

The psychological and social impact of Covid-19: new perspectives of well-being in the UK

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ABSTRACT

Aim: The research aims to highlight the psychological and social impact of Covid-19 on the wellbeing of the UK residents.

Method: The study comprises of positivism research philosophy and the research approach being used is the deductive approach. The data is collected through 100 participants through the convenience sampling method. The research design is quantitative, and the primary method collects the data.

Findings: The data is analysed through the SPSS tool, and the analysis is conducted from descriptive, regression and correlation. The research includes identifying the correlation of the variables and how they have affected individuals during Covid-19. It was highlighted through the data analysis and hypotheses process regarding the significance of the variables. The purpose of determining the significance of the variables is to determine their correlation and how each of them has an impact on the other variable. The study comprises two independent and two dependent variables, which are incorporated.

Keywords: Covid-19, psychological impact, social impact, obsessional thinking, news exposure, social revival

INTRODUCTION

Modern society's social and economic domains became severely distorted with the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020. Although this was only one of the several epidemics faced by the world in the last two decades, its scale and severity were substantially more devastating compared

to other pandemics such as the SARS-CoV in 2002, H1N1 influenza in 2009, and Middle East respiratory syndrome coronavirus (MERS-CoV) in 2012. Like previous outbreaks, Covid-19 also triggered pressure on individuals and communities' psychological and social aspects. The Covid-19 pandemic caused extended stress exposure. In order to help the public psychologically, academics were increasingly concerned with measuring social and psychological unrest being developed in the human lives. Certain groups tend to be more prone to post-traumatic, depressive, and anxious symptoms because they are more sensitive to stress.

Viral outbreaks like the recent pandemic cause non-uniform impacts on different population groups. According to a recent survey done during the Covid-19 outbreak, children and young people were more likely to develop unsettling symptoms (Orgilés et al., 2020). The analysis of Orgilés et al. (2020) found that parents typically observed behavioural and emotional changes in their children throughout the quarantine, including symptoms of concentration issues (76.6%), boredom (52%), anger (39%), restlessness (38.8%), anxiety (38%), a sense of loneliness (31.3%), uncomfortable (30.4%), and fears (30.1%). When the epidemic broke out in China, an additional study by Kellerman et al. (2022) on a sample of college students showed how some protective factors, such as living in urban areas, the stability of the family's finances, influence the capabilities of individuals to sustain during the pandemic. Providers of mental health services had worked to limit service interruptions ever since the pandemic began, for instance, by offering care through other channels when public health and social measures were in place. Community-based efforts frequently changed rapidly and developed creative methods to offer psychiatric assistance, such as through unofficial aid and digital technologies (Johnson et al., 2021). International organisations have also offered information, resources, and direction to members of the general public, public health planners, and responders. Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) should be included throughout all preparation and response stages for public health emergencies (WHO, 2021).

Although the literature is replete with an investigation of the psychological implications of the pandemic, a context-based study is scarce. Therefore, the current study examines the psychological and social impacts of COVID-19 on the well-being of people in the United Kingdom. To realise this aim, the research is based upon the following objectives:

LITERATURE REVIEW

The covid-19 pandemic thwarted the process of increasing healthcare resilience that was being experienced in several developed and developing countries. While countries with unregulated healthcare systems suffered from mismanagement and misallocation of resources, those with centralised healthcare systems proved to be better able to cope with the multipronged disruptions (Spieske et al., 2022). Nonetheless, these countries also faced challenges in the form of slow service delivery to the populace in need, disparaged health monitoring systems, dissatisfaction of patients and their families, long waiting periods for medical consultations etc. (Peek et al., 2020; Sokas et al., 2021). In the wake of the coronavirus's global spread and the subsequent restrictive measures, mental health has become a major issue (Thibaut et al., 2020). People are in danger for more than just their physical health. This epidemic has significantly impacted the prevalence and severity of mental illness worldwide. In the study of Majeed et al. (2021), two measures have been validated to evaluate how people's anxiety and obsessional thinking levels have been impacted by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in both clinical and non-clinical groups.

