

Critical Thinking as a Response to Stress, Mental Health and COVID-19 in Common Man's Life

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Abstract

COVID 19 is a deadly pandemic disorder that emerged on December 31 in China. The widespread the pandemic has been swaying away millions of lives through its pre and post-pandemic symptoms. The disease constitutes certain norms that have to be followed by a human being to protect themselves from getting affected by Corona Virus. Self-quarantine, social distancing, wearing Masks, and a hyper hygienic lifestyle has snatched the natural routine of a commoner. Meanwhile, people are becoming more frustrated, stressful and mentally weak due to emotional imbalances. The pandemic has ruined millions of people's jobs, food scarcity, loss of families resulting in harmful drug addiction, psychological complications and suicide attacks. The paper deals with the consequences and several ways of being stressed by a common person in his life due to COVID 19. It also depicts different psychological therapies introduced by health workers to treat mentally ill patients online. The paper's survey analysis confesses that the COVID 19 pandemic lifestyle is killing millions of people through mental and psychological aspects than physical sufferings. In between, the report also provides specific prospects for children, health workers, adults and students on "how to avoid mental stress and to lead a healthy lifestyle for the current scenario." Finally, critical thinking is suggested as a reliable solution for both the commoner and the health workers to overcome their mental stress and combat the pandemic hours.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The term "Corona" has been enlisted in scary words by the familiar dwellers. It has snatched millions of lives and welcomed hectic scarcity, death to starvation, unemployment, and ruined normal lifestyle within a span of period. Initially, the outbreak of the disease was found at Hubei Prince, Wuhan, in China. Though the condition stepped its foot on December 12, 2019, its profound catastrophic global impact was officially announced on March 11, 2020, by World Health Organization (Satci, 2020). Initially, the widespread was seen throughout China, and So, the connective countries slowly canceled all the travel routine with it. But the emergence of COVID in South Africa on March 5, 2020, has disrupted a scary fear globally (Haddad, 2020). Followed by Asian, Australian, European and American countries got affected numerously. The graph of death hit the peak. The media's overflowed with COVID news. The hospitals are overrun across the world. People started to isolate themselves. The disease's initial state was crucial as the same mode of transfer; its pre and post symptoms were partially predicted. All countries started to imply a lockdown period by shutting down grocery shops, Luxurious Malls, and all the industries except healthcare. Even a single motorbike was not allowed to be seen outside, which would lead to hectic fine & lockup. This situation worsened the middle class and below them, especially in developing countries like India and the Sub Saharan Region (Mahler, 2020). The health workers, on one side, are trying their level best to serve the COVID patients; on the other hand, the practitioners are giving several measures to undergo in human's routine life to stuck away from the widespread disease. In the Midst's, the frustrating pseudo

rumors on Coronavirus are pushing millions to depression. Inequality and poverty are the two main factors that outrage the entire Universe. In this epidemic, we could sense the disparity of preferring people in providing healthcare, employment, public services and stabbing of innocents for perplexing crimes. For all these consequences, imbalanced Mental Stress & emotional intelligence act as deep root sources to exhibit, which could be eradicated only through critical thinking.

II. RESEARCH PURPOSE

The primary purpose of the study is to understand the impact level of the COVID 19 pandemic on the middle-class respondents who strive hard to come out from external (media news, false rumours, corona cases, lockdown, change in schedules) and internal forces (unemployment, financial crisis, quarantine stress, mental health, running of family needs, work from home stresses). It was done studied through the survey analysis method, and their results were recorded and graphed. The research aims to provide a critical thinking model as a tool for the respondents to cope with the situation. Alternatively, the research also recommends some online therapies for the respondents suffering from stress or psychological impressions.

III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Symptoms of COVID-19 (Pre & Post)

The novel Coronavirus was researched profoundly to spread through the physical touch of an infected person or area,

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water droplets while sneezing, and airborne transmissions in rare circumstances. From the emergence of the virus, the symptoms are widely confused in the human scenario. The study of Larsen and his co-workers (2020) depicted seven common symptoms before the final stage of COVID 19. They identified by implementing Markov's process of Stochastic Progression model in their study. According to Stochastic Progression, the seven main common symptoms of COVID 19 are; Fever, Cough, Sore throat, Headache, Myalgia (muscle pain), Nausea or Vomiting and Diarrhoea. Among these symptoms, Diarrhoea is rare, and Fever seems prominent in the infected patient (Larsen et al., 2020). The study of Davido and his co-workers with 61,728 patients in Paris concluded that anemia, ageusia, myalgia, intense fatigue, shortness of breath, intense fatigue, chest tightness, headache, tachycardia and anxiety as the prolonged symptoms in COVID patient (Davido et al., 2020). At the same time, Carfi's (2020) study showed that fatigue, dyspnoea, joint pain, and chest pain as persistent post symptoms of COVID would be treated through periodical therapies.

