

Youth Partnership

Partnership between the European Commission
and the Council of Europe in the field of Youth



Researching Youth: New Methods in Changing Times



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Researching Youth: New Methods in Changing Times

This paper has been developed in response to a Youth Knowledge Forum Event held in October 2020, which focused on the challenges of researching youth during the global COVID-19 Pandemic. Central to the paper is the question of how social researchers have had to adapt the way they research in response to the pandemic, and the lessons that might be learned from these adaptations. The paper considers these challenges through the lens of an ongoing research project about family life and COVID-19.

The paper divided into two parts:

1) **Part 1: Youth and Social Research** – this section sets the research landscape and discusses how youth have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. It then considers how we might research some of these challenges.

2) **Part 2: The Families & Community in the time of COVID-19 Project (FACT-COVID)** – here details will be presented of an ongoing international research project on family life and COVID-19 led by researchers from University College London. We use this example to consider some of the wider social research challenges which have emerged during this period.

Part 1: Youth and Social Research

Social Challenges faced by Youth post Covid-19

Today, there are over 1.2 billion young people aged 15 to 24 years, accounting for 16 percent of the global population (UN World Youth Report, 2020). Here, we are interested in exploring challenges faced by youth specifically across Europe, yet these challenges are by no means unique to young people living in this continent.

A range of studies have explored the challenges faced by youth (13-30) across Europe. These have been conducted both within and across countries, by governments, charities, think tanks and other third-sector organisations. Most have used survey-based methods, and in doing so have captured a range of perspectives from large numbers of young people. Across each of these surveys similar youth challenges have emerged. One such study, conducted by the health charity, Central YMCA in a survey of 1600 young people aged between 16 -25 years old in the UK identified the following top 10 issues faced by young people in the 21st century (Central YMCA, 2016):

1. Lack of employment opportunities
2. Failure to succeed in education system
3. Issues related to body image
4. Family problems
5. Substance abuse

6. Pressures of materialism
7. Lack of affordable housing
8. Negative stereotyping
9. Pressures of 24-hour social networking
10. Crime

Mental and physical health have also specifically been highlighted as important challenges. Across Europe, depression is one of the key issues faced by adolescents and suicide is the second leading cause of death in 15-29-year olds (WHO, 2019). In the United Kingdom, according to the Mental Health Foundation, 70% of people in the UK aged 18 to 34 self-reported mental health difficulties, making them more likely to report mental health difficulties compared to other age groups. Another important challenge which young people across Europe have stated is their concern over Climate Change and the Environment. These concerns in turn link to challenges around physical and mental health (e.g global warming, air and other forms of pollution on health and eco-anxiety- 'a chronic fear of environmental doom') (Clayton et al, 2017; Patrizia, 2014).

It is important to recognise that youth are not a homogenous category, and disparities in challenges exist both within and between countries. Inequalities of access to resources are faced more by certain groups of young people than others with gender, poverty, rurality, disability, migrant and refugee status all mitigating levels of equality.

COVID-19 has exacerbated many of these issues for youth across Europe, but has brought new ones to light. It has impacted on mental well-being, employment, income loss, disruptions to education, familial relations and friendships, as well as a limitation to individual freedoms. There has also been a general agreement that longer-term economic and social damage will hit young people disproportionately (OECD, 2020).

Once such area which has been incredibly impacted is that of education. The closure of schools and universities has affected more than 1.5 billion children and youth worldwide and has significantly changed how youth and children live and learn during the pandemic (UN, 2020). Not all young people have had consistent access to education and the pandemic has placed a magnifying glass over the issue of access to resources. For example, the availability of a quiet study space, access to the internet or a computer to do work. Technology has played a critical part in this global pandemic and lack of it, has left some behind. Moreover, the postponement or cancellation of exams in around 70 countries exposes youth and children to uncertainty, anxiety and stress (UN, 2020).

Of course, there have been significant psychological impacts of social distancing and quarantine measures on young people causing stress, anxiety and loneliness (OECD, 2020).

Added to this, Generation Z (youth aged 16-24 years old) will be and have already been impacted economically. Many young people have fewer financial assets. This places those in households which are more economically vulnerable at a heightened chance of falling below the poverty line, in instances where income suddenly seized or declined. Added to this, the prospects of both school leavers and recent graduates finding jobs have been eroded.

