... with remote, you can sleep more, get up, and turn on the computer, and you're already in class".

"You could get up at 8:14, still in your pyjamas".

It was possible to sleep longer, and to explain such a situation, children found a way: "because if you're late for remote classes, nothing really happens, because, for example, someone could say you had some technical problems".

Social isolation and staying at home allowed children to have additional time for relationships with their parents and siblings. However, on the other hand, the proximity of family members posed a hindrance to concentrating during lessons because a sibling would "bang on the door", "mom would shout", and "the neighbours were doing renovations". Children tried to separate their "school space at home" from their family, from noise, and from pets. They also pointed out that remote lessons were their "private" sphere of activity, where, just like at school, family members could not participate. However, continuous stay at home and the inability to participate in other spaces of activity were sources of stress. Children perceived everyday life as monotonous and repetitive, as expressed in the discourse of third-grade students:

"When I was in quarantine for about two weeks, the day looked almost the same, getting up every day and doing this and that, and repeating it the next day, and that annoyed me".

The new form of school lessons, which children perceived as a "transfer to another world", was stressful and elicited strong negative feelings that children considered threatening to their psychosocial functioning and even their cognitive abilities. First-grade students expressed it as follows:

"Constant fatigue because you have to keep staring at the screen all the time, and then it turns on again, and you keep looking at the screen, and you can't even close your eyes because you have to see everything, and your ears can't rest because you have to listen, and your hands can't rest because you have to write, so it's constant fatigue, and during the break, you'd rather lie down and sleep".

"And I have nothing to do, I have to study, and my head is about to explode, and everything, everything".

Third-grade students, like their younger peers, experienced the crisis situation as a sense of space limitation, blocked activity, immobility, and a sense of fiction:

"It's as if I was always in a movie".

"I thought I was talking to the monitor itself instead of everyone".

During online education, children felt objectified through the "monitor", had difficulty identifying with the class, and were unable to engage in interactions that had lost their characteristics of face-to-face meetings. Therefore, after "turning on the computer", the child was unable to fulfill the role of the person learning. The attempt to transfer the model of in-person classes into virtual reality was ineffective for children. Even first-grade students accurately noticed its shortcomings and negatively assessed their possibilities of engagement in learning:

"She just keeps talking, sometimes she stutters. Sometimes I get bored and bored there, so I can't learn anything there".

"Mainly electronics. I wanted to go to school already because my brain would almost die. If I hadn't gone to school, I would have lost my mind".

Similarly, third-grade students assessed the effectiveness of remote lessons:

"We kept listening, but nothing came out of that listening".

"This computer distracted me".

The feeling of depersonalization and the blockage of familiar forms of "speaking and acting" as coping strategies in their relationships with the world triggered passive and active resistance. Third-grade students, aware of mediated relationships, decided independently about their participation in remote classes, saying:

"I can quietly, secretly turn off my camera during (watching) the video, and you can leave, because the teacher always tells us to turn off our cameras, and if there's a video that we don't like, we can do something else".

Children sought ways to emphasize their autonomy, communicate with peers, and construct a shared sense of the unusual reality. They searched for interaction and playfulness. Older students also tried to "joke around and play tricks" during classes. For example:

"Once, when I was the host, I shared funny things with everyone so that they wouldn't be sad".

"It could also be that if someone gets bored during online lessons, they can start playing a game or watch YouTube peacefully".

The first-grade students also recalled their experiences of resistance during remote lessons, for example:

"When the teacher once forgot to block the chat during a conversation lesson, everyone was watching, and we weren't watching anything, just chatting with each other on chat with Staś (name changed)".

The third-grade students used IT tools to independently contact their peers, such as:

"Through the phone, through chat, through Zoom, through Internet programs. Sometimes someone would create their own Zoom meeting and invite the class... and we created groups on WhatsApp, on Messenger, and called each other".