The distraction of Routine life

The emergence of COVID 19 firstly distracted the mode of working where WFH (Work from Home) was chosen in most companies. Due to crisis, lacks entrepreneurs shut their business, leading to unemployment, mainly daily waged workers. The basic needs for a human are shelter, food and clothing. The advent state of COVID 19 made millions suffer from buying their daily bread. Initially, the curfew was unknown, that it would be the final ticket for poor's either to starve or die. But the crucial sobbing state of poor in India, Sub Saharan regions who work for daily wages and fill their stomach, is thriving at the help line's edge. They could not maintain any social distance nor wash hands frequently as, without physical touch (daily workers on street shops), they could not feed their family. (Cosgrove, 2020). Hyper hygiene of washing hands, wearing masks, applying sanitizers, and cleaning things with detergents highly stress the homemakers, which de-motivate them to pursue their routine lifestyle (Merina, 2020). On the other side, the burden of feeding their families imposes hectic mental stress resulting in psychological impressions.

Role of Emotional Imbalance Inducing Stress and Mental Depression

Memories in the brain induce memories based on information obtained from the external world. The sequential influence of adverse events in daily activities, primarily through TV news, social media, gossip of neighbours, real negative events like death, accidents, and departure, might create an in-depth negative emotion that changes cognitive functions' emotional regulations misbalancing of emotions (Razumnikova, 2019). Thereby, it fosters the individual to act imbalanced to the typical situation in life. The most four relevant psychological reactions to COVID infection are uncontrolled fear related to disease, pervasive anxiety, frustration and boredom and disabling loneliness (Serafini, 2020)

Behavioural Immune System Theory, Stress Theory, Perceived Theory

The behavioural theory states that people tend to develop

negative emotions like aversion, anxiety, etc., and negative cognitive assessment to protect themselves from external factors by obeying strict social norms (Hills, 2002). Likewise, the stress and perceived theory state that the public health emergencies are the one who triggers more negative emotions of the people and affects the cognitive assessment of the brain. Though these negative emotions keep the person away from the pathogens, the deadly disease, the prolonged impression of negative emotions weakens the immune system resulting in psychological imbalances (Keicolt-Glaser, 2002).

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Measurement

Data Collection: There are two ways for data collection. Primary and secondary. Because of the COVID pandemic situation, the information was collected through the Primary data method. A qualitative survey analysis method was chosen to retrieve the necessary knowledge of the respondents necessary knowledge in this pandemic situation. The required details were compiled as ten questions in Google Form, and then they were sent to the selective respondents.

Demography	Participants (n)	Percentage
Gender		
Male	25	44.64%
Female	31	55.35%
Age		
15-24	8	14.28%
25-45	31	55.35%
46-66	2	3.57%
67-75	1	1.78%
No data	14	25%
Career		
School/College	8	14.28%
Employed	33	58.92%
Unemployed	15	26.78%

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of selected Participants

Sampling method: The participants were selected in a subjective way depicting the non-probability sampling method. It was conducted upon 56 respondents on varied demographic characteristics (Table 1). The respondents were given a specific time to fill the form through WhatsApp and Emails (<https://forms.gle/9KnE4dcQfEsbGPHL7>) and were requested to submit it back along with their mail ID.

Research Design

The qualitative survey analysis of the Primary data collection method was chosen as the study's research design.

