

Impact of Sociodemographic Factors on Optimism during COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT: The present study aims to assess the effect of some socio-demographic factors on optimism in adults who tested positive for covid-19 during the pandemic. to conduct the study 200 subjects who tested positive for covid-19 were selected as sample. the age range of the sample was 40-60 years. the optimism scale constructed and standardized by ajawani (2010) was used to assess optimism. the information on demographic variables namely age, gender, educational status, family income and type of family was collected through a demographic fact sheet. results indicate no significant association of socio-demographic variables namely age, gender and type of family with optimism in subjects who tested positive for covid-19 during the pandemic. a significant positive association was found between educational status and optimism (kendall tau_b = 0.366, p<.01), thereby indicating that an increase in educational status also leads to increased optimism in subjects who tested positive for covid-19. a significant positive association was found involving family income and optimism (kendall tau_b = 0.221 p<.01), thereby indicating that an increase in family income also leads to increased optimism in subjects who tested positive for covid-19. it was concluded that certain socio-demographic factors such as educational status and family income are responsible for low optimism in subjects who tested positive for covid-19 during the pandemic.

Keywords: COVID-19 Pandemic, middle-aged adults, Optimism, Socio-demography.

INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 epidemic brought new challenges and necessitated changes that the whole world had to adjust to. Similar to what India did, a great number of countries' governments were compelled to impose strict lockdowns on their citizens to safeguard their inhabitants' lives. The lockdown significantly increased the difficulties and unpredictability of life for our nation's residents. Due to all of these challenging conditions, mental health conditions like stress, anxiety, fear, rage, and depression are far more common overall. Globally, mental health has become increasingly important in recent times. To overcome the barriers preventing them from realizing their full mental potential, people are beginning to pay more attention to their mental health and are seeking professional support. The scenario also put middle-aged adults' fortitude and upbeat outlook to the test. These individuals deal with dreadful obstacles in their care of elderly parents and children. The middle-aged population has been particularly affected since they already lead stressful lives as a result of pressure to do well, excessive use of digital media, and the constant pursuit of new knowledge in all spheres of life. What we mean when we talk about optimism is a positive outlook on life. The belief that a person will have happy experiences in the future is another definition of optimism. According to the principle of learned optimism, an individual may educate themselves to be more positive about life, even in difficult circumstances. Despite the importance of optimism in maintaining/enhancing mental health, its socio-demographic correlates during the pandemic have not been studied extensively, hence the present study was planned.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Martinez et al. (2006) discovered that pessimistic individuals do not voice grievances over unimportant issues. Nes (2016) found a high correlation between cognitive skills like problem-solving and optimism. Qiu et al. (2020) found that there has been a marked upsurge in mental health difficulties during the COVID-19 pandemic. Arslan et al. (2020) found that stress caused by the coronavirus can negatively impact optimism and pessimism as well as several psychological issues. Vos et al. (2021) found a negative correlation between optimism, mindfulness, and resilience levels and symptoms of depression, anxiety, and stress in adults during the pandemic.

Reizer et al. (2022) direct correlation between humour, optimism and well-being during the COVID-19 lockdown period. According to a recent study by Chesterman et al. (2021), household affordances and social position—two important sociodemographic factors—are highly predictive of lockdown resistance and coping. According to other research by Alizadeh et al. (2021), a person's career, age, and degree of education, all affect how they cope with the stress and tension during the pandemic.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To assess the impact of socio-demographic variables namely age, gender, educational status, family income and type of family on the optimism in COVID-19-positive adults during the Pandemic.

HYPOTHESIS

It was hypothesized that socio-demographic variables namely age, gender, educational status, family income and type of family will have a significant influence on the optimism in COVID-19 positive adults during the Pandemic.

METHOD

Sample :

To conduct the study 200 subjects who tested positive for COVID-19 were selected as sample. The age range of the sample was 40-60 years. A purposive sampling method was used.

The demographic details of the subjects are as follows :

- Age: It was also observed that 30% of subjects age fall in the age range of 40-45 years (N=60), 35% fall within 45-50 years (N=70), 20% fall within the age range of 50-55 years (N=40) and the remaining 10% lie in the age group of 55-60 years (N=30).
- Gender: Among selected subjects 50% were males and 50% were females.
- Educational Status: 2.5% of subjects were illiterate (N=5), 10% were educated upto class V (N=20), 12.5% were educated upto class VIII (N=25), 20% were educated upto class X (N=40) and 30% were educated upto class XII (N=60). Among subjects, 17.5% were graduates (N=35) and 7.5% were post-graduates (N=15).