In general, during remote education, children developed their IT skills, but these skills did not necessarily facilitate learning in the form it was offered during "emergency" education. Instead, they effectively used these skills to connect with their peers and engage in play. Collaboration, play, and interactive tasks would likely be beneficial for children in online learning.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The gathered empirical knowledge regarding how elementary school students understand and experience the crisis situation brought about by the pandemic, in accordance with qualitative research methodology (Kvale, 2012), provided "significant data" for capturing the main sense of constructing a "personal world" by children in the early school years and their ways of adapting to unusual conditions. In presenting the research results, I gave children a voice to understand their comprehension of the causes of the crisis situation, changes in their home environment and school education, the actions they took, and their adaptive characteristics in these extraordinary circumstances.

The crisis caused by the pandemic created a specific context for children's daily experiences. What was once routine and familiar to children, the rhythm and orderliness of their daily lives, suddenly became problematic. Adapting to these new conditions required recognizing the factors disrupting their previous routines and acquiring new knowledge. This new knowledge served to understand the reasons for the changes, assign meaning to them, and adapt their living environment to themselves and themselves to the environment.

From the discourse of children, it can be observed that the crisis situation was seen holistically, encompassing many dimensions of their daily lives. It was a time of existential unease, a disturbance of their sense of security, and their daily routines. Negative emotions, particularly fear, anger, sadness, and despondency, accompanied children, and these feelings were intensified by the limitations on their activities and the blocking of direct peer interactions. Consequently, the changes in their living environment were perceived by children as multi-dimensional pressure that disrupted their previous routines and required a response in terms of adjusting the environment to themselves and themselves to the environment.

During the pandemic, the microcosm of education, especially, experienced significant disintegration. Remote education, without replicating the ecosystem,

noticeably deprived learning at home of many characteristics of everyday school education. There was a lack of institutional, symbolic, cultural, and material attributes of teaching and learning that could not be replicated in the home environment. For students in grades 1–3, the separation of the teacher from the student and the student from the group of learners was particularly significant. Online classes lacked the conventional context of the school classroom and the presence of educational actors, their interactions, and activities in the microenvironment, in the emerging networks of relationships.

In short, school is a space for interaction and defining situations in which students shape their knowledge, develop reflexivity, agency, action skills, engagement, action patterns, and motivation. The learning culture is based on relatively stable, personal, and emotional relationships between interaction partners, on trust and motivation, on a sense of security, closeness, and direct dialogue. In contrast, remote education based on mediated communication was perceived by children as taking place "on" computers, "on" screens, like in a movie, as "separated" from everyday life. This led to the depersonalization of the child, a sense of being "invisible", voiceless, devoid of activity during lessons, and a lack of personal learning experiences. In assessing the effectiveness of remote classes, children demonstrated reflexivity, were able to identify the reasons for their passive attitude during classes, and expressed their resistance. On the other hand, children creatively sought ways to endure their school time in front of the screen, either by pretending to participate in classes using their digital skills or by engaging in other activities like chatting, talking on the phone, playing available games, etc. In any case, the boring educational sessions were replaced by a typical early school period activity, which is play. They were able to utilize the available infrastructure and their digital competencies for this purpose (Iwanicka, 2020). Particularly, third-grade students often met on the "virtual playground" both during classes and after classes, using various communication tools.

In general, children experienced the unusual everyday life not as external observers but as active participants from an internal perspective, as active players with a sense of agency and autonomy. Children constructed the world in a crisis situation along with other people, asserting their agency in the following ways:

- At home, they developed new routines, such as morning wake-up times, meal schedules, and workspaces. They asserted their own privacy during lessons, separating themselves from parents and noise, among other things.
- Children's agency in the field of education manifested in their reflexivity, assessing the usefulness of lessons, expressing resistance, pretending to participate, giving up on classes, or replacing them with more attractive activities, such as online games or phone conversations.
- Children's relationships moved to the "virtual playground". Third-grade students, in particular, often met, using various communication tools during and after classes.

