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Correlation Between Covid-19, Anxiety and Work Values Among University Students

¹Nagatheesan V Marimuyhu , ²Saralah Devi Mariamdarani Chetiyar

^{1,2}School of Applied Psychology, Social Work and Policy, College of Arts and Sciences, Universiti Utara Malaysia, Sintok, Malaysia

Corresponding Author: Saralah Devi Mariamdarani Chetiyar ; Email: devi@uum.edu.my

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ABSTRACT

There is a lot of nature in career choice decisions and other spheres of life due to global shifts in available career opportunities that occurred after the 2020 recession due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The purpose of this study is to understand how students' work attitude and professional orientations have been influenced by anxiety and the COVID-19 pandemic. To achieve this, it will be necessary to employ a quantitative research method as detailed below. The result is consequently, the hypothesis that will inform this study regarding the effect of anxiety and the pandemic influence on work values decisions. The outcomes will contribute to information about the consequences of fear and the epidemic on work values and career choices among college students. Some of the recommendations of the study will be in the form of recommendation to policymakers, university administration as well as the career counsellors

INTRODUCTION

Closures and quarantines over COVID-19 have led to mortality of millions of people, and the epidemic impacts the health of the population, food chains, and business (Baryshnikova et al 2021). This problem threatens the populations of tens of millions of people with extreme poverty, and it may lead to undernutrition of 132 million people by the year's end. Joblessness at the international level was estimated to be at 6. 5%–6. 7% in 2021 (OECD, 2023). The remaining threats have long term impacts which call into jeopardy the lives of 3. 3 billion people, especially those in the informal sector who do not have employment security,

healthcare, and assets to engage in productive ventures and had to starve during the COVID-19 lockdowns.

The pandemic has been devastating in terms of health, social and economic losses (Dragolea et al., 2017). Women, constituting about 70% of employment in the health sector, bear a higher risk of infection, and experience increased caregiving and education and childcare facility closures, as well as gender gaps in unpaid work (Rahman et al., 2020). In 2021, men's employment in Asia and the Pacific is expected to exceed pre-crisis levels but women's employment may remain submerged below the 2019 level, thus, they are arguably at a

higher likelihood of jobs and income insecurity, violence, including, exploitation, abuse, and harassment (Mendoza et al., 2022).

This crisis had also aggravated conditions such as financial insecurity, joblessness, and terrorism while significantly reducing factors like social connections, employment opportunities, cognitive engagement, physical movements, and access to healthcare. This has caused what researchers describe as unprecedented deterioration of mental health (Bekele et al., 2020). People with low income and those who are unemployed experience poor mental health than those with good incomes. The countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) have expanded mental health care and safeguarded jobs and income, but better prevention, treatment, and social response are required to adequately deal with COVID-19 social suffering.

Another aspect of COVID-19 phobia is its impact on career-related anxiety: women showed higher levels of anxiety during the first wave compared to men (Fairer, 2021). Female anxiety was significantly lower for the second wave, while male anxiety was tied to misconceptions on COVID-19 and female to job insecurity (Rosenblum, 2021). The subject under review reveals factors such as anxiety and COVID 19 on work values and career aspirations of university students, a research gap. Acquainting young people

with work attitudes and career preferences is useful since young people will constitute 27percent of the global work force by 2025 (Tsukamoto 2021). Employment that is location-sensitive and involving remote working from home has altered this generation's attitude to work and work-life balance expectations.

According to the above-mentioned statistics, approximately 30 million novel anxiety disorders were identified globally between 2010 and 2019 (Lin, 2022). In this paper, the effects of worry on work values of university students in reference to the COVID-19 pandemic on their work are discussed. The study covers two main questions: 1) Does COVID-19 impact Work Values or not? 2) Whether work values are impacted by anxiety?