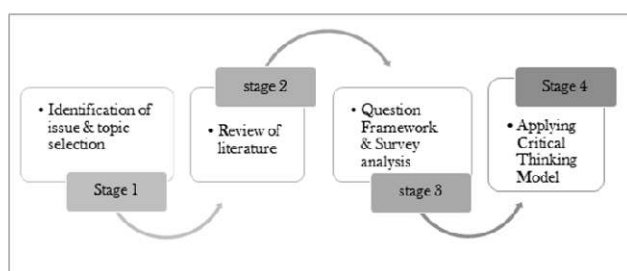


Figure 1: The Overall Framework of the Study

Research Questions

The questions mandatorily scripted in the Google form are given below;

- i. Do you fear when you hear the term "Corona"
- ii. When you hear someone residing with you is "COVID +ve", what would be your reaction?
- iii. If any government volunteers come to your house for taking COVID test, what would be your reaction?
- iv. What rating would you give for the mental pressure you are facing due to COVID 19 pandemic?
- v. Did any of your important schedules got changed/delayed/ cancelled because of COVID 19? If so, please specify.
- vi. Have you ever thought about missing your routine lifestyle?
- vii. What do you miss more in your routine lifestyle in COVID 19?
- viii. Do the safety measures of COVID 19 is stressful?
- ix. Have you ever thought of consulting a psychiatrist because of COVID 19 stress?
- x. How much are you impacted by the media information about COVID 19?
- xi. According to you, what major problem people face due to COVID 19 and why?
- xii. "Critical thinking is the best way to deal with mental pressures during COVID 19" Do you agree?

V. DATA ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDING CRITICAL THINKING MODEL

The collected survey results were then analyzed to detect the high COVID 19 awareness, stress level, and critical thinking awareness. A four circle, the critical thinking model of Alfaro-LeFevre, is suggested here to implement our everyday lifestyle to prevent distraction and mental stress, leading to psychological implications.

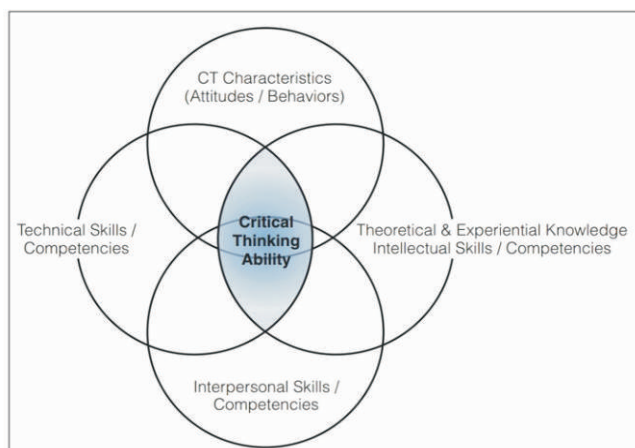


Figure 2: Critical thinking model of Alfaro-LeFevre's four circle model

(Source, Alfaro-LeFevre, 2016)

VI. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

i. COVID awareness level

The survey analysis of 56 respondents showed that 60.7% of people get feared when they hear the term "CORONA," leading to the maximum level of instant fear of the disease. Though it's been nearly nine months, people still fear the pandemic. It shows the impact of essential stress in-built in their memory. Simultaneously, the awareness about the

infection has reached more, which could be seen in the sample's response where 57.1% of people are ready to take them self-tested of any of their neighbors' get infected. Alternatively, 26.8% of respondents were prepared to take care of the infected person with proper measures. To the surprise, 5.4% of the sample chosen to avoid the infected person. It shows the persistence of a lack of awareness about COVID 19.

Regarding the awareness of testing, 73.2% of samples agreed to let the government volunteers take them self-tested while 14.3% neglected. Most of them have raised the fact that none of the government volunteers has approached them to conduct an initial test or awareness tips depicting the lack of necessary government steps to provide complimentary counseling to the people. Alternatively, one respondent stated that they might check whether the officials are prankers and then provide specific options to testify them in the comfortable zone. It shows the grown negative thought & untrusting of NGOs correlating with the behavioral immune system theory. (Graph 1)

ii. Routine life distraction and emotional imbalances

Detachment from routine life is a disastrous worry prevailing in the current scenario. Out of 56 samples, 33 people has found to be missing their everyday life. They could not undergo their regular activities like going to school, college, offices. They are trembling to pursue their regular check (pregnancy, genetic disorders) and worrying about their child's education. One of the highlighted reasons was encountered in most of the respondent's statements as they could not travel to their hometown from abroad for visiting children, attending marriages, delivering babies, and many other personal schedules. (Graph 1)

