Well-Being And Transformational Spaces During The COVID-19 Pandemic

Patricia Schubiger-Grenacher¹, Dr. Edina Krompák²

¹University of Teacher Education Lucerne/ University of Teacher Education Schaffhausen
²University of Teacher Education Lucerne/University of Basel

Abstract

The global COVID-19 pandemic challenged the education system worldwide. In Spring 2020, in Switzerland schools and kindergartens were in lockdown and learning and teaching became virtual almost overnight. Important physical and social spaces (Lefebvre, 1974/1991) for children were only limited available and relevant experiences in early childhood development were significantly impacted during the lockdown. While there are numerous international studies on how children and adolescents experience the pandemic at school age (Huber et al. 2020), the area of early childhood seems to be underrepresented.

The project aims to explore children’s well-being and the transformation of spaces during the COVID19 lockdown. In our study, we address the questions of how kindergarten children experience the lockdown, how they cope with this challenging situation and what role space plays in children’s well-being.

The collected data includes multimodal data such as WhatsApp written and audio messages, videos and photos, as well as interviews with thirteen children and their parents. To analyse the multimodal data, a conversational analysis approach (Sidnell, 2010) and Bohnsack’s (2011) documentary method were applied. The interpretation of the interviews was carried out using Charmaz’s (2006) grounded theory.

The results of the study indicate that fear, lack of social contact with peers and extended family members, and thus boredom and loneliness, affect the well-being of children. Moreover, we found significant transformation of physical and social spaces in the context of the pandemic. We will present the reconstructed coping strategies of the children and discuss the notion of transformational spaces.

Keywords: Well-being, physical and social space, transformational spaces, COVID-19 pandemic