Obsessional thinking refers to the recurrent thoughts associated with painful emotions and judgments (Majeed et al., 2021). On many occasions, the inability of individuals to control their persistent obsessive patterns of thinking leads to high levels of psychological distress, traumatic triggers, general irritability, and irrational belief system, thus leading to debilitating consequences in their daily lives. Concerning Covid-19, several studies have shown a rise in pandemic-related obsessional thinking reported by population groups worldwide (Loosen et al., 2021; Jelinek et al., 2021). In their analysis of nurses and patients, Galehdar et al. (2020) reported a significant increase in anxiety due to fear of infecting the family, corpse burial, worries about time wastage, and obsessive thinking about bad news in both patients as well as the nurses. However, the study does not explicate the isolated implications of obsessional thinking on the mental health of these groups. Meanwhile, the study of Ashraf et al. (2021), conducted in the same domain in Pakistan showed that obsession thinking about Covid-19 led to lower levels of general life satisfaction, triggering a search for the meaning of life. However, the study also suggested that this heightened obsessional thinking could be reduced by increasing life satisfaction through other means. Nevertheless,

research is scarce related to precise measurements of these means. In light of this analysis, the first hypothesis for the current study is presented below:

H1: Obsessional thinking has a significant negative impact on the psychological wellbeing of UK residents

Global disruptions entailing the pandemic stirred the socioeconomic, political, and intuitional strata, bringing their inherent and often-neglected systematic weaknesses to the forefront (Shet et al., 2022). In these circumstances, news channels (both televisions based and online) played a crucial role in keeping the common people updated about ongoing changes in the world around them. However, exposure to news for long periods has been associated with triggering psychological stressors (Alhujaili et al., 2021). In the study by Rodrigues et al. (2020), it was revealed that news related to the virus's progression in the local populace has a generally negative perception among the people. However, some analysts also suggest that news regarding the government's initiatives to curb the pandemic also causes psychological distress for a long period (Pragholapati, 2020). It could be the case when individuals view the news repeatedly, triggering mental distress. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic's unexpected and rapidly changing character and instructions to stay indoors and work from home, there was an increase in the demand for and availability of information on the disease throughout the first year of the pandemic (Majeed et al., 2021). News consumption has increased across all media, including watching the news on television, visiting daily news websites, and using mobile devices to follow the progression of the pandemic (Nelson and Lewis, 2022). The epidemic's increased exposure to unfavourable news has undoubtedly affected mental health. In order to reduce uncertainty and promote feelings of security, people seek information during crises, which increases news consumption overall during the pandemic. This aspect of the literature forms the basis of the second hypothesis of the current study.

H2: Excessive news exposure has a significant negative impact on the psychological wellbeing of UK residents

The history of human civilisation is replete with instances of great disasters associated with natural calamities, famine, war, and diseases. While several of these disasters are somewhat caused by

societal inefficiency and lack of resilience, such as wars and famines, these events are also marked by the amelioration of social values. Macro and micro-level disruptions caused by the pandemic introduced societies to what Durkheim referred to as the state of 'anomie' (Roblain, 2022). It refers to the sociological situation in which dominant norms are absent in society. Due to a severe lack of a global or regional scientific consensus regarding the true nature of Covid-19 and its implications, most severely-hit countries faced the dilemma of creating a wide-ranging societal consensus (Roblain, 2022).

