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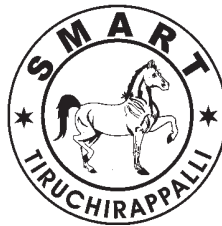


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# IMPACT OF LOCK DOWN ON THE MINDS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

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## Abstract

*The Corona virus pandemic has affected the whole world in unimaginable ways. While countries and nations are struggling to contain the virus,implementing various measures to contain the spread of the pandemic, humans have been pushed into lockdowns and confinement within their own houses. This has brought about a lot of pain and suffering to humans all over the world. Economic downfall, unemployment, scarcity of food, loss of homes and many more issues have surfaced. But among all these factors, the mental and psychological state of humans has not been studied, as ought to be. One segment of this population is the young college students. These students are the most vulnerable and affected ones. This paper tries to understand the impact of the lockdown on the minds of college students and also attempts to study the positive and negative thoughts that have influenced these young adolescent minds.*

**Keywords:** *Lockdown, Mental State of Mind, Adolescents, College Students and Millennial*

**JEL Code :** *J24, I30, O15 and Z13*

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## 1.Introduction

China has a unique zodiac calendar according to which the year 2020 was termed as the Year of the Rat. For whatever reason this was done, it turned out to be literally and metaphorically true. The turn of events, right from the beginning of this year, have made each one of us to scramble back into our own holes and stay put for as long as the danger lurks. An unknown and unseen micro- organism, in the form of a virus named as corona, has pushed the whole of mankind into an unimaginable lockdown and confinement. Man has put himself behind his own bars and locked himself in the fear of being infected. The situation is common and the whole world is facing a crisis that is unparalleled in the history of mankind.

## 2. Review of Literature

Today's young adolescents are the millennials who have a happy go lucky attitude. These youngsters were born and brought up in a world order, that has not seen any major upheavals,barring a few natural calamities. In contrast their parents grew up in times of wars and political crises. The Millennial or the Gen Y generation was born between the years 1981-2000 **(Dimock 2018).** This generation stands apart from the others in many ways. These are the children of the baby boomers and there are roughly 6.5 million of this generation **(Foot &Stoffman, 1998).**They are determined, driven achievers, who depend on technology, for their support system. The method of teaching ten years ago is not the method to achieve learning with this generation **(Monaco & Martin, 2007)** Each generation has their own set of characteristics which can somewhat differentiate them from the previous generations. **Ford, et al., (2011)** explain what makes each generation unique. One way of understanding these millennials is to define what differentiates

them from the previous generations. According to **Lundin (2017),** millennials are the largest generation since the Baby Boomers . Millennials account for over 77 million of the population **(Taylor and Keeter, 2010).** Baby Boomers account for 76 million and Generation X account for 46 million. Millennials are set to be the largest generation ever entering the labour**force (Jacobowitz, et al., 2016)** and it is estimated that millennials would account for nearly half of the employees globally **(Toossi, 2009; Meister &Willyerd, 2010).**NetGens come with their own set of expectations, demands, and work habits, including incredible technology literacy, work values, beliefs, and behaviours. Many of NetGens' values, attitudes, and beliefs also reflect those of their baby boomer parents **(Loughlin&Barling, 2001).** They possess many of the same attitudes in that they are ambitious, they want a good life, and they are not afraid to speak up**(Burke &Ne, 2006).**According to **Saville et al., (1984),** Personality includes preferences or a typical way of behaving, thinking and feeling **(Swathy).** Many research studies on the personality traits of college students, have been carried out and there is currently a broad consensus among personality researchers that the Big Five Model represents a unified and parsimonious theoretical framework for personality **(Digman, 1990; Digman, 1997; Wiggins and Trapnell, 1997).** Numerous empirical studies, in many different settings, have verified the overall factor structure and construct validity of the Big Five constructs (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism) **(Lounsbury, et., al, 2005).** Empirical studies, involving adults in a variety of occupations, at different stages of the life cycle, have found significant correlations between personality traits and life satisfaction **(Boland and Cappeliez, 1997; DeNeve and Cooper, 1998; Hart,**

