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Research Paper

Resilience, Gratitude, Affectivity, Life Satisfaction and Death Anxiety among Adults during COVID- 19 Lockdown

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ABSTRACT

COVID- 19 Lockdown impacted people of all ages, however majorly adults as these are the important years of career and settlement. This study explored whether resilience, gratitude, positive affect, negative affect, life satisfaction and death anxiety are related in any way among adults during COVID-19 lockdown. We used descriptive correlational design, the sample comprised of 260 adults from northern India. The results showed that Resilience, Gratitude, and Positive Affect significantly contribute to Life Satisfaction, and Death Anxiety is significantly predicted by Negative Affect. Also, Females showed higher Gratitude than males. Our study contributes to a recent discussion on Death Anxiety as a factor for disability in the pandemic and has implications for psychological factors which play a role in determining Life Satisfaction and Death Anxiety.

Keywords: *Adults, resilience, gratitude, positive Affect, negative Affect, satisfaction with life, death anxiety, COVID- 19 lockdown.*

The World Health Organization announced a pandemic due to a sudden upsurge of COVID- 19 globally in 2020 on 11 March (Cucinotta et al., 2020). Quarantine restrictions were all over the world for a long period of time including staying home policies, however these practices aided in retarding the process of spreading the infection (Anderson et al., 2020); (Hsiang et al., 2020). We all had to adopt a "new normal" which was difficult for all ages of the group, however, the mental health of adults (18- 34 years) is affected more than any age group as this time is most crucial for higher studies which pertains to career, settlement, independency, and individual owns family responsibilities (Sojli et al., 2021). This is a transition period including a number of responsibilities of career and settlement and it needs an optimal psychological environment during this time as it contributes to a healthier adaptation and coping strategies. The new normal not only came with difficulties in adapting but also the threat associated with the risk of getting it, caused death anxiety among people (Vindegaard & Benros, 2020), (Brooks et al., 2020), (Ahmad et al., 2020). The COVID 19 has long-term effects from which many are still unknown and experts suggest that it may cause a life-long impact on physical as well as mental health (Wang et al., 2020).

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Death anxiety or fear of death is explained as a stable individual aptness to experience negative emotions stemming from one's existential concerns pertaining to mortality (Nyatunga et al., 2006). The WHO declared COVID-19 pandemic as one of the global anxiety-triggering events of the past decades. People across the globe when informed about the rising death toll, as the pandemic progresses and are prompted by the infirmity of human existence, no doubt, thoughts related to ones' own mortality increases (Pattee, 2020). Research done on Chinese students, the emotional reactions to the pandemic showed having relatives infected with COVID-19 increased anxiety in students (Wang, 2020). Also, when COVID-19 was declared as a pandemic, concerns about public health and death numbers were widely communicated through news channels, mass media via the internet, people reported a significant increased level of psychological distress (Su et al., 2021). To conclude, studies to date shows that the COVID-19 lockdown propels an anxiety-like state displaying the preoccupation with one's own health and mortality. As indicants of negative emotionality, there is a difference between anxiety and the negative affect related to COVID-19. Negative affect refers to transient diffused emotional states (Lazarus, 1991) having knowledge of the nature of the target we can expect that these emotional states must be negative), whereas anxiety describes perceived threat to oneself, nervousness, and uncertainty that can be anticipatory in nature, might be resulting from the cognitive label (appraisal) of a particular stimulus (Lazarus, 1991).

Resilience and Death Anxiety
To be resilient, one needs to show "functional adequacy (the maintenance of competent functioning despite and interfering of emotionality) as a benchmark of resilient behavior under stress'' (Garmezy, 1990). Past researches tell us that increased anxiety in response to covid-19 is related to resilience in a way that the more resilient the individual was, the lower this overall anxiety score (Rayani et al., 2021). Resourcefulness, resilience, hardiness and, optimism positively play role in restricting death-related thoughts to overpower (Gazo et al., 2020), as resilience forms a positive relationship with mental health and works as a buffer to negative impacts of COVID- 19 (Li F et al., 2021).

Gratitude and Death Anxiety
Gratitude is an effective contributor to mental health (Brown, 2017), more gratitude is associated with good subjective well-being and low depression and anxiety in COVID- 19 (Bono et al., 2020), (Butler et al., 2021) because via experiences of positive emotions and implying gratitude, one become more creative, socially integrated knowledgeable and they transform themselves into healthier individuals (Fredrickson, 2004). Inducing gratitude also helped in decreasing death anxiety because by reexamining life events with a thankful attitude, people may become less fearful of death due to a sense that life has been well-lived (Lau et al., 2011). Mature gratitude involving thanking for life, actions of kindness and, relishing small moments helped people to cope during the times of COVID- 19 (Jans-Beken et al., 2021).