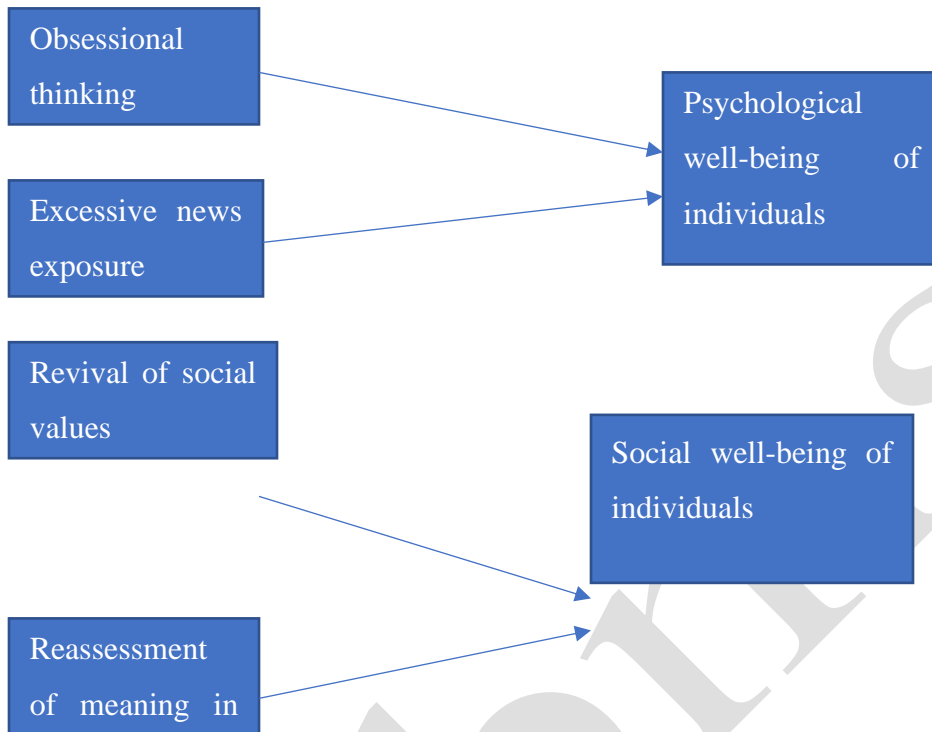
Consequently, sociological studies suggest that individuals reverted to several traditional values systems guiding humanity for centuries. For example, the rapidly increasing communication problems witnessed a substantial decrease as youngsters turned to frequent conversation sessions through social media platforms. A study by the University of Connecticut (2022) reported a 70% rise in social media usage during the first wave of the pandemic. The lack of social practices that could prevent people from the virus's devastating effects continues to drive social strata's transformation.

H3: Revival of social values has a significant positive impact on the social wellbeing of UK residents

Individuals' capability to guide themselves through life's difficulties depends on their inner resilience. Studies indicate that this inner resilience is a function of their life's narration (Baykal, 2019). Moreover, the ability to create a coherent and focused meaning of life has been identified as a positive capability to sustain during socially and psychologically distressing periods. A constant sense of purpose and the corresponding sensation of fulfilment define meaning in life (Ashraf et al., 2021). Maintaining psychological health also involves finding meaning in life. According to the study, having a purpose in life may help one cope and forecast happiness in the face of adversity. It also helps improve disaster recovery (George and Park, 2016). The current study hypothesised the impact of the ability to reassess life's meaning on the social well-being of people.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Source: Author (2024)



METHODOLOGY

The research philosophy in the current study is positivism, which would help analyse the hypotheses and experimentally measure results. The justification for following the positivist research philosophy is that it helps the researcher collect adequate data comprising the aspects being discussed to continue with the study flow. The information is not biased, and the data collected is from relevant sources relating to the fundamental variables being discussed.

Considering the research approach, the study would be further followed by the deductive research approach, which would guide the researcher to develop an adequate understanding of the topic resulting in accurate outcomes. The psychological and social impact of Covid-19 and a new perspective of well-being in the UK requires adequate outcomes and relevant results that would be obtained through a deductive approach. The deductive approach would help to identify the numeric data of the psychological and social impact of Covid-19, leading to the authenticity of the analysis. According to Pandey (2019), a deductive approach begins with a theory, further proceeds with developing hypotheses and then collecting and evaluating the hypotheses. In addition, Manjarres and Zwierewicz (2021) have discussed that a deductive approach is relatively more relevant for quantitative research, depicting the analysis process through different theories and models.

