

Research Paper

New Onset of Maladaptive Conduct among Teachers and IT Professionals in COVID-19

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ABSTRACT

As a result of the tremendous technological advancements brought forth by COVID-19, everyone now leads whole new lives and uses a variety of employment styles. Nowadays, many people work remotely or online, including some teachers in schools and institutions who occasionally choose online courses. Numerous changes occurred during COVID-19, which increased stress and altered job prospects for individuals in the teaching and IT industries. In order to better understand the phenomena, their underlying causes, and the elements that influence them, as well as the relationship between them, this study's purpose was conceptualised as such. In order to achieve the goal, a questionnaire was created and distributed across all of India to individuals working in the teaching and IT industries. The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine how COVID-19 will affect these two professions and to identify the differences between maladaptive behaviour. The responses were compared using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) t-test in order to further analyse the data. The results of the study indicated a significant difference in the maladaptive behaviour of Teaching and IT Professionals during COVID 19.

Keywords: COVID-19, IT Sector, Maladaptive Behaviour, Occupation, Teaching

The COVID-19 epidemic has posed enormous challenges across several sectors of society, particularly the education and information technology (IT) industries. As teachers and information technology workers seek to adapt quickly to changing conditions, there is rising worry about the growth of maladaptive behaviour within both professions. Understanding the underlying reasons, manifestations, and repercussions of such behaviour is critical for effectively addressing this issue and ensuring professionals' well-being and the quality of services they provide.

Particularly, the traditional working environments of the education and information technology (IT) industries saw significant change. Because of this, teachers and IT professionals have had to respond quickly to challenging situations, which may have resulted in behaviour that could have a negative impact on both their professional lives and the welfare of the clients they serve.

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This study intends to explore the topic of maladaptive behaviour among instructors and IT specialists by looking at the root causes, signs, and effects of maladaptive behaviour in these fields. This research study aims to highlight the difficulties these people confront and investigate potential solutions for reducing and controlling these actions. The results of this study can help politicians, school administrators, leaders in the IT industry, and other professionals better understand and deal with this urgent issue.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ever Since, Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic hit the world it led to immediate lockdown at a global level which impacted various aspects of society especially education sector and IT industries. This further resulted in the rise of maladaptive conduct in people associated with these sectors in particular which created a gap between general teaching and operational methods. Researches support that immediate change in the environment due to COVID-19 led to maladaptive behaviour.

These studies have given us a baseline of how the pandemic affected people as a whole, how education and IT professionals were affected by it and the concept of adaptability to immediate change. Additionally, these studies have been of great assistance to us in the way that we have used them to support our research.

Pilch, Wardawy, and Probierz (2021) studied the predictors of adaptive and maladaptive coping behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic through the protection motivation theory and the big five personality traits. The findings presented robust evidence supporting the PMT's predictive utility, particularly in relation to fostering adaptive (preventive) behaviour amid the Sars-CoV-2 pandemic. Results revealed maladaptive coping can hinder the motivation and behaviour related to protection. Providing practical infection prevention strategies and boosting self-efficacy may help handle this issue.

Allen, Jerrim and Sims (2020) studied the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic affecting teacher wellbeing. The findings discovered that from the beginning of the epidemic in October 2019 and the peak of the lockdown in April 2020, levels of teachers' general well-being as assessed by the Warwick Edinburgh Mental well-being scale, remained stable. Results indicated that Teachers may have more energy and feel more loved, but other parts of their well-being may have been affected in various ways. They may also feel less valuable and enthusiastic about the future. Teachers, however, were more likely to concur than disagree that the pandemic had a negative influence on their mental health.

He, Zhang and Li (2020) studied the information technology solutions, challenges, and suggestions for tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. The results demonstrated that the use of technologies to fight the epidemic, however, brings with it issues like security, privacy, biases, ethics, and the digital divide. The COVID-19 pandemic necessitates significant coordination for connected data, people, and systems in order to promote global collaboration of technology applications based on the data-people-system framework.

Simione, Gnagnarella, Spina and Bersani (2021) studied help-seeking as a maladaptive coping style in the pandemic scenario about what worked and what did not for facing this new stressor. The findings from this paper demonstrated a three-factor high-order structure of coping mechanisms may be regarded as consistent across many stressful circumstances, including the pandemic spread. The results stated that the only way to distinguish adaptive

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and maladaptive strategies was to take into account the complicated contextual environment in which those strategies are implicated.

Collie (2021) examined COVID-19 and teachers' somatic burden, stress, and emotional exhaustion while further examining the role of principal leadership and workplace buoyancy. It was found that autonomy-supportive leadership was associated with greater buoyancy and, in turn, lower somatic burden, stress related to change, and emotional exhaustion. In contrast, autonomy-thwarting leadership was positively associated with emotional exhaustion. Autonomy-supportive leadership was also indirectly associated with stress and emotional exhaustion via buoyancy.