Literature Review

Covid-19 Pandemic and Work Values

World population health largely depended on and the financial systems of countries across the world were severely affected by COVID-19 pandemic. First, the quarantine measures, including the closure of industries and enterprises worldwide to prevent the transmission of the virus, led to a plethora of never-before-seen severe issues for the communities, the industries, the workers, and businesses on a global level. Individual workers were suddenly divided into three categories: These groups included: (a) the "work from home"

employees; (b) “essential” or “life sustaining” employees such as those rendering services in supermarkets and hospitals; or (c) employees placed on furlough or laid off workers who wanted to avail of the national unemployment benefits. Due to the uncertainty and the severity of COVID-19 consequences within the global work environment, work and organizational psychology research area is called to apply the existing knowledge on individual work values to help individuals and organizations amid these issues and support the development of solutions by them (De Moor, 2019).

Alongside traditional work values, the pandemic influenced the quick development of new conditions-virtual/internet-based work environments which were developing before the pandemic. Remote work including Work from Home (WFH) and other things were not mandatory during the pre- Covid-19 era and were more often than not policies that existed for the employees who wanted it (Zhu et al., 2021). Indeed, for some the pandemic forced the implementation of WFH policies, thereby eradicating the clear division between work and home environments. The epidemic had worsened matters by forcing people to isolate themselves thus erasing other such boundaries specifically including the one where work and home, often marked by a commute. These pathogenic elements became significant challenges despite the appeal of working from home as a safe

space: the blurring of the line between workplace and home, that loss of human connection which is crucial for people’s physical and psychological health quickly turned into appreciable problems (Mofijur., 2021). Those studies performed during epidemic showed that even ordinary, casual, informal communication with other people on the job, become meaningful and essential to health.

Using psychological distance at the workplace and enforcing work from home orders might have some consequences that are not only unhealthy for individuals but are also socially undesirable (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020). As the intent of rightful assistance to different eras of workers in these unprecedented situations is significant, so is the recognition of these social behaviors and their impacts’ management.

Hypothesis 1: There is a significant relationship between the COVID-19 pandemic and work values.

Anxiety and Work Values

COVID-19 crisis has brought extra uncertainty and unpredictability that forced organizations to take actions to safeguard the employees’ health (Panzeri et al., 2021). There is considerable evidence that suggests that working conditions have worsened with the effects of the pandemic on job demands and resources differing between and within business establishments, with frontline

healthcare workers bearing the brunt of these adverse effects (Mogilner et al., 2013). These have resulted in job burnout, which depicts chronic stress and poor career decisions. Also, being constantly exposed to the COVID-19 news triggers ruminative thinking, which is a passive and repetitive dwelling on negative aspects of the illness, such as its symptoms and possible causes and outcomes. It has also been evidenced that anxiety or even depression can linger after a crisis is over (Barry & Wilkinson, 2016).

It is also shown that there is a highly positive correlation between self-identified individual anxieties and personal work values. This is where noticing this link may prove to be useful in redirecting the performance towards work values and not out of fear (Todd et al., 2021). That is, perceiving lateness as a negative aspect of social functioning may create anxiety surrounding timely arrival to work and perceiving success in job interviews may result in anxiety regarding job interviews. It has creativity, management, achievement attitude, environment, supervisory relationships, security, peers, autonomy, economy and mental challenge (Arshad et al., 2023). These fears bring apprehensions about people's losses, lack of success at work, diseases, embarrassment, or poverty (Ferreira & Gomes, 2023).

Prefocusing on work values associated with certain stressors like COVID-19, one might be more

effective than post focusing from a reaction of fear. This shift in perception can help refocus the action from avoiding some fantasy about what might happen to approaching and attaining something positive (Falco et al., 2021). REBT suggests that changing the behavioral ramifications of irrational beliefs into assertive aspects of positive personal values has the prospect of decreasing anxiety and facilitating constructive conduct.

Hypothesis 2: There is a significant relationship between Anxiety and Work values.