The research design would further include the quantitative research method, which would help the researcher focus on the result's numeric outcomes. The purpose of using a quantitative research approach is that it would help the researcher to determine the numeric data regarding the improvement in social values and the impact of Covid-19 on the reassessment of meaning in life for low- or mid-income individuals incorporated with the social well-being of the individuals. Furthermore, each of these analyses would proceed with the statistical tools and techniques which would help mitigate the errors while determining the validity of the psychological and social well-being of individuals.

Moving forward with the data collection method, which is considered an essential aspect of research directly relating to the core of the research outcomes. The following research would comprise a primary data collection method, further incorporated with the questionnaire survey.

The questionnaire survey would aim to analyse the psychological and social impact of Covid-19 and discuss the individuals' social well-being. The primary research approach's purpose would be to come up with the most relevant and up-to-date information to avoid any discrepancies in future. Furthermore, the sampling would be proceeded with convenience sampling, increasing the researcher's accessibility. According to Stratton (2021), convenience sampling is used to evaluate the participants' perceptions and helps identify the potential issues regarding the research.

The data collection process would include 100 participants facing either the psychological or social impact of Covid-19 and having gone through severe conditions. Selecting a questionnaire as a data collection method is to diversify the outcomes and understanding. It would be further diversified with obsessional thinking and excessive news exposure leading to an increase in the impact of Covid-19. Furthermore, the participants would also be required to answer regarding the individuals' social well-being, which would include a revival of social values and a Reassessment of meaning in life.

The responses from the participants would be collected through different variables using a five-point Likert scale (0: Strongly Agree, 1: Agree, 2: Neutral, 3: Disagree and 4: Strongly Disagree). The data collection process would be followed by SPSS software, and the analysis would be; descriptive, regression and correlation determining the psychological and social impact of Covid-19. The justification for using the SPSS tool is to assist the study with numeric and statistical findings proceeding with a quantitative study.

At last, the research methodology would conclude with ethical consideration, including the participants' informed consent. It includes that the confidentiality of the participants' data would be protected, participants would be answering as per their willingness, and it would not cause any harm to the participants.

RESULTS

Impact of obsessional thinking and news exposure on psychological wellbeing during Covid-19

Firstly, the researcher analysed the descriptive statistics of the given variables. As shown in the following table, the mean values of all three variables ranged around the option of 'agree' on the Likert scale, indicating that most responses agreed with the statements in the questionnaire. With marginal standard deviation, it can also be asserted that there were only a few outliers in the responses.

Descriptive Statistics									
	N	Mini mum	Maxi mum	Mea n	Stdeviatio n	Skew ness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Constant news exposure	100	0	3.67	3.33	0.80036	0.047	0.241	2.7	0.478
Obsessional thinking	100	0	4	1.56	0.98117	0.433	0.241	2.63	0.478
Psychological well-being of UK residents	100	0	3.5	1.34	1.05859	0.295	0.241	3.102	0.478
Valid N (listwise)	100								

Through the correlation analysis, as depicted in the following table, the researcher found that constant news exposure only has a moderate association with the psychological well-being of UK residents. However, the correlation is negative, indicating that an increment in news exposure leads to a decline in psychological well-being. Meanwhile, obsessional thinking was strongly and

negatively correlated with the psychological well-being of UK residents. Similar to the previous case, an increase in obsessional thinking leads to the deterioration of the overall psychological well-being of UK residents.

