

WHAT HAPPENS UNDER CRISIS: A COVID-19 PANDEMIC MATTER ABOUT SOCIAL ISOLATION

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ABSTRACT. The study aims to understand what happens during a crisis and provides the story of the COVID-19 pandemic about social isolation. The coronavirus outbreak made the government impose specific measures to reduce the spread. The measures include social isolation and social distancing. The study provides a comprehensive analysis of how COVID-19 social isolation had detrimental effects on people's psychological well-being. The study shows the relationship between the disruption caused by the pandemic, i.e., social isolation, and people's psychological well-being. Provides an extensive literature review on how the crisis disrupted the workplace, negatively affecting job satisfaction and productivity. The research involves a qualitative systematic literature review on social isolation during the coronavirus pandemic. The study involves articles which are thoroughly assessed using the exclusion and inclusion criteria to provide a comprehensive understanding of the study themes. The study concludes that social isolation influences people's mental health in their personal lives and work life. People lack the feeling of social connectedness, which leads to increased levels of depression, stress, and anxiety. Working remotely during the pandemic heightened people's stress and depression and ultimately reducing job satisfaction and productivity.

Keywords: social isolation, crisis, Covid-19, mental health, mental well-being

JEL Classification: I19, I39, Z13

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Introduction

The beginning of 2020, COVID-19 was officially recognized as a pandemic. In response to the outbreak of the coronavirus, various measures for social distancing were developed in order to prevent the virus from spreading further. Infected people and those who had been exposed to the sickness were required to undergo quarantine and isolation measures, and members of the general public were instructed to maintain social distance from one another in order to prevent the spread of coronavirus (Pancani et al., 2021). Several nations have strengthened their containment efforts in an effort to decrease the risk of the virus spreading within their borders; these efforts include the imposition of travel restrictions and lockdowns. There were stringent guidelines for social distance around the globe, and the general population was instructed to cancel any travel that was not needed and remain at home. The measures were relaxed, but the social distancing measures remained in place, and people who had been infected with the virus were required to self-isolate. Additionally, some countries continually re-introduced national lockdowns (Issa & Jaleel, 2021). The COVID-19 virus was responsible for more than half a million fatalities throughout the world in July of 2020. This had a significant impact on the lives of people everywhere.

Because of the epidemic, people all throughout the world are becoming increasingly isolated, anxious, and stressed out. The World Health Organization (WHO) reports that death rates are much higher for those of advanced age (Kim & Jung, 2021). Protecting vulnerable persons and imposing social distance limits on all people can have unintended consequences, one of which is the physical separation that can lead to feelings of loneliness and social isolation. The objective lack of interaction with other people is what is meant by the term "social isolation." The idea of loneliness is comparable, but it more broadly refers to the subjective experience of being alone. During the lockdown, a significant number of

people all around the world felt isolated since they had less opportunity to interact with other people. There is mounting evidence that loneliness and social isolation are linked to increased rates of mortality as well as depression, cardiovascular illness, and anxiety.

An issue for the public's health has been caused by the extensive social isolation that has resulted from the coronavirus outbreak (Clair et al., 2021). It has been proven that people's well-being and overall life satisfaction suffer when they are socially isolated during a pandemic. The epidemic has caused social isolation, which has negative effects on mental health. People who are exposed to these types of events are more likely to acquire mental health issues, such as depression, panic attacks, phobias, and drug misuse, according to the findings of previous catastrophes that have befallen humanity. People were impacted in the long and short term by an increase in the prevalence of mental health disorders as a result of the pandemic, which had effects for both people's physical health and mental well-being as a result. The fact that people have turned to religion and spirituality as a means of coping with the crisis has, as a result, an effect on the therapeutic outcomes. There is a paucity of research on how COVID-19 has contributed to individuals being socially isolated, which is strongly tied to other factors such as variations in people's day-to-day life. This study demonstrates what occurs during a crisis and how COVID-19 has led to social isolation, which has a negative impact on people's psychological well-being in their personal lives as well as in their professional life.