**1999; Herringer, 1998; Lounsbury et al, in press; Ramanah,Detweiler and Byravan, 1997). (Lounsbury, et., al, 2005)**

## 2.2 Present Scenario

Social skills deficits and peer rejection are associated with a number of negative outcomes, including mental health problems, behavior problems, delinquency, substance abuse, sexual offending, loneliness, high-risk sexual behavior, and academic and vocational difficulties **(Hansen et al., 1995; Kupersmidt**and **Coie, 1990; P Parker** and **Asher, 1987). Nangel** and **Hansen (1998)** discussed the role of life satisfaction and personality traits, and the effect of a global lockdown on these young adolescents, whose outlook and behaviors are influenced by their fulfillment of their mental desires and achievement of their goals. Lock down has brought life to a standstill, throwing up never before challenges and threats, that left humans scurrying for survival. It not only put these young millennials in imaginary shackles but also made them reinvent strategies to overcome these obstacles. Those with strong positive traits came up with innovative ways to tackle the lock down while others found it distressing.This study tries to link these personality traits and the good and bad moments experienced by college students, during the lockdown. Being brought up in an environment of encouragement, autonomy, independent thinking, treated as an equal by their parents, who chose not to over-supervise, have led millennials to resume micromanagement. They will not ask "how high?" when told to jump, instead, they will ask "why?"

## 3. Statement of the Problem

Lockdown brings with it a number of psychological disturbances. This study is aimed at understanding the impact of such a lock down on the psychological wellbeing of young adolescents, who are on the threshold of completing their graduation and who would have been preparing themselves for a long path of a career in their chosen fields. This study is an attempt to analyse the state of mind of young college going adolescents, during the lock down period and to understand its implications.

## 4. Need of the Study

This lockdown has affected all human beings irrespective of country, race, color, regime, geographical boundaries, rich, poor, educated, illiterates, old and young and so on. Among all this chaos, the world is staring at yet another darker crisis and that is the mental state or psychological wellbeing of its inhabitants. It was just a year ago that it was declared that the new world order would see the Millennial and the Gen Z or Gen alpha ride the wave of a booming economy. This Gen Z were the adolescents and young minds, born in the year 2000 and thereafter, making them the young graduates ready to take the plunge into their careers and create innovations that would make the world a more technology driven and comfortable place to live in. But the pandemic has applied its brakes on a fast moving and booming population.

## 5. Objectives of the Study

1. To rank the activities missed during the lockdown period.

2. To rank the most enjoyable and most distressing thoughts during the lockdown period

3. To determine the association between enjoyable tasks and positive thoughts

4. To determine the association between the distressing tasks and negative thoughts.

## 6. Hypotheses of the Study

NH-1 - There is no significant difference among mean ranks towards personal activity

and social activity missed during the lock-down period.

NH-2: There is no significant difference among mean ranks towards personal and social activity enjoyed and personally and socially distressing activity experienced during the lock-down period.

NH-3: There is no association between the personal activities enjoyed and personal positive thoughts.

## 7. Research Methodology

### 7.1. Sample Selection

For the purpose of this study, certain constructs like simple day to day tasks and feelings, that an individual may experience, were used. These constructs were grouped as personal and social activities that were:

1. Missed

2. Enjoyed

3. Most Disturbing

4. Fears experienced during the lockdown period.

### 7.2 Sources of Data

Primary data were collected for the study. A Google docs form questionnaire was prepared and circulated, based on the objectives of the study. The questionnaire was subdivided into:

1. Personal and social activity missed during the lock down period

2. Personal and social activities enjoyed during the lock down period

3. Personally and socially distressing activity experienced during the lock down period

4. Personal fears and social fears experienced during the lock down period

5. Personal and socially positive thoughts during the lock down period

A total of 466 responses were received. The sample population consisted of college students from arts, science and commerce colleges, engineering colleges and professional colleges. The respondents were students mainly from the under graduate programs and a few from the post graduate programs.