Life satisfaction and Death Anxiety
Unremarkably, Life satisfaction has been acknowledged as a social and cognitive construct (Lent et al., 2005). In the time of COVID- 19, when well-being was affected for most people (Bidzan-Bluma et al., 2020), enhancing Life Satisfaction could lessen Death Anxiety (Jose et al., 2018). Also, the adults who did not work in the pandemic were worse in mental and physical health, distress, and life satisfaction (Zhang et al., 2020)

Affectivity and Death Anxiety

Positive affectivity refers to positive feelings and articulation, including brightness, pride, eagerness, vitality, joy, enthusiasm and delight. Negative affectivity is negative feelings and articulation, which incorporates trouble, nauseate, sadness, laziness, dread, and misery. In addition to the threat to health, the presence of constant worry and state of emergency may lead to factors of increased stress, with continuous increase in anxiety can lead to even emotional disorders (Jin et al., 2019), (Bauer et al., 2020). There is a circular relationship, in which perceived threat influenced the presence of negative mood, and negative mood, in turn, linked to emotions of irritation and agitation from a present situation, promoted the feeling of threat (Perez-Fluentes, 2020). Moreover, in this pandemic of COVID-19, comparative analyses of social media posts before and after the declaration of the COVID-19 emergency situation showed a significant increase in anxiety and social risk-taking and, a significant decrease in positive emotions (Su & McDonnell, 2021).

There has been a lot of studies that found that the pandemic had negative impacts on the mental health of people, afflicted them with feelings of death anxiety, fear, and depression (Asmundson & Taylor, 2020), (González-Sanguino et al., 2020), (Tull et al. 2020) and feelings of loneliness and social isolation (Rossi et al., 2020), (Ettman et al., 2020). There has been a lot of studies assessing mental health and the negative impacts across the population (Ding, 2021) but studies on how positive variables like resilience, gratitude, positive affect, life satisfaction is playing on death anxiety and how they can impact our lives in the times of pandemic still need to be explored. Also, death anxiety is mostly studied on older adults, the studies on adults are sparse. As Life satisfaction is a robust variable in itself and is majorly suffered in COVID-19 lockdown, there is to explore the dimensions associated with it. In the *present research*, we focus on whether resilience, gratitude, positive affect, negative affect, satisfaction with life, and death anxiety are related in any way among adults during COVID-19 lockdown. We tried to explore the gender differences and the relationship between resilience, gratitude, positive affect, negative affect and, life satisfaction with Death Anxiety among adults. The present study determines the role of resilience, gratitude, positive affect, negative affect, and satisfaction with life in predicting Death Anxiety. Also, the role of resilience, gratitude, positive Affect, negative Affect, and death anxiety in predicting Life Satisfaction. Based on the objectives, it was hypothesized that there would be significant relationship between resilience, gratitude, positive affect, negative affect, satisfaction with life and death anxiety among male and female participants. Furthermore, it was hypothesized that death anxiety would be a significantly predicted by resilience, gratitude, positive affect, negative affect, and satisfaction with life. Furthermore, the life satisfaction would be significantly predicted by resilience, gratitude, positive affect, negative affect, and death anxiety.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The sample size constituted 260 adults from northern India. After getting reviewed by the institutional board, an online survey was designed via a google form. For the dissemination of the link, it was shared with various professionals for the purpose of reaching to potential candidates. The data was collected amidst covid-19 second-wave outbreak from March 2021 to May 2021. The targeted population for this research is adults who belong to an urban area in the age range of 20 to 35 years and are single (not married). Out of 260 participants, 127 were males and 133 were females.

Design and Sampling

The design used in this study was a descriptive correlational design. Participants in this study were recruited through convenient sampling. Research participants and the public were not involved in design, reporting, and disseminating the form link of this study.

Measures

- *Resilience was assessed through the Nicholson McBrid Resilience Questionnaire (NMRQ),* an abbreviated version of the Nicholson McBrid Resilience Questionnaire (NMRQ). It contains 12 items which has a minimum score of 12 and a maximum score of 60, created by McBride. It was taken in the English Language as per the need of the current sample. It is measured by five-point Likert scale, ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree'. Reliability of NMRQ, Cronbach's Alpha =.76. It contains items such as "I don't take criticism personally".

