

**Emotions, social support and positive resources during  
Covid-19 pandemic:  
A qualitative-quantitative survey among Italian adolescents**

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**Abstract**

Covid-19 pandemic had a massive impact on adolescents. The present study illustrates an online survey administered to N = 861 Italian adolescents (mean age = 15.81 years; females 58%), asking them about: (i) the most frequent negative emotions during the pandemic; (ii) the main sources of social support; (iii) whether they had also experienced positive emotions; (iv) in which life-domains they had experienced positive emotions. The results reveal that adolescents experienced boredom, sadness, fear, and agitation as negative emotions. The respondents reported family, friends and themselves as sources of social support. The main life-domains in which adolescents experienced positive emotions were: new discoveries in self-awareness, inner growth, relational skills. This study highlights that the pandemic has elicited positive resources (e.g., resilience, creativity and generativity) in adolescents, laying the foundations for interventions, in developmental and educational psychology, that are not top-down but bottom-up.

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## **Introduction**

The occurrence of stress and anxiety significantly rose as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic (Yao et al., 2020). On a global scale, between January 2020 and January 2021, there was a 27% increase in depressive disorders and a 25% increase in anxiety disorders (Santomauro et al., 2021). Given that adolescence is a crucial period in the emotional, social and identity development of the individual (Crone & Dahl, 2012; Blakemore & Mills, 2014), the COVID-19 pandemic has threatened adolescents' growth process, forcing them to face changes in their daily lives such as distance learning, limited social contact with peers, and being forced to stay at home for extended periods (Green et al., 2021). A study on the analysis of adolescents' drawings by Tishelman et al. (2022) shows that adolescents suddenly found themselves living in a dystopian scenario, where their routines were disrupted, and loneliness and predominantly negative emotions took hold. Pandemic had a short- and long-term impact on the lives of an entire generation of adolescents in terms of negative emotions on a clinical level (e.g., spreading emotional problems such as depression, anxiety, panic, mood fluctuations) (Amorós-Reche et al., 2022), corroborated by data collected from the perspective of the parents (Babore et al., 2022).

Over the past two years, scientific research has attempted to delineate the severity and direction of Covid-19 pandemic's impact on adolescents. The first pandemic wave increased negative emotions in children and adolescents, given the exposure to stressors such as distance learning and increased time spent – obligatorily – with the family (Green et al., 2021). According to Rathgeb et al. (2022), the impact of the pandemic on the level of negative emotions was correlated with age: adolescents suffered more than children. Von Soest et al. (2022) emphasised a decline in optimism and expectations for the future in adolescents, in line with the decline in positive emotions and life satisfaction reported by Shoshani and Kor (2021) and the decrease in perceived happiness documented by Evli and Şimşek (2022).

Another negative aspect, on which many studies have focused, is the massive use of the Internet and social media during the pandemic: given an increase in the screen-time (Evli & Şimşek, 2022), for many children and adolescents, social media represented a means of keeping in touch with peers, maturing appreciation and gratitude towards this form of technology (Maheux et al., 2021). However, studies by Cauberghe et al.

(2021) and Velez et al. (2022) have indicated that social networks cannot really make up for the absence of a face-to-face exchange with peers and in-person experiences, which are fundamental to psychosocial development. Internet use, therefore, should be considered both a coping response during the emergency, but also a risk factor for Internet addiction in the developmental age (Evli & Şimşek, 2022).

Research has also shown that adversity can lead individuals to catalyze their resources. This consists in the development of abilities and resources, benefits, and growth opportunities, related to the pandemic experience (Paoletti et al., 2022a; Bhattacharya et al., 2022). Silk et al. (2022), analysing diary text of teens, state that the pandemic represented a pause from the stresses of contemporary life, offering a time to focus on oneself, and engage in creative and healthy activities.

### ***Adolescence and emotions***

During the development, emotion regulation involves complex and continuously evolving processes (e.g., recognition, acceptance, management and organisation of internal and external stimuli) (Zeman et al., 2006). These processes are filtered by different systems: a) physiological, b) cognitive, c) behavioural and d) environmental. In adolescence, the continuous interaction between neuro-physiological substrates and environmental interactions (Ahmed et al., 2015) reinforces emotion regulation. A disruption in this exchange (caused by environmental, relational, familial, etc. stressors), triggers maladaptive emotional regulation processes in the adolescents, and becomes a risk factor for anxious-depressive symptoms characterised by self-blame, catastrophisation, rumination, social withdrawal and anger (Stikkelbroek et al., 2016; Young et al., 2019).