### 7.3 Period of the Study

This study was undertaken during the months of April 2020 and May 2020, when the whole of India was under lockdown, trying to combat the pandemic virus. The lockdown began in the month of March 2020 and when this study began, the respondents had spent more than 45 days under lockdown.

### 7.4 Tools used in the Study

The SPSS tool was used to analyse the data. Statistical tool such as the Freidman Test was used for signifance and Karl Pearsons Correlation Coefficient was used to analyse the data.

## 8. Data Analysis

The results of the survey were put through the SPSS software for the analysis. The demographic results of the survey indicated that 93.1% of the respondents were female and 6.9% were male. 81.8% were in the age group of 18-20 years and 12.4% were in the age group of 21-23 years. 90.3% of respondents were either pursuing under graduation or had just completed their graduation. The respondents were pursuing arts, science, commerce, engineering and other professional courses. The data were analysed, based on the objectives and hypotheses formulated.

### 8.1. Ranking the activities missed during the lockdown period

To test this objective, five personal and five social activities missed during the lockdown

period, were listed out for the respondents to be ranked according to their preference. The responses were then subjected to Freidman Test of significance and the results are exhibited in **Table-1**. The results revealed that P value was less than 0.001, and hence the **NH-1 - There is no significant difference among mean ranks towards personal activity and social activity missed during the lock down period**, was rejected, at 1% level of significance. In other words, there was significant difference among mean rank towards the personal activity missed and social activity missed during the lock down period.

## 8.2. Ranking the most enjoyable and most distressing thoughts during the lock down

To test these objectives, five personal activities enjoyed and five personally distressing activities were listed out for the respondents, to be ranked according to their preference. The responses were then subjected to Freidman Test of significance and the results are exhibited in Table 2. Since P value was less than 0.001,**the NH-2: There is no significant difference among mean ranks towards personal and social activity enjoyed and personally and socially distressing activity experienced during the lock-down period**, was rejected, at 1% level of significance. In other words, there was significant difference among mean rank towards the personal activity enjoyed and personally distressing activity during the lock down period. Five social activities enjoyed and five socially distressing activities were listed out for the respondents to rank them according to their preference. The responses were then subjected to Freidman Test of significance and the results are exhibited in **Table-3**, Similarly, five socially enjoyable activities and five socially distressing activities were identified and ranking was done.

## 8.3.Determining the association between enjoyable tasks and positive thoughts

Correlation analysis, among the personal activities enjoyed during the lockdown period and personal positive thoughts, was done to analyse whether there was association between the two factors. The results of the test are exhibited in **Table-4**. The correlation co-efficient between "all is well and I am strong" was $0.565^{**}$, which indicated positive relationship between 'all is well' and 'I am strong'.

## 8.4. Determining the association between the distressing tasks and negative thoughts.

While association between positive thoughts and activities was established, association between distressing activities and personal fears experienced, during the lock down period, was also analyzed, using the Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient. The results are exhibited in **Table-5**. The relationship between 'all is well' and 'I am strong' was 31.92%, followed by 'planning for the future and learning new skill was $0.507^{**}$, which indicated positive relationship between 'planning for the future' and 'learning a new skill' at 25.70%. Hence, **NH-3: There is no association between personal activities enjoyed and personal positive thoughts,** was rejected, at 1% level. The correlation co-efficient between fear of not being able to pursue your dream and 'fear of missing out' was 0.560, which indicated positive relationship between the two factors, with a correlation of 31.36% This was followed by falling sick and putting on weight, witha correlation coefficient of $0.521^{**}$.