Nowak, Brzóška, Piotrowski, Sedikides, Piotrowska and Jonason (2020) studied adaptive and maladaptive behaviour during the COVID-19 pandemic and the roles of dark triad traits, collective narcissism, and health beliefs. It was found that barriers were especially important for preventative behaviour among those with high levels of dark characteristics, and these individuals had reduced self-efficacy. The results demonstrated that potential negative health attitudes may then be adjusted by interventions that would shield persons with dark personalities from some of the personal and interpersonal consequences of the pandemic, urging preventive and avoiding stockpiling.

Popa, Ștefan, Olariu, Popa and Florentina Popa (2022) studied modelling the COVID-19 pandemic effects on employees' health and performance which is a PLS-SEM mediation approach. The findings stated pandemic effects experienced by employees were compared to their general work performance as well as the relationship between those effects and the employees' physical and mental well-being. Structured questionnaires were employed as the research technique for data collecting, and SmartPls 3.3.3 was the programme used for data interpretation and analysis. Six constructs—the COVID-19 effects, health-related stress factors, work-related stress factors, mental well-being, and physical health were used.

METHODOLOGY

Aim: To study the onset of maladaptive conduct among Teachers and IT Professionals.

Objective

- To study the impact of COVID-19 on IT professionals and Teachers
- To study the difference between maladaptive behaviour of IT sector and Teaching sector during COVID-19

Hypothesis

Based on our present study, following hypotheses were proposed:

- H₁: There will be a significant difference in maladaptive behaviour due to COVID-19 on the basis of occupation.
- H₂: There will be more impact on Teaching sector than IT professionals during COVID-19.

Sample

The sample consisted of a total of 489 participants. The sample population was classified into two occupations i.e., IT sector and Teaching sector. An online google form survey was created to understand the effect of COVID-19 lockdown and behavioural changes of

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Teachers and IT professionals during work from home. The sample was from all over India. The age range was from 25 to 45 yrs and above.

Sampling Technique

Following were the sampling techniques used for data collection of the current research study:

- Purposive - A researcher uses a purposive sample when they choose a sample based on their understanding of the topic and population. Basically, researchers can choose who to ask to participate in their study.
- Convenience - It happens to be the easiest method of sampling because of the participants availability and willingness to take part in the survey. The sample engages in the survey voluntarily.
- Snowball - This type of sampling involves primary data which is purely based on referrals. It is used where population is unknown and rare.

Tools

In the study, we developed a self-constructed tool. The total number of questions we asked were 46 excluding the demographic information. The response was collected using the Likert Scale. Herein, the respondent's answers consisted of 1. always, 2. often, 3. sometimes, 4. rarely and 5. Never.

The aim of the questionnaire was to assess how the lockdown and digital working style has affected different types of factors in the lives of IT professionals and teachers.

Due to the ongoing pandemic, the lives of the corporate working executives had been in a bit of a disarray. Be it their mental health or any other area of their lifestyle, covid-19 has had a lasting impact on it. The different areas of their lives were impacted due to the current situation.

People had to work longer hours to be able to work through things, being stuck at one place all day long led to the build-up of huge amounts of aggression among the employees. They were experiencing mood swings and agitated behaviour more often. Due to the second wave that took over the nation, a sense of fear and anxiety was felt by everyone including corporate working executives.

Research Design

In order to determine the new onset of maladaptive behaviour among teachers and IT workers during COVID-19, a cross-sectional study on people in the age range of 25–65 and above was done. This paper is designed in a quantitative manner. In the social sciences, a cross-sectional research strategy is used to study a population of interest at a single point in time. This means that data is only collected once from each participant, and changes over time are not evaluated. The cross-sectional methodology is descriptive in nature, which implies that its primary goal is to discover patterns or the prevalence of occurrences, and it is thus unsuitable for proving cause-effect links. Cross-sectional approach enables the researcher to analyse several groups and populations at the same time, such as different age groups, genders, ethnic groupings, and so on.

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Procedure

The aim of this paper is to assess maladaptive behaviour among teachers and IT workers during COVID-19. The data collection process was carried out through the distribution of Google forms around India, and hence the results were curated. The questionnaire consisted of 48 questions about work and the impact of Covid 19 on individuals in the Education and IT sectors. The results were gathered using a tool that was self-made. The questions were in multiple choice format (MCQ's), i.e. they were closed ended. The study included adults aged 25 to 65 and older. The paper was curated using a quantitative research approach, and a cross-sectional study was conducted to determine the fresh onset of maladaptive behaviour among Educators and IT professionals. The test which was used for this study was the T-test. Results were calculated using SPSS. The results were further analysed and then discussed.

