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Lockdown Stressors Effect Life Management of University Students during COVID19

Dr. SAGHIR AHMAD CH.
Department of Education, Hazara University Mansehra, Pakistan.
Email: saghir.edu786@gmail.com

Dr. AYESHA BATOOL
(Corresponding Author)
Assistant Professor, Lahore College for Women University Lahore, Pakistan
Email: drayesharana19@gmail.com / ayeshabatoolrana@gmail.com

Dr. RAKHSHANDA NAEEM
Lahore College for Women University Lahore, Pakistan
Email: rakhshandanaeem.77@gmail.com

Abstract

The Covid-19 outbreak makes a big shift and disturbs the lives of people in all fields. The academic institutions faced this tragedy also. It was a comparative study about lockdown stressors' effect on life management of university students in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtukhwa. It was a descriptive casual comparative study. The population of the study consisted of university students of Punjab and KP Province. Two universities were selected for selecting the sample of the study. A convenient sampling technique was used to select the two hundred and forty sample from university students. The data were collected from university students through an adapted questionnaire consisting of fifteen items based on Likert type scale. The descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were applied for data analysis. Results showed that students of Punjab province felt a little bit higher stressors and focused life stress management than KP students. The lifestyle of the majority of the students was affected due to lockdown stressors, the family budget was tightened, personal relationships with friends and family got worse, and anxiety levels increased when they heard the news about corona disease. It is concluded that lockdown adversely affected the lives of university students but they faced this uncertainty with a positive frame of mind. Universities administration and teachers may provide psychological services to students just to overcome the stress level of this epidemic.

Key Words: *Covid-19, Lockdown Stressors, Life Management, University Students.*

Introduction

The outbreak of new coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), which originated in China, is a highly dangerous tragedy that has spread around the globe at light speed (World Health Organization, 2020). It is difficult to distinguish between stress symptoms caused by the lockdowns and the disease itself. The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2020) considers lockdown and quarantines to be vital protective measures for physical health, but some extended impositions can be harmful.

To combat the impacts of mild lockdown, all educational institutions have begun to use online digital apps for education. All public areas, including restaurants, parks, movies, and gyms, were closed as a result of the extreme lockdown. Unfortunately, following the government's self-quarantine guidelines had a significant influence on students' mental health. The majority of them have a higher risk of serious mental illnesses, depressive symptoms, and irritability (Ron & Cuellar-Flores, 2020).

Specific Humans and other organisms benefit from psychological time flow because it allows them to live in a changing environment (Zakay, 2014). By changing the stimuli, the lockdown can cause people to lose track of time for an extended time, to the point where they forget simple things like what day of the week it is. Some people may experience time dilation as a result of their heightened ennui. According to recent studies, being compelled to stay at home all day can cause sleep interruptions and daytime stress, both of which can lead to insomnia. People ended up sleeping and waking up later, which has an impact on sleep quality (Cellini et al., 2020).

Literature Review

Multiple stresses have been recognised as important elements affecting students' anxiety and psychological well-being, including financial concerns, educational disruptions, consequences of the disease on education and jobs, dramatic & alarming broadcasts, and unsuitable media reports. Other stresses include family income stability, student residency, parent mental status, a growing number of cases, restricted social interactions, affected provinces, and travel limitations. Uncertainties about the virus's propagation, isolation from family and friends, loss of independence, confinement length, flat lifestyle, acute scarcity of vital items, lack of correct information, economic loss, and shame are just a few of the lockdown stressors (Sundarasen et al., 2020).

Different studies are concentrating on a specific type of action or behaviour, such as sleep, exercise, social distancing, and mental health, have mentioned lifestyle disturbances during COVID-19 (Giuntella et al., 2021). The lockdown during the Covid-19 pandemic imposes some systemic measures-that includes school closures, heavy workload, avoid of public gathering isolation, and social distancing that has a deep impact on personal life, and prevail the sense of "losses" in terms of self-worth and motivation (Williams et al., 2020). The pandemic-related measures do not confine at the fear of virus transmission and social isolation rather it also significantly modifies the various aspects of daily life, including avoidance of all relationships, such as those with the partner, with family, with friends, and colleagues. According to UNESCO 2020 (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) due to closure of educational institutes (school colleges and universities), displacement of campuses and student's accommodations, even sift of various activities and social interactions to online platforms, postponed of daily activities and events, leads to the considerable change in student's conventional life.

