

Anxiety Levels in College Students During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to determine if COVID-19 has affected anxiety levels in college students. COVID-19 has brought many changes such as the switch from in-person classes to online formats. In order to determine whether anxiety levels were affected, we created a survey that would help determine any changes. Students were asked whether they were struggling to balance the new learning format and home life, whether they suffered any financial stress, as well as whether they were struggling to keep up academically. A scale was also provided to them to help determine their anxiety levels. The scale ranged from never, mild, moderate, to severe.

Keywords: COVID-19, college students, anxiety levels

Introduction

The research presented shows how we examined anxiety levels in college students during the recent Covid -19 Pandemic. Participants were asked to answer a thirteen question survey to break down the levels of anxiety they face on a daily basis when dealing with this new way of life.

Previous researchers have also shown concerns and interests in the mental health decline of students throughout this troubling time. Islam, Barna, Raihan, Khan, and Hossain (2020) also examined a study on depression and anxiety levels experienced by students in Bangladesh University during a COVID-19 pandemic. The methodology applied in the study was a web-based cross-sectional survey. The study concluded a high percentage of students in the university of Bangladesh experiencing symptoms of anxiety and depression while going through this pandemic (Islam et al., 2020). The case is similar in the Philippines. Researchers Tee, Anlacan, Reyes, Ho, and Kuruchittham (2020) created a survey for college students to take, which took into consideration health status, knowledge on COVID-19, and stress and anxiety scales. The purpose was to see the psychological impact COVID-19 had on students. The research found that students were experiencing moderate to severe stress, depression, and anxiety levels.

Our study aims to see if there is a relationship between COVID-19 and college students' anxiety, specifically here in the United States. These types of studies are important because knowing about a student's anxiety levels can help schools know better ways to work with students and the type of aid they may need. This can help improve a student's performance in school as well as in their day-to-day life. We predict that there will be a strong relationship between COVID-19 and students' anxiety levels.

Methods

Participants

The purpose of our study was to determine if anxiety levels related to COVID-19 have impacted college students. A total of 41 students participated. Eighty eight percent of the students were females, and 12% were males. Ninety seven percent of students were between the ages of 18 to 24. Nine percent of students were freshmen, 29% were sophomores, 39% were juniors, and 22% were seniors. Ninety five percent of students were Hispanic or Latinos, 3% were multiracial or multiethnic, and 3% were Native American or Alaska Native.

Materials

A 13 question survey titled Anxiety levels During the COVID-19 Pandemic was provided for a group of 41 college students. The survey evaluated the students' anxiety levels using a Likert scale (e.g., none, mild, and severe). The survey also included demographic questions (e.g., age, gender, and ethnicity). To answer the demographic questions, participants were given a list of responses to choose from. Six of the demographic questions also included yes and no responses (see appendix for survey).

Design

This study was done in a survey format. The purpose of our study was to determine if anxiety levels related to COVID-19 have impacted college students. The independent variable were college students, and the dependent variable was the student's anxiety levels. The stress levels are what were measured through the answers obtained from the survey. Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were obtained to describe the data. The Chi-square was the inferential statistical analyses to applied to answer the following research questions and hypotheses:

RQ1: Have anxiety levels related to COVID-19 affected college students?

H₀1: Anxiety levels related to COVID-19 has not affected college students.

H₁1: Anxiety levels related to COVID-19 has affected college students.

Procedure

Participants took the survey at home on their computers. Participants were told to read and fill out the consent forms before starting the survey. The participants were informed regarding the general procedures, purpose and possible risks and benefits of the study. The results of the online survey were analyzed via using SPSS.