## 9. Findings of the Study

Based on the mean ranks, it was found that going to the Cinema theatres to watch a movie was the most important activity, missed by the college students, during the lock down period,

followed by going to beaches driving or riding, shopping and eating out. Entertainment seems to be the most important factor on the minds of the students. This is in consonance with the personality traits of a millennial, who does like to enjoy life and be entertained. Based on the mean ranks, the most missed social activity was partying with friends, followed by meeting new people, visiting malls, attending college and hanging out with friends. This reflects the Extraversion trait of the millennial, as pointed out in the big five constructs. Based on the mean rank of personal activity enjoyed, learning a new skill was the most enjoyable task, followed by discovering a new hobby and planning for the future being the least enjoyed. Similarly, the fear of falling sick and putting on weight,were the most distressing factors while insomnia was the least distressing factor. The Freidman Test of significance revealed that making new friends had recorded the highest mean score while bonding with parents and siblings had a mean score of just one. On the other hand, idleness and lack of personal space were the socially distressing activity. Hence it was concluded that there was relation between personally distressing activities and personal fears experienced, during the lock down period and the results have been significant.

## 10. Suggestions

This study has helped in analyzing the impact of lockdown on the minds of young college going adolescents. The study could help in understanding the worst fears and the best moments in the lives of such adolescents. It has also linked the fear with the most distressing times and the most positive thoughts to the enjoyable activities. It is, therefore, suggested that these adolescents must be given proper care and counseling, to overcome their distress so

that they overcome the challenges in life and this lockdown phase does not shadow over their optimism and positivity.

## 11. Conclusion

A new order world is being born during this pandemic crisis and every nation, big and small, is on the brink of a social disorder. Normal times seem like many light years away. Among these trying times, we need to remember that this earth was not inherited by us from our forefathers but borrowed from our children. Hence it is very essential to understand the thoughts, feelings and the emotions and the mental state of the largest population of today, the Millennials. They are our future. They are the future of this earth and to them belongs the next world order. Hence it is necessary to understand the likes and dislikes of these young minds and understand their fears and thoughts so as to be able to help them and inspire them to flutter their wings and learn to take flight even amidst this pandemic and pull the world from plunging itself into the darkest era in the history of mankind.

## 12. Limitations of the Study

This study was carried out on a small sample of college students. The sample was geographically concentrated in and around Chennai City. Hence the findings are only reflective in nature and not conclusive.

## 13. Scope for Further Research

Having studied only a small segment of population, the implications of the lockdown on the minds of college students revealed significant results. It is, therefore, an area of research that can be carried out on a population, based on age, gender, income, qualifications and so on. This will add comprehensively to the research on the psychological wellbeing of the human race during the pandemic.

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**Table-1: Results of Friedman's Test for significant difference among mean ranks towards Personal activity and Social activity missed during the lock – down period**

| Personal Activity Missed | | | | Social Activity Missed | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Factor | Mean Rank | Chi-Square Value | P Value | Factor | Mean Rank | Chi-Square Value | P Value |
| Eating out | 2.15 | | | Hanging out with friends | 1.97 | | |
| Shopping | 2.81 | | | College | 2.11 | | |
| Cinema | 3.48 | **214.462** | **< 0.001**\*\* | Malls | 3.21 | **656.561** | **< 0.001**\*\* |
| Beaches | 3.34 | | | Meeting new People | 3.55 | | |
| Driving / Riding | 3.22 | | | Partying | 4.16 | | |

Note: \*\* Denotes significant at 1% level
Source: Primary source using SPSS

**Table 2: Results of Friedman's test for significant difference among mean ranks towards Personal activity enjoyed and personally distressing activity experienced during the lock – down period**

| Personal Activity Enjoyed | | | | Personally Distressing Activity | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Factor | Mean Rank | Chi-Square Value | P Value | Factor | Mean Rank | Chi-Square Value | P Value |
| Planning for the future | 2.61 | **129.195** | < 0.001** | Boredom | 1.97 | 309.403 | < 0.001** |
| Reading books/ newspapers/ journals etc | 2.8 | | | Falling sick | 3.55 | | |
| Discovering a new hobby | 3.17 | | | Anxiety on exams | 2.79 | | |
| Helping in household chores | 2.77 | | | Insomnia | 3.29 | | |
| Learning a new skill | 3.65 | | | Putting on Weight | 3.40 | | |