All of the factors associated with the Covid-19 pandemic revealed a high level of anxiety and depression among university students regarding delays in academic life and effects on routine life as the Covid-19 outbreak causes a major shift and disrupts the students' normal daily life routine, social relationships, activities, and objectives (Cao et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2020; Lee, 2020b; Sahu, 2020). The lockdown not only obstructs the opportunity for university life experiences and practices, such as effects on academic life such as uncertainties associated with delays and slowdowns in activities, difficulties, and barriers in employment, but it also obstructs the opportunity to enjoy and benefit from relationships and interactions that may serve as a keystone in a student's life, such as those with colleagues, peers, and professors (Lee, 2020b; Sahu, 2020). Furthermore, research suggests that the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in significant alterations in couple relationships and sexual life (Anniko et al., 2019; Liang et al.,

2020). In the majority of cases, relationships with family have been reported to be improved. The bulk of students was obliged to return home in such a panicked state that they only interacted with relatives in dissatisfaction and conflicts. Those who are already in a bad situation and have been subjected to domestic violence (Lee, 2020).

The process of learning and practicing a variety of cognitive and behavioral skills for controlling and coping with stress is known as stress management. Stress is described as the sense and cognition that demands exceed personal resources, and it can have both physiological and psychological repercussions (e.g., migraine, high blood pressure migraines) (Kreutzer et al., 2011).

Educational institutions all over the globe imply preventive measures, including closing institutions, canceling on-site classes, shifting to online-based learning/ examinations, and postponing all kinds of practicums. However, the majority of universities are still unsure about how long these implementations will remain to continue, and these uncertainties have badly affected student's life. Universities students face a broad range of stressors and transfigurations, along with switching and adaptation of new educational environments and needs. Compared to males, females may have a huge impact on such stress. It has been identified from various studies that during puberty stress has stronger effects on girls that may lead to cause increased risks of stress-associated disorders, such as anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and depression. Hence, psychological support from academic institutions is required to enhance female students' mental health. For international students, living abroad, central social support systems that include friends and family could be a further challenge that influences the mental health of a student. However, different students belonging to different countries have huge cultural differences, which might influence them to cope with the strategies (Lai et al., 2020).

Personal resilience and effective coping skills are important variables that can prevent people from lockdown-induced exhaustion and other mental and psychological health impacts of the epidemic and the methods taken to combat it. Personal resiliency is a critical aspect in overcoming adversity, whereas coping skills are useful in resolving an issue (Hart et al., 2014; Piergiovanni & Depaula, 2018). Personal resilience and coping abilities are necessary for the setting of a pandemic to enable an individual to cope with the negative effects of the epidemic and support their mental health difficulties (Labrague & De los Santos, 2020).

Early research has demonstrated the harmful impact of pandemics on students' psychological well-being, leading to acute depression and anxiety. During the COVID-19 pandemic in China, Cao et al. (2020) looked at the psychological effects on university students. Among the 7143 pupils who were tested, 0.9 percent had severe anxiety, 2.7 percent had moderate anxiety, and 21.3 percent had mild anxiety. The poll found that 53.8 percent of respondents had a severe to moderate psychological impact, with female students having a higher proportion. Increased ambiguity and its implications for students' academic progress may affect students' psychological well-being (Sundarasen et al., 2020).

Students' mental health has been affected by this unusual experience of 'home confinement' under lockdown, as well as the uncertainty of academic and professional careers. For example, a Canadian study looking into the consequences of quarantine in the aftermath of the SARS epidemic found a link between lengthier quarantine periods and a higher frequency of anxiety and sadness among persons. Countries have reported a substantial increase in mental health problems among their citizens, such as worry, depression, stress, sleep disorder, and terror, which has led to an increase in substance usage and, in some cases, suicidal conduct, as a result of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (Islam et al., 2020).

