

Perception of Home in Pandemic Situations: A Thematic Network Analysis Study

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ABSTRACT

Homes are more than places to live in. They might keep the rain off our heads but they also house a whole host of other issues, things that resonate with us on a deep and symbolic level, a kind of physical manifestation of all our hopes and fears. "idea of home" in the current context of social distancing caused by the Corona Virus pandemic. The data was collected by conducting a semi-structured interview on one of the family members of the researcher. Results showed that the home is perceived as a personal entity, a place where family relationship plays a very important role and directly related to family environment and well-being. Further, the effects of quarantine on mental health, behaviour, productivity and self are also explained through network diagrams.

Keywords: *Social distancing, Corona virus and family environment.*

Home came into focus immediately upon learning that COVID-19 is highly contagious and spread by human contact. Precautions people can take to safeguard themselves included physical distancing, social isolation, and staying at home. Despite phases of loosening or tightening precautions in most parts of the world, home retained its safe space status, almost irrespective of geographical location. Recent studies have shown that safety, security, and familiarity are the most referred positive attributes of home. The aim of this paper was to discover the perceptions of the people of home as an entity during the time of pandemic. Whilst home was crucial to reduce COVID-19's potentially devastating effects, little scientific attention has been given to it itself. Since existing investigations still provide a basis for considering the meaning of the home, we considered, where applicable, to use its input to grasp the impact of lockdown on the meaning of the house.

Rationale of the study

This study focuses on how the subject perceives his/her home in the time of pandemic due to COVID-19. As this pandemic has hit the world hard, everyone is stuck at their homes in order to ensure safety and as a precautionary measure also leaving their daily scheduled life at holds. Also, because this situation is very novel and new to everyone nobody knows a lot about it. The number of researches that have been done on this topic is very less. So, this study will

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help the society learn more about the pandemic situations and how the perception of people about their own homes changed during pandemic situations. This study will also explore the effects of lockdown or pandemic on the mental health of the people, so that if by any chance similar situation occurs in future everyone will be ready to face it.

Objectives

To explore the “idea of home” in the present-day context of Social Distancing caused by the pandemic of Corona Virus.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample consists of one family member of one of the researchers as the practical was conducted in the situations of lockdown and abiding by the norm of Social Distancing. A Semi-structured interview was conducted, and analyses of the data were done using Thematic Network Analyses.

Tool

The data is collected with the help of semi structured interview and analysed with the help of thematic analysis.

Procedure

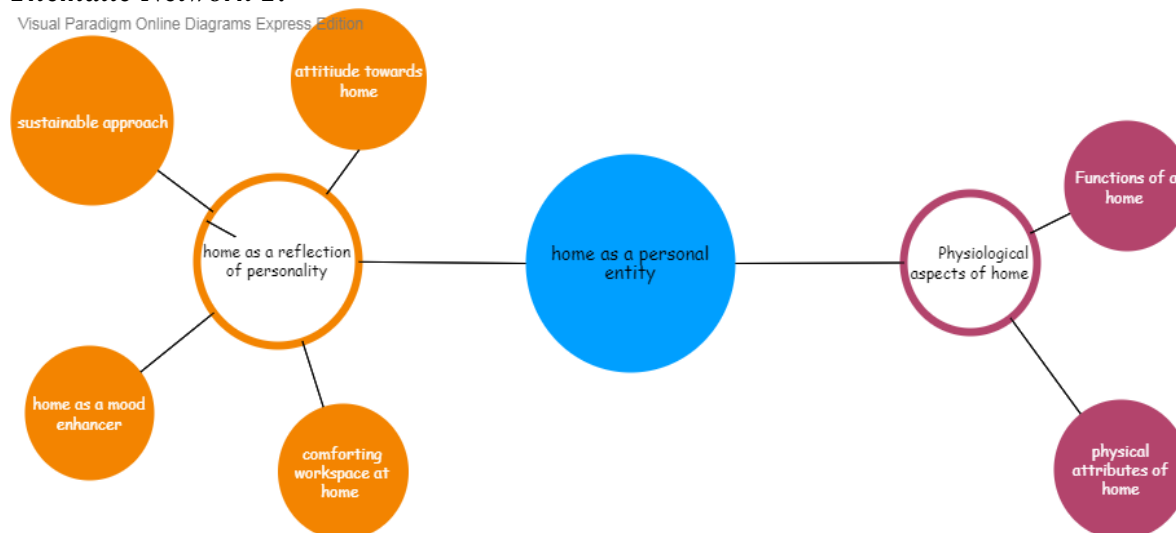
The participants were selected by convenient sampling. One family member was chosen and informed consent was taken. The participant was briefed about the nature and the purpose of the study. Initial rapport was established and a comfortable environment was chosen for the interview. The participant was thanked for their time and participation. The data derived from the semi structured interview was analysed with the help of thematic network analysis, where themes were generated with the help of codes driven from the data.