Across Europe, youth have felt left out of the conversation on the pandemic. A survey conducted by the British Science Association (BSA, 2020) in the United Kingdom with youth (14 – 18 years), revealed 9 in 10 young people did not think scientists (89%) or politicians (92%) were addressing them when discussing COVID-19. This has implications on how youth perceive guidelines and measures are being developed in their best interests (BSA, 2020). At the same time, across Europe, at various timepoints in the pandemic (particularly during the second wave), youth have been portrayed as rule-breakers who have contributed to the spread of the virus due to their carelessness. The second wave across Europe has seen increased cases of COVID-19 in young people (Aleta and Moreno, 2020). This is in part due to the opening up of universities and schools after national lockdowns and school closures. There thus seems to be a dichotomy in how youth are being represented and how youth are coping. Research into their lived experiences during this pandemic is therefore paramount.

[How are Social Scientists Researching these Challenges?](#)

There is no disputing the COVID-19 pandemic is a monumental event that has impacted societies and communities globally. While initially much research focused around the medical and health impact of the virus, social research soon caught up. Existing research projects have had to adapt and new projects have had to develop and think about different methods for capturing lived accounts.

Social research enables us to capture how society functions and understand how people live their day-to-day lives, using a rigorous set of procedures. Critical to any research process is the setting of research questions which influence the choice of methods used. Information is collected from individuals known as respondents, participants, research subjects or informants. Methods of research are often divided into two broad categories. Quantitative research is concerned with the extent of things within society. It uses numerical data to provide such information and includes method such as *surveys, census data, opinion polls, questionnaires, social attitude surveys* and *administrative records* (ESRC, nd). Qualitative research on the other hand is concerned with individuals' experiences, capturing their beliefs, attitudes, and interactions with others. It includes methods such as *semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews, photos, observation, logs and diaries, and ethnography* (Lindlof and Taylor, 2011). Of course, a mixed-methods approach is also possible and involves the inclusion of both qualitative and quantitative approaches.

The broader focus in this paper is ethnography which is a primarily qualitative research method. This is traditionally conducted in person. Ethnography involves the in-depth and

holistic understanding of a Bronfenbrenner's Ecosystems Model

social or cultural group; how

they function, their day-to-

day

routines, rituals and practices, the perspectives and experiences. Ethnographers often collect more than one type of data to create an account of a group. Central to this is observation and data types include field notes (from participant observation), transcripts from formal interviews, photos, documents and artifacts. Ethnography is an excellent way of understanding the lived experiences of people (Allen, 2017).

Researching Youth during the Pandemic – How have qualitative researchers adapted?

The Covid-19 pandemic has forced social researchers to consider different ways of gathering evidence, and the role of technology has been central to this. There have been a number of quantitative survey-based studies researching on youth. These include the OECD Youth and Covid 19 Study², the YouGov and Institute of Global Health Innovation Study³ (which includes questions about Youth) amongst multiple others⁴. The benefit of these quantitative studies is that they offer accounts rapidly (which is helpful in a situation such as a pandemic). Additionally, they can be less onerous (for both researchers and participants), as they often involve survey or questionnaire completion, and they can be transferred to an online platform fairly easily making them COVID-19 safe.

When it comes to qualitative research and COVID-19, there are far fewer published studies focusing on youth. This could be in part due to the longer time that qualitative research, but also due to the more challenging nature of collecting qualitative research during a pandemic.

If we consider the conceptual ecosystems model by Urie Bronfenbrenner, then we may begin to understand how to overcome these challenges, and about the sorts of research questions we should be asking young people (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 1999). The ecosystems model explores relationships between individuals and contexts. At the centre of the framework is child or young person, surrounded by different levels (the microsystem, mesosystem and macrosystem). The model asks us to consider how the child develops across these different levels as well as across time (chronosystem). The model posits that children and young people are affected by their own characteristics (at the individual level e.g. sex, age, health), but also their immediate social and built environment (microsystem level – in which different institutions and structures are in place e.g. family, peers, health services, school, work) as well as the interrelationship between different structures in their immediate environment (mesosystem level e.g. relationship between caregivers and schools). We also need to consider broader social settings (including policy and media) and cultural attitudes and