Research Framework

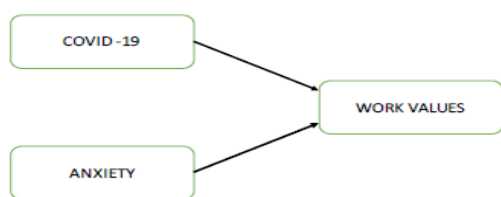
The purpose of this section is to describe the procedural plan used in undertaking this research study. This chapter is to define the sampling technique, the questions included in the survey, and how the data was collected and analyzed (Lacová et al., 2022). First of all, the present research is based on two propositions from the previous literature which seems to be the starting point of the whole investigation. This research proposal is informed by research questions for which the role of anxiety and the COVID-19 pandemic in shaping the work values of university students will be attempted to be explained.

Special care was taken to select the sampling technique to make it appropriate for a cross-sectional survey of the university student population. The survey questions were created with

a view to minimizing the loss of important detail in the emotions of anxiety and stress related to the pandemic on students' work values. This means that data were collected through structured surveys with an aim of capturing the full range of all the variables that relate to the study. Thereafter, to enhance the interpretation of the findings, a comprehensive analysis was made following sound statistical procedures.

The research framework was useful in directing the research process of the study by presenting a kind of roadmap in understanding effects that anxiety and COVID-19 have on work values as shown in figure 1. This research approach enhances the credibility and dependability of the study findings and is beneficial in the elaboration of the psychological and sociocultural related effects of the pandemic on university students.

Image 1. *Research Framework*



METHODS

This research utilizes a correlational design used for analyzing various variables in order to see their effects and does not try to control or alter them. It involves gathering data, from a sample, at a precise period in time in an effort to offer an

Account of the phenomena under consideration simultaneously. To this end, the study employs both quantitative research techniques in order to meet its set objectives.

Manipulation of quantitative data entails taking data in its most elemental form and then applying critical and logical thought in converting the same into meaningful information. It aims to gather data to confirm or deny hypotheses developed throughout the first stages of a study. The analysis process includes testing of hypothesis through the use of statistics which can determine commonality of variables, associations, and even cause and effect connections.

Data collection for this study will be carried out through three primary methods: a review of literature, a set of surveys, and a set of questions. From the prose analysis, it will be easier to establish a baseline of the study and find shortcomings in the available knowledge that this study seeks to fill. Quantitative data of the variables of interest, on the other hand, will be obtained using sampled distribution of surveys. By completing questionnaires through interviews, as the study tools, it will be much easier to achieve more detailed and structured information from participants.

This will include a synthesis of the existing articles, books, or reports reviewed to put into perspective the research proposal within the existing

theory and evidence-based literature. The questionnaire to be used in the surveys will be constructed in a way that will allow maximum coverage of variables and events, and thus allow superior statistical testing. Self-completion questionnaires will be designed section wise which would possibly contain questions to be answered in detail related to the research questions making the depth of the collected data richer.

CONCLUSION

From the existing evidence, it can be concluded that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about changes in the segmented and complex structures of health, social, and economic systems and has caused significant impacts to common communities around the globe in terms of mortality, food insecurity, and extreme poverty. New opportunities have been widening the initial degrees of difference: employees of the informal sector remained vulnerable due to unstable employment and health insurance for themselves, which deepened during the epidemic. Mental health circumstances have also worsened further due to the crisis, including rising anxiety and employment instability, particularly among women and professional/ key Workers. This study aims to review and determine the effect that COVID-19 has on work values and anxiety associated with careers focusing on the college students who shall join the

job market across the globe. They include self-developed surveys, questionnaires, and literature reviews, and data will be gathered to conduct the study through correlational research design with quantitative approach. Based on the findings, information about how the COVID-19 and correlated concerns affect work values, policy actions to increase mental health support and equal opportunities for education and job opportunities shall be affected. In even more detail, the findings pointed out how these factors affect work values. The integrality of the approach which is depicted in the study advocates for the consideration of social as well as economic factors when confronting the lasting impact of the pandemic.

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