Correlations

		Constant	Obsessiona	Psychological well-
		news	l thinking	being of UK residents
		exposure		
Constant news exposure	Pearson			
	Correlatio			
	n	1	.653**	-.598**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0	0
Obsessional thinking	N	100	100	100
	Pearson			
	Correlatio			
	n	.653**	1	-.956**
Psychological well-being of UK residents	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	0
	N	100	100	100
	Pearson			
	Correlatio			
n	.598**	.956**	1	
Psychological well-being of UK residents	Sig. (2-tailed)	0	0	
	N	100	100	100

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

For the causal impact, the following model summary depicts that the conceptual model used in this study has a high capability of predicting the behaviours of the variables through high R and R-square values ranging between 90%-95%.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. An error in the Estimate
1	.957 a	0.915	0.913	0.31185

a Predictors: (Constant), Obsessional thinking, Constant news exposure

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	101.507	2	50.753	521.9	.000
	Residual	9.433	7	0.097		
	Total	110.94	9			

a Dependent Variable: Psychological wellbeing of UK residents

b Predictors: (Constant), Obsessional thinking, Constant news exposure

Meanwhile, the following table highlights that constant news exposure does not significantly impact psychological well-being, with a p-value of >0.05 . At the same time, obsessional thinking was found to have a significant impact with a p-value of <0.05 .

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients	Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
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The following correlation table shows that both the variables, a revival of social values and reassessment of the meaning of life, are strongly and positively correlated with the social well-being of UK residents, with Pearson coefficients of 0.908 and 0.987.

		Correlations		
		Revival of social values	Reassessment of meaning in life	Social wellbeing of UK residents
Revival of social values	Pearson Correlation			
	n	1	.949**	.908**
	Sig. (2- tailed)		0	0
	N	100	100	100
Reassessment of meaning in life	Pearson Correlation			
	n	.949**	1	.987**
	Sig. (2- tailed)	0		0
	N	100	100	100
Social wellbeing of UK residents	Pearson Correlation			
	n	.908**	.987**	1
	Sig. (2- tailed)	0	0	
	N	100	100	100

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The following model summary indicates the high accuracy and predictability of the proposed model, with the values of R and R-square ranging from 98% to 99%.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.991	0.982	0.982	0.1272

a Predictors: (Constant), Reassessment of meaning in life, Revival of social values

ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	87.118	2	43.559	2692.08	.000
	Residual	1.579	7	0.016		
	Total	88.687	9			

a Dependent Variable: Social wellbeing of UK residents

b Predictors: (Constant), Reassessment of meaning in life, Revival of social values

The following table depicts the causal impact of the independent variables. From the sig value (p-value), it can be asserted that both revival of social values and reassessment of meaning in life significantly impact the social well-being of UK residents.

Coefficients

Model	Unstandardised Coefficients	Standardised Coefficients	t	Sig.
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		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-0.003	0.022		-0.132	0.895
	Revival of social values	-0.274	0.041	-0.287	-6.699	0.002
	Reassessment of meaning in life	1.263	0.043	1.26	29.362	0.000

a Dependent Variable: Social wellbeing of UK residents

DISCUSSION

The research has been further evaluated using the SPSS tool based on descriptive, correlation and regression analysis. Based on the above analysis, two independent and two dependent variables were incorporated with each of them. The first independent variable is the psychological well-being of UK residents, whose correlation was identified through two dependent variables: constant news exposure and obsessional thinking. Both the independent variables are negatively correlated with the dependent variables, which means that increasing one variable would decrease the other variable. However, constant news exposure has a moderate value of 0.598, and obsessional thinking has a high correlation of 0.956. However, within the regression analysis for the independent variable psychological well-being of UK residents, the dependent variable constant news exposure is 0.244, which makes it insignificant. In contrast, obsessional thinking is at 0.002, making it significant within the regression analysis.

Based on the discussion of the second independent variable, which is the social well-being of UK residents, whose correlation is being evaluated through two dependent variables: revival of social values and reassessment of the meaning of life. Both variables are positively correlated with each other, which means when the intensity of one variable increases, the other variable also increases. The correlational value of revival of social values is 0.908, which depicts its higher significance on the social well-being of UK residents. However, the correlational value of reassessment of the

meaning of life is 0.987, representing its higher significance. The significant value of the regression analysis of both the variables' revival of social values and reassessment of the meaning of life is significant, where the values depicted in the table are 0.002 and 0.000, respectively.