Using the example of the coronavirus pandemic, the purpose of this study is to determine what happens during a crisis in regard to social isolation and how it manifests itself. As a result of the outbreak of the coronavirus, measures of social distance and social isolation have been implemented in an effort to prevent the further spread of the disease. Isolation from others and loneliness are serious public health concerns that are connected to the increased incidence of mental health problems. In this study, a meta-analysis on social isolation is carried out to demonstrate the ways in which the coronavirus outbreak has impacted individuals' mental health. The goal of this study is to determine the impact that the coronavirus had on people's psychological well-being and the degree of social isolation they experienced during the epidemic. It demonstrates how a global health crisis may lead to a worsening in both one's physical and mental health, depending on how a person deals with the issue. The purpose of this study is to investigate how the epidemic has caused

individuals to become socially isolated and how this has affected their lives, including the manner in which they do their jobs, their mental health, and their quality of life in general. It demonstrates how the social distance restrictions caused people to separate themselves and avoid interactions with family members, friends, co-workers, and students. The contemporary world has, on very few occasions, been compartmentalized and segregated. It is critical to have an understanding of how the imposition of many constraints during a crisis burdens people with social isolation, which in turn leads to boredom and the deepening of feelings of loneliness. The purpose of this study is to investigate how people's health is affected by social isolation and how it does so. The purpose of this study is to get insight into what occurs during a crisis by determining the effects that being socially isolated during the pandemic has. It demonstrates how interrelated the many aspects of people's life are as well as how being isolated from others is detrimental to people's mental health.

Literature Review

Social Isolation and Mental Health

An individual is said to be socially isolated when they are objectively and physically separated from other individuals. (Pancani et al., 2021). Because they provide a buffer against the negative effects of stress, social ties are vital to the health and happiness of individuals. The provision of informational, instrumental, and emotional social support via social interactions contributes to an improvement in the adaptive and neuroendocrine behavioral responses to both chronic and acute stresses, such as social transitions and self-quarantine (Li et al., 2021). According to the main impact model, having strong social connections is important for a person's mental health regardless of whether or not they are experiencing high levels of stress. The degree to which one is socially linked is correlated with the degree of protection afforded to their health through cognitive, biological, behavioral, and emotional aspects. The harmful effects of stresses on people's health are mitigated and buffered by the presence of social support. Because they are cut off from their social connections, those who have chosen to self-isolate are likely to feel higher levels of stress than other people, which has a detrimental effect on their overall health. Studies have shown that even brief periods of

social isolation can lead to unpleasant feelings such as melancholy and rage, as well as a reduction in the degree to which core psychological needs and cognitive capacities are satisfied. Isolation from one's social network for an extended period of time has been linked to an increased risk of suicidal ideation, premature death, and depression. People who are emotionally and physically isolated from others for an extended period of time are more likely to develop psychological symptoms of resignation, such as a sense of hopelessness, unworthiness, and depression. This is because these people reach a point where they feel they have no control over their situation (Li et al., 2021). Other theoretical models establish a connection between protracted rejection and practices of social retreat. Due to the unanticipated nature of the circumstance in every respect, the emotional unpreparedness for a biological emergency such as COVID-19 has a negative influence on the scenario.

The subjective experience of being cut off from other people is what we mean when we talk about loneliness. It is believed that the emotional condition of loneliness is caused by the biological reaction of being isolated from other people. Because it requires a constant state of mind, the concept of loneliness is one that has been around for a very long time (Banerjee & Rai, 2020). Isolation from society or community is what we mean when we talk about loneliness; it's a terrible sensation that can put people at risk for a number of mental illnesses, such as anxiety, depression, sleeplessness, and chronic stress. There appears to be a significant connection between loneliness and mental health, according to the literature. Having a grasp of the effects that loneliness has on mental health is distinct from having an understanding of whether or not forcing members of the general public to remain alone for a set amount of time might result in a decrease in mental health. According to a number of studies, the quality and quantity of interpersonal social relationships may have an effect on the mental health of individuals who are subject to situations that involve continuous social isolation. If self-isolation and lockdowns were to continue for an extended period of time, this would certainly result in an increased risk of fractures and frailty (Banerjee & Rai, 2020). The COVID-19 epidemic caused disruptions in contemporary civilization and curtailed people's ability to engage in limitless social activities. People who are subjected to social constraints are compelled to face the harsh reality of solitude, which in turn leads to boredom and disputes amongst individuals. Similar patterns of increased

isolation and loneliness have been seen among those who work in emergency services and those who are confined. Isolation has contributed to an increase in the occurrence of both depression and sleeplessness, as well as depression. Isolation from one's social circle has been linked to increased levels of exhaustion as well as a loss in performance among healthcare professionals. The idea of being alone leads to feelings of frustration and rage; it also has the potential to inspire people to disobey rules, which would have a significant negative impact on public health.

