



ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER

Management

A STUDY ON THE SOURCES AND CONSEQUENCES OF STRESS DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TAMIL NADU

KEY WORDS: Covid-19, Pandemic, Lockdown, Managing Stress

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ABSTRACT

The mortality due to the COVID-19 pandemic is shooting up across the world in an apprehensive speed. People try to detach themselves from the current reality and turn towards something which gives them a brief relief. They try to find solace in snacks, TV shows, etc. However, the pandemic is actually a truth. This truth creates a negative feeling. All around words such as “lockdown; stay home, stay safe; wash your hands; wear a mask; maintain social distancing” is heard continually. People have developed fear of death; fear of social security and fear of financial security. Covid19 and the associated lock down have brought about a strong emotional trauma to men, women and children across the globe. This creates stress among people. This empirical paper aims to identify the sources of stress occurred due to this pandemic and tries to suggest a few sustainable practices to manage stress.

INTRODUCTION

COVID-19 started in December 2019, in Wuhan city of central Hubei province of China (Holshue et al., 2020). World Health Organization (WHO) along with Chinese authorities started working together and it was discovered to be a new virus which was named Novel Corona Virus (2019-nCoV).

Living through the menace of such a public health emergency can be really stressful. Managing the threat of the disease seems to be quite challenging for a normal human being. The fear of getting exposed to the deadly virus makes people anxious. At the same time, one may be feeling overwhelmed by the continuous, rapidly changing, and often contradictory data provided by the mass media about the growing threat of COVID-19. The epidemic is likely to upsurge the stress and anxiety among the people, both because of the fear of getting infected due to the virus and also because of the ambiguity about how the pandemic will affect us socially and economically.

People try to detach themselves from the current reality and turn towards something which gives them a brief relief. They try to find solace in snacks, TV shows, etc. However, the pandemic is actually a truth. This truth creates a negative feeling. All around words such as “lockdown; stay home, stay safe; wash your hands; wear a mask; maintain social distancing” is heard continually. People have developed a fear of death; fear of social security and fear of financial security. Even though it is critical during this time to take care of one’s physical health, it has also become a mandate to pay attention to one’s emotional well-being.

Country-wide lockdown are being implemented to prevent the spread of the virus. This step by the government has definitely brought about a good impact in reducing the spread. But however, this lock-down has halted the services of many industries. This has led to a break in the global supply chains and thus, affected the global economy brutally (Ebrahim et al., 2020). Worldwide transport industry has been affected. Transport business even at national levels has terminated due to lock-down in different countries. Import of steel, iron, inorganic chemicals, etc. from China and other countries has been completely affected. Most of the employees are working from home, which has its financial disadvantages. Educational institutions have been shut down. The uncertainty and postponement of examinations is also a stressor for young minds.

Considering the relevance of all the above factors, the researchers decided to make an empirical study, to identify

the sources of stress occurred due to this pandemic and tried to suggest a few sustainable practices to manage stress during the corona virus pandemic.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research methodology refers to a precise procedure or technique used to identify, select, process, and analyze information about a topic. The researchers have adopted descriptive research design for the present study. Descriptive research studies are those studies which are concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual or a group. The present study is mainly based on primary data. The secondary data includes collections from the books, journals, magazines, articles, etc., which were used to write the conceptual framework of the study. Snowball sampling under non-probability sampling method was used for the present study. The researcher collected data from 133 samples for the purpose of the study. The time period of the study is 1st May 2020 to 30th May 2020.

A self-administered questionnaire was developed using Google forms which was sent through electronic mail and Whatsapp to people residing at various Districts of Tamil Nadu due to lock down. The participants were encouraged to pass-on the questionnaire to as many people as possible. Thus, the link was forwarded to people apart from the first point of contact and so on.

The questionnaire consisted of 46 questions. The five-point Likert scale technique was used to frame the multiple-choice questions. It helped the researchers to collect the demographic profile of the respondents and to solicit information regarding their stress due to Covid19 and the ways people adopt to manage it. For the purpose the following objectives were framed.

Major Objectives

- To identify how people look at COVID 19 lockdown
- To identify whether the respondents are really afraid about being affected by COVID 19
- To identify the major sources of stress during the pandemic days.

Other Objectives

- To identify whether this lock-down stress has caused any diseases in the respondents.
- To identify whether this lock-down stress has made the respondents to resort to any bad habits.
- To identify how the respondents feel about work from home.

- To identify the opinion of the parents towards the education of their children.
- To identify whether the lockdown has caused any financial crisis in the family of the respondents.
- To identify the association between the marital status of the respondents and the financial crisis in the family due to lockdown.
- To identify the association between the age of the respondents and their stress due to technology usage during the lockdown period.
- To identify the association between the gender of the respondents and the additional time they spend on work during the lockdown period.
- To identify the association between the age of the respondents and their constant fear of getting affected by corona.
- To identify the association between the gender of the respondents and their opinion about change in lifestyle due to the lockdown.

To obtain the results for the above objectives of the study, the following Hypotheses were formulated:

- H_{01} : There is no significant association between the marital status of the respondents and the financial crisis in the family due to lockdown.
- H_{02} : There is no significant association between the age of the respondents and their stress due to technology usage during the lockdown period.
- H_{03} : There is no significant association between the gender of the respondents and the additional time they spend on work during the lockdown period.
- H_{04} : There is no significant association between the age of the respondents and their constant fear of getting affected by COVID19.
- H_{05} : There is no significant association the gender of the respondents and their opinion about change in lifestyle due to the lockdown.

Simple percentage analysis and Chi-square test was used to analyse the data for this study. However, the present study is limited to the people who had smartphones, e-mail IDs and the capability to comprehend English language. This denotes the educated population of the country, so it may not be generalized to the entire population of the country.

Data Analysis And Interpretation

Google forms automatically calculated the simple percentage analysis for the data. Statistical Tool for Social Service (SPSS) was used to perform Chi-square test.

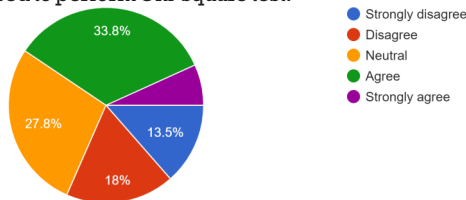


Fig.3.1 Showing The Psychological Effect Of Corona In The Minds Of The Respondents

Interpretation: From Fig. 3.1 it can be interpreted that 33.8%, i.e., maximum of the respondents are psychologically affected due to this corona virus pandemic and 13.5% of the respondents strongly disagree for the same.

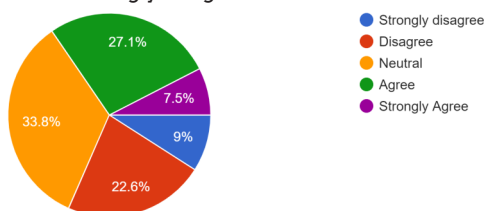


Fig.3.2 Showing The Fear Of The Respondents Of Getting

Affected By Corona

Interpretation: From Fig. 3.2 it can be interpreted that 33.8%, i.e., maximum of the respondents has just a neutral fear of getting affected by corona and 9% of the respondents strongly disagree for the same.

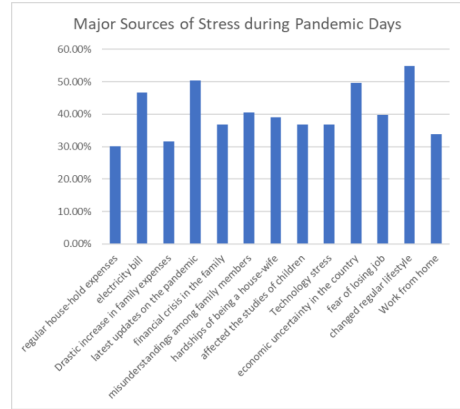


Fig.3.3 Showing The Psychological Effect Of Corona In The Minds Of The Respondents

Interpretation: From Fig. 3.3 it can be interpreted that the changed lifestyle, economic uncertainty in the country and misunderstandings among the family members are the greatest sources of stress during these pandemic days.

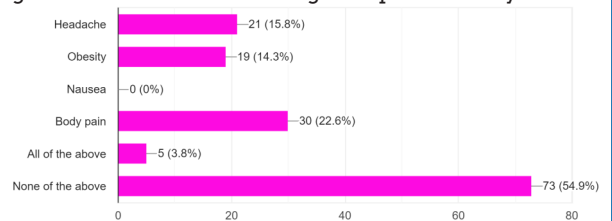


Fig.3.4 Showing The Lockdown Stress Causing New Diseases In The Respondents

Interpretation: From Fig.3.4 it can be interpreted that the respondents have not developed any new diseases due to this lock-down stress.

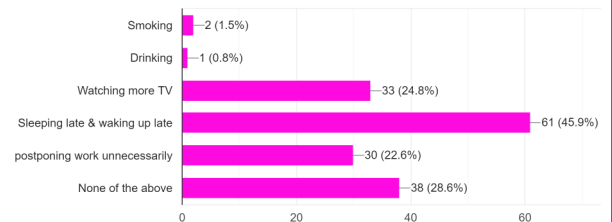


Fig. 3.5 Showing The Increase In The Bad Habits Due To This Lock-down

Interpretation: From Fig. 3.5 it can be interpreted that maximum of the respondents, i.e., 45.9% of the respondents developed the bad habit of sleeping late and waking up late due to this lock-down.

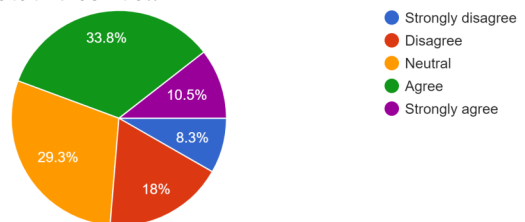


Fig. 3.6 Showing The Decrease In Job Satisfaction Due To Work From Home Scenario

Interpretation: From Fig. 3.6 it can be interpreted that

maximum of the respondents, i.e., 33.8% of the respondents experience a decrease in job satisfaction due to work from home scenario.

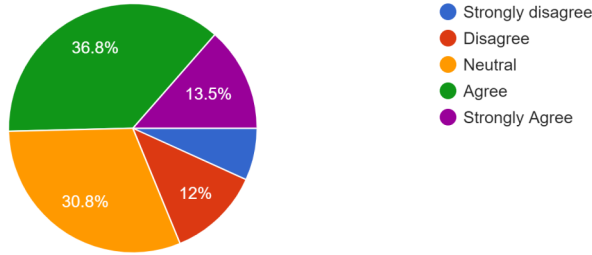


Fig. 3.7 Showing The Opinion Of The Parents Towards The Education Of Their Children

Interpretation: From Fig. 3.7 it can be interpreted that maximum of the respondents, i.e., 36.8% of the respondents feel that their children's education is being affected due to this lock-down.

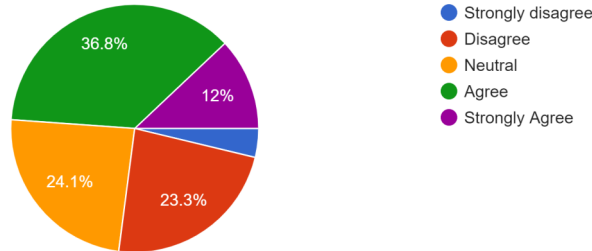


Fig. 3.8 Showing The Lockdown Has Caused Financial Crisis In The Family Of The Respondents

Interpretation: From Fig. 3.8 it can be interpreted that maximum of the respondents, i.e., 36.8% of the respondents feel that this lock-down has caused financial crisis in their families.

Chart 3.1 showing association between the marital status of the respondents and the financial crisis in the family due to lockdown Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	4.587 ^a	8	.801
Likelihood Ratio	6.273	8	.617
N of Valid Cases	133		

Interpretation: Since the p value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis H_{01} , "there is no significant association between the marital status of the respondents and the financial crisis in the family due to lockdown", is accepted. Thus, from chart 3.1 it can be interpreted that there is no association between the marital status of the respondents and the financial crisis in the family due to lockdown.

Chart 3.2 showing the association between the age of the respondents and their stress due to technology usage during the lockdown period. Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	20.648 ^a	16	.192
Likelihood Ratio	20.827	16	.185
N of Valid Cases	133		

Interpretation: Since the p value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis H_{02} , "there is no significant association between the age of the respondents and their stress due to technology usage during the lockdown period", is accepted. Thus, from chart 3.2 it can be interpreted that there is no association between the age of the respondents and their stress due to technology usage during the lockdown period.

Chart 3.3 showing the association between the gender of

the respondents and the additional time they spend on work during the lockdown period Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	3.067 ^a	4	.547
Likelihood Ratio	3.044	4	.550
N of Valid Cases	133		

Interpretation: Since the p value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis H_{03} , "there is no significant association between the gender of the respondents and the additional time they spend on work during the lockdown period", is accepted. Thus, from chart 3.3 it can be interpreted that there is no association between the gender of the respondents and the additional time they spend on work during the lockdown period.

Chart 3.4 showing the association between the age of the respondents and their constant fear of getting affected by corona Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	29.716 ^a	16	0.041
Likelihood Ratio	29.789	16	0.044
N of Valid Cases	133		

Interpretation: Since the p value is lesser than 0.05, the null hypothesis H_{04} , "there is no significant association between the age of the respondents and their constant fear of getting affected by COVID19", is rejected and the alternative hypothesis H_{a4} , there is a significant association between the age of the respondents and their constant fear of getting affected by COVID19", is accepted. Thus, from chart 3.4 it can be interpreted that there is a significant association between the age of the respondents and their constant fear of getting affected by corona. As the pandemic is said to be more dangerous to old age people, fear of getting affected is more among the senior citizens. As there is no vaccine or medicine found against this deadly virus, the chances of getting infected and losing life is more. Thus senior citizens are asked to be more vigilant in following the safety measures and to be more cautious, compared to other young age citizens.

Chart 3.5 showing the association between the gender of the respondents and their opinion about change in lifestyle due to the lockdown. Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	7.289 ^a	4	.121
Likelihood Ratio	7.915	4	.095
N of Valid Cases	133		

Interpretation: Since the p value is greater than 0.05, the null hypothesis H_{05} , "there is no significant association the gender of the respondents and their opinion about change in lifestyle due to the lockdown", is accepted. Thus, from chart 3.5 it can be interpreted that there is no association between the gender of the respondents and their opinion about change in lifestyle due to the lockdown.

CONCLUSION

Living through the threat of a pandemic such as COVID-19 can be very stressful. Dealing with it and leading a normal life becomes quite a tough task. One may feel anxious, or fear for the life ourself and for our loved ones. At the same time, one may be feeling overwhelmed by the constant, rapidly changing, and often conflicting information provided by the media regarding the growing danger of COVID-19.

In the year 1918, it was Spanish flu which was a deadly pandemic and now it is covid-19. This pandemic has caused a worse effect over livelihood of lots of people then. It has greatly ruined their lives in several ways. Currently, there is no full proof medicine or vaccine for this virus. There is a high risk of social end and we may have to face many sacrifices of life.

While it is critical during this time to take care of our physical health, paying attention to our emotional health is equally a vital aspect to look upon. There are various reasons identified for stress among the public. Few of them include their changes in food habits, household expenses, their children's education, etc. Also, the age factor has caused a great stress due to the fear of this deadly pandemic. This study has revealed that old age people are mostly of the fear of getting affected by this virus and are in stress.

However, one can overcome this stressful situation if yoga, meditation, physical workouts, hobbies such as reading books, painting, handicrafts, etc., is persistently practiced. This gives a relaxation to the mind and shifts our concentration from the latest updates of COVID cases. Apart from overcoming the pandemic, one can maintain healthy eating practices; personal hygiene and safety precautions as recommended by the government, shall also be adopted.

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