- Family Income: 7.5% of subjects have a family income of less than Rs. 5000 (N=15), 20% of subjects have a family income of Rs. 5000- Rs. 20000 (N=40), 27.5% of subjects have a family income of Rs. 20000 - 50000 (N=55), 20% of subjects have a family income of Rs 50000-100000 (N=40), 15% have a family income of Rs 100000-300000 (N=30) and 10% have a family income of more than Rs 300000 (N=20).
- Type of Family: 55% of subjects belonged to nuclear families (N=110) while 45% were living in joint families (N=90).

Tools :

Selected COVID-19 positive subjects' optimism was measured using a standardized Ajwani (2002) scale.

There are 20 items on this measure, and a Likert scale is used to collect the responses. Depending on how positively or negatively written the items are, Completely Agree, Somewhat Agree, Uncertain, Somewhat Disagree, and Complete Disagree receive scores of 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1.

This scale exhibits strong reliability and validity, as seen by its test-retest reliability value of 0.69 and statistically significant product-moment correlation coefficient.

A population's socio-demographics are a summation of its demographic and social characteristics. The socio-demographic indicators such as age, gender, education, family income and type of family respectively were assessed with the help of HUDCO norms.

Research Design: A Correlational design was employed.

Procedure:

200 adults who tested positive during the pandemic were selected from Raipur city. The socio-demographic data was collected through the HUDCO checklist. The optimism scale was administered to each subject. After scoring the data was tabulated and Kendall tau_b was used to establish a relation between socio-demographic variables and optimism.

ANALYSIS OF DATA:

In the present study socio-demographic variables - age, gender, educational status, family income and type of family were taken into consideration. These are ordinal variables, hence to calculate the association of these variables with optimism, the Kendall rank correlation coefficient formula was used.

Table 1
Depicting Correlation between Socio-demographic Variables and Optimism in COVID-19 Patients during the Pandemic (N=200)

Socio-demographic Variables	Optimism Kendall tau_b
Age	-.051
Gender	-.071
Educational Status	.366, p<.01
Family Income	.221, p<.01
Type of Family	.012

A perusal of table 1 revealed a statistically non-significant correlation between age and optimism (Kendall tau_b = -.051, p>.05), gender and optimism (Kendall tau_b = -.071, p>.05) and type of family and optimism (Kendall tau_b = .012, p>.05).

A significant positive association was found between educational status and optimism (Kendall tau_b = 0.366, p<.01), thereby indicating that an increase in educational status also leads to increased optimism in subjects.

A significant positive association was found involving family income and optimism (Kendall tau_b = 0.221 p<.01), thereby indicating that an increase in family income also leads to increased optimism in subjects.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION :

1. No significant impact of age was observed on optimism in subjects who tested COVID-19 positive during the Pandemic.
2. No significant impact of gender was observed on optimism in subjects who tested COVID-19 positive during the Pandemic.

3. Educational status emerged as a significant predictor of optimism in subjects who tested positive for COVID-19 during the pandemic.
4. Family income emerged as a significant predictor of optimism in subjects who tested positive for COVID-19 during the pandemic.
5. No significant impact of the type of family was observed on optimism in subjects who tested COVID-19 positive during the Pandemic.

Therefore, even though educational status and family wealth appeared as predictors of optimism, age, gender, and family type did not emerge as predictors of optimism in adults who tested positive during the pandemic. This could be because adults experience stress, worry, and anxiety almost equally. Highly educated people appear to have stronger cognitive capacities and can approach problems more logically since they have the in-depth knowledge necessary to comprehend the circumstances. The relationship between optimism and family income is not surprising, as having a higher income gives one better resources, which in turn increases one's optimism about life.

CONCLUSION :

1. Educational status significantly predicted optimism in adults who tested positive for COVID-19 during the pandemic.
2. Family income significantly predicted optimism in adults who tested positive for COVID-19 during the pandemic.
3. Age, gender and type of family unable to predict optimism in adults who tested positive for COVID-19 during the pandemic. Summarily it can be concluded that some of the socio-demographic variables did affect the optimism of patients during the pandemic and need to be looked into so that optimism can be maintained during future emergencies in case of endemics.

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