University of Sheffield

Facing The Unknown:
Unravelling The Threads of Childhood Resilience and Creativity

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Introduction

This research explores the links among the COVID-19 pandemic, children's experiences, and educational strategies that foster creativity, resilience, and learning. Despite challenges in both traditional and digital play, these forms emerge as powerful tools supporting children's adaptability, which yields positive outcomes. Strategies such as digital game-based learning, inclusive play, and family-centric interventions shed light on how children foster creativity and resilience during the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns. Overall, the studies collectively highlight the interconnectedness of play, creativity, resilience, and innovative educational approaches in navigating the complexities of the pandemic's impact on children and education.

Aims & Objectives

- To assess how both traditional and digital play enhance children's adaptability to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- To investigate the connection between creative activities and children's emotional resilience throughout the COVID-19 pandemic.

- To explore the impact of digital game-based learning, inclusive play, and family-centric interventions on children's creativity, resilience, and learning during the pandemic lockdowns.

Methodology

Online Research Databases

Padlet

Zotero

Findings

- **Active engagement in digital play** such as Minecraft and TikTok duet dances, enhance children's creativity and imagination.

- **Children craft meaningful play experiences** using tools accessible to them, which encourages them to take ownership of their play and cultivate resilience.

- **Parents became more engaged with their children's play** during lockdowns.

- **Neurodivergent children may face disparities** in access compared to neurotypical peers, which could impact their engagement in such activities.
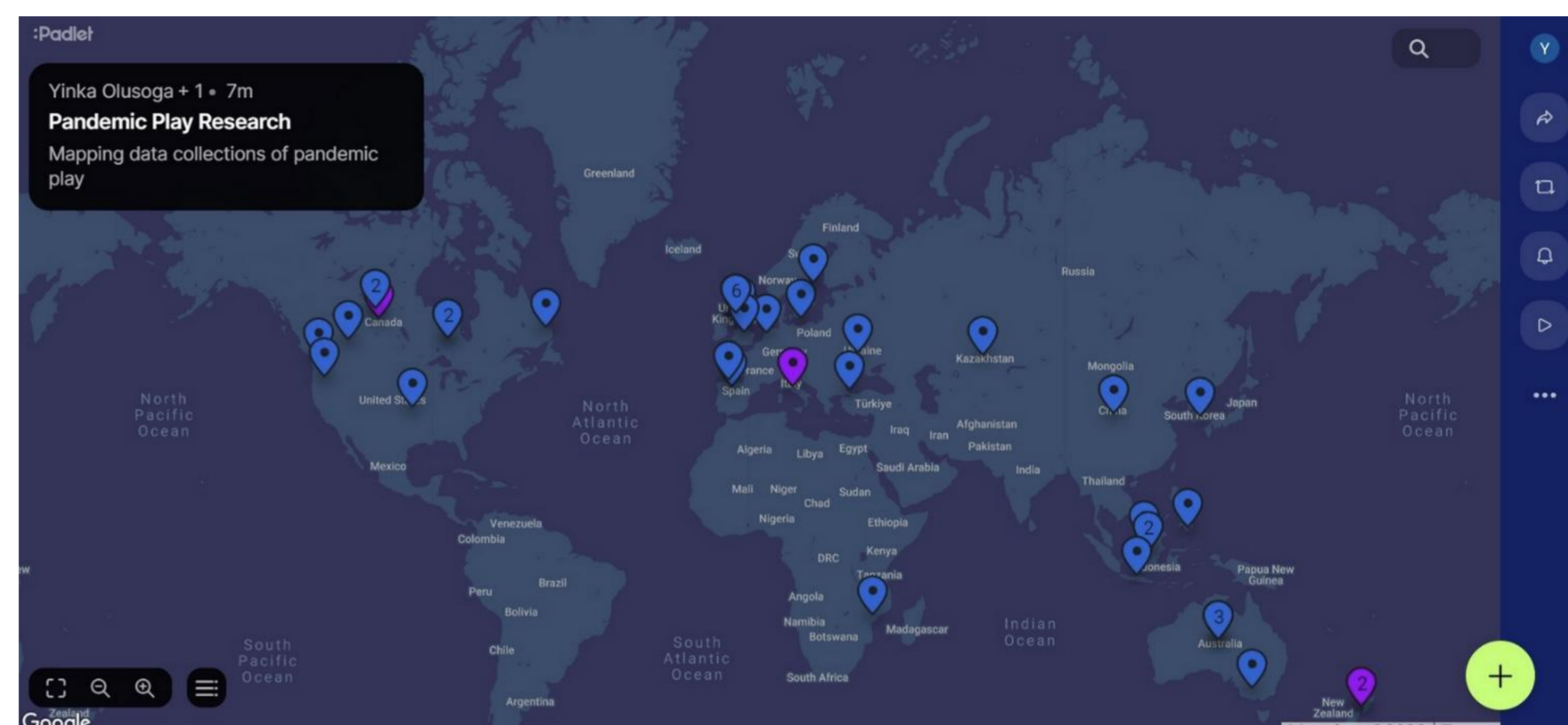
The figure above displays a map of all the child-created research data from around the world.

(Padlet)

Analysis

Impact on Play-Based Learning
- Disrupted play-based learning for children which impacted their creativity during lockdowns.

Diverse Impact on Families
- Increased family playtime improved bonding and creativity. However, disparities persisted for disadvantaged families due to a lack of resources and accessibility.

Bridging Gaps and Cultivating Resilience
- Highlighted the crucial need to bridge the gap in children's experiences by prioritising indoor and outdoor play to cultivate resilience.

Impact on Neurodivergent Children
- The absence of structured play-based learning for neurodivergent children significantly impacted their creativity development and resilience-building despite support from schools.

Conclusion

- Play fosters children's creativity and development, which are crucial for resilience.

- Reflections on lockdowns have highlighted the link between play, creativity, and resilience in children.

- Children have demonstrated adaptability by navigating challenges to engage in meaningful play experiences.

- Policymakers, educators, and key figures are strongly encouraged to devise innovative approaches to support families and children regardless of their background.

- Unequal access to play necessitates inclusive strategies for children of all abilities and backgrounds.

- Future research should focus on ensuring equal play engagement and developing frameworks that are adaptable for holistic child development, particularly during times of crisis.

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