Method of Analyses

The data was analysed using the method of thematic analysis

RESULT

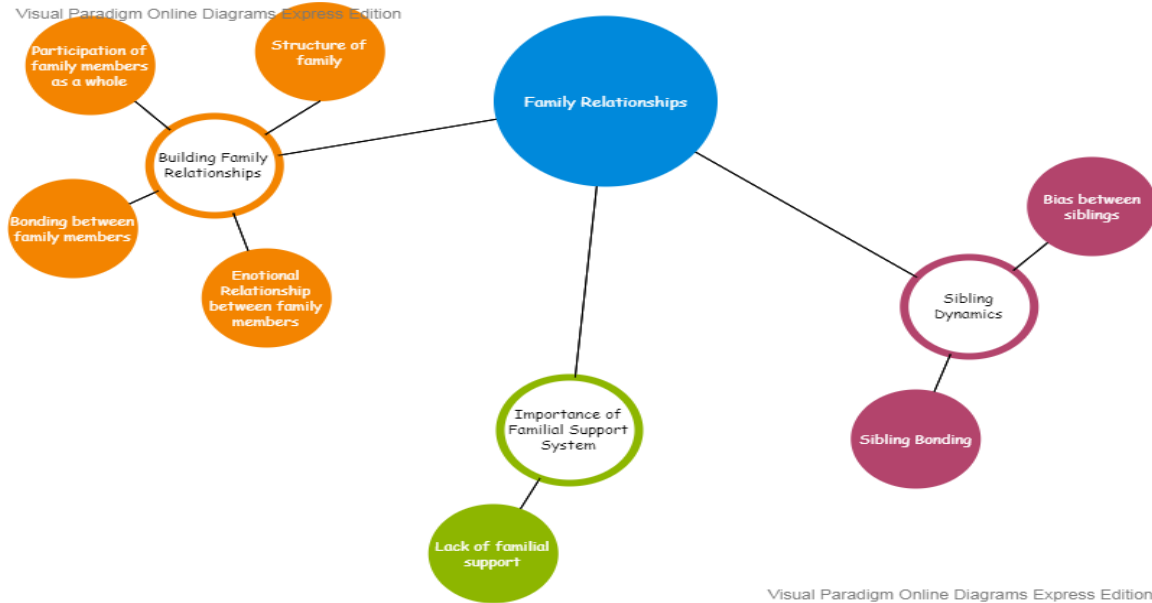
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Thematic Network 2:

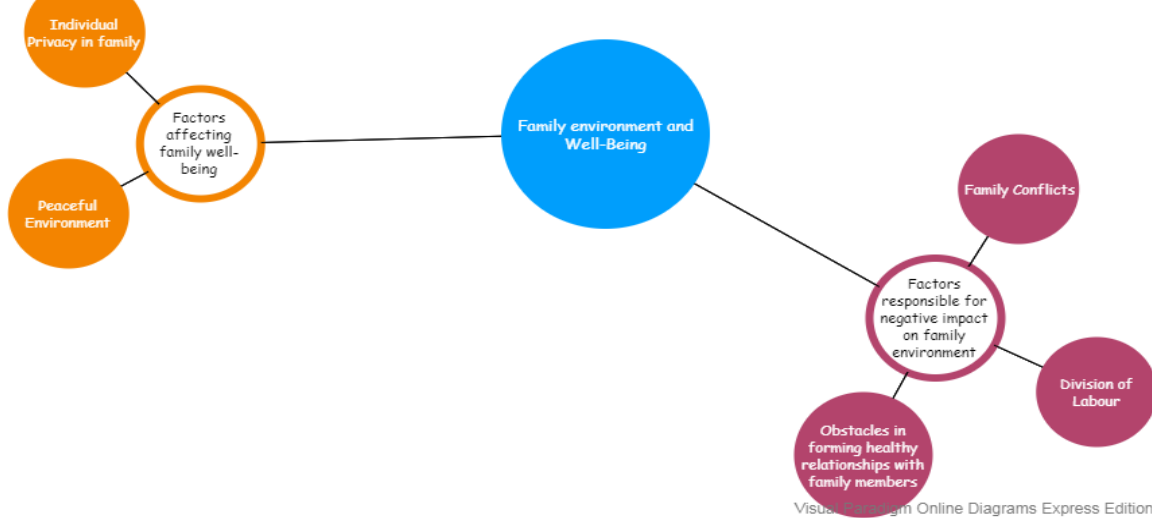
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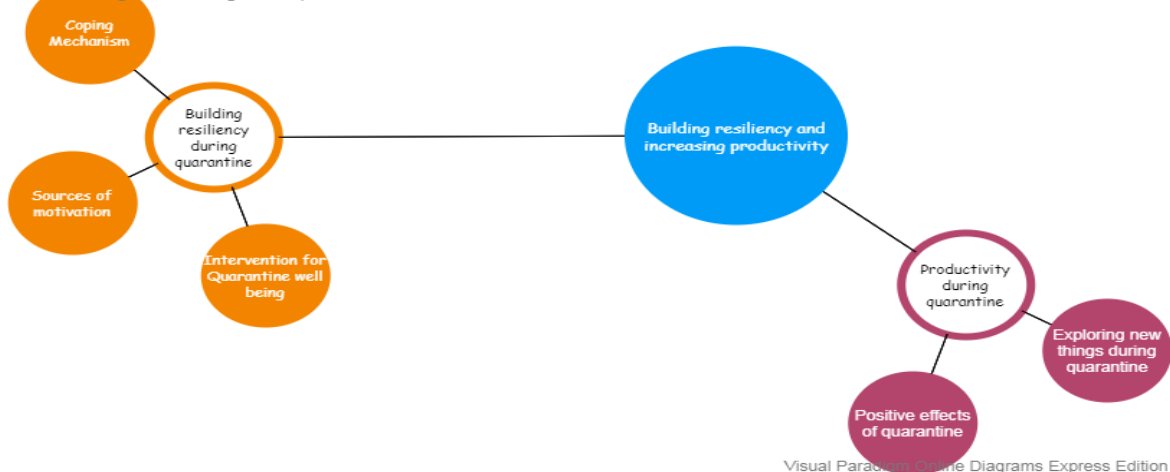
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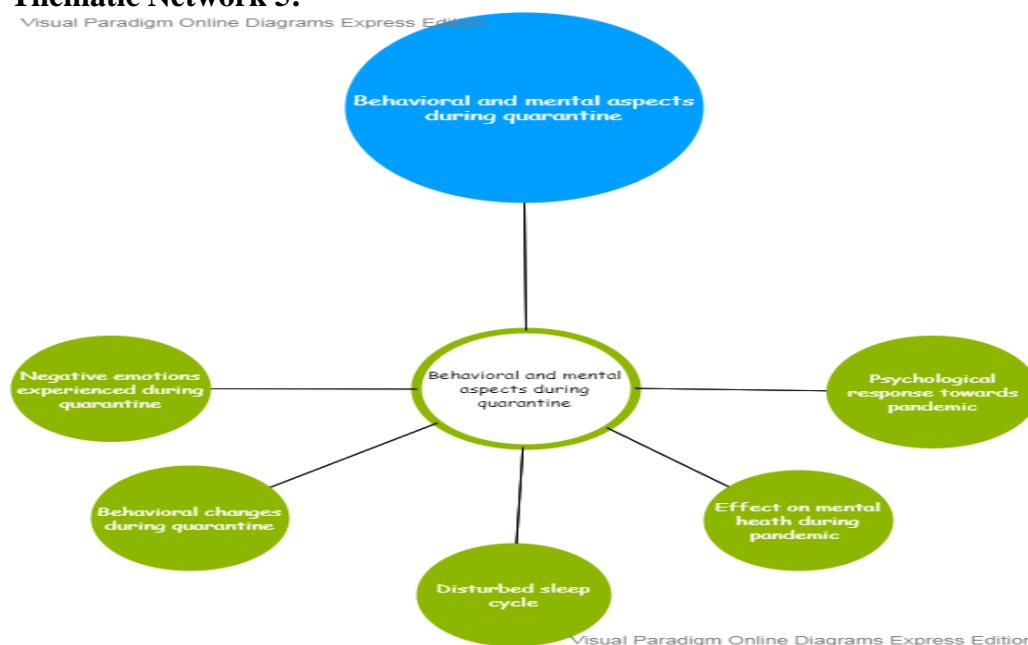