Lee et al. (2021) carried out a research with the purpose of identifying the steps that might be taken to prevent older people living in community settings from becoming socially isolated. According to the findings of the study, social isolation is a reflection, both quantitatively and objectively, of diminished social interactions and a smaller overall social network. When looking at older people, social isolation is an important factor to investigate since older people frequently have fewer resources and a higher degree of mobility impairment. The findings of this study concur with those of previous researchers who hypothesized that loneliness is a psychological manifestation of social isolation. Loneliness is characterized by a limited capacity for intimacy, a low frequency of social contact, and significant differences between relationships (Lee et al., 2021). Loneliness, as well as both social and emotional loneliness, are characterized by a lack of social integration; however, emotional loneliness is characterized by the perception that one lacks an attachment figure. Because it creates an increased risk of hypertension, stress, mental health concerns, and cardiovascular disease, loneliness and social isolation are a significant public health concern for older adults. This is especially true in the United States. According to Kim & Jung (2021), the emergence of the coronavirus led to a drop in the mental health of those who were over 65 years old. Isolation from others increases the risk of having poor mental health as a result of the stress caused by the epidemic. Isolation among people as a result of the epidemic contributed to increased levels of anxiety and stress.

According to Best et al. (2021), the Canadian officials in charge of public health responded to the unexpected epidemic of coronavirus by implementing public health measures such as quarantine and social distance. The precautions are necessary for preventing the transmission of the virus; nevertheless, it is not known how the social isolation and physical distance may affect an individual's mental health. In this study, the psychological effects of the different measurements are compared, and

the influence of the coronavirus on psychological distress is investigated. The purpose of this study is to ascertain whether or not the preliminary phases of social isolation measures resulted in any unintended consequences. The levels of psychological discomfort, life satisfaction, and social cohesiveness are all measured in the study. According to the findings of the study, social isolation can lead to higher levels of psychological discomfort even in the short term. This can manifest in a variety of ways, including greater levels of panic, despair, and emotional disturbances (Best et al., 2021). Coronavirus treatment that was less stringent linked to more people experiencing psychological disturbance. Similar findings were reported by Hamza et al. (2021), who found that the outbreak of the coronavirus increased the psychological distress of university students, regardless of whether or not the students had pre-existing problems with their mental health. The broad epidemic of the virus resulted in the closure of campuses across the country, which resulted in a move to online learning, which had an unforeseen effect on students all over the world (Hamza et al., 2021). Learners who did not have any pre-existing concerns with their mental health were disproportionately affected by an increase in social isolation, which had a negative impact on their mental health.

Social Isolation and the Workplace

Due to the lockdown rules imposed by the government to prevent the further spread of COVID-19, a large number of people have been compelled to do their jobs outside of the physical site ever since the month of May 2020 came to a close. The majority of workers were forced to switch to working from home, which brought up both possibilities and problems all of a sudden. One of the most common aspects of working remotely is experiencing increased levels of social isolation, both from one's co-workers and the physical location of their job. Toscano & Zappalà (2020) conducted a study with the objective of determining whether or whether there is a correlation between social isolation brought on by the coronavirus pandemic and the levels of stress, productivity, and job satisfaction associated with working remotely. The researchers carried out an online poll and received replies from 265 workers. The results of the poll showed that social isolation had a part in raising stress, which in turn caused a drop in the productivity of remote work and, ultimately, work satisfaction. According to the findings, the pandemic acts as a moderator between linkages between distant work happiness and social

isolation, as well as between job contentment and productivity. According to the findings of the study that was conducted by Toscano & Zappalà in 2020, Italy was one of the Western countries that were hit hard by the effects of coronavirus, and approximately sixty million of the country's residents were forced to stay inside their homes in order to prevent the virus from spreading further. The first containment measures were developed in March of 2020, and by May of that year, many Italian workers and companies were forced to rethink the working model, the primary focus of which was to enable them to carry out their day-to-day responsibilities outside of the workplace by utilizing contemporary technological tools. The new laws passed by the government primarily made it easier to transition away from jobs that required physical presence and toward work that could be done remotely. People were forced to work in methods that were both novel to them and, at times, ineffective for the activities that were being carried out during the period of psychological strain as a result of the unexpected and rather swift nature of the repercussions. Similar findings are presented in Prasad's et. al. (2020) research, which suggests that the COVID-19 outbreak has significantly altered the working landscape. The researchers suggest that there is a connection between psychological health and employees who worked remotely while the coronavirus crisis was ongoing.