According with these premises and with an awareness of the large-scale impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had and continues to have, recent scientific literature has highlighted how monitoring the emotional health and general well-being of adolescents is a priority to prevent: development of depressive-type psychopathological profiles, poor quality of life, social withdrawal, exposure to bullying episodes, hetero- or self-inflicted aggression, decline in school performance, lowered self-esteem, etc. (Branje & Sheffield Morris, 2021; Robillard et al., 2021; Romm et al., 2021; Gupta et al., 2022; Schunk et al., 2022).

It is also important to note that, when exposed to a risk situation, adolescents have positive resources (e.g., coping strategies, self-efficacy, emotion regulation skills) that can help them manage the emotional difficulties associated with the critical period (Fergus & Zimmerman, 2005). These characteristics are associated with a high level of resilience,

defined as the ability to manage and cope adaptively with adverse events (Luthar et al., 2006). In these terms, an adverse event, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, may have awakened and strengthened the vital resources of those who experience it (Grotberg, 1995; Cyrulnik, 2001), offering people the opportunity to learn about their potential, improving themselves and reprogramming their future (Paoletti et al., 2022a).

### ***Adolescence and social support***

Social support results from interpersonal relationships and connections that shape, protect, stimulate and promote individual functioning (Zimet et al., 1988). It is generally provided by people in the family and close-relational circle or by members of society (Barker, 2007). In adolescence social support fosters: (i) the ability to recognise needs and request help, (ii) the development of adaptive coping strategies, (iii) the promotion of self-esteem, (iv) and the prevention of social withdrawal, stress and depression (Dumont & Provost, 1999; Chu et al., 2010). However, as pointed out by Camara et al. (2014), if the social support sources are not perceived by the adolescent as sufficiently aware of their personal history, mature, trustworthy and emotionally involved, they may represent a source of additional stress. This aspect is in line with the scientific literature that has investigated the sources and role of social support in adolescence during the pandemic period (Lisitsa et al., 2020; Kurudirek et al., 2022). During COVID-19 second and first waves, adolescents mainly relied on family members and close friends, rediscovering some ties and strengthening others (also through the use of technologies) to preserve ‘normality’, fight loneliness, take care of their emotional and mental well-being, and maintain good school performance. (Meng Qi et al., 2020; Permatasari et al., 2021). Social support, in fact, was crucial to strengthen their resilience and adaptive capacities (Campione-Barr et al., 2021; Li et al., 2021).

### ***Crisis and resources***

From a theoretical and empirical point of view, positive psychology (Sheldon & King, 2001), emphasizes the importance of the strengths and virtues of human beings in coping with difficulties. A crisis, especially as vast as the global health crisis, can make human beings realize and display exceptional processes and resources, which adversity makes urgent, constituting a real turning point in the lives of individuals (Morin, 2000). When humans do not neglect suffering, crisis allows individuals to reflect on their future, reorganize their resources, catalyze them and reinvent themselves (Paoletti et al., 2008; Paoletti & Selvaggio, 2013, Paoletti et al., 2022a). Therefore, in this study, space will be given

both to the difficulties experienced by adolescents, but also to positive resources of social support, coping, self-awareness, hope and creativity, deployed in the social and historical context of the pandemic and in the phase of the life cycle most important for the definition of identity (Erikson, 1968).

### ***Study Aims***

The present study aims to analyse, quantitatively and qualitatively, the emotions experienced by Italian adolescents during the pandemic and the type of social support perceived. Specifically, the study aims to investigate: (i) the most frequent negative emotions experienced by adolescents during the pandemic; (ii) the main sources of social support experienced by them; (iii) whether positive emotions were also experienced by them during the pandemic; (iv) in which life-domains adolescents had experienced positive emotions.

### **Method**

#### ***Participants***

Eight hundred sixty-one (N = 861) adolescents (58% females; mean age = 15.81 years, SD = 1.89, min = 12, max = 19) took part in the study. The adolescents were secondary school students of first (25%) and second degree (75%). The sample came from all over Italy, with San Benedetto del Tronto (27%), Rome (21%), Oristano (14%) and Acerra (5%) as the cities with the highest participation. The other cities involved in the survey were: Ascoli Piceno, Assisi, Bergamo, Catania, Foggia, Naples.