iii. Mental pressure & stress level

Owing to the pandemic's mental pressure, seven respondents have strongly agreed, followed by 13 agreeing to it. But we could see 19 people being neutral here, posing the disturbed mindset has chosen neutral. A typical interview analysis with close friends suggested that following safety measures daily seemed to be hectic, which reflected as 14.3% of sample agreeing to it while 12.5% strongly agree on the point. The neutral level was seen high for experiencing high-stress levels, imposing that they were highly distracted from everyday lifestyle. Though 90.7% neglected to consulting psychiatrists, 7.4% of the respondents thought of consulting, which shows the importance of counselling and online therapies? Thirty-three respondents have highly agreed on media as an impact on inducing the stress level. It is eventually fostering the malicious gossips and events telecasting on televisions which is highly frustrating in everyday lives. Owing to the contrast of behavioral, stress and perceived theory, we can correlate that the false projection of the COVID 19 pandemic has filled negative emotions into the vacuum minds and slowly penetrating the psychological imbalances deep rooting into the cognitive functions of the brain. (Graph 1)

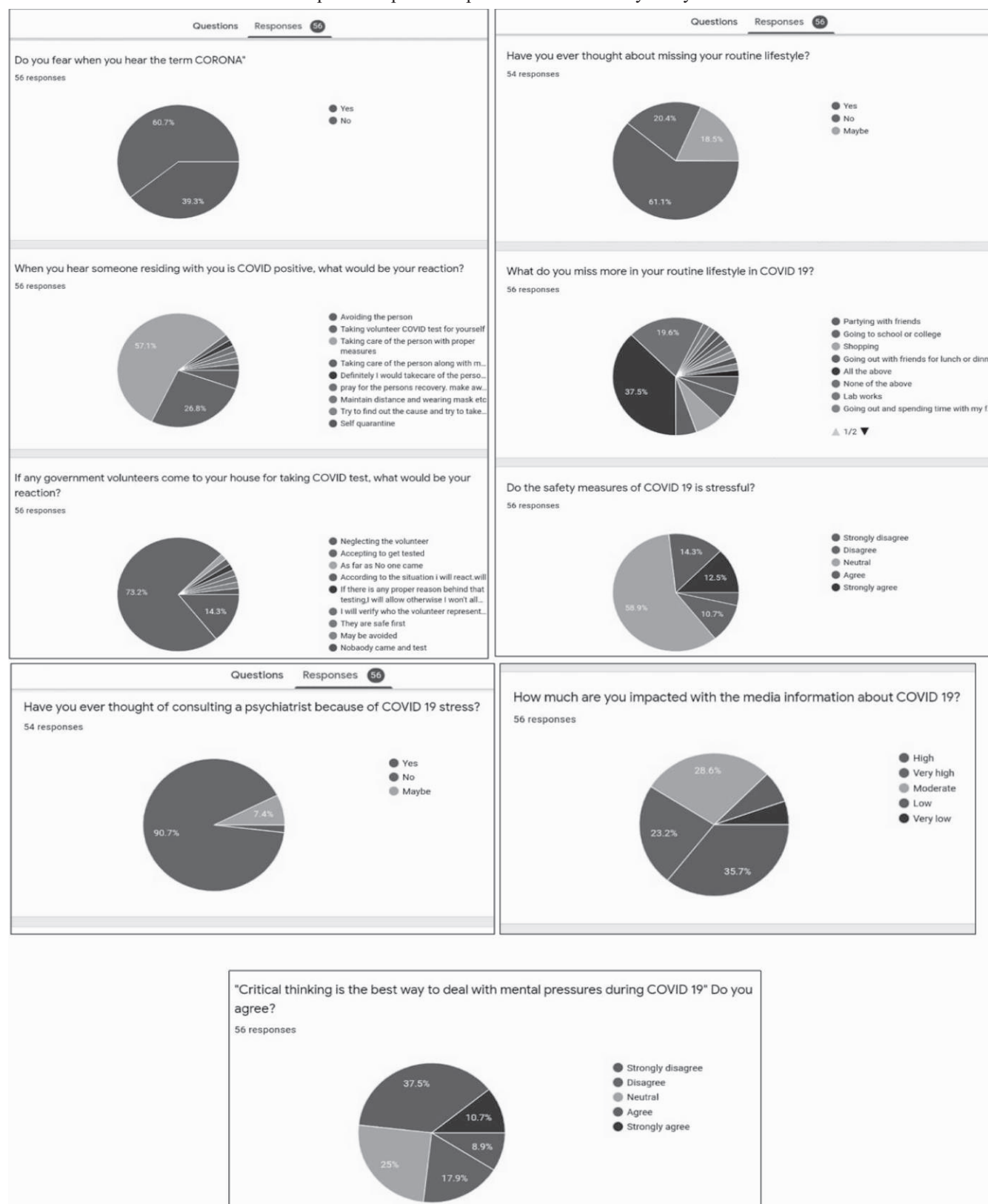
iv. Critical thinking awareness

To the surprise, only 27 respondents agreed on critical thinking as the best tool to control mental pressures, while 15

people disagreed with the statement. In between, 14 respondents showed a neutral opinion. These results depict the need for critical thinking awareness among them. Some of them were not even aware of critical thinking and its prospects, while others had a misconception (Graph 1). The

one who is possesses increased CT (Critical Thinking) has found to be fearless while hearing the term "Corona." The study strongly recommends practicing CT in our daily life to combat COVID-related stresses.

Graph 1. Graphical Representation of Survey analysis



VII. APPLYING ALFARO-LEFEVRE'S FOUR CIRCLES CT MODEL

Several researchers postulate many CT models. Alfaro-LeFevre's four circles Critical thinking model is suggested here. It consists of four steps through which the respondents can overcome their mental stress and emotional imbalances.



- State 1: CT characteristics: The respondents can developing specific critical thinking characteristics such as honesty, patience, fair-mindedness about Coronavirus in their mind. Though the COVID is pandemic, it is uncertain. So, a positive mentality of dealing with everything soft and humble should be created first.
- Stage 2: Theoretical and experiential knowledge & intellectual skills / Competencies: secondly, the respondents should gain some theoretical knowledge about what is a Coronavirus, what are the ways it could be sorted out, what are the possible measures to be taken to tackle the situation etc., through any expertise or referring online books, websites and so on. But, make sure of gaining proper knowledge irrespective of inhibiting false comments. Practice intellectual skills such as following appropriate safety measures of wearing masks, sanitizing hands, etc., which should be practiced as needed.