- *Gratitude was assessed through The Gratitude Questionnaire Six Item Form (GQ-6),* developed by McCullough, M. E., Emmons, R.A., & Tsang, J. (2002). It has a minimum score of 6 and a maximum score of 42. The GQ-6 has good internal reliability, with Cronbach alphas between 0.82 and 0.87. It contains items such as "I have so much in life to be thankful for".

- *Affectivity was assessed by PANAS-SF (Positive and Negative Affect Scale-short form),* developed by Watson, Clark, and Tellegen (1998). PANAS-SF contains 20 items which are divided into two subtypes- Positive and Negative affect in which scoring is based on the Likert scale. Scores of both positive and negative items are taken out separately. Reliability demonstrated internal consistency for the PANAS ranged between .86-.90 for positive affect and .84-.87 for negative affect. Test-retest reliability for the PANAS (1 week) was reported as .79 for positive affect and .81 for negative affect (Watson et al., 1988). Validity Correlation of the PANAS to HSCL=.74 for negative affect and .19 for positive affect and Correlation of the PANAS TO BDI=.65 for negative affect and -.29 for positive affect.

- *Life Satisfaction was assessed by the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)*, developed by Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, (1985). A 5-item scale designed to measure global cognitive judgments of one's life satisfaction (not a measure of either positive or negative affect). Participants indicate how much they agree or disagree with each of the 5 items using a 7-point scale that ranges from 7 strongly agree to 1 strongly disagrees. It has a minimum score of 5 to a maximum of 35. The analysis of the scale's reliability showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = 0.74$). The exploratory factor analysis confirmed the existence of a unique factor structure that explained 54% of the variance. SWLS was related to depression, perceived health, financial situation, and social support, and these relations were all statistically significant (P < .01). There was a significant difference in life satisfaction between the good- and bad-health groups. Results show good internal consistency and construct validity of the SWLS. This scale contains items like." In most ways, my life is close to my ideal".

- *Death Anxiety was assessed by Death Attitude Profile-Revised (Dap-R),* developed by Wong, Reker & Gesser (1994). DAP-R contains 5 dimensions but our focused dimension is fear of death which contains 7 items and has a minimum score of 7 and a maximum score of 49. Reliability alpha coefficients range from a low of .65 (Neutral Acceptance) to a high of .97 (Approach Acceptance); stability coefficients range from a low of .61 (Death Avoidance) to a high of .95 (Approach Acceptance).

Taken together, the DAP-R scales have good to very good reliability. The validity of the Fear of Death dimension in the DAP-R scale is .61. This scale contains items like "Death is no doubt a grim experience".

Procedure

The data was collected with the help of google forms. The questionnaire link was provided through social media platforms like what's app, g-mail, and Instagram. Participants were asked to sit in a peaceful and comfortable environment to fill out the questionnaire. The informed consent, confidentiality, assurance, the purpose of the research was attached to the online form. After the subjects voluntarily filled the consent form, the next section demands them to fill out the questionnaires of resilience, gratitude, affectivity, life satisfaction, and death anxiety. The participants were not given any monetary award for participating in the research. Every participant had to fill the form individually. After getting the questionnaires filled, the scoring of each questionnaire was done. The data was entered in SPSS software. After drawing the results, interpretation of the result was done.

Data Analysis

During data analysis, the data was examined in the context of extreme values or missing data. After examining the variables, the data set did not have any missing data. But in the preliminary analysis, out of 406, 146 individuals were excluded from the analysis (married and rural population) to eliminate the intervening variables. Thus, 260 participants remained in the latent analysis. Data was also reviewed whether the distribution was normal, multi-collinear, multivariate normality, and linearity. In step 1, gender comparisons were done for all the measures with the help of an independent sample t-test. In the second step, correlations between different variables were examined and the last step included regression analysis (step-wise method) for detecting the significant prediction. SPSS 25.0 version software was used for independent sample t-test and regression analysis.

RESULTS

Before designing a plan of study, knowing whether a sample size is adequate, required for .80 power to detect an effect is very important (Fritz & MacKinnon, 2007). A sample of 115 to 285 would be required to detect an effect among variables, as reported by Frits and MacKinnon (2007). In the present study, 260 participants were recruited, suggesting that the sample size of this study comes within the range for detecting an effect with .80 power.

Means and standard deviations is shown are Figure 1. Gender comparisons, correlation, and Regression analysis are shown in tables.