#### ***Measures***

The survey has been administered to adolescents online on the Survey Monkey platform, in March 2022. The survey was an *ad hoc* questions tailored to specific research questions or populations (Kazdin, 2013). The first part delves into the emotions of young people in times of adversity; then it focuses on the social resources teenagers have in times of crisis; finally it investigates the contexts of positive emotions that adolescents may have felt during the pandemic crisis. It is important to notice that the survey was created in the framework of positive psychology, aiming at studying the resources that humans can exhibit in times of crisis, without ignoring their sufferance (Sheldon & King, 2001). The survey presented four questions, in the following areas: i. most frequent negative emotions during the pandemic (e.g. “Which emotions did you feel more often during the COVID-19 pandemic?”

with possible answers: Agitation, Irritation, Boredom, Fear, Distrust, Sadness, Upset, Other with possibility to specify); ii. social support sources during the pandemic (e.g., “Who were your main points of reference during the COVID-19 pandemic?” as an open-ended question); iii. presence or absence of positive emotions during the pandemic (e.g., “Did you feel positive emotions during the COVID-19 pandemic?” with answers: Yes vs. No). iv. the fourth question (i.e., reserved for those who answered ‘Yes’ to question iii.), included a qualitative investigation: participants were asked to specify which positive emotions they had felt and in which context (e.g. ‘In which context did you feel positive emotions during the COVID-19 pandemic?’).

### ***Procedure***

The research project, developed by the Research Institute for Neuroscience Education and Didactics (RINED, Fondazione Patrizio Paoletti) in collaboration with the University of Padua, was co-founded by Fondazione Mediolanum Onlus and approved by the Ethics Committee of the University of Padua (file: 2020-III/13.41.10). Fondazione Patrizio Paoletti created a series of regional online conferences to present the research project, during the second pandemic wave (April 2021-February 2022). The online conferences were addressed at teachers and school principals who had participated in Fondazione Patrizio Paoletti’s courses and webinars of continuing training – accredited by the Italian Ministry of Education, University and Research. After informed consent was provided to the families (administered by the schools participating in the research), the students of the schools were administered the survey (March 2022).

### ***Analytic Plan***

For the study a mixed method approach has been used since combining qualitative and quantitative methods can provide a more comprehensive understanding of complex psychological phenomena (Hanson et al., 2007). The results of the qualitative-quantitative survey were analysed: (i) quantitative data with descriptive statistics using IBM Statistics SPSS Software Version 25 (2017); (ii) qualitative data following the guidelines of the Consensus-Based Checklist for Reporting of Survey Studies (CROSS) (Sharma et al., 2021). Text analysis was performed by first identifying the most recurring themes and then coding the emerging common categories (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

## Results

The negative emotions felt most frequently by the respondents during the pandemic were boredom (29%), sadness (14%), fear (9%) and agitation (8.9%) (Table 1). Fourteen percent (n = 69) marked the option 'Other', specifying that they felt bewilderment, anger, uncertainty, grief, apathy, anxiety, and distress.

Tab. 1 - *Negative emotions of adolescents (N=861) during Covid-19 pandemic*

<i>Response options</i>	<i>Frequency (n)</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>
Agitation	68	8
Irritation	56	6
Boredom	258	30
Fear	69	8
Defeat	57	7
Sadness	114	13
Turmoil	70	8
Other	118	14
Missing	51	6

The main sources of social support were family members (31%), friends (29%) and themselves in first person (22%) (Table 2). For this item, the survey had no optional answers, leaving the respondent free.

Tab 2 - *Social support sources of adolescents (N=861) during Covid-19 pandemic*

<i>Responses</i>	<i>Frequency (n)</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>
Friends	548	29
Online Friends	121	6
Family	587	31
Teachers	47	3
Myself	413	22

Sport Coach	29	2
Religious Figures	25	1
Physicians	10	1
Psychologists and Counsellors	67	7
Nobody	8	1
Partner	15	1
God	1	0
Grandparents	2	0
Uncles	1	0
Other	8	1

When asked to indicate whether or not they had experienced positive emotions during the pandemic, 42% of participants answered ‘Yes’, 58% of participants answered ‘No’ (Table 3).