Moreover, the hypotheses of the psychological well-being of UK residents with constant news exposure are rejected, which is determined through its insignificant correlation. However, obsessional thinking is accepted due to its significance and high correlation. The second independent variable, the social well-being of UK residents, is associated with two dependent variables where the hypotheses of both variables are accepted.

S.No	Developed and Tested Hypotheses	Status
1	Obsessional thinking has a significant negative impact on the psychological well-being of UK residents.	Accepted
2	Excessive news exposure has a significant negative impact on the psychological well-being of UK residents.	Rejected
3	Revival of social values has a significant positive impact on the social well-being of UK residents.	Accepted
4	The ability to reassess life's meaning in the context of society has a significant impact on the social well-being of UK residents.	Accepted

CONCLUSION

To conclude, the topic identifies the psychological and social impact of Covid-19 on UK residents and the research is further proceeded with the analysis to identify the relations between the variables. The research was accomplished using the positivist research philosophy with a deductive approach. The data was primary quantitative and was collected through a questionnaire survey. The data analysis and findings comprised two independent variables, and two dependent variables were incorporated with each of them. However, the hypotheses and discussion depicted that the

variable regarding constant news exposure was rejected due to its insignificance, whereas the other three variables were accepted. However, the variables regarding obsessional thinking and excessive news exposure were negatively correlated, whereas revival of social values and reassessment of the meaning of life were positively correlated. The researcher highlighted the significant impact of the variables which helped to identify the correlation between the variables and how the psychological and social impact of Covid-19 is affecting the individuals.

Since the current study evaluated very few psychological and social impacts of Covid-19, which can be further enhanced in future studies, future studies can include financial loss and poverty, which impact the individuals psychologically and socially, resulting in an adverse effect of poverty for low or mid-income individuals. Most of the individuals were jobless due to poverty affecting most of the individuals across the globe. Another impact which can be considered in future studies is the social isolation in the individuals. Families who were diagnosed with Covid-19 were isolated, and no one was meeting, leading to mental pressure on the individuals. Future studies can also include the impact of social media on individuals, where excessive information and constant death of individuals are being displayed, leading to great mental pressure on the individuals. Future researchers can proceed with a more in-depth study regarding the psychological and social impact of Covid-19 and find out the aspects which have affected individuals being isolated for long periods. The future implications for the researcher can also comprise collecting data from different countries besides the UK to identify the social and psychological impact of Covid-19 on individuals and how the country's economy has affected people's mental health.

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Variables and statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Constant news exposure					

Constantly seeing the news about covid increases my anxiety					
Covid-related distracts me from day-to-day work.					
Covid-related news lowers my mental state to deal with other problems.					
Obsessional thinking					
I often think about whether I am going to infect my family and friends with the Covid virus.					
The threat of getting the virus has disrupted my					

day-to-day routine					
Constant fear of covid has become a permanent thinking pattern in my life without even realising it.					
Revival of social values					
My family and friends have increased communication with each during Covid.					
The community I live in improved, taking care of each other as the covid began.					

<p>My extended family has become emotionally closer with the rise of the pandemic.</p>					
<p>Reassessment of meaning in life</p>					
<p>I feel better when I realise that I can still achieve my aspirations in life even after the pandemic.</p>					
<p>During a pandemic, individuals who have a high level of hope, greater life satisfaction, and positive social</p>					

interaction are better able to cope with negative news.					
Realigning my meaning in life helped me in coping up with the traumatic experience of the early phases of the pandemic.					
Psychological well-being of UK residents					
Obsessional thinking has a negative effect on my ability to cope with Covid-related difficulties					
Excessive to covid related news has a negative effect on my					

psychological wellbeing.					
Social wellbeing of UK residents					
Revival of some social values positively affected my wellbeing.					
The ability to reassess my meaning of life improved my social wellbeing.					