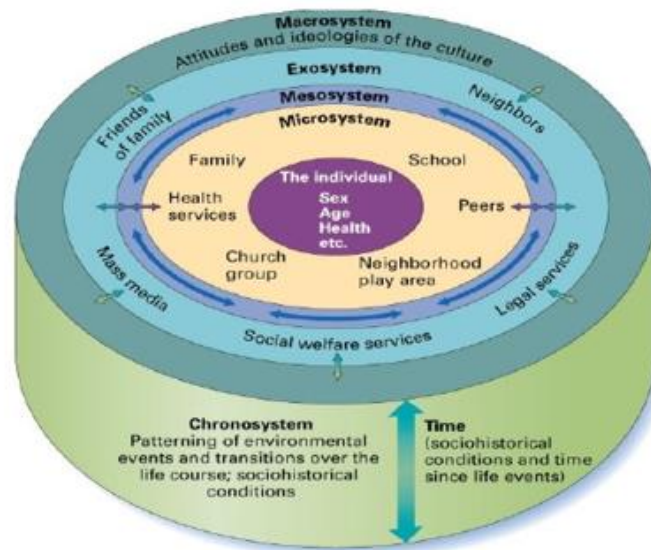
² see <http://www.oecd.org/coronavirus/policy-responses/youth-and-covid-19-response-recovery-and-resilience-c40e61c6/>

³ see <http://www.coviddatahub.com/>

⁴ see <https://nya.org.uk/available-surveys-during-the-covid-19-pandemic>

ideologies (which make up the exo- and macro- systems) to truly understand factors influencing youth.

For all intents and purposes, this model reminds us about the inter-relation between a person and their context as well as the macro and micro picture. It also acts as a means for us to consider how COVID-19 has impacted on different structures and processes in a young person's life.



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The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many of these structures to function in very different ways, to merge and in some instances collapse. For example, as discussed earlier (in the challenges of the pandemic), across many European countries at different points, schools and universities have been closed. This has meant the public domain of school has entered into the private domain of the home to a much greater extent. Indeed, home and family have become particularly important for youth. Another example is neighbourhoods and local communities have become more important due to restrictions on travel. Places of work have also been closed down and many have been forced to work at home, or found themselves unemployed or on furlough. The media and government reactions to the pandemic have been central to management of the pandemic. The model then helps us to think about what we need to be researching and how we need to adapt research.

Due to social distancing measures and restrictions on meeting in person, qualitative researchers have had to move online for both cross-sectional and longitudinal studies. This has meant more online and phone-based interviews and creatively thinking about conducting ethnographies and photographic and diary-based research. However, conducting online research in this way has brought a number of methodological challenges. Below we detail these briefly:

1. **Accounting for uncertainty and stress during a pandemic:** The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a great deal of uncertainty and major life changes for youth and their families (as detailed above), and many individuals have found themselves in very difficult circumstances. For some, participation in a time-intensive qualitative research may add to existing levels of stress and they may choose not to do so. Additionally, for those who do choose to take part, it is important to develop a flexible approach to data collection and to be mindful of the emotional and physical tolls that living through

the pandemic may take. Participation in research can also be a rewarding process, and it is important that individuals are informed of findings and updates from the study across different points in the research process.

2. **Challenges associated with recruitment:** The pandemic has brought new challenges in the recruitment process. Qualitative research often involves building up a rapport with individuals before the research takes place. This is particularly important when researching with children and youth (Lewis 2004) and can be harder to achieve virtually. It is also challenging reaching participants through virtual networks rather than in person through for e.g. recruiting through schools and youth clubs. The digital divide means that not everyone has access to technology, and important considerations need to be made about how to reach hard to reach groups digitally.
3. **Sourcing the right technology for a digital ethnography;**
4. **Data storage and privacy and thinking about how to manage the volume of online data;**
5. **How to account for the digital divide**

This section applies to points 3-5. With all qualitative data collection moving online, sourcing the right technology for gathering evidence is important. The data has to be stored securely and comply with legal requirements for data management. Research studies should employ user-friendly technology which participants can easily learn. Another important consideration is cost. Certain data collection apps can be very expensive. Furthermore, not everyone has access to technology which would enable them to participate. It is important that studies have measures that can be adapted and account for this. For example, rather than an online interview (using a virtual platform), a phone interview could take place.