Figure 1. Graph showing Means and Standard deviations of resilience, gratitude, positive affect, negative affect, life satisfaction, and death anxiety.
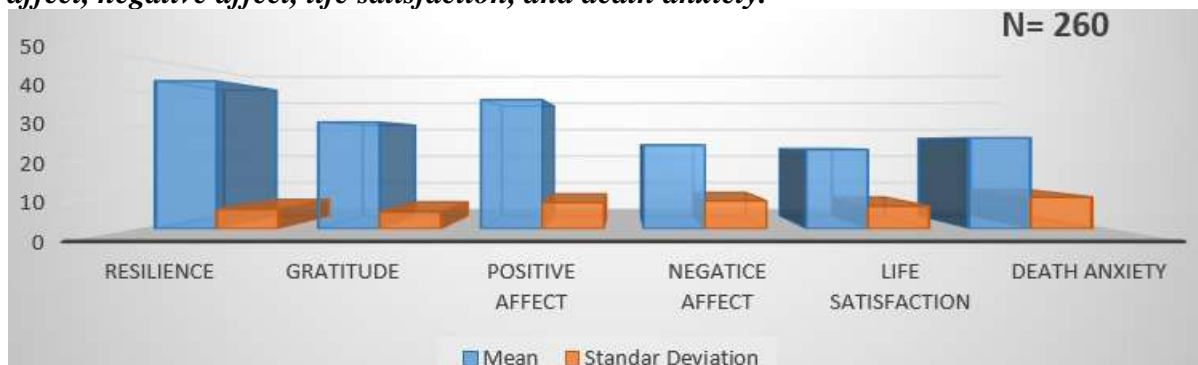

Table – 1: Gender comparisons on the measures of Resilience, Gratitude, Affectivity, Life Satisfaction and Death Anxiety. (df = 258)

Measures	Groups	Mean	S.D	SeM	t- value
Resilience	Male	43.31	5.71	.506	.903
	Female	42.67	5.69	.493	
Gratitude	Male	30.39	4.23	.392	-2.075
	Female	31.65	5.25	.455	(p< 0.3)
Positive Affect	Male	38.02	7.91	.701	.959
	Female	37.11	7.41	.642	
Negative Affect	Male	24.14	8.29	.735	-.435
	Female	24.58	8.02	.695	
Life Satisfaction	Male	23.39	6.36	.564	.749
	Female	22.77	6.79	.588	
Death Anxiety	Male	27.28	9.72	.862	1.298
	Female	25.79	8.74	.757	

Comparison of males and females on the measures of Resilience, Gratitude, Affectivity, Life Satisfaction, and Death Anxiety are reported in table 1. On the measures of gratitude, the significant gender difference was observed (t- value =-2.075, p>0.3), indicating that females showed higher gratitude. However, gender differences were not found to be significant on the measures of resilience, affectivity, life satisfaction, and death anxiety.

Table – 2: Showing inter co-relations of various dependent measures for the total sample (N=260)

Measures	Resilience	Gratitude	Positive Affect	Negative Affect	Life Satisfaction	Death Anxiety
Resilience	-	.208**	.395**	-.304**	.388**	-.172**
Gratitude		-	.291**	-.312**	.273**	-.116
Positive Affect			-	-.033	.443**	-.019
Negative Affect				-	-.147*	.251**
Life Satisfaction					-	-.017

*p<.01** p<.05**

Table 2 presents the co-relations between resilience, gratitude, positive affect, negative affect, life satisfaction, and death anxiety. *Resilience* showed a positive correlation with gratitude, positive affect, life satisfaction, whereas a negative correlation with negative affect and *death anxiety* p<.01. *Gratitude* showed positive correlation with positive affect and life satisfaction whereas a negative correlation with negative affect p<.01. Positive

affect showed a positive correlation with life satisfaction p<.01. Negative affect showed positive correlation with the *death anxiety* p<.05,
whereas negatively correlated with the life satisfaction p<.05.

Table – 3 Inter-co-relation differences on different variables for male and female (bold numbers) participants.