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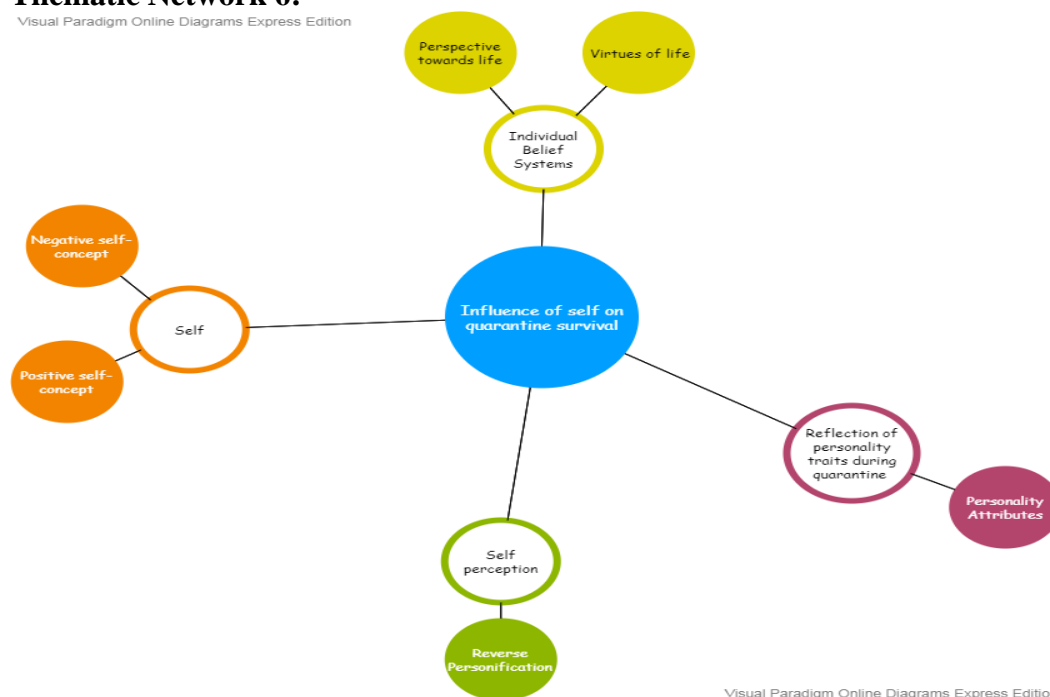
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DISCUSSION

The COVID-19 pandemic, also known as the coronavirus pandemic, is caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2. Since this virus spreads through physical contact at a very rapid rate, a complete lockdown has been instructed to the people almost all over the world as a precautionary step from the deadly corona virus. People are advised to stay at their homes and are not allowed to go outside or meet anyone to ensure maximum safety. So, since people are stuck at their homes and spending all of their time at home with their family members, this research taps into their perception or idea of home. What they think about home, what are the challenges they are facing because of their routine life getting completely disturbed and stopped and also how they are coping with it. So, in this way this research

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becomes very prevalent for the contemporary issue. The thematic networks depicting 6 different global themes discovered during the research are as follows:

1) Home as a personal entity

This network explains that how our home is a very personal entity. The subject perceives home as something which is very personal, full of her own values and a lot attachment. According to the subject every aspect of home whether it's concrete like walls and geography or abstract like the energy of the house etc. is very personal and important. Home is a reflection of our personality. It represents us, our culture, our daily practices, our habits, our beliefs etc. We can see the difference in the home of a north Indian family and a south Indian family. We can easily spot the central traits of someone's personality being reflected in their homes. For example, an environmental activist's home will comprise of lots of green plants and electronic devices that promotes sustainable approach towards the environment. The subject wants a home where she can work comfortably so that there can be no obstacle in her creative ideas. Even if we look at the physiological factors, a fitness enthusiast will prefer home near a place where he/she can practice his/her skill. Similarly, a religious person will be highly enthusiastic to settle down in home which is near to religious institutions like temple, church etc. So, your personal preferences affect the physical features of the home a lot. Home is a place which provides us the safety and the sense of security that nobody can do anything to us when we are in our homes. The subject is very creative and has a lot of ideas about how she wants her home in future like colour palette, eco-friendly, terrace etc. So, perception of home according to the subject is that it is a very personal and subjective entity and can vary drastically from one person to another.