The adaptive actions taken by children during the period of remote learning did not always have a positive character from the perspective of educational goals. Early elementary school students require support in developing self-management skills and recognizing interpersonal relationship principles, which were lacking during remote education based on mediated relationships. In this context, the statement by Husén (1985) remains relevant, based on extensive research and UNESCO's experiences with the use of new technologies in education in the 1980s: "Schools cannot be treated as pedagogical factories, and as a result, teachers cannot be replaced by machines. [...] We have begun to understand that the essence of the didactic and educational process is the interaction between two individuals: the teacher and the student" (p. 214). The analysis of children's experiences regarding learning in mediated relationships confirms this assertion. Children need teacher support in their learning, a competent individual who should participate in the relationship between the child and the machine.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The presented research results on the experience of educational everyday life during the pandemic among students in grades 1–3 focus on an urban environment. This was the intention, to reflect on the everyday life of remote education for children who had access to the necessary infrastructure and family support, as well as a guaranteed continuity of classes. The goal was to understand the experiences of children in a crisis situation and their actions as social actors in an unusual everyday life. There is limited access to research with a similar methodology in the academic literature. There is relatively more research on the experiences of older students, adolescents, and university students conducted in a positivist paradigm. The qualitative approach employed in the presented research can be useful for analysing the needs of children regarding the integration of technology into their daily learning and the transformation of daily school practices (Jaskulska et al., 2021; Pyżalski and Walter, 2021).

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NIECODZIENNOŚĆ SZKOLNA UCZNIÓW KLAS I–III W CZASIE PANDEMII COVID-19. DZIECIĘCE TWORZENIE SPOŁECZNEGO ŻYCIA W SYTUACJI KRYZYSOWEJ

Wprowadzenie: Kryzys spowodowany pandemią wirusa SARS-CoV-2 wywołał wiele zmian w środowisku życia i rozwoju dzieci. Musiały one te zmiany rozpoznawać i interpretować oraz podejmować wiele nowych działań, aby sprostać niecodziennym wyzwaniom.
Cel badań: Celem badań był opis i zrozumienie, jak uczniowie edukacji wczesnoszkolnej doświadczali zmian w sytuacji kryzysowej w środowisku domowym i edukacji zdalnej oraz na czym polegała ich adaptacja do niecodziennych warunków działania.
Metoda badań: Badania miały charakter jakościowy i były ulokowane w paradygmacie konstruktywizmu społecznego i interakcjonizmu symbolicznego. Główną metodą badań był zogniskowany wywiad grupowy (fokusy), prowadzony z grupami uczniów klas I i III w szkołach warszawskich.
Wyniki: Wynik pokazują, że izolację społeczną dzieci odczuwały jako silną, wielowymiarową presję, wywołującą negatywne emocje, poczucie zamknięcia, bezruch i poczucie

pustki. W związku z zajęciami zdalnymi w domu wypracowały one nowe rutyny, konstruowały przestrzenie do pracy, zaznaczały własną prywatność, ceniły funkcje opiekuńcze domu. Zajęcia w formie zdalnej odbierały jako pozbawione poczucia relacji, sprawczości, poczucia uczenia się, męczące i nudne, rozwijając ich bierną postawę. W związku z tym wyrażały swój opór i z rówieśnikami twórczo w zabawie na „szklanym podwórku" szukały sposobów przetrwania szkolnego czasu.
Wnioski: Z analizy dziecięcego dyskursu jednoznacznie wynika negatywna ocena edukacji *online*, realizowanej w trybie „awaryjnym". Prowadziła ona do depersonalizacji osoby dziecka, poczucia bycia „niewidzialnym", pozbawionym głosu i aktywności w czasie zajęć oraz osobistego doświadczania uczenia się. Refleksje dzieci i ich potrzeby powinny być wysłuchane w zapewnieniu efektywności strategii uczenia się z użyciem narzędzi cyfrowych.

Słowa kluczowe: pandemia, niecodzienność, edukacja zdalna, doświadczenia dzieci, cechy adaptacji