Measures	Resilience	Gratitude	Positive Affect	Negative Affect	Life Satisfaction	Death Anxiety
Resilience	--	**.120**	**.320****	**-.297****	**.485****	**-.123**
Gratitude	.339**	--	**.326****	**-.344****	**.408****	**-.107**
Positive Affect	.463**	.279**	--	**-.049**	**.471****	**-.025**
Negative Affect	-.310**	-.292**	-.014	--	**-.280****	**.186***
Life Satisfaction	.278**	.115	.412**	-.003	--	**-.054**
Death Anxiety	-.229**	-.110	-.023	.315**	.012	--

p<.01**   p<.05*

In *males,* resilience positively correlated with gratitude, positive affect, and life satisfaction whereas negatively correlated with negative affect and death anxiety. Gratitude showed a positive correlation with positive affect whereas a negative correlation with negative affect. Positive affect showed a positive correlation with life satisfaction, negative affect positively correlated with death anxiety. (p<.01)

In *females*, resilience positively correlated with positive affect and life satisfaction and negatively with negative affect. Gratitude positively correlated with positive affect and life satisfaction and negatively with negative affect. Positive affect showed a positive correlation with life satisfaction, negative affect negatively correlated with life satisfaction (p<.01), and positively correlated with death anxiety (p<.05).

Table 4: Summary results of multiple regression analysis of death anxiety (criterion) and resilience, gratitude, positive affect, negative affect and life satisfaction (predictors) of adults.

Predictors	Beta- value	t- value	p- value	Remarks
Negative Affect	.251	4.16	**.001**	F= 17.274; df1/258; p<.001
Positive Affect	-.011	-.180	.857	R= .251, R^2= .063
Resilience	-.106	-1.677	.095	
Life Satisfaction	.020	.333	.740	Adjusted R^2= .059

In table 4, the summary results of multiple regression (stepwise method) analysis for the criterion variable of death anxiety when resilience, positive affect, negative affect, and life satisfaction as predictors are reported. Negative Affect seems to be a potential predictor (β= .251, t= 4.16; p<.000), however other dimensions did not contribute significantly. The multiple R-value is .251 and the adjusted R^2 is .059, which indicates that 6 % variation can be explained in the death anxiety by negative affect.

Table 5: Summary results of multiple regression analysis of life satisfaction (criterion) and resilience, gratitude, positive affect, negative affect, and death anxiety (predictors) of adults.

Variable	B	t- value	p- value	Remarks
Step 1				F= 62.96; df1/258; p<.001
Positive Affect	.44	7.94	.001	R= .443, R²= .196
				Adjusted R²= .193
Step 2				F= 42.87; df2/257; p<.001
Positive Affect	.34	5.84	.001	R= .500, R²= .250
Resilience	.25	4.30	.001	Adjusted R²= .244
Step 3				
Positive Affect	.31	5.18	.001	F= 30.97, df3/256; p<.001
Resilience	.24	4.07	.001	R= .516, R²= .266
Gratitude	.13	2.37	.019	Adjusted R²= .258

In table 5, the summary results of multiple regression (stepwise method) analysis for the criterion variable of Life Satisfaction when resilience, positive affect, negative affect, and life gratitude as predictors are reported. In Step 1, the adjusted R^2 value of .193 revealed a 19% variance in the Life Satisfaction with F (1/258) = 62.96, p<.001. The findings revealed that Positive affect positively predicted life satisfaction (β= .44, p<.001). In Step 2, the adjusted R^2 value of .24 revealed that the positive affect and resilience explained 24% variance with Life Satisfaction with F (2/257) = 42.87, p<.001. The results show that positive affect (β=.34, p<.001) and resilience positively predicted Life Satisfaction (β=.25, p<.001). In Step 3, the adjusted R^2 value of .26 revealed the positive affect, resilience and, gratitude explained 26% variance with Life satisfaction with F (3/256) =30.97, p<001. The findings revealed that positive affect (β=.31, p<.001), resilience (β=.24, p<.001), and gratitude (β= .13, p<.019) could predict Life Satisfaction. However, Negative Affect did not contribute significantly.

DISCUSSION

The present study aimed to explore the gender differences, relationships, and the influence of resilience, gratitude, positive affect, and negative affect on life satisfaction and death anxiety in the pandemic of COVID- 19. Significant gender differences were obtained on the measure of gratitude, female was comparatively higher on gratitude than males, which gets supports from previous studies (Kashdan et al., 2009). They found similar results that women were high on gratitude and men experience less gratitude. It can have roots in the differences in how we were socialized as kids will affect what emotions we perceive in adulthood because boys are generally instructed not to reveal emotions and more controlling It is also evident that men regard the expression of gratitude as weakness or vulnerability to their social standing and may pose a threat to their masculinity (Levant, 1995). In our study, there is no gender difference found in death anxiety which may contradict some of the findings (Sahed et al., 2016) (Assari et al., 2016) (Pierce et al., 2007) (Özgüç et al., 2021) who reported women had more death anxiety, but most studies reported for older women and it might be that our results are related to the unprecedented situation that COVID- 19 lockdown poses.