Significance of the Study

The current study is useful in determining how much lockdown stressors affect children's daily routines. This study shows that while lockdown or quarantine is necessary as health-protective measures, imposing them for an extended period can be detrimental. This research highlights several stresses that have an impact on student life. This research also shows that pandemics harm students' psychological well-being. The current study teaches people how to develop good coping skills and how to find resources that can help them deal with problems. It might be useful in developing a theoretical foundation for reducing psychological suffering among university students. This study may give policymakers a more detailed understanding of how to lessen university student misery. It will assist the student in reducing their stress levels while allowing them to continue with their regular activities and schoolwork. They'd be able to handle their stress in no time.

Research objectives

The basic purpose of the study was to achieve the following objectives.

1. To find out the level of lockdown stressors and life management of university students.
2. To explore the relationship between lockdown stressors and life management of university students.
3. To explore the effect of lockdown stressors on life management of university students.
4. To explore the significant difference regarding the effect of lockdown stressors and life stress management of university students in terms of different demographic variables.

Research Methodology

This section presents the research design and procedure adopted in this study.

Research Design

In the present study, the causal-comparative research design was used. A survey method was used for data collection.

Population and Sampling

The population of the study comprised all the enrolled university students of BS, MA/MSC MPhil, and Ph.D. programs located in Punjab and KP provinces. There was a high intensity of pandemic waves at that time. That's why two general universities were selected from each province. Due to Covid19, the convenient sampling technique was used to obtain a study sample. Two hundred and forty students 240 were selected from six selected departments (03 from Natural Sciences and 03 were from Social Science).

Instrumentation

A close-ended questionnaire was adapted and it was developed by (Sugaya et al., 2020). This scale was changed according to cultural settings and translated for easiness of participants. It consisted of 15 items based on a five-point Likert type scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire was shared with the experts for the face and content validity. They were requested to express their opinions about the validation of the instrument. They were further asked to give feedback about the overall structure of the questionnaire. The reliability of the items was proved statistically. The detail is given below in table 1.

Table 1: Reliability Statistics

Factors	Participants	No of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Lockdown stressors	35	7	.79
Life management	35	8	.83

The Cronbach's Alpha was applied for getting the reliability of factors. The alpha values of both factors lockdown stressors .79 and life management .83 were statistically significant. Therefore, this questionnaire was reliable.

Data collection and Analysis

The researcher personally visited the department and collect the data from respondents. The clear instructions were written on the top of the questionnaires. The respondents were assured that information provided by them would be used for research purposes only. The respondents were requested to return the questionnaire as early as possible. The data were collected through a questionnaire. The response rate of participants was 83 percent. The incomplete questionnaires were not entertained during data entry. After collecting data, SPSS software was used for the analysis of data. The data was organized in the form of a table. Frequencies, percentage, correlation, regression, t-test, and ANOVA was used to analyze the data.

Findings and Results

Table 2: Gender Distribution of Sample

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	114	47.5
Female	126	52.5
Social science	120	50.0
Natural science	120	50.0
Psychology	40	16.7
political science	40	16.7
Education	40	16.7
Physics	42	17.5
Bioinformatics	38	15.8
Chemistry	40	16.7
BS	132	55.0
MA/ MSC	20	8.3
M.Phil	67	27.9
Ph. D	21	8.8

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics of lockdown stressors and life management

	PU		KP	
Statements	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**
Lockdown stressors				
Due to lockdown,				
family budget has squeezed	3.99	1.067	3.96	1.064
relationship got worse	3.42	1.228	3.23	1.242
irritated as a result of a life transition	3.56	1.074	3.60	1.070
became frightened due news	3.94	1.213	3.79	1.228
sleep disturbance	3.09	1.369	3.00	1.378
unavailability of corona vaccine	3.27	1.177	3.15	1.189
Academic life interrupted	4.31	.952	4.19	.974
Life management				
Exercise	3.73	1.12	3.65	1.110
Healthy diet	3.58	1.049	3.52	1.055
Punctual and consistent	3.69	1.10	3.53	1.206
Hobbies and interests	3.71	1.029	3.65	1.036
Social interaction	3.32	1.090	3.90	1.060
Social interaction (digital)	3.87	1.157	3.70	1.161
Wearing a mask	4.12	.993	3.97	1.008
Hopeful about future	4.34	.932	4.23	.943