Note: ** Denotes significant at 1% level
Source: Primary source using SPSS

**Table-3: Results of Friedman's test for significant difference among mean ranks towards social activity enjoyed and socially distressing activity experienced during the lock – down period**

| Social Activity Enjoyed | | | | Socially Distressing Activity | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Factor | Mean Rank | Chi-Square Value | P Value | Factor | Mean Rank | Chi-Square Value | P Value |
| Social/Community Services | 2.86 | **489.753** | < 0.001** | Restricted movement | 2.44 | 269.621 | < 0.001** |
| Being active on social media | 2.58 | | | No favourite junk/food joints | 2.35 | | |
| Bonding with parents and sibling | 2.06 | | | Uncertainty | 3.11 | | |
| Playing virtual games | 3.28 | | | Lack of personal space | 3.33 | | |
| Making new Friends via social app | 4.22 | | | Idleness | 3.77 | | |

Note: ** Denotes significant at 1% level
Source: Primary source using SPSS

**Table 4: Results of Karl Pearson Correlation Coefficient between personal activities enjoyed and personal positive thoughts**

| Factors | Planning for the future | Reading books/ papers/ journals etc., | Discover-ing a new hobby | Helping in house-hold chores | Learning a new skill | All is well | Every thing is for the good | Life will bounce back to normalcy | Future will be better | I am Strong |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Planning for the future | 1 | 0.145** | 0.245 | 0.493** | 0.507** | 0.135** | 0.065 | 0.077 | 0.04 | .163** |
| Reading books/ newspapers/ journals etc. | | 1 | 0.097* | 0.416** | 0.466** | .101* | .137** | 0.06 | .093* | 0.083 |
| Discovering a new hobby | | | 1 | 0.195** | 0.199** | 0.044 | 0.087 | 0.001 | 0.017 | 0.066 |
| Helping in household chores | | | | 1 | 0.079 | 0.098* | 0.092* | 0.088 | 0.053 | .092* |
| Learning a new skill | | | | | 1 | 0.166** | 0.130** | 0.06 | 0.021 | .195** |
| All is well | | | | | | 1 | 0.145** | 0.215** | .422** | .565** |
| Everything is for the good | | | | | | | 1 | 0.114* | 0.264** | 0.476** |
| Life will bounce back to normalcy | | | | | | | | 1 | .108* | .202** |
| Future will be better | | | | | | | | | 1 | 0.013 |
| I am Strong | | | | | | | | | | 1 |

Note: ** denotes significant at 1% level;   * denotes significant at 5% level
Source: Primary source using SPSS

**Table-5: Karl Pearson Correlation Coefficient between personally distressing activity experienced and personal fears experienced during the lock-down period**

| | Boredom | Falling sick | Anxiety on exams | Insomnia | Putting on Weight | Fear of Unemployment | Fear of not being able to pursue your dreams | Fear of unstable future | Fear of losing loved ones | Fear of missing out |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Boredom | 1 | 0.087 | 0.236** | 0.436** | 0.465** | 0.100* | 0.079 | 0.015 | 0.075 | 0.079 |
| Falling sick | | 1 | 0.158** | 0.296** | 0.521** | 0.208** | 0.208** | 0.039 | 0.249** | 0.155** |
| Anxiety on exams | | | 1 | 0.184** | 0.244** | 0.011 | 0.036 | 0.018 | 0.082 | 0.026 |
| Insomnia | | | | 1 | 0.001 | 0.092* | 0.176** | 0.001 | 0.146** | 0.082 |
| Putting on Weight | | | | | 1 | 0.191** | 0.126** | 0.031 | 0.210** | 0.112* |
| Fear of Unemployment | | | | | | 1 | 0.310** | 0.055 | 0.583** | 0.675** |
| Fear of not being able to pursue your dreams | | | | | | | 1 | 0.012 | 0.489** | 0.560** |
| Fear of unstable future | | | | | | | | 1 | 0.346** | 0.258** |
| Fear of losing loved ones | | | | | | | | | 1 | 0.248** |
| Fear of missing out | | | | | | | | | | 1 |

Note: ** denotes significant at 1% level

     * denotes significant at 5% level

Source: Primary source and computed using SPSS