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**BOOK OF ABSTRACTS
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NEGATIVE EMOTIONS AS PREDICTORS OF LONELINESS IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS DURING THE PANDEMIC

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The current COVID-19 crisis is threatening the learning processes and the students' mental health, and the emotional response to it is an important research domain. Transition from studying in regular classrooms to online classes, accompanied with lockdown and restricted daily activities and social interactions, inevitably increases solitude and could also increase loneliness. The aim of this study was to examine how negative emotions could predict loneliness of university students during the pandemic. The study was conducted at two time-points: during lockdown in april 2020. (T1) and throughout december 2020., when COVID-19 incidence rates in Serbia were high (T2). Two independent samples of Belgrade university students participated in research, one sample at each time-point: N1=301 (age range 19 - 31, $M = 20.82$, $SD = 2.23$) at T1 and N2=291 (age range 18-33, $M = 19.82$, $SD = 1.70$) at T2. Data on fear, hostility, guilt and sadness was collected using negative emotion scales of PANAS-X (Positive and Negative Affect Schedule - Expanded Form). The respondents also filled out Revised UCLA Loneliness Scale, measuring general loneliness. The data was obtained through an online survey. Two linear regression analyses were performed to reveal the way negative emotions predicted loneliness in different pandemic-moments. Results indicate that loneliness at T1 ($F(4, 296) = 11.58$, $p < .001$, $adj. R^2 = .124$) was predicted by feeling of guilt ($\beta = .261$, $p < .001$), while at T2 ($F(4, 296) = 25.68$, $p < .001$, $adj. R^2 = .254$) the same criterion was predicted differently – negatively by Fear ($\beta = -.256$, $p < .01$) and positively by Guilt ($\beta = .223$, $p < .01$) and Sadness ($\beta = .492$, $p < .001$). The data could reflect cumulative effects of prolonged pandemic condition – loneliness at T2 is mostly affected by Sadness with also significant contribution of Guilt and Fear. Considering the

unpredictable course of the pandemic, it is of great importance to comprehend the possible effect intense emotions might have on students' mental health.

Keywords: COVID-19; loneliness; negative emotions; university students

PREDICTING ACADEMIC STRESS DURING THE PANDEMIC: THE ROLE OF TRAIT EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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The COVID-19 pandemic has provoked extraordinary disruptions to higher education. Changes in learning opportunities and habits could contribute to academic pressure and stresses related to academic expectations, examinations and students' academic self-perceptions. According to previous studies, academic stress is related to both basic personality traits and emotional intelligence (EI) as a trait which demonstrated its relevance in numerous researches regarding stress and mental health domains. The present study sought to examine the role of trait EI in predicting the academic-related stress during the pandemic, while controlling for the basic personality traits. A sample ($N = 291$) of 259 female and 32 male participants, age range 18-33 ($M=19.82$, $SD=1.70$) completed: (1) Perceptions of Academic Stress (PAS) Scale, measuring intensity of academic-related stress, (2) HEXACO Personality Inventory Revised comprising traits Honesty-Humility, Emotionality, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness and Openness to experience, and (3) the TEIQue, examining trait EI (encompassing factors Well-Being, Self-control, Emotionality, and Sociability). Subjects

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