Several pieces of research point to the potential benefits of working from home, which include favourable outcomes in terms of one's job performance, organizational commitment, and overall job satisfaction (Issa & Jaleel, 2021). On the other hand, studies have shown that working from home can lead to a number of negative outcomes, such as increased family-work tension and professional isolation. Working from home also reduces the likelihood of receiving a promotion and disrupts professional connections. The individual, their family, organization, place of work, and the kinds of technology tools they use all have a role in determining the good and bad effects. Despite this, the outcomes cannot be attributed only to impromptu and unplanned remote work done in response to the emergency caused by the outbreak of COVID-19. Many people, particularly those who were already in poor health, showed signs of despair, stress, and anxiety in response to the pandemic crisis, which led to widespread concerns. According to research, the COVID-19 period included restrictions that led to an increase in people's level of unhappiness with their jobs, which in turn can lead to an increase in the level of pay disparity among

workers over the long run. Toscano & Zappalà (2020) found that job demands that need persistent psychological and physical efforts lead to increased weariness and stress, which in turn produce a decline in performance. This is due to the fact that the demands of the job require sustained effort. One of the requirements of the work may be described as the feeling of being alone, as well as the lack of chances for social and emotional interaction with the supervisor and the rest of the team. Previous research has demonstrated that being socially isolated has a negative influence on both performance and health. The social isolation that occurred during the crisis demonstrates features that are frequently present in labor that is performed remotely. The primary distinction between working remotely during the coronavirus season and working during regular business hours is the absence of face-to-face encounters. During the coronavirus pandemic, many employees were forced to utilize technology in order to communicate with one another and reduce the amount of social isolation they experienced as a result of the pandemic. The use of telework has made the phenomenon not unique to a select group of people but rather applicable to other workers.

Golden et al. (2008) claim that technological innovation has displaced people from the actual workplace and allowed them to conduct tasks from the usual office environment. Telework is being done in more and more locations all around the world. Studies demonstrate that professional isolation causes teleworkers to be left out of the loop of workplace relationships, as highlighted by Toscano & Zappalà (2020). This is the case despite the fact that telework is thought to have positive effects on job performance and employee retention rates. Because of this procedure, employees who telework report feeling isolated from their coworkers. This poses a substantial barrier to the widespread adoption of telework. A person may be said to be suffering from professional isolation if they have the mindset or perception that they are not in contact with other people in their place of employment. Isolation produces an innate need and effort on the part of the individual to feel socially connected. Working remotely does not satisfy the demand for social components such as understanding, support, and other social characteristics that are acquired from face-to-face encounters that arise as a result of the isolation. Isolation in one's professional life creates opportunities for problems to arise with regard to the efficiency of the remote work model. Even if a person may feel professionally isolated when working among

other employees, others may still be able to keep the sense of connection even when they are not frequently coming to the office. Isolation in one's professional life can be attributed to the perception that a person does not have sufficient relationships with other workers, which combines with a lack of sentiments of social closeness. To avoid social and professional isolation in one's line of work, one must have an adequate number of contacts in both fields. Work results might be affected by factors such as physical separation or loneliness brought on by professional isolation. The knowledge base of the person is put at risk when they are isolated, which is detrimental to their performance on the job. Workers who do not have adequate opportunities for social connection perform at a lower level and are forced to carry out their professional duties with fewer insights. Employees who work from home report higher levels of worry and tension, which may have a negative impact on their ability to make sound decisions.

Even (2020) agrees with the findings of research by Toscano & Zappalà (2020) and Golden et al. (2008), which show that pleasure may be increased through social connections and the impression of support from others. This study reveals the best strategies that may be used to prevent social isolation for employees who work remotely. People used to think of their jobs as the place they went to every day, whether it was a factory, a shop, a store, or even an office. However, as Golden et al. (2008) pointed out, technology has made it possible for individuals to work from any location, which has led to a fundamental rethinking of what it means to be employed. Work has transitioned from being a location to consisting of a variety of goals and activities that individuals carry out. The term "telework" refers to the practice of carrying out some or all of one's regular work responsibilities away from the traditional workplace, such as from inside the confines of one's own home or from an off-site eating establishment. Isolation and detachment are two problems that might arise from working from home. A significant number of workers are sent home to do the less meaningful aspects of knowledge job, with little to no engagement with their coworkers in the process. A significant number of workers do not interact with their immediate bosses or coworkers. Although technology enables workers to perform their jobs from any location, this perk is rarely taken advantage of. Some workers have reported increased feelings of loneliness, isolation, and stress as a result of

the technology that allows for greater working flexibility (Even, 2020). People's personal life have been disrupted as a result of their having to work from home. The employees who work remotely complain of being exploited by their jobs and losing out on opportunities to gain new skills. Job satisfaction suffers when employees are kept apart from one another. Because social and face-to-face contacts are replaced by telework, employees get the impression that they are missing out on insider knowledge. Employees believe they are being kept in the dark, which contributes to increased levels of sadness, stress, and worry among those workers.

