

FEAR OF CORONA AND PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS AMONG TEACHERS AFTER RETURNING TO TEACHING UNDER THE CORONA PANDEMIC

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Abstract

Background: The fear of the corona virus and the psychological discomfort experienced by teachers after returning to the classroom were two psychological repercussions of the spread of the corona virus that were mentioned in much earlier research. The current study aims to ascertain the degree of psychological distress, fear of Corona, and the relationship between the two among teachers upon their return to face-to-face instruction. **Materials and Methods:** After taking their initial agreement, the questionnaire was distributed among the teachers in several schools after they showed their agreement to participate in filling out the questionnaire. They were informed of the aim of the study concerning all the ethical issues in preserving the confidentiality of the information and that the information will be used for scientific research only. Accordingly, the questionnaire was distributed to 300 teachers in the by the simple random sample method. **Result:** The study was female preponderance with 54% are female teachers and most common age group was 30-39 years comprising 45% participants followed by 40-49 years. There are no statistically significant differences in the level of fear of Corona among the teachers, which is due to the variable of gender. There are no statistically significant differences at the significance level of in the level of psychological distress among the teachers according to the variable of age. There is a positive relationship with statistical significance between fear of Corona and psychological distress among the teachers. **Conclusion:** According to the study, psychological distress and fear of Corona are positively correlated. To strengthen the teachers' non-knowledge abilities and safeguard them against the detrimental effects of the phenomena of fear and psychological distress, it is vital to develop their flexibility and emotional adaptability.

INTRODUCTION

We no longer see the world as we once did because of the COVID-19 pandemic. Strong social isolation and lockdown measures implemented since the start of the pandemic have resulted in major social connection modifications that, for many people, have caused a sense of loneliness and isolation. Indeed, the rapid spread of COVID-19 throughout the world has had an impact on people's social, psychological, economic, and educational outcomes.^[1] In reality, one of the most frequently employed strategies for promoting social segregation has been the closing of schools on a global scale as well as to reduce infections.

With the development of the pandemic, specialists started to underline how crucial it is to preserve both physical and mental health. Individuals' mental

health suffered psychological and social impairment as a result of their anxieties about contracting the illness, dealing with its challenging symptoms, and losing their families. Fear and stress associated with COVID-19 caused symptoms to emerge, including altered sleeping and eating patterns, a rise in the severity of psychological cases, an increase in the use of alcohol, tobacco, and drugs, and an increase in the risk of death even among health care professionals.^[2] The epidemic's spread and effects extended beyond the pupils' mental health and had a significant negative impact on the teachers as well. According to several research, teachers experienced stress during the closure period as a result of having to quickly adjust to educating students online. Due to the constraints put in place, this had an impact on their positions and orientations, which had an impact on their concerns and beliefs, adaptation techniques, and other day-to-day problems.^[3]

The teachers have to adjust to new teaching techniques as a result of these challenges. One of the psychological effects of this encounter was fear. They experienced stress from having to meet requirements in a new setting, such as employing teaching technology, struggled to balance their professional and personal obligations, and were afraid of the future. The emotional distress could therefore be extremely acute.^[4]

Teaching is incredibly taxing, especially when dealing with adolescent students. According to research, 17% of teachers experience worry, 19% experience despair, and 33% experience exhaustion as a result of COVID-19.^[5]

Because of the abrupt interruptions of these closures, the lack of information of the duration of closure, and the generally limited understanding of remote learning, UNESCO (2020) noted that one of the negative effects of closing the schools is a situation of uncertainty and stress among the teachers.^[6]

Because COVID-19 can have a negative impact on people's psychological health, it is important to understand the psychological changes that it causes, such as unfavorable emotions, knowledge indicators, and social dangers. All of these changes are brought on by COVID-19.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

After taking their initial agreement, the questionnaire was distributed among the teachers in several schools after they showed their agreement to participate in filling out the questionnaire. They were informed of the aim of the study concerning all the ethical issues in preserving the confidentiality of the information and that the information will be used for scientific research only. Accordingly, the questionnaire was distributed to 300 teachers in the by the simple random sample method.

Methodology

The Measure of Fear of Corona was used and the psychometric characteristics of the validity and reliability coefficients were calculated. The measure consisted of seven items. To correct the measure, the five-grade Lickert scale, which ranges between (I strongly disagree: 1, I disagree; 2, I don't agree and do not disagree; 3, I agree; 4, I strongly agree; and 5 were used. The grades on the scale range from 7–35, where the highest grade indicates the existence of fear of the corona virus.

The present study adopted the Psychological distress Measure (DASS-21), which is a brief version of the complete DASS. The measure consists of 21 items. It consists of three measures that are designed to

measure depression, anxiety, and stress. It is a self-report tool that is prepared to measure the emotional cases of depression, anxiety, and stress. Every measure consists of seven items: depression, which includes items (3, 5, 10, 13, 16, 17, and 21); anxiety, which includes items (2, 4, 7, 9, 15, 19, 20); and stress, which includes items (1, 6, 8, 11, 12, 14, 18).

Statistical Analysis

Data so obtained were subjected to statistical analysis. Data analysis was done by SPSS software @ version 22.0. Descriptive statistical analysis, which included frequency and percentages, was used to characterize the data. Inferential statistics included chi-square test and independent samples t test for different dependent variables of the study and $p < 0.05$ was considered statistically significant.

RESULTS

As per [Table 1] the study was female preponderance with 54% are female teachers and most common age group was 30-39 years comprising 45% participants followed by 40-49 years.

As per [Table 2] psychological distresses was calculated by using DASS-21 scale. The degrees are specified on the branch measures (depression, anxiety, and stress) to classify the intensity of the symptoms from light to extremely severe.

As per [Table 3] that there are no statistically significant differences in the level of fear of Corona among the teachers, which is due to the variable of gender. The arithmetic mean for the total degree among the males was (22.13), while the arithmetic means for the females was 23.65.

As per [Table 4] there are statistically significant differences in the level of psychological distress among the teachers, which are due to the variable of gender on the total degree and the dimension of anxiety in favour of the males, while it is indicated that there are no differences on the two dimensions of depression and stress.

As per [Table 5] there are no statistically significant differences for the level of fear of Corona among the teachers according to the variable of age.

As per [Table 6] that there are no statistically significant differences at the significance level of in the level of psychological distress among the teachers according to the variable of age. And there is an approximation in the level of psychological distress given the differences in their ages.

As per [Table 7] there is a positive relationship with statistical significance between fear of Corona and psychological distress among the teachers.

Table 1: Age and Gender wise distribution of teachers

Variable		Number	Percentage %	Total
Gender	Male	145	46	300
	Female	155	54	
Age	20- 29	48	17	300
	30-39	140	45	
	40- 49	72	23	

	50 and Over	40	15	
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Table 2: Classification of Psychological distress

Severity of Symptoms	Depression	Anxiety	Stress
Normal	0-4	0-3	0-7
Mild	5-6	4-5	8-9
Moderate	7-10	6-7	10-12
Severe	11-13	8-9	13-16
Extremely Severe	14+	10+	17+

Table 3: Fear of Corona in teachers according to gender variable

Variable	Gender	Number	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	p-value
The total degree of fear of corona	Male	145	22.13	7.15	.08
	Female	155	23.65	6.12	

Table 4: Psychological distress in teachers according to gender variable

Variable	Gender	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	p-value
Depression	Male	145	5.61	4.68	0.10
	Female	155	4.55	4.45	
Anxiety	Male	145	5.46	4.56	0.02*
	Female	155	4.19	3.76	
Stress	Male	145	5.41	4.40	0.07
	Female	155	4.63	4.02	
The total degree of psychological distress	Male	145	17.17	13.91	0.02*
	Female	155	13.18	11.49	

Table 5: Fear of Corona among teachers according to age

Variable	Age	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	p-value
Fear of Corona	20-29	48	23.33	6.360	0.83
	30-39	140	23.80	7.352	
	40-49	72	22.28	7.122	
	50 and over	40	23.78	7.004	

Table 6: Psychological distress in teachers according to age variable

Variable	Age	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	p-value
Depression	20-29	48	6.04	5.63	0.21
	30-39	140	5.02	4.85	
	40-49	72	4.89	4.17	
	50 and over	40	4.18	4.59	
Anxiety	20-29	48	5.29	4.96	0.32
	30-39	140	4.11	3.91	
	40-49	72	4.16	3.97	
	50 and over	40	5.61	4.47	
Stress	20-29	48	6.91	4.84	0.23
	30-39	140	5.68	4.37	
	40-49	72	4.02	3.82	
	50 and over	40	5.71	4.41	
The total degree of psychological distress	20-29	48	18.25	14.49	0.15
	30-39	140	15.82	11.12	
	40-49	72	13.08	11.08	
	50 and over	40	15.51	12.89	

Table 7: Correlation the level of fear of Corona and psychological distress.

Variable		Fear of Corona	Depression	Anxiety	Stress	The total degree of psychological distress
fear of Corona	r		0.27**	.24**	.25**	.21**
	p-value		0.02	.01	.02	.01
Depression	r			.81**	.85**	.94**
	p-value			.02	.02	.02
Anxiety	r				.84**	.95**
	p-value				.01	.01
Stress	r					.92**
	p-value					.02

DISCUSSION

The personnel on the front lines of the conflict, particularly the teachers, were immediately impacted by the Corona pandemic. The goal of the current

study was to determine the level of corona fear and psychological distress among teachers. This research will contribute to a better knowledge of how to safeguard teachers during emergencies and the

spread of diseases so that they can continue providing educational services.

The study's findings indicated that there was little fear of Corona. This is consistent with the study's findings.^[7,8] This may be due to the fact that young people made up the majority of the sample in the study, who have higher levels of awareness and knowledge, are more able to practice personal protection measures, and have psychological processes and character traits that make it easier for them to deal with health risks. This society has stressed the significance of human readiness for all outcomes, particularly that readiness for the epidemic, as well as the significance of using healthy methods to combat the epidemic, which were outlined in calls from the mosques as a religious requirement for which man is responsible. Religion provides a sense of comfort and lessens worry and dread. Previous studies that discovered beneficial correlations between religious activity and wellbeing stressed this. Other research, however, has shown that religion plays no part in reducing the fear of Corona.^[9]

The results of earlier research may have differed because different countries have varied standards for measuring the extent of awareness and understanding about this disease. This was highlighted by the observation that fear levels in Corona were higher than those observed elsewhere.^{8,9} Previous research, however, produced a range of outcomes. A cross-sectional survey done in the summer of 2020 in Berlin revealed that 59% of the school team indicated that there is a medium fear to a very high fear of being infected. Half of the team expressed a medium fear to a very strong dread of the infection.^[10]

The study uncovered that 73% of the teachers were afraid of being infected by SARS-CoV-2 in the school and that the females were more worried than the males. This agrees with the fact that women are more vulnerable to being infected with anxiety than men. According to the study's findings, there were no changes in the sample's level of psychological discomfort according to age. However, the results indicated that the amount of fear was higher in younger people and decreased with age. In other studies, it was noted that those between the ages of 30 and 39 who felt more distress had higher levels of fear. However, prior research revealed that those over the age of 47 have increased levels of anxiety and fatigue.^[11]

The pandemic caused the teachers a lot of stress. This may be a result of their inability to adjust to remote learning and their worry about their future as a result of the epidemic. As a result, there may be serious mental anguish among them. The earlier investigations also showed that people's lives are harmed by their dread of Corona.^[12]

The results of the current study are astounding, nevertheless, in that men displayed greater anxiety than women. These finding conflicts with those of recent studies, which show that women tend to experience anxiety on average more than men. The

current investigation demonstrated that there are no age-related changes in psychological discomfort. This outcome appears to be at odds with the study on age-related distress. This finding appears to be at odds with the study's finding that older teachers experienced higher levels of stress and anxiety. This may be because it is challenging to adjust to the technology techniques that will be employed in education. However, the study found that among instructors, age was not significantly associated with tension, anxiety, or depression; older teachers and those with more experience report less stress.^[11]

The current study clarifies the connection between the fear of Corona and the detrimental effects on psychological health; the findings revealed a favourable correlation between Corona and anxiety, tension, and melancholy. When a patient's health anxieties take control, this can disrupt their moods and lead to anxiety and melancholy. This is consistent with a study that found a link between anxiety, fear, and depression levels and the degree of COVID-19 phobia that people had. This can then result in a worsening of the epidemic's psychological and social impacts, which have a significant impact on people's mental health. People who are mentally and emotionally spent have unfavourable opinions about being exposed to the corona virus.^[12,13]

CONCLUSION

This study clarifies the significance of having an interest in this field because the study showed a link between psychological anguish and a person's fear of Corona. Because the quality of the teaching services that are provided to the students and the quality of the students' emotional states are both influenced by the teachers' emotional states, it is necessary to strengthen the non-knowledge skills of the teachers, such as flexibility and emotional adaptation, to reinforce their psychological immunity and protect them from the negative effects of the phenomena of fear and psychological distress. As a result, it is inevitable to focus on providing psychological and social support for them as well as creating psychological and social techniques and interventions that can be applied in the event of crises like the Corona crisis. The study suggests carrying out research with additional factors like spirituality, religiosity, and personality qualities.

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