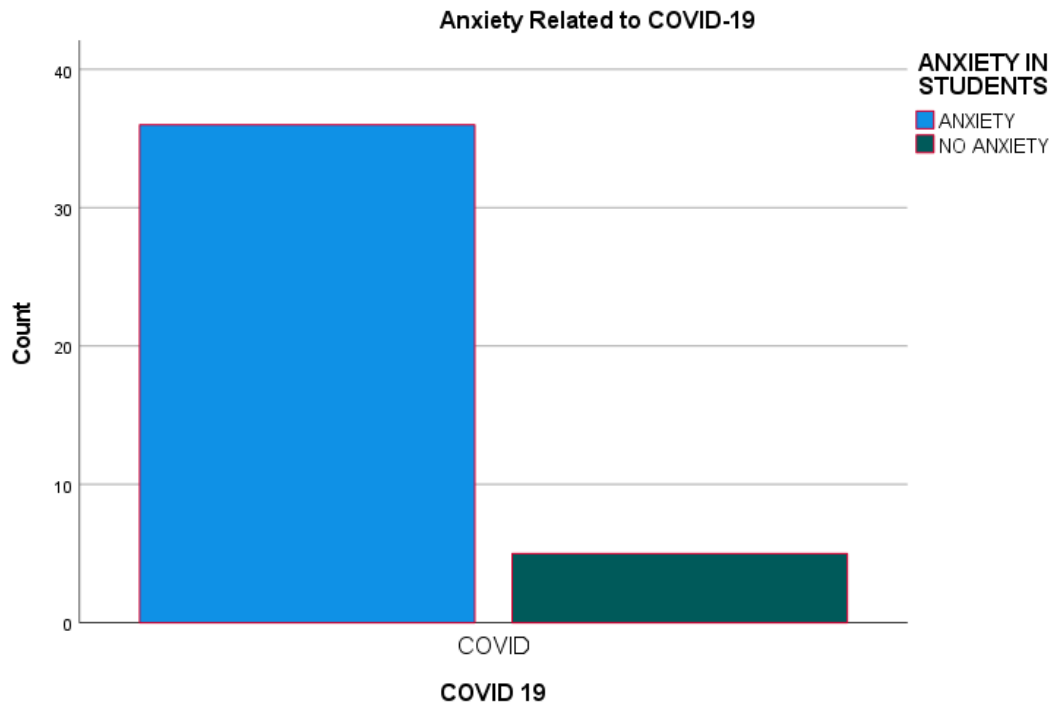
Results

The following will be a review of the descriptive statistics obtained from the study. A total of 41 students participated. Eighty-eight percent of the students were females, and 12% were males. Ninety-seven percent of students were between the ages of 18 to 24. Nine percent of students were freshmen, 29% were sophomores, 39% were juniors, and 22% were seniors. Ninety-five percent of students were Hispanic or Latinos, 3% were multiracial or multiethnic, and 3% were Native American or Alaska Native.

The following discusses the inferential statistical data. The Chi-Square Test was used to determine whether anxiety levels were related to COVID-19. The results indicate there was a significant relationship between COVID-19 and anxiety levels in students. ($p = .000$). The data indicates that COVID-19 related anxiety is present in many students. Therefore, H₀1 was rejected. Figure 1 presents the results of the relationship.

Figure 1

Anxiety Related to COVID-19



The figure shows the difference between students who did and did not experience anxiety related to COVID-19.

Discussion

The purpose of our study was to determine if anxiety levels related to COVID-19 has impacted college students. We directed our study to try and answer the following research questions and hypotheses:

RQ1: Have anxiety levels related to COVID-19 affected college students?

H₀1: Anxiety levels related to COVID-19 has not affected college students.

H₁1: Anxiety levels related to COVID-19 has affected college students.

The inferential statistical data of our study implied a relation between anxiety levels and COVID-19. Therefore, our findings indicated that the H_0 was rejected while the H_1 was supported.

According to Son, Hegde, Smith, Wang, & Sasangohar (2020), 71% of students reported an increase in stress and anxiety, 89% reported difficulty concentrating, 86% reported disruption in sleeping pattern and a decrease in social interactions, and overall 82% reported challenges in academic performance. This study, just like ours, shows that many college students are troubled by the Pandemic and are suffering from moderate to severe anxiety.

The potential limitations of our study were the sample size. Our sample size was not uniform; it consisted of 88% females and 12% men; therefore, our results could have low validity. A future direction for our study could consist of having the same amount of male and female participants to complete the survey.