Tab. 3 - *Adolescents’ answers (N = 861) to the question “Did you feel positive emotions during the pandemic?”*

Response Options	frequency (n)	frequency (%)
No	492	58
Yes	369	42

Three hundred and sixty-nine ‘Yes’ respondents answered the open-ended question ‘In which context did you feel positive emotions during the pandemic?’. These answers were analysed qualitatively, deriving 10 semantic categories (Table 4) – which can be consulted in the coding tree (Figure 1) – that explain in which area of life the young people felt positive emotions: (1) “Self-awareness/Personal growth” (32% respondents), (2) “Relationships: Family” (33% respondents), (3) “Relationships: Friends/Partners”(25% respondents), (4) “Appreciation and Enjoyment” (31% respondents), (5) “Gratitude and Hope” (13% respondents), (6) “Empathy and Sense of Common Humanity” (6% respondents), (7) “Self-care” (13% respondents), (8) “Contact with



Nature and Animals” (4% respondents), (9) “Technology for Communication” (9% respondents), (10) “Pandemic Period as Opportunity” (2% respondents); 6.5% of the responses were unclassifiable. The categories identified underwent content analysis, tagging and thematic analysis (Figure 1 and Table 5).

Tab. 4 – *Categories emerged from the thematic analysis of the text*

<i>Category</i>	<i>Frequency (n)</i>	<i>Frequency (%)</i>
Self-awareness/Personal growth	121	32,79
Relationships: Family	124	33,60
Relationships: Friends/Partners	94	25,47
Appreciation and Enjoyment	117	31,71
Gratitude and Hope	49	13,28
Empathy and Sense of Common Humanity	23	6,23
Self-Care	51	13,82
Contact with Nature and Animals	16	4,34
Technology for Communication	36	9,76
Pandemic Period as Opportunity	9	2,44
unclassifiable	24	6,50
<b>Total</b>	<b>369</b>	<b>100</b>

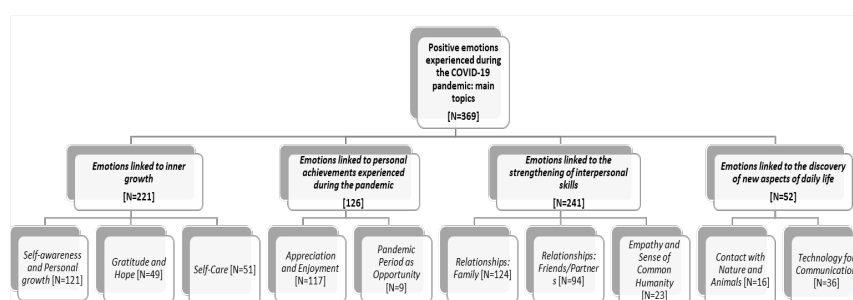


Fig. 1 – *Coding tree of the categories identified through content analysis, tagging and thematic analysis open-ended responses from N = 369 adolescents [N = number of interviews/topic occurrence]*

## **Discussion**

### ***Negative Emotions, Positive Emotions, Social Support***

Investigating adolescents' biopsychosocial health is crucial as they represent the future of mankind (Kuntsche & Ravens-Sieberer, 2005). The survey data show that, during the pandemic, adolescents experienced negative emotions more frequently than positive emotions in line with the decrease in individual happiness documented by Evli and Şimşek (2022). Among the negative emotions reported by adolescents, boredom is predominant and possibly linked to a feeling of existential emptiness as shown in the study by Hartoyo and Wijaya (2022). The prevalence of sadness and agitation is in line with studies that show, at a clinical level, the growth of depressive and anxious symptoms among adolescents during the pandemic (Amorós-Reche et al., 2022; Babore et al., 2022). Moreover, the spread of fear probably relates to contagion, a specific fear that became prevalent among adolescents (Panda et al., 2021), risking to compromise adolescents' health, leading them to reduce physical and outdoor activities (Cummings et al., 2022).

In the present study adolescents' perceived social support, operationalised as a multidimensional (Zimet et al., 1988), is also investigated. Adolescents report relying on family to manage negative emotions and stresses related to the pandemic. Although adolescence represents a phase of individuation and separation from the family nucleus, it still constitutes – for the majority of them – a safe base for proximity and socio-emotional comfort during adversity (Garmezy & Masten, 1994; Nickerson & Nagle, 2005), as well as a protective factor against risk behaviours (Perasso et al., 2020; Perasso et al., 2021). Similarly, peers represented a key social resource to manage stress, even if the contact was mediated by technology (Maheux et al., 2021; Cauberghe et al., 2021; Velez et al., 2022), in line with the literature emphasising the importance of the peer group to support the identity construction process (Erikson, 1968; Nickerson & Nagle, 2005). In the results of the present survey, a large subgroup of adolescents reports having relied on themselves, seeing themselves as a social resource: the response is in line with Silk et al. (2022) research, where the pandemic is portrayed by some adolescents as an opportunity for self-discovery.