The table indicates the comparison by mean value and standard deviation of all the statements on a scale. The mean values of the most statements in a table are above 3 then we conclude that most students agreed to the statements that due to the lockdown, their family budget is tightened, their relationships with friends and family got worse, their anxiety level increase when they heard the news about corona disease. They both agreed that they couldn't sleep because they were afraid of contracting the corona. They also agreed that their everyday lives were disrupted owing to the lack of vaccination or lockdown and that they spoke with their families via video calling. They also agreed that they avoided going out on their own or took precautions such as social distancing, wearing a mask, and washing their hands to avoid contracting the coronavirus. The mean values of statements are above 4 show that they are strongly agreed with the statement in the table. They are strongly agreed that due to life changes in lockdown their university work is highly interrupted or disturbed. They are also strongly agreed that they thought about their future positively.

Table 4: Correlation between lockdown stressors and life management

Factors	r	Sig.
Lockdown Stressors and life management	.307**	.01

The table displays the association between lockdown stressors and life stress management among university students. There was a moderately significant relationship between lockdown stressors and life stress management. The p-value of lockdown stressors and life stress management was .01. It shows a significant relationship because the p-value was less than 0.05. So, it is concluded that those students who face stressors during the lockdown, can manage their stress and reduce their anxiety due to stress management.

Table 5: Regression Analysis Predicting lockdown stressors from life management

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.307[a]	.094	.090	4.232

a. Predictors: (Constant), Lockdown Stressors

The table indicates the fitness of the regression model as contributing to life stress management. The value of the R Square is .094 (indicate that lockdown stressors contribute .9% variation in life stress management. So, it is concluded that the result of regression analysis indicates lockdown stressors are a significant predictor of the dependent variable life stress management.

Table 6: Anova showing significant difference between lockdown stressors and life stress management

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	443.474	1	443.474	24.758	.000[b]
	Residual	4263.126	238	17.912		
	Total	a4706.600	239			

a. Dependent Variable: Life stress management

b. Predictors: (Constant), Lockdown Stressors

The table indicates that the statistical value F=24.758, P=.000<0.05 which shows a significant difference for the variable lockdown stressors as predicting variable for life stress management. It is concluded that predictor (lockdown stressors) has a significant effect on life stress management.

Table 7: Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	23.121	1.439		16.069	.01
	Lockdown Stressors	.282	.057	.307	4.976	.01

a. Dependent Variable: Life stress management

The result in the table shows that lockdown stressors (B=.282, P=.01 < .05) are the significant contributor to life stress management.

Table 8: T-value of gender difference on lockdown stressors and life management

Factors	Gender	N	M	SD	T	df	Sig.
Lockdown Stressors	Male	114	24.34	4.954	-1.761	238	.08
	Female	126	25.44	4.671			
Life management	Male	114	29.86	4.525	-.964	238	.33
	Female	126	30.41	4.358			

The result in the table shows a non-significant difference between males and females on lockdown stressors and life stress management. The p-value of males and females on lockdown stressors is p=.08 and on life stress management is p = .33 which shows a non-significant difference.

Table 9: T-value of faculty difference on lockdown stressors and life management

Factors	Faculty	N	Mean	SD	T	df	Sig.
Lockdown Stressors	social science	120	24.64	4.770	-.882	238	.38
	natural science	120	25.19	4.891			
Life management	social science	120	29.79	4.215	-1.252	238	.21
	natural science	120	30.51	4.640			

The table shows a non-significant difference between social sciences and natural sciences on lockdown stressors and life stress management. The p-value of social and natural sciences on lock down stressors is p=.38 and on life stress management is p=.21.