The significant positive relationships were seen between *life satisfaction* and resilience, gratitude, and positive affect indicating that increase in resilience, gratitude and positive affect, may result in better life satisfaction, whereas the inverse relationship with negative affect shows that the more the person is occupied with negative emotions, the more it

degrades the life satisfaction. The results of the research are in line with previous studies (Jiang et al., 2020), (Abolghasemi et al., 2010), (Bishop & Martin, 2011). Another possible explanation for a positive relationship between resilience, gratitude, and positive affect could be given by the theory of positive emotion of broaden and build that positive attributes can build psychological resources and initiate a cycle of good outcomes which further can enhance life satisfaction (Fredrickson et al., 2013). Further, the implications-based practices need to be explored by future researchers.

Death anxiety has negative relationship with resilience, may be because people with high resilience may have better-coping strategies to fight death anxiety in COVID – 19 as compared to less resilient people (Rayani et al., 2021). Death anxiety has a positive affinity with the negative affect (Sherman et al., 2010), as negative affect may be potentiated by continuous ideas about death and distort people from recovery (Gonen et al., 2012).

The result shows that Negative affect in COVID- 19 is a potential contributor towards Death Anxiety. A recent study was done by Perez- Fuentes et al. in 2020 also reported a positive influence of negative affect on death anxiety related to COVID -19 because negative affect increases one's perception of threat from COVID- 19 and negative mood (Perez- Fuentes, 2020). Also, the people's emotional response to the COVID- 19 virus can be understood through Terror Management Theory, which says that fear of death drives much of human behavior as when we become conscious and aware about our death, it produces a disabling terror (Greenberg et al., 1992) and negative emotions which further narrow down our attention and cognition and physiological processes for coping death anxiety (Cosmides et al., 2000).

Also, the results showed that Positive Affect, Resilience, and Gratitude contributes significantly to Life Satisfaction, playing an important role in determining it. It gets support from the previous studies (Bishop & Martin, 2011) (Cohn et al., 2009) (Yıldırım et al., 2018). Positive emotions, as evident, forecast wide-ranging thoughts that are novel foster creative actions, and can change people's life. It results in many coherent social groups and flexible mindsets thus producing favorable outcomes such as health and longevity because of the internal resources they have built (Fredrickson et al., 2001). As resilience mediates the relationship between positive emotions and increased life satisfaction, it poses that people who possess happiness, joyful nature feel more satisfied, not because they feel better but they have also the developed resources as well (Cohn et al., 2009) (Abolghasemi et al., 2010). Gratitude which involves thankfulness as a trait and part of life, is consistently associated with greater happiness and greater optimism (Emmons et al., 2003) (Wood & Joseph, 2008). When people feel life as a gift and, with full of positive emotions, it broadens their thinking about life and people feel more satisfied (Emmons et al., 2003) (Wenceslao et al., 2019).

Limitations of the study
The Present study has some limitations, firstly, the sample was collected through convenient sampling and it was via google form, therefore, was accessible to only those people who have internet. Although we eliminated data of married people to make representative of the single adult population age range of 18 to 30 years, however in our sample females were slightly higher than males. Secondly, due to self-reported measures, results may be affected by the social desirability of responses and it may also suffer from selection bias as it could be said that respondents who took part in the survey may be more interested than those who

did not take part. Howerver the study could contribute to understanding how Death Anxiety could be relieved by resilience, gratitude, positive affect, and life satisfaction and help professionals deal with it by developing effective intervention programs. Future researchers should see the long-term effects of death anxiety related to COVID- 19 and how the interventions could be helpful for community-based programs, which can relieve death anxiety and could enhance life satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

Life satisfaction is a positive measure giving a more broad understanding of how these positive variables comes to play in the role even during the lockdown. Although because of COVID- 19, death anxiety could have been a more potent variable but it did not influence, rather only negative affect could predict death anxiety. Therefore, the results highlight the importance of positive aspects and when gender is compared, it was found that women have more gratitude than men. It has important implications to research and practice, understanding the underlying mechanisms of Life Satisfaction and how positive variables like resilience, gratitude, and positive affect could influence it. Life Satisfaction could be achieved by using downward counterfactuals, thinking positively, showing and practicing more gratitude, and having a resilient attitude. Under pandemic, these were the significant positive contributors towards Life Satisfaction. Findings of the present study can be applicable with certain shortcomings (small sample, not representative) and there is a need to extend this research in various settings and in different cultural contexts.

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