- Stage 3: Gain interpersonal skills like advocating neighbors about the risk associated with COVID 19 and the importance of being hyper hygienic through specific simple procedures in a positive manner. These skills help to create a positive environment around the response rather than being stressful and negative. Build the habit of resolving conflicts among people as it is highly needed in this pandemic situation to help one another in all aspects from food to finance.
- Stage 4: technical skills / Competencies: make these characteristics second nature. Just dumping inside the mind would not provide any results. Through practice alone, anything could be achieved.

Apart from Alfaro-LeFevre's model, a standard framework of critical thinking for children, health workers, adults and students to combat the COVID pandemic era are given below (Zayapragassaram, 2016);

VIII. RECOMMENDED ONLINE PSYCHOLOGICAL THERAPIES FOR MENTAL STRESS

The outbreak of Coronavirus has pertained to several psychological impacts such as mental stress, emotional imbalances, fear, etc., which is well seen in literature review and survey analysis. Online group therapy is recommended for the respondents who showed a high level of stress. It is one of the emerging psychological treatments where face-to-face interaction takes place. But physical contact is impossible, which encourages the patients to share their problems without any hesitation. Similarly, Online mental health education programs were initiated by China to assist psychologically affected patients by sharing guidelines for psychological self-help via social media portals like We chat, WhatsApp, Tiktok (Liu, 2020). Online chats are considered an effective therapy for children and adults to cover up their emotions. Though it is a slow pace method, the absence of face-to-face interaction, verbal tone encourages children, adults and teenagers to flush out their emotions through which they get a sigh of relief (Dowling, 2016). Internet-based cognitive-behavioral therapies are introduced for post-traumatic stress disorder patients where their level of stress is measured effectively through the proxy indicator, call and survey analysis (Simon, 2019).

IX. FUTURE RESEARCH

- In-depth research on solid critical thinking models for COVID warriors has to be researched.
- There are many disadvantages in online therapies which might scare the respondents. A glance at those negative aspects and the possible ways to sort them out should be explored.
- Through Stress detector tools, the accurate level of stress has to be determined, and the appropriate psychological procedures could be recommended.
- The persistent COVID symptoms need more research to determine the exact time and procedures for curing and all its complications

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