Research Methodology

A qualitative and systematic literature review is going to be used as the methodology for the investigation. We searched the systematic literature in order to locate the most compelling evidence that is currently available. Creating an evidence-driven review question, developing a review procedure, carrying out an exhaustive search for relevant evidence, and applying inclusion and exclusion criteria are the usual phases of a systematic review. Following the selection of the most relevant pieces of research literature, a quality evaluation, data extraction, and finally a synthesis of the findings are carried out. The research finds articles by doing a search in a bibliographic library and utilizing a "snowball" method that starts with a focal article. In order to choose the most reliable facts, each article was scrutinized to determine whether or not it should be included. In order to establish the quality of the selected articles, the mixed methods tool was utilized in the evaluation process. In order to obtain the useful data on the topic of this study, the finest study papers have been summarized, and the data extraction process has begun. The data was retrieved through the use of thematic coding in order to extract significant topics from the articles that were chosen. In order to have a better understanding of the COVID-19 epidemic and social isolation, the material has been synthesised into themes. The research offers a comprehensive grasp of the effects of being isolated from others while suffering from coronavirus on psychological health as well as changes in the job. Through the use of the electronic database, a search is conducted for publications that are published in English and are about coronavirus and social isolation

Results and Discussions

According to the conclusions of the study, the emergence of COVID-19 had negative impacts on humans. People's mental health was negatively impacted as a result of the implementation of public health policies that encouraged social distance and isolation. Loneliness and amplified emotions of stress, despair, and anxiety were the results of social isolation during the extraordinary crisis caused by the coronavirus. Social connectivity is vital for providing support to people during challenging times. Isolation from one's peers has a negative impact on a person's psychological health. It is simple to ignore the psychological impacts of a crisis and concentrate exclusively on its material repercussions; nonetheless, there are psychological effects related with the emergence of the crisis. According to the available research, experiencing social isolation, even for a little period of time, can lead to unpleasant feelings such as melancholy and anger, and can also have a detrimental impact on one's psychological well-being and general quality of life. The fact that individuals were emotionally unprepared for the implications of the crisis also contributed to the deterioration of their mental health since they were inadequately ready to deal with such substantial alterations in social connectivity.

As a result of the social isolation that was mandated by the government, a significant number of workers began working from home, which led to a rise in the level of professional isolation. The employees' perception that they were cut off from their coworkers contributed to the elevated levels of pressure and stress they experienced on the job. Employees feel overwhelmed by the decision-making process since they are unable to engage in face-to-face interactions with their superiors and other workers. Employees who work from home are more likely to experience feelings of social isolation, which can have a negative impact on mental health. The increased prevalence of mental health problems has an impact on the job performance and happiness of the employees. According to the findings of the studies, workers report lower levels of satisfaction with their jobs since they are cut off from the information loop at work and have less opportunities to advance in their careers. The personnel suffer from a loss of morale, which, in turn, has a negative impact on their productivity and performance.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak caused a global catastrophe that compelled individuals to remain isolated from one another. People report higher levels of stress, worry, sleeplessness, and sadness as a result of the situation. The fact that people felt cut off from their families, friends, and co-workers contributed to an intensification of their feeling of isolation and loneliness. People who are older are more susceptible to the negative effects of social isolation, which includes an increased chance of developing other illnesses such as hypertension and cardiovascular disorders. Because of the COVID-19 epidemic, there was a significant adjustment made to the concept of labour. People were required to leave their workplaces or other physical locations in order to prevent the virus from spreading further. The personnel were subjected to the detrimental impacts on psychological well-being that are associated with being socially isolated. The employees were coerced into isolating themselves from their co-workers and other people in the workplace, which resulted in increased levels of stress, despair, and anxiety. The employee's mental health suffered as a result of the forced remote labour that was required due to the coronavirus epidemic.

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