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### XIV CONGRESO ESPAÑOL DE SOCIOLOGÍA

**Uses of Writing.**

**Sociology of Creativity in COVID-19 Pandemic**

**Karelina, Jekaterina**

University of Barcelona, España, email: jkarelka17@alumnes.ub.edu

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**Introduction**

In December 2019, COVID-19 had started spreading over the globe, eventually evolving into a worldwide pandemic – in 2020 measures were put into force, which almost instantly limited personal and social contacts. In social sciences, debates about the implications of COVID-19 measures for social issues are still turning into a huge cluster of questions and hypotheses.

The way in which creativity is presented across society is connected to how other areas of human actions are forming a specific context. The context of pandemic produced the most influential factor in all areas of out life for the last few years. An absolutely unidentified, unknown, and uncertain situations that the pandemic has brought required individuals to find new behaviour models to connect innovations, creativity, ethics, and sustainability to handle this crisis more resiliently and receptively. According to Reckwitz, creativity has become a life matrix core and the routine of everyday practices. However, contemporary sociological discourse has not yet sufficiently stressed the issue of creativity during COVID-19 pandemic. Extending Simonton’s thesis on importance of social context (Simonton 1999), I plan to explore the phenomenon of creativity as coping strategies during crisis and lockdown time.

The research applies to an analysis of people’s experiences when their mobility was restricted, and they were forced to rearrange their practices. The findings show how the pandemic expanded social contexts in which practitioners of writing are embedded and featured the role, played by socio-cultural factors in shaping of stress coping strategies.

**Objectives**

Scientific evidence has committed the existence of a positive and affirmative connection between the experience of crisis and creativity. Crisis situations like pandemic and isolation may lead «diversifying experiences», which are «highly unusual and unexpected events or situations that push individuals outside the realm of ‘normality’» (Ritter, Damian, Simonton, van Baaren, Strick, Derks et al., 2012: 961). According to model formulated by Damian and Simonton, the common function of such experiences lies in that they push individuals outside the standard frameworks, promote cognitive flexibility, and force individuals to embrace new and uncommon ideas (Damian & Simonton, 2014). Recent research has suggested that creativity can be an effective resource for individuals encountering a crisis situation (Damian & Simonton, 2014; Orkibi & Ram-Vlasov, 2019). Multifarious analyses demonstrated that perceived impact of COVID-19 was largely related to creative process engagement, which was positively associated to self-reported creative increase for facilitating the impact of coronavirus (Tang, Hofreiter, Reiter-Palmon, Bai, & Murugavel, 2021). But for the most part, such studies aimed the functional creativity, that is, push-fullness in the benefits of solving day-to-day problems ([Cropley & Cropley, 2010](https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.601389/full%22%20%5Cl%20%22ref18)) instead of any abstract creative expressiveness.

The proposal research provides an empirical contribution to the debate on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and lockdowns on members of writing industry and adaptation strategies and challenges. Personal abilities to either adapt or to innovate in the face of any external stress or crisis may be influenced by life context – in an innovative setting fruitful creativity can be an invaluable skill to possess. (Kirton, 1994). Therefore, the aim of the current study was to verify two hypotheses: (H1) the perceived impact of COVID-19 crisis is positively related to creative process engagement; (H2) people who write professionally experienced less stress positioning creativity as a tool to copy with crisis.

**Methodology**

The current study drew on a sample consisting of 64 individual writers of online Wall Street International (WSI) magazine (www.wsimag.com) – people, whose job implies a creative attitude primarily – to examine whether creativity can function as an competent method to reflect the pressure of situation and to build up coping socially framed behaviour. The sample include authors who have been writing regularly at least one year and have spent lockdowns of 2020 in Spain and Italy. Most of the participants were from the branches of media, art, culture, education, or design.

In order to work on the objectives, determined above, I aim to combine both qualitative and quantitative research designs with emphasis on the former. The time frame of the study focuses on year 2020. The WHO declared COVID-19 outbreak a [Public Health Emergency of International Concern](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_Health_Emergency_of_International_Concern%22%20%5Co%20%22Public%20Health%20Emergency%20of%20International%20Concern) on 30 January 2020, and a [pandemic](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pandemic%22%20%5Co%20%22Pandemic) on 11 March 2020. At the current stage (March 2022) it is not possible to predict the official end of SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. As some developments may become known or understood only in retrospect, I will focus on shutdowns/lockdowns periods in every country relying acknowledged information about current timeline of the pandemic. Following the design of analysis I extract data from individual respondents (writers of WSI) based on their perception of the lockdown in their country.

Italy. On 9 March 2020, the government of Italy under Prime Minister [Giuseppe Conte](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giuseppe_Conte%22%20%5Co%20%22Giuseppe%20Conte) imposed a national lockdown or quarantine, restricting the movement of the population except for necessity, work, and health circumstances, in response to the growing pandemic of COVID-19 in the country. Officially lockdown extended until 18 May (2 months, 1 week and 2 days).

Spain. On 14 March 2020, The Spanish government imposes a nationwide lockdown. Since 26 March, Spain has the most stringent ban on leaving the home. On 28 April, the government announced a plan for easing lockdown restrictions. Country lockdown measures were in effect from 14 March to 14 May 2020 (2 months).

The research methodology deployed in the course of this research included several types of techniques: quantitative approach (Likert-style surveys and self-reports about willingness to work creatively in isolation), including contextual factor analysis and an ex post facto design as well. An ad hoc socio-demographic questionnaire, perceived crisis/resilience scale (PCS) and creativity level scale (CLS) are examined. Except socio-demographic points, questionnaire include sections of questions about: spending isolation period alone, or with family/partner, a strong commitment to work regularly, an experience to work creatively under severe stress. PCS survey include self-reporting questions about retrospective self-feeling level of stress in the beginning/in the end of lockdown, level of impact and it’s consequences on creative work processes, different levels of support, and others. Data for precise tables and charts are still collecting via online forms, for the reason that all survey participants live in different places.

**Expected Results**

At the stage of providing this short text, I have to feature that full data is not yet collected. Still receiving the answers from WSI writers from both mentioned countries I am able just to predict some forecast results of research. Formulating the main direction of statistics data the preliminary results are as following: considering that present research supports the positive coping effect of creativity in stressful situations (Corry et  al., 2014, 2015), and supposes that creativity is an effective way to deal with crisis, overwhelming majority of participants declared that isolation crisis stimulates creativity attitude.

There is no doubt that COVID-19 pandemic and lockdown times are very social problems, with solutions particularly dependent on how social communities help and support each other (for example, work together as a collective via online is vital importance for creative mind and job satisfaction particularly in crisis). Nevertheless, the findings of the present research should be applied with caution, generally because of self-report measure design, which is prone to methodological restrictions (personal motivations, differences in understanding of questions and notions, etc.). Full analyses and final precise data will be demonstrated on poster at the Congress section.

**Conclusion**

Because the pandemic can have long-term effects, further research needs to be conducted to monitor stress levels after it subsides.

After analysing all received data from all the recipients a proposal research allow to reconstruct and figure out mechanisms, which were associated with different activities and social challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. Fractionally, it is an attempt to analyse the chronology of an unprecedented new-wave social reality.

Precise results, which will be provided via poster for Congress, may be applied to a comprehensive investigation of post-pandemic and post-crisis society. Ultimately, this research constitutes a call to sociologists to pay more attention to creativity and accelerate toward a discourse of sociology of creativity in XXI century in all spectres.

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