Table 10: Anova values of different departments on lockdown stressors and life stress management

Factors		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Lockdown Stressors	Between Groups	532.723	5	106.545	4.947	.01
	Within Groups	5039.610	234	21.537		
	Total	5572.333	239			
Life management	Between Groups	251.246	5	50.249	2.639	.02
	Within Groups	4455.354	234	19.040		
	Total	4706.600	239			

The result shows lockdown stressors are affecting life stress management. The table indicates a significant difference (f=4.947, p=.01) between groups and within groups on lockdown stressors. The result also shows a significant difference (f=2.639, p=.02) between groups and within groups on life stress management.

Table 11: Anova value of different programs on lockdown stressors and life stress management

Factors		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Lockdown Stressors	Between Groups	28.888	3	9.629	.410	.74
	Within Groups	5543.445	236	23.489		
	Total	5572.333	239			
Life management	Between Groups	236.901	3	78.967	4.169	.01
	Within Groups	4469.699	236	18.939		
	Total	4706.600	239			

The result shows lockdown stressors are affecting life stress management. The table indicates non-significant difference (f=.410, p=.74) between groups and within groups on lockdown stressors. The result also shows a significant difference (f=4.169, p=.01) between groups and within groups on life stress management.

Discussion and Conclusion

A significant association exists between lockdown stressors and stress management of life. University students face many stressors. Many of the students' academic activities are pressurized and also they face financial problems. Most of the students of university view stress as a negative experience, they are unable to cope with stress, but they try to access such strategies that manage their stress. Due to stress most of the students cannot manage their life because of lacking strategies and coping but in their life a time come they can cope with their stress and spend a normal life. This finding is similar to a previous study in which the researcher examined that lockdown stressors disrupt the daily routine of the students. Due to lockdown stressors, the social life of the students' changes, and their daily routine is also disrupted. Students try to change their habits and routines. The students wear masks when they go outside, frequently wash their hands, and avoid crowded places. Most students avoid using transport in public, cancel their plans and avoid touching to face (Aristovnik et al., 2020).

The factor lockdown stressors is a significant predictor of life stress management. The previous research reported that perceived psychological stressors that are experienced by the human that help to survive in a changing environment. The stimulus of lockdown becomes effective over time, it causes more complications for survival. The Lockdown period also affects directly on our mental health like we can experience more boredom in lockdown. It is implemented forcedly to stay at home. Its force can lead to destroying the sleeping as well as cause daytime stress. Insomnia is the most popular disease in lockdown (Cellini, Canale, Mioni, & Costa, 2020).

It is concluded that lockdown adversely affects the life of people especially university students. This study suggested that due to the lockdown student face many stressors during coronavirus disease. The lifestyle of the student is badly affected by this disease. The result also showed that due to the lockdown the student feels psychological distress like anxiety, depression, and social isolation. Most students manage their problems and continue their daily activities and studies. Due to the lockdown, their family budget is tightened, personal relationships with friends and family got worse, anxiety level increases when they heard the news about corona disease. Their daily life is interrupted due to the unavailability of the corona vaccine. However, there was a moderately significant association between lockdown stressors and life stress management. It is concluded that those students who face stressors during the lockdown, may be able to manage stress and reduce anxiety due to stress management. The lockdown stressors are a significant predictor of life stress management. The recent research concluded that how coronavirus outbreak disrupted the life of the university students

Recommendations

The followings are recommendations based on the findings of the study.

1. It also proved that pandemics played a negative role in student mental health. Higher educational institutes may give confidence by providing strategies and helping students to cope with such problems and they may do better work.
2. Universities should also play a vital part in overcoming these issues by providing a variety of counseling services to students, either online or in person. They may have a greater influence on reducing pupils' emotional and mental stress.
3. It may be useful for the student to return to educational activities that are simple, transparent, and cooperative despite making unnecessary strain and suffering.

4. It would prove helpful in informing a theoretical basis for improving psychological distress among university students. This study may provide understanding to the policy maker to reduce the stress among university students. It will help the student to decrease their level of stress and continue their daily activities and studies. They could easily manage their stress by positive thinking.

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