### ***Life domains related to adolescents' positive emotions***

The categories identified through content analysis and thematic analysis of the open-ended answers given by a subgroup of adolescents (the participants who reported, who reported having experienced positive

emotions) allows an in-depth examination of important topics, that are related to prevention, and educational and clinical intervention (Figure 1 and Table 5).

Adolescents have reported that, during the pandemic, they were able to nurture inner growth through a greater awareness of their emotions and their management, in order to control the situation's impact on a physical, social, emotional and psychological level (Bathia, 2020; Kazi & Mushtaq, 2021). Adolescents described themselves as more mature and aware, ready for new challenges (González-Valero et al., 2020). This greater self-awareness and the greater time spent taking care of oneself may represent, a protective element against impulsive behaviour, depressive symptoms and addictive behaviour (especially from the new technologies, which are so useful for maintaining contact with one's relational circle but equally dangerous in terms of the risk of alienation) (Bermejo-Martins et al., 2021; Diotaiuti et al., 2022). Other aspects, linked to the positive emotions experienced, such as hope, gratitude and appreciation for the small things of everyday life and a sense of security, emerged in the literature as fundamental psychological resources for coping with and adapting to the changes imposed by such a stressful period as the pandemic (Pellerin & Raufaste, 2020; Pigaiani et al., 2020). Adolescents seem to have seized the period of restrictions imposed not only as a loss of freedom but as an opportunity to reflect on difficult relationships - especially at school and among peers - and as a chance to experience a new sense of security, a new, more protected environment in which they do not feel judged and can grow. However, this aspect must be monitored to prevent social withdrawal (Almeida et al., 2021).

Relationships with family, friends and the self also represented fundamental sources of joy, appreciation, gratitude. Although the literature has focused mainly on negative emotions and their consequences (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004), positive emotions are associated with greater life satisfaction and fewer depressive symptoms (Quoidbach et al., 2010; Gentzler et al., 2016).

Plus, during the pandemic, positive emotions predict individual resilience (Israelashvili et al., 2021). According to Romm et al. (2021), positive emotions can be a protective factor for adolescents towards the negative consequences of COVID-19 and can be increased with specific educational programmes as described by Mesuardo et al. (2022) and Datu et al. (2022). During the pandemic, perceiving emotional closeness to family and friends was associated with more frequent positive emotions in adulthood (Brown & Greenfield, 2021) and in the elderlies (Cavallini et al., 2021). Similarly, the present study states that positive emotions were experienced by adolescents in their relationships with

family and friends, the two socioemotional extremes where, in adolescence, a balance is needed between the search for attachment proximity and the need to explore the world (Nickerson & Nagle, 2005).

Moreover, some adolescents reported experiencing positive emotions related to seeing daily life in a new way, during the period of pandemic-related restrictions, through a re-discovery of the resources available in the home environment (Rogers et al., 2021). As some research reports, digital technologies for communication and virtual encounters can promote a greater perception of social support, associated with fewer feelings of loneliness, boredom and anger and a greater sense of belonging, ensuring the maintenance of meaningful social relationships even during an extreme situation such as isolation (Pedrosa et al., 2020; Gabbiadini et al., 2020). Quarantine therefore did not reduce young people's empathy and sociability (Commodari et al., 2020). Some adolescents report that they also made new friends, expanding their network of relationships and cultivating it over time. Online gaming was also found to be socially significant and alleviated emotional distress during isolation (Giardina et al., 2021).

Plus, some adolescents reported that during this period they experienced more contact with nature through walks and activities in the green spaces near home. According to a recent study, during the restriction period, emotions were found to be more positive among people who had accessible outdoor green spaces (Pouso et al., 2021). Furthermore, exercise, walking and gardening are among the activities associated with greater benefits on emotions (Lades et al., 2020). The interaction with pets was also associated with positive emotions, in line with evidence on the benefits of the contact with animals for social behaviour, interpersonal interactions, mood, and stress management (Beetz et al., 2012).