6. **Ethical issues in working with young people:** It is vital that youth participating in digital studies feel comfortable in doing so, that they are aware their data will remain private, that they discuss any concerns with researchers, understand that participation is voluntary and that they are aware that protocols are in place should they disclose any information that reveals they are in danger (or that the researcher was worried about). All researchers working with youth under the age of 18, need to have had a check done to ensure they are able to work with this age group (who are classed as vulnerable). Some studies may choose to provide incentives or gifts to thank participants for taking part, and the ethics of this varies across countries. However, it is vital that researchers recognise the time participants put into the study adequately. When working with youth, it is important to also where possible get input from them about how they find the research process, and the questions that are being asked of them.

7. **Coping with attrition and keeping people motivated:** This is another challenge associated with long term ethnographic data collection, and certainly with the emotional uncertainty the pandemic has brought, maintaining motivation can be difficult. One way of keeping participants engaged is by varying the types of tasks and questions asked. Also, by asking questions which adapt according to developments with the pandemic (e.g. relating to facemasks, or the vaccine, or new guidelines). Providing incentives for participation can also help (e.g. vouchers) and sending email reminders. Lastly, it is important to state clearly the value of the study and to feed back findings and results to participants so they can recognise the importance of their contributions.

In order to contextualize these points further, we turn to an example of an ongoing digital ethnographic based study based on Family Life under Covid-19. The study does not focus specifically on youth, but they do form an important part of the research. We will examine the research methods used and the research challenges that have been encountered.

Part 2: FACT: Families and Community in the time of Covid-19 (para below from advisory group)

The FACT project investigates the challenges experienced by families with children and young people during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study is based at University College London and is multidisciplinary drawing from Sociology, Anthropology and Social Psychology⁵. Family units and relationships have been incredibly important during the pandemic, and given this, our study has two main objectives:

1. **Understanding the impact of the pandemic on everyday life** – How does living through a pandemic shape everyday family life, education and work and intimate relationships?
2. **Understanding people's responses to rules and regulations related to the pandemic** – Why do different people react to measures put in place in different ways?

The FACT Project explores both how individuals understand and respond to public health measures, and how these are negotiated within the family. We study both inter- and intra-household differences, examining how position in the household (such as that determined by gender and generation) and access to various forms of capital (such as that determined by socio-economic class and ethnicity), shape the ways through which individuals can respond to challenges in the context of a public health crisis. The study follows participants over a year (May 2020 – April 2021), examining the medium-term consequences of the pandemic and the potentially changing reactions of families to public health measures. The project is part of an international network of projects, in ten different countries, led by us at University College London, all using the same methods and addressing the same questions. The nine other

⁵ Details of the study can be found here <https://fact-covid.wixsite.com/study/>

countries are: Argentina, Chile, Pakistan, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, Sweden, Taiwan, and the USA. More information on our project and partners here can be found on our project website.

Across the 10 country case studies, the intention is to investigate the challenges experienced by families during these difficult times of Covid-19, as well as how they attempt to overcome them. The comparison will allow us better to understand the role of local policies and cultural meanings and practices that shape individuals' responses to, and experiences of the pandemic. Across the studies, similar research methods have been used, however not all countries have used the same methodological tools for data collection (details below). In this report we detail the UK based study.

Methods

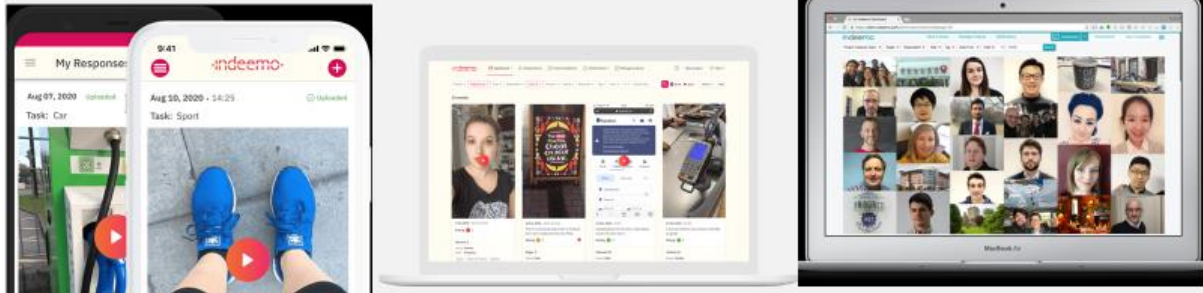
Due to the nature of the pandemic and social distancing measures in place, all research was conducted online. This meant adapting existing methods, and thinking about new ones.