RESULT TABLES

Table 1: Mean and SD for Maladaptive Behavior in both the occupations

	Occupation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Maladaptive Behaviour	IT Professionals	285	17.94	5.25	.3677
	Teaching	204	28.07	8.63	.5109

Table 2: Comparing means and SD for Maladaptive Behaviour in both the occupations

		t	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Df (degrees of freedom)	Sig. (2-tailed)
Maladaptive Behaviour	Equal variances assumed	14.926	10.1409	.6794	487	.001
	Equal variances not assumed	16.110	10.1409	.6295	475.790	

**sig at p value 0.05, **sig at p value 0.01*

According to table 1 and 2, there was a significant difference between the Maladaptive Behaviour among participants in both IT and Teaching professions. The tables also show that the 2nd hypothesis stating that the Teaching profession will experience more maladaptive behaviour as compared to the IT profession above was proved to be true.

DISCUSSION

The COVID-19 epidemic has caused significant difficulties for many facets of society, particularly the fields of Education and Information Technology (IT). There is growing concern about the rise of maladaptive conduct in both the teaching and IT fields as both aim to swiftly adjust to changing environments. For this problem to be effectively addressed and to ensure the well-being of professionals and the calibre of the services they deliver, it is essential to comprehend the underlying causes, manifestations, and effects of such behaviour.

The present study was conceptualised as a maladaptive behaviour study. Researchers used cross sectional design aimed at analysing the influence of COVID-19 on individuals belonging to two working sectors: IT and Teaching. The segment of the online questionnaire

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consisted of demographic questions and questions related to COVID-19 and its impact on the individuals.

The teachers observed abrupt changes in behaviour during this era, according to Hypothesis 1. The result Table 1 shows mean of maladaptive behaviour in IT Professionals 17.94 and in Teaching Sector 28.07. The result Table 2 shows the T score of maladaptive behaviour when the equal variance was assumed 14.926 and when the equal variance was not assumed 16.110. The mean difference for the equal variance assumed is 10.1409 and mean difference for when the equal variance was not assumed is 10.1409. This means that the T Score is significant at 0.01. Teachers were more involved and thus more affected. Teachers lost the physical connection they used to have with their students in the classroom, making it difficult for them to continue further in that particular situation (Bhaskar et al., 2020). They encountered technical issues as well. The issues were classified as lack of technical assistance, which included a lack of technical infrastructure, lack of awareness of online teaching platforms, and security concerns. Teachers' personal issues, such as a lack of technical expertise, a negative attitude, course integration with technology, and a lack of desire, have been recognised as the fourth factor limiting their engagement in online teaching and evaluations (Joshi et al., 2020). As a result of the shift, Covid 19 caused various behavioural changes among teachers. It led to maladaptive conduct among teachers. They were stressed, anxious, apprehensive, and restless, and they even had a distorted self image and lacked confidence.

Hypothesis 2 states that the Teaching sector was more affected than IT professionals during COVID-19. This we got to know as the result Table 1 shows the means, standard deviation and standard error mean of maladaptive behaviour in Teaching and IT Professionals. The mean of maladaptive behaviour in the Teaching sector was 28.07 while the mean of maladaptive behaviour in IT Professionals was 17.94. The standard deviation of maladaptive behaviour in the Teaching sector was 8.63 while in the IT Professionals it was 5.25. The standard error mean of maladaptive behaviour in the Teaching sector was .5109 while in the IT Professionals it was .3677. The mean, standard deviation and standard error mean of maladaptive behaviour in the Teaching sector was greater than that of IT Professionals this further implies that massive changes were observed in the mental health of teachers during this time period. It was more difficult for teachers to adjust to the change and modify themselves to shift from authentic teaching patterns to online mode of teaching. Which further made it difficult for older teachers as well as they were not used to this sudden change. IT Professionals were used to working in such a manner as all of their work was carried out on an online platform but the teaching that takes place in a physical mode was actually a very drastic shift that was observed by the education sector as a whole (Corrente et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this study was to look into the onset of maladaptive behaviour in teachers and IT professionals. This study discovered two key findings: first, there was a difference in maladaptive behaviour caused by COVID-19 based on profession. For the study, two occupation areas were chosen: teaching and information technology (IT). Both industries experienced a negative and statistically significant impact. Two, the teaching sector was more affected than the IT industry. This was then clarified by expanding on the changing nature of SNSs for the two occupations.

Some limitations are that the study was quantitative in nature, hence the investigation was limited to numerical data. Some of the participants may have also reacted in socially acceptable ways.

Some ideas for additional research include a gender-based study and other jobs to compare different groups of people. In-depth qualitative research can also be conducted instead of quantitative research using semi-structured interviews and surveys. Last but not least, while the study focused on Indian residents, future research on the influences of different cultures can include people from all over the world.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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