All these resources, from different life domains, highlight the heterogeneity of post-traumatic growth patterns and resilience profiles that other studies have pointed out (Zhen & Zhou, 2022; Dvorsky et al., 2021). The present study shows that adolescents, during the COVID-19, pandemic demonstrated increased self-awareness, positive emotions, and strengthened social connections, a renewed interest for nature, which contributed to protect and foster their emotional wellbeing. The study supports the notion that crises, such as the global health crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, can serve as catalysts for individuals to tap into exceptional processes and resources, constituting turning points in their lives (Sheldon & King, 2001; Morin, 2000; Paoletti & Selvaggio, 2013; Paoletti, 2008; Paoletti et al., 2022a). Given the multiplicity of post-traumatic growth and resilience profiles of adolescents (Zhen & Zhou,

2022; Dvorsky et al., 2021), the present research emphasizes the need for interventions (Perasso et al., 2023) in developmental and educational psychology that focus on promoting positive resources in different life domains. By recognizing and nurturing these strengths, psychologists, educators, teachers, and parents, can support adolescents in navigating future crises and promoting their overall well-being and development.

### ***Limits and Future Directions***

Limitations of the study include the use of survey constituted by self-report items, that according to Dicken (1963), can cause social desirability bias in the respondent; this was possibly buffered by the anonymity of the compilation. The methodology did not include a longitudinal perspective (McCall, 1977; Ferrer & McArdle, 2010) because the focus of the study was on the height of the pandemic emergency, as a present event at the time of the research. It is suggested to future studies on the effects of the pandemic to adopt a longitudinal assessment and follow-up.

Another limitation of the research is the lack of face to face interviews and focus groups to investigate the emotions of the adolescents: the implementation of further qualitative methods was hindered by the pandemic restriction and by the extended number of participants. Moreover, no qualitative investigation has been conducted on negative emotions. In fact, since a large body of studies have focused on young people's negative emotions during the pandemic (e.g., Amorós-Reche et al., 2022; Babore et al., 2022), the present work wished to focus instead on positive emotions, which have been less investigated in the literature.

In fact, to date, most studies on the effects of the pandemic mainly examine the risk factors for the individuals' health, while there are still few studies that explore the resources and factors that promote positive coping with the negative effects of the pandemic (Paoletti et al., 2022a).

The present research results provide useful information for orienting educational policies towards mental health promotion in the coming years. Although the results show the marked presence of negative emotion experienced during the pandemic by adolescents, important forms of positive coping adaptation were highlighted. The research highlighted aspects to be valorised in terms of resilience and the ability to respond to crises. Having experienced a health emergency as an opportunity to have more intense experiences with oneself, with family and peers, re-signifying restrictions and isolation as a time to rediscover oneself, are all important elements to be promoted and shared.

Furthermore, the recognition of positive emotions represented a factor in the adolescents' coping with stress, making them more capable of learning from unusual situations. Reducing the negative impact of the pandemic experience through a re-signification of it by cultivating positive emotions through the experience of social cohesion and gratitude, mirrors the strategies described in some recent neuroscientific models of promoting brain resilience and well-being (Paoletti & Ben-Soussan, 2019; Tabibnia, 2020).

In terms of future directions for research on the issues addressed, the important strategies activated by adolescents remind us of the need to educate on the awareness of one's own resources through a positive neuropsychopedagogical approach (Paoletti, 2008; Paoletti et al., 2016; Pavoncello et al., 2013). Indeed, the awareness of one's own capabilities can enable and sustain a new rebirth (Paoletti et al., 2016). School curricula should educate future generations in neuro-psychopedagogical knowledge to cope with adversity and uncertainty. Thus, it is necessary to educate adults and young people to understand the links between neuro-psychophysiological states, emotions and behaviour to prevent depression and anxiety (Paoletti et al., 2022a; Paoletti et al., 2022b).

## **Conclusion**

The Covid-19 pandemic had a massive impact on adolescents. The results of this study emphasised how adolescents were confronted with negative emotions (e.g., boredom, sadness, fear, agitation) and the principal sources of social support (e.g., family, friends, one-self). The results confirm the fundamental role, for adolescents, of family and peers to overcome adversities. However, this study innovatively shed light on the positive aspects, transformations and generative crises that the adolescents experienced. The analysis of their reflections on the positive emotions they experienced during the pandemic revealed: an inner growth in terms of increased self-awareness, gratitude and hope, and self-care; the ability to appreciate small moments and the courage to take up new challenges by reading them in terms of opportunities; a strengthening of relational skills both within the family and among peers by using empathy and a sense of common humanity; and, finally, the possibility of discovering new aspects of everyday life through technology and new means of communication, without ever giving up contact with nature. This is the first study in Italy to focus on capitalising on the adolescent's resources during the pandemic and lays the foundations for clinical and educational interventions that aim to highlight the aspects of creativity, positivity and generativity of the new

generations. This approach wants to lay ground for more educational and risk-prevention tools in the developmental age that are developed from a bottom-up, and not top-down, perspective.

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