Our study is a mixed-methods longitudinal comparative study. The main method of data collection is via digital ethnography – this includes individual multimodal diaries, collected over a period of a year (since May 2020), and qualitative interviews. Digital ethnography is a way of collecting data remotely and asynchronously but at the same time understanding how people behave in context. It is a means of remotely entering into the worlds of participants (Györ, 2017). The longitudinal nature of the ethnography and diaries allows us to capture change over time, as participants respond to the unfolding crisis, capturing different waves and the wider long-term implications of the pandemic. There is a focus on families with children, and the young people in our study are 12 years and above. We learn about the experiences of youth directly from young people but also from others in their household. Children under the age of 12 do not participate in the study independently, but their parents or carers sometimes reflect on their experiences.

Digital Ethnography

indeemo

<https://indeemo.com/>

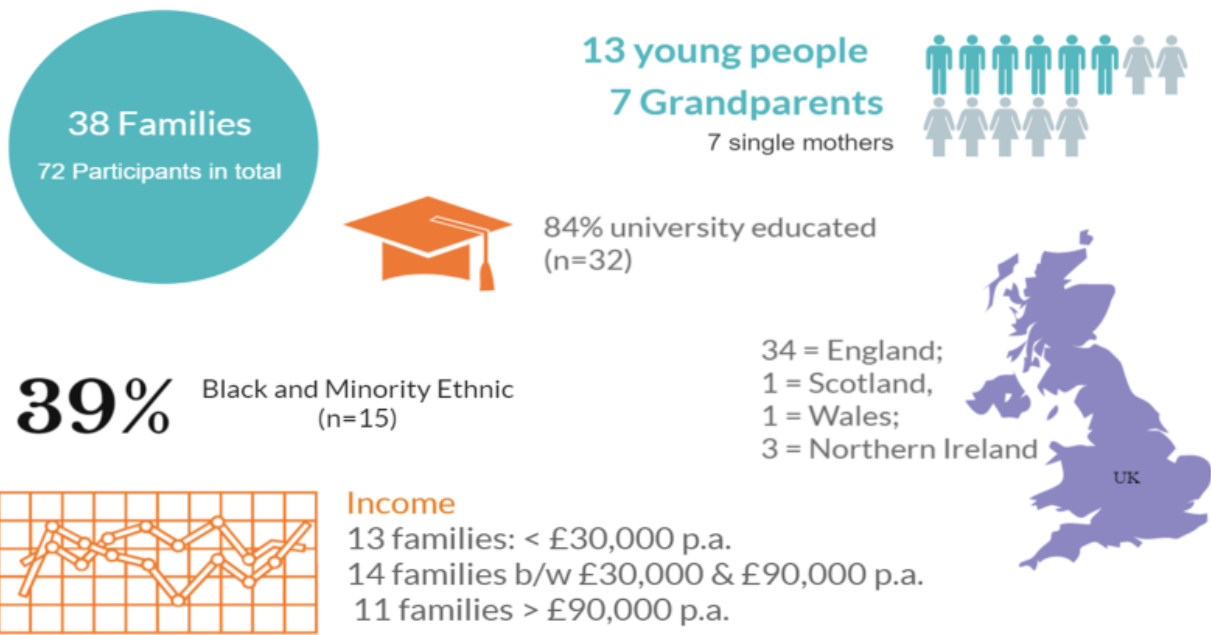


We are using the Indeemo data collection application⁶ to collect diary entries which facilitates multimodal entries (text, video and photos). Indeemo can be used on smartphones, and it allows 'tasks' or questions to be scheduled for participants. Once participants complete the questions, the results begin to appear for researchers on the dashboard. The app also allows for the researchers to engage in a dialogue with participants by probing responses and asking follow-up questions. While there are other means of collecting digital ethnographies, the software has been helpful in bringing all of the data together in one place. Additionally, it allows researchers to carryout basic analysis within the application such as tag coding, adding keywords to responses and creating keyword clouds. Further, it facilitates the export of data from a project as a CSV file or Word document which can then be analysed in depth using qualitative data analysis software packages such as NVivo.

