

Dysfunctional Career Thought Patterns in Youth Amidst the Covid-19 Crisis

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ABSTRACT

COVID-19 has affected each aspect of human life to a greater extent be it social life, cultural aspects or economic conditions. We may have different opinions about it but one thing that cannot be denied is that it has certainly put the professional life or career of many at stake. Even those who could still survive and keep their jobs during the period have become victims to negative thoughts that are related to one's career. These dysfunctional career thoughts further lead to dysfunctional cognitions (thought process) and perceptions that eventually take away the very zeal to try that may eventually take one towards success in life. This research paper is an effort to draw attention towards the damage that COVID -19 has caused to not only the source of income or professional career of many but the spirit deep down inside. Time that took away the source of income and that made people stay at home also shattered their dreams that once gave them the strength to carry on. The prevalence of dysfunctional career thoughts is usually noticed through behavior like incomplete tasks, verbal expressions that lead to depression, anger and become the primary causes of increase in suicidal rate which has been clearly noticed during COVID -19. The limited use of the term dysfunctional career thoughts in the field of psychology in general limits the availability of the relevant evidence but isn't the whole idea of research is to explore the unexplored? In this paper, we tried to study the causes and mitigations of dysfunctional career thoughts. We also propose an assessment model which analyses the effective loss in psychological mindset and career progress. It also suggests some remedial measures for the same.

Keywords: COVID-19, Psychological Effects, Procrastination, Dysfunctional Career Thoughts, Decision Making

Undoubtedly, the occurrence of COVID-19 and that too at such a great level has affected each person regardless of geographical location or professional field. No matter how hard we try the effects of COVID-19 would be seen and acknowledged around us be it in the society in general or medical urgencies or even in many other aspects of human life. Above all these effects would be seen for decades to come. One major aspect of all this has to do with the different professional areas of human growth that demands and require effective corrective measures. It has usