A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HOPELESSNESS AND GENERALISED ANXIETY AMONG STUDENTS WHO GRADUATED AFTER AND DURING COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2. The aim of this study is to compare hopelessness and generalized anxiety among students who graduated after and during COVID-19. The sample Size was 90 graduated students from jaipur and neighbouring cities with age ranging between 20 - 30. The Generalised Anxiety Disorder Assessment (GAD-7) developed by Spitzer, R. L et al.,(2006) and Beck's hopelessness scale developed by Aaron T. Beck (1974) were administered to the participants. Independent t-test was used to compare both the groups. No significant difference was found in hopelessness between students who graduated after and during COVID-19 and in Generalised anxiety between students who graduated after and students who graduated during COVID-19

Keywords: Hopelessness, Generalised Anxiety, COVID-19.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of hopelessness is a multifaceted psychological phenomenon that has attracted considerable attention in the field of psychiatric research. It is a subjective state of mind that is characterized by a lack of optimism, feelings of hopelessness, and a lack of control over one's future (Beck, Weissman, Lester, & Trexler, 1974). As an emotional state closely linked to depression, hopelessness plays a crucial role in understanding the development, maintenance, and treatment of various mental health disorders (Abramson, Metalsky, & Alloy, 1989). Research on hopelessness has gained particular importance in recent times due to the unprecedented global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has brought about a myriad of challenges, including social isolation, economic instability, health concerns, and disruptions in daily routines. These factors have contributed to a heightened sense of uncertainty and an increased risk of experiencing feelings of hopelessness among individuals (Zhang et al., 2020). Numerous studies have reported elevated levels of anxiety, depression, and stress among individuals during the pandemic (Pierce et al., 2020; Li et al., 2020). The impact of the pandemic on mental health has been widely documented. Understanding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on hopelessness is essential for several reasons. First, hopelessness is a significant risk factor for suicidal ideation and behaviour (Beck et al., 1974). Given the potential adverse psychological consequences of hopelessness, investigating its prevalence and associated factors during the pandemic can inform suicide prevention efforts and the development of targeted interventions.

Studying hopelessness in the context of the pandemic allows for a comparison between individuals who graduated during the COVID-19 era and those who graduated before or after the pandemic. This comparative approach enables a deeper understanding of the specific challenges faced by students during the pandemic and their potential impact on feelings of hopelessness. In this study, hopelessness will be assessed using well-established self-report measures such as the Beck Hopelessness Scale (Beck et al., 1974).

Anxiety is a prevalent and debilitating mental health condition that has received significant attention in both research and clinical practice. It is characterized by excessive and persistent worry, apprehension, and physiological arousal in response to perceived threats or stressful situations (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). Anxiety disorders encompass a range of conditions, including Generalised anxiety disorder (GAD), panic disorder, social anxiety disorder, and specific phobias, among others. Due to its debilitating impact on people of all ages and demographic the study of anxiety is being given importance. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2017), anxiety disorders affect approximately 284 million individuals worldwide, making it one of the most prevalent mental health conditions globally. Furthermore, anxiety disorders are associated with significant impairment in various domains of life, including work productivity, social relationships, and overall quality of life (Stein & Stein, 2008). In recent times, the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has introduced unprecedented challenges and stressors, which have further intensified concerns about anxiety. The pandemic has brought about a range of stressors, including fear of infection, social isolation, economic uncertainty, and disruptions in daily routines (Brooks et al., 2020). These factors have the potential to exacerbate anxiety symptoms and contribute to the development of new cases of anxiety disorders. Over the course of the pandemic the impact of COVID-19 has been documented very well. Several studies have reported elevated levels of anxiety symptoms among individuals during the pandemic, both in clinical and community populations (Cao et al., 2020; Wang et al., 2020). The unique circumstances associated with the pandemic, such as the rapid spread of the virus, the implementation of public health measures, and the uncertainty surrounding the duration and consequences of the pandemic, have contributed to heightened anxiety levels among individuals (Asmundson & Taylor, 2020). Understanding the specific effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on anxiety is crucial for several reasons. First, the pandemic has introduced new stressors and challenges that may have distinct impacts on anxiety compared to pre-pandemic times. Investigating the specific factors that contribute to heightened anxiety during the pandemic can inform targeted interventions and support strategies to mitigate the psychological impact of the crisis. Second, studying anxiety in the context of the pandemic allows for a comparison between individuals who experienced the pandemic-related stressors directly and those who did not. This comparative approach provides insights into the unique challenges faced by individuals during the pandemic and their potential impact on anxiety levels.

The COVID-19 pandemic, caused by the novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2, has had a profound and far-reaching impact on global health, society, and economies. First identified in Wuhan, China in December 2019, the virus rapidly spread across the globe, leading to a worldwide public health crisis (Zhu et al., 2020). As of [Current Date], COVID-19 has infected millions of people and caused a significant number of deaths worldwide. Understanding the

characteristics, transmission dynamics, and impact of COVID-19 is of utmost importance for public health officials, policymakers, and researchers. The virus primarily spreads through respiratory droplets when an infected individual coughs, sneezes, or talks, making person-to-person transmission a major concern (Li et al., 2020). The severity of symptoms ranges from mild to severe, with some individuals experiencing life-threatening complications such as acute respiratory distress syndrome (ARDS) or multi-organ failure (Guan et al., 2020). The impact of COVID-19 extends beyond the immediate health consequences. It has disrupted healthcare systems, strained economies, and led to significant social and psychological consequences. The implementation of public health measures such as lockdowns, quarantine, and social distancing has caused disruptions in education, employment, and mental well-being (Brooks et al., 2020). Efforts to combat the pandemic have involved extensive research and collaboration across disciplines. Studies have focused on various aspects, including epidemiology, clinical characteristics, transmission dynamics, diagnostic methods, treatment options, and vaccine development. Rapid advancements in scientific knowledge and technologies have facilitated a better understanding of the virus and its implications for public health (Wang et al., 2020).

OBJECTIVE
- To compare Hopelessness in students who graduated after and during COVID-19.
- To compare Generalised Anxiety in students who graduated after and during COVID-19.

Hypothesis
- There would be significant in hopelessness between students who graduated after and during COVID-19.
- There would be significant difference in generalized anxiety between students who graduated during and after COVID-19.

METHOD
Sample
The sample was collected through circulating an online Google form among graduated students from jaipur and neighbouring cities. In total a sample of 90 students was collected (45 who graduated after COVID-19 and 45 who graduated during COVID-19)
Tools
- Beck's Hopelessness Scale - The Beck Hopelessness Scale (BHS) is a psychological instrument used to measure an individual's level of hopelessness. It was developed by Aaron T. Beck and his colleagues in 1974 as a way to assess the negative cognitive symptoms of depression. The BHS consists of 20 true/false statements that assess a person's outlook on life, expectations for the future, and sense of personal control. The scale is designed to be self-administered and takes about 5 to 10 minutes to complete. Each item on the scale is scored either a 0 or 1, with a higher total score indicating a greater level of hopelessness. The BHS has been widely used in both clinical and research settings to assess an individual's risk for suicide, as well as to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions aimed at reducing feelings of hopelessness.

- Generalized Anxiety Disorder Assessment - The Generalised Anxiety Disorder Assessment (GAD-7) is a brief measure for symptoms of anxiety. The Generalised Anxiety Disorder assessment(GAD-7) items describes feeling about being nervous, anxious, or on edge and worrying too much about more different things. It was developed by Spitzer, R. L., Kroenke, K., Williams, J. B., & Löwe, B in 2006. The questionnaire contains 7 questions with 4 possible answers – none at all, several days, more than half the days, nearly every day with score 0, 1, 2, 3 to respective answers. The raw score: 0-4 = None-Minimal level of anxiety,5-9 = Mild anxiety 10-14 = Moderate anxiety, 15+ = Severe anxiety.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table-1 Result of t-test of Hopelessness in students who graduated after COVID-19 and students who graduated during COVID-19

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	T value	P value	Not Significant at
Students who graduated after COVID-19	45	5.93	25.11	1.63	0.54	<.05
Students who graduated during COVID-19	45	4.49	10.39			

The mean of hopelessness among students who graduated after COVID-19 was 5.93 and 4.49 for students who graduated during COVID-19 which means hopelessness in students who graduated after the pandemic was higher than students who graduated during COVID-19. But the difference of mean was not significant.

Table-2 Result of the t-test of Generalized Anxiety in students who graduated during COVID-19 and students who graduated after COVID-19

Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	T value	P value	Not Significant at
Students who graduated after COVID-19	45	8.51	25.03	0.74	0.23	<.05
Students who graduated during COVID-19	45	7.73	24.88			

The mean of generalized anxiety among students who graduated after COVID-19 was 8.51 and during COVID-19 was 7.73 and t score was found to be (t=0.74, p=<.05) suggesting that there

is no significance difference in generalized anxiety among students who graduated after and during COVID-19.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to compare levels of hopelessness and generalized anxiety among students who graduated after and during the COVID-19. A sample of 90 students was taken for the study. Generalized Anxiety Disorder Assessment-7 (GAD7) and Beck's Hopelessness scale were used in the study to collect data. Analysis of data revealed that hopelessness in students who graduated after and during COVID-19 do not differ significantly. Although students who graduated after COVID-19 scored higher in hopelessness than students who graduated during COVID-19 but the difference was not substantial. Mehmet Saricali et al. (2022) found that the level of hopelessness remains same in students during and after COVID-19 because of traits like mindfulness and good humor etc. present in students.

Analysis of Data revealed that generalized anxiety in students during and after COVID-19 has indicated no significant difference. Majority of the studies in the area have also indicated no significant difference in generalized anxiety among students who passed after and during COVID-19. Gowrang Paul et al. (2022) in a study found that Anxiety symptoms were experienced by 38.2% of students during the pandemic period, and the percentage was nearly identical in the post COVID-19 interval which shows that there is no significant difference between anxiety in students after and during COVID-19.

CONCLUSION

The present study was done to compare the hopelessness and generalized anxiety among students who graduated during and after COVID-19. Sample of 90 graduated students was taken which included 45 students who graduated during COVID-19 and 45 Students who graduated after COVID-19. When means were calculated for hopelessness and generalized anxiety in students who graduated after and during COVID-19 and t-test was applied, it was found that there was no significant difference between hopelessness in students who graduated after and during COVID-19 and between generalized anxiety in students who graduated after and during COVID-19.

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