Future researchers can recreate this study perhaps with an equal amount of male and female participants. Researchers can also extend their range of participants, for example it would be idealistic to test elementary, middle school and highschool students. By extending the range of participants researchers can better evaluate and compare anxiety levels during the COVID-19 pandemic amongst students of different grade levels. Researchers can also expand their study by testing the anxiety levels of students during the pandemic and after the pandemic, by doing so researchers can compare their findings and more thoroughly support or reject their hypothesis. By testing students after the pandemic researchers can see if student anxiety levels have decreased in relation to the pandemic being over.

References

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Appendix

Anxiety levels During the COVID-19 Pandemic Survey

Anxiety Levels During the COVID-19 Pandemic Survey

This survey was designed for you to submit feedback directly to our research project.

*** Required**

Email address *

Your email

Consent Form

The policy within the Department of Psychology at Mount Saint Mary's University includes that all participation within this study is voluntary. If you wish to withdraw at any moment you are free to do so and will face no consequence. All of your information will remain confidential and you will not be identified. You have the right to ask anything about the study if you feel unsure about anything. You must be 18 years or older to give consent for your participation within the study.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to determine how COVID-19 has affected the levels of anxiety, specifically in college students. We'd like to see if anxiety levels have risen dramatically due to all the stress and changes that this pandemic has brought to everyone's lives.

Nature of Participation

You will participate in one session, in the session you will be given a list of questions to answer anonymously. Your task will be to answer each question to the best of your ability and truthfully. The session should not take more than an hour to complete.

Possible Benefits

By participating in this research you will be able to help yourself and other college students perform better in school. The research is meant to inform teachers that COVID-19 has had a drastic impact in school. Schools will focus on mental health more.

Possible Risks

There are foreseeable risks involved by participating in this study. You may encounter some questions to be sensitive. Some questions may cause emotional discomfort. However, you have the right to stop your participation at any given time during the study.

Confidentiality

You will be asked to participate in a self administered survey to protect your identity. All information regarding the survey and yourself will be secured in a file. Information will be protected according to the specification of American Psychological Association, University standards and Federal regulation. Any response information will not be stored in your file.

Opportunities to Question

Any questions regarding our research may be directed to the Principal Investigators: Ana Varay Ph.D. Phone number: (818) 426-4535. If you have any concerns regarding our research, you may direct your question(s) to the Mount Saint Mary's University Human Subjects Research Committee, 10 Chester Place, Los Angeles, CA 90007, and by phone at (213) 477-2620.

Opportunities to Withdraw at Will

This is voluntarily and you have the right to withdraw at any time, without having to give a reason. You may also skip any questions or stop the survey without any penalty.

Do you wish to participate in this study? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

What is your gender?

☐ Female

☐ Male

What is your age?

☐ Under 18

☐ 18-24

☐ 25-34

☐ 35-44

☐ 45-54

☐ 55-64

What is your college education level?

- ☐ Freshman
- ☐ Sophomore
- ☐ Junior
- ☐ Senior

What is your race or ethnicity?

- ☐ Asian
- ☐ Black or African American
- ☐ Hispanic or Latino
- ☐ Middle Eastern or North African
- ☐ Mutiracial or Multiethnic
- ☐ Native American or Alaska Native
- ☐ Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- ☐ White

Have you ever taken online courses before the Pandemic?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Have you been struggling to balance your home life and school work since COVID-19?

☐ Yes

☐ No

During this COVID-19 pandemic, are you struggling in school academically?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Have you suffered any financial stress over the last couple of months due to COVID-19?

☐ Yes

☐ No

Has anyone in your family been infected with COVID-19?

☐ Yes

☐ No

What is your current anxiety level?

- ☐ None
- ☐ Mild
- ☐ Severe

How much anxiety do you feel due to the online format of school?

- ☐ None
- ☐ Mild
- ☐ Severe

What amount of anxiety do you face because of COVID-19?

- ☐ None
- ☐ Mild
- ☐ Severe