2) Family Relationships

Anyone can buy a house but a house turns into a home when a family lives in it. The role of family is very important in the perception of home. It is the family which brings everyone together. Sibling dynamics play a very important role in family bonding and relationship. If there is any impartial treatment on the basis of any criteria then the child turns out to be an insecure, jealous and a person with low self-esteem. So, it is very crucial to note how their bonding or relationship is with each other because an unhealthy relationship leads to a lot of fights and negativity in home. The subject has also talked about the importance of family support in her life. Family being the first environment we are exposed to when we are born to throughout our lives play a very pivotal role in everybody's lives. So, it is very important in someone's life that his/her family supports them in every situation. However, from the subject's verbatim it can be concluded that her family lacks completely in this aspect and she feels that she does not receive as much support from the family as she should. Only one person can't change anything because it is always two people who are involved in any kind of relationship. Also deep, interactive and meaningful conversations help a lot in clearing all the misunderstandings and getting insights about other person's feelings. However, on the other hand it is also very important that we give each member of the family his/her due privacy because otherwise the involvement will turn into interference which would create negativity in the family member. So, the idea of home of the subject rests heavily on the family relationships.

3) Family Environment and Well-Being

The Family Environment involves the circumstances and social climate within families. If every member of the family strives hard to maintain the peace in the family, home would be the most peaceful places one can ever experience because there will be less, fights arguments, conflicts and negativity. Peaceful environment in the family especially in the lockdown

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situations would lead to emotional stability and more positivity. Subject says that improper division of labor, family conflicts and obstacles in forming healthy relationships like being misunderstood, fear of being judged, generation gap etc. creates a negative impact on the environment of the family.

4) Building resiliency and increasing productivity:

This quarantine brought a lot of stress, conflicts, arguments etc. but it also had some positive effects too. As the subject states that initially she was facing a lot of problems like disturbance in sleep cycle, lack of motivation, feeling of self-doubt etc. but then she came out of it by putting extra efforts to solve her problems. Thus, building her resiliency. This quarantine helped to come out with an intervention for our own mental health problems like the subject did with the help of meditation, physical exercise, practical goal setting etc. She found different sources of motivation to which she can turn to even when these situations are over and also this quarantine situations helped to develop new and effective coping mechanisms like introspection, rationalization, theory of acceptance etc.

5) Behavioural and mental aspects during Quarantine:

This network explores the effects that quarantine has on our behaviour and on our mental health. No wonder that these pandemic situations have given us a completely new lifestyle with lots of precautions like sanitization, cleanliness and social distancing. People take each and every step by being highly cautious about getting infected from the deadly virus. This pandemic has given a lot of feelings of uncertainty and the unpredictability of life. However, as the subject says, this has been her perspective from the beginning itself so the pandemic situations have not changed or constructed a new perspective for her but surely it has strengthened her pre-existing belief system. Another theme that this network connects is the effect on mental health during quarantine. So, if we consider the verbatim of the subject it clearly states that the quarantine has a very negative effect on her mental health. Feelings of being depressed, alone, lack of motivation, doubt on self-worth, anger, fear etc. have been very prominent with her which is quite natural as these situations were very sudden and nobody was ready for it.

6) Influence of self on quarantine survival

This network is very inter-related and it depicts the role of self in quarantine survival. It is a very multidimensional concept and plays a very pivotal role in every aspect of our life. So, according to the subject's interview her "self-concept" also played a very important role in her survival during quarantine. Her virtues of life i.e., being courteous to every living being and enjoying your own company helped her to survive in the quarantine. It's always within us what needs to be rewired to tackle a problem because we cannot change the world or the situations according to our convenience or preferences. We can see that because of all the negative feeling that the subject is experiencing in the quarantine is shifting her self-concept from positive to negative which is very common these days as the whole world is fighting against death. So, in a nutshell we can say that the perception of home of the subject is highly affected by the pandemic situations but it is getting better for her.

CONCLUSION

The present study aimed at understanding the "idea of home" in present day context of social distancing due to the pandemic situations created by COVID-19. Many constructions were unfolded and various themes emerged which helped in understanding the perception of home of the subject in a deeper and multidimensional level. It was very evident that the perception of home is highly affected by the pandemic situations.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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