Our Sample – who we have managed to reach

In order to recruit families, we developed an online initial recruitment survey. We asked a number of demographic questions in this survey and it was administered widely through our networks and online channels. We contacted a number of poverty and family charities (including the Poverty Alliance, Children in Northern Ireland and Family Action).

⁶ see <https://indeemo.com/>

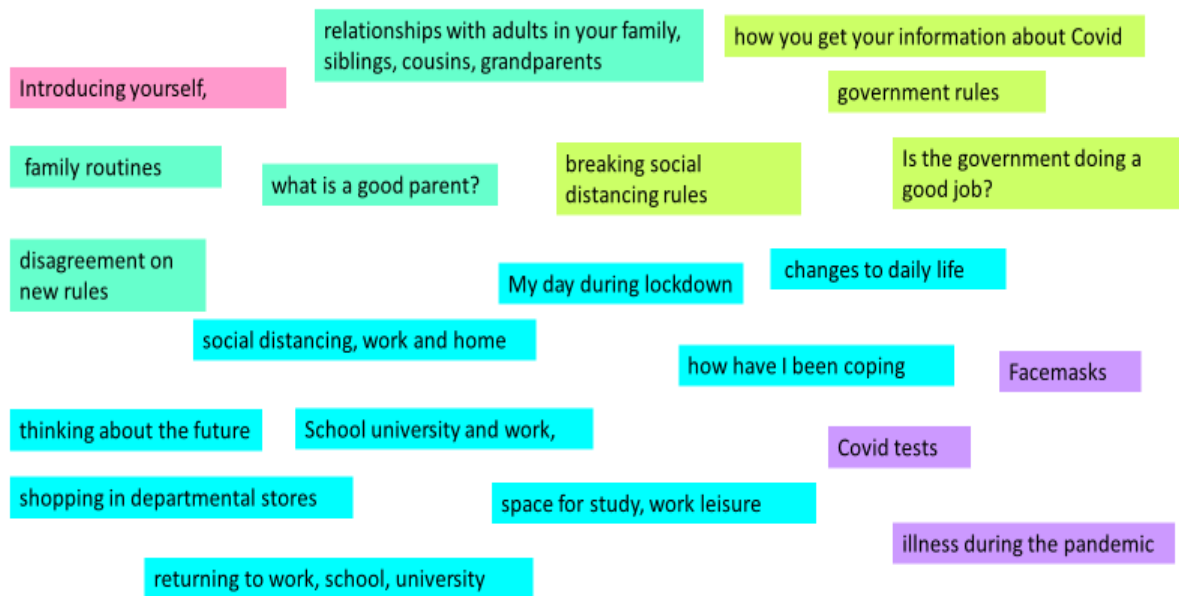


The graphic above details the sample profile of the FACT study. Thirty-eight families have been recruited to the study. All household members were invited to participate, as well as grandparents, whether resident or otherwise. In total, we have collected data from 72 individuals. Thirty families have opted to use Indeemo, the rest have chosen to be interviewed at 2 timepoints.

From the parents, mostly mothers participated, seven grandparents from five families took part and relevant to this paper, 13 young people (over the age of 12) have participated. Other key data can be found above.

Tasks and Diary Probes

Participants are sent guiding questions for their diary entries, which focus on everyday living, experiences and feelings. These questions have been developed keeping age in mind, so for example, young people are asked questions relevant to their lives. To date we are just over six months into our study and we have sent out 41 diary questions/tasks. The image below demonstrates some of the key areas which youth were asked about. These include questions about family routines, family relationships, coping and emotions, daily routines, daily routine, education and work youth perception on government rules, adherence and understanding of rules.



The questions are drawn up iteratively, responding to events as they change. For example, we asked about questions related to facemasks as they became mandatory across the UK, as well as about the easing of lockdown and responses to it. The interviews for participants who did not want to take part in the diaries, or who had fallen behind in the diaries, took place in July. The questions followed those of the diary tasks, but relied on verbal communication.

In the final month of the study (April 2021), we will conduct a household level (online) interview with participants about their experiences over the previous year, both more broadly and in terms of participating in the study. This means our data will include not only ‘in the moment’ accounts of life under lockdown, but also more reflexive considerations of the long-term impacts of the pandemic, as well as how they are differentially experienced. On the next page is an image showing how participants see diary probes. The image also shows what participants responses look like and how we as researchers are able to follow up with participants based on what they post.

Example of Task/Question

Week 1, Task 3: School, University, and Work

We want to know about how your life has changed since Covid

Using the note function in Indeemo, write a note, telling us how things have changed in your everyday life since Covid, focusing on school/university or work:

- How are you finding working from home on your school or university work? Are you managing to concentrate?
- Are your parents/the adults in your house supporting you with your work?
- Do you feel worried about your education?

This is your last task for now.

Please check back in again in a few days when we will have some more tasks for you.

Thanks again for your posts.

Required responses: 1 note

Example of a response from a young person

9 Sep 2020 - 17:51 (18:51)

I was already aware of the new rules, but only by a day or so - I think it's good but it seems a lot like the government backpedalling after they encouraged so many people to go out and eat in restaurants; I don't see how they can be surprised and (too) reprimanding of people and the younger generations for mingling too much when that's exactly what they were encouraging. Obviously I realise that there is a difference between those who have gone out and social distances and those in bars and crowded pubs, but still.

It doesn't change any plans, but if it had been earlier it would have - we have a surprise party for a friend on Saturday, which is following the current guidelines but wouldn't be with the new ones. My brother has a friend's birthday party to go to as well, in the same situation.

(Daffodil Daughter17)

Target Group: Young People - Phase 1

Task: **FLASH TASK: Gatherings of more than six banned across UK**

+ Tag

+ Notes



Type your comment here. Select Enter to send

researcher 28 Sep 2020 - 14:21

Thanks [redacted] like your point about backpedalling! I wonder if you have seen the news about all the university students being stuck in their uni accommodation. Any thoughts on this? I am sure you are feeling relieved that you are not starting uni this year.

Methodological Challenges of Researching During a Pandemic

As discussed earlier, conducting research digitally and during uncertain times can create methodological challenges. We have certainly encountered a number of these, relating to: time constraints and recruitment, technology and the digital divide, ethical considerations, recruiting 'hard-to-reach' groups, attrition, managing data storage, and data quantity. During the Youth Forum session, questions were raised around data privacy and The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) as well as around the notion of overburdening youth with excess requests for participation in social research. I will attempt to address these two concerns and questions below when I detail the challenges.

Time Constraints and Recruitment

Setting up our project was time-sensitive because we wanted to capture how families were coping during the pandemic and it was a live event. We recognised the need for a social and relational research in these unprecedented circumstances. In order to do this, we rapidly developed our research questions and study aims, and began our research as soon as we could, without funding. It was important that the project have an international component due to the nature of the Covid-19 virus. This involved reaching out across our networks to invite people to join. We also had to rapidly set up protocols and agreements. These have proved to be important in managing expectations across partners.

Recruitment under challenging circumstances is difficult. It has been a time of great uncertainty with changes occurring in people's day to day lives and lack of understanding of the virus. We developed an online survey for recruitment and advertised widely across our networks. Although commitment to a diary study requires effort, we explained to people the need for research and the time commitment that would be involved (initially there would be more tasks to do, but as the time went on, these would be less and less (once a month) - although with further waves this could change).

Right from the beginning we have also tried to be clear about the aims and purpose of our study and our intentions of generating research which is impact driven and which would reach policy makers. Our project advisory group reflects this intention (we have policy makers, academics and practitioners). The online recruitment survey contained demographic questions and we were able to track in live time who was completing the survey. We fast recognized that initially our survey was being completed by participants from more affluent middle-class backgrounds. In order to change this, we connected with poverty charities and our other networks to send the link to the survey as far and wide as we could. We worked hard to get a diverse sample as it was important for us to be able to say our findings were reflected the experiences of a variety of people. Once we secured funding, we were able to use incentives in the form of vouchers for groceries and phone top up vouchers. We also included some funding to provide some families with tablets. This assisted with the process of recruitment, particularly of families with a lower income background. Despite all of this, recruiting online has proved to be challenging and we haven't recruited as many young people as we would have hoped. Under normal situations, we would have been able to approach families and youth through schools, youth clubs and universities in person. However, this was impossible during the pandemic, as many of these spaces were closed down and had strict social distancing measures in place.

Technology and the Digital Divide

Given all data is being collected online via digital ethnographic means, there was a need to identify the best software for gathering evidence. The platform needed to be user friendly and to collate different types of data from participants in one space. We recognised that an app would be helpful in this regard, and this is when we approached Indeemo. Software apps

can be expensive, and this is an important consideration when conducting such research⁷. Indeemo is particularly useful in that it allows for each participant to maintain their own diary which we do not share with other members of the family. We explained to participants (including YP and parents) that we would keep the contents of the diary private to other family members. Amongst our international partners, some but not all of the countries chose to use this app. This is because the app works in English and Spanish languages only. Indeed, WhatsApp was more familiar and used for research by some of our partners. Additionally, Indeemo requires the use of a smart phone which many people did not have. To account for this, we developed our tasks into interviews and conducted these online or over the phone with some participants. We will do this across two time points.

Ethical Considerations

Our study went through a rigorous ethics procedure by our University Ethics Board. New protocols were set by the board, which asked us to carefully consider the demands we placed on participants during the pandemic. We have been mindful of this throughout, and were clear with all participants including young people about the time that the study would take up. We were also clear that participation was voluntary and that they could drop out at any time (and remove their data from the study). Additionally, we offered the option of an interview at two time points.

In order for young people to take part, we needed both parental and youth consent. We developed a video for people to watch which explained the study. Clear information sheets and consent forms were also developed explaining the nature of the study as well as details on data privacy written in accessible language. We created a protocol, in the event that a young person shared anything worrying (or that they were in harm's way). We asked people to try and record videos for study tasks alone and in private. We always provided options in case people were not comfortable with using video. Audio, images and video of study participants will only be used in presentations of findings where there is explicit consent from all participants identifiable or present in these although we will avoid using such images where people are identifiable. Lastly, the fact that the app allows us to communicate directly means we have and can ask people what they think of the study, and how we can improve it.

Attrition

A common aspect of diary-based research, is there can be lulls in how much participants contribute over time. As mentioned earlier, such research involves a large time commitment (1 year in the case of FACT). We were clear with the participants about this at the start and we also asked them to turn on notifications for the app. This useful feature serves to inform participants of when new tasks are added, and reminds them to complete them. In order to keep participants motivated, we regularly check posts and follow up with questions and

⁷ Indeemo kindly allowed us to use the software pro bono due to the research being based around the Covid-19 pandemic.

comments. We send video updates from time to time using the app, letting all participants know about the study, and at the 6-month mark, we sent a brief report to everyone involved in the study with updates and some preliminary findings. We reassured people of the value of their contributions and our commitment of conducting an impact-based study. Finally, in order to account for uncompleted tasks, we recognise that we can also capture data at a later stage when we conduct the final interviews at the end of the study.

Data Storage and Data Quantity

Our study involves collecting personal data about people's lives including photographs. Data is all online, and it was paramount that we followed General Data Protection Regulation guidelines. The Indeemo app complies with UK and EU regulations. However, we also collected interview and survey data, and can download data from Indeemo to analyse further. To account for this, we worked closely with our University data management teams and opted for a secure platform on the UCL university network. In the information sheets we developed for adults and young people we had a clear section on data storage. We explained to youth where the data was being stored, how long for and what we would do with the data. All participants were given pseudonyms.

We developed a storage and analysis strategy for dealing with the vast amount of data from our 72 participants. The data is also made up of a range of data types (including photos and diary entries). Our data will be brought together in one place to be analysed. We are using the qualitative software N-Vivo to help do this. The various types of data will be brought together in a matrix (Brannen 2005) and analysed using thematic analysis techniques (Braun & Clarke 2006), which will allow the identification of patterns across the data sets, and can be used both to generate themes inductively, and to identify salient themes deductively. Within family analysis will draw on the multiple perspectives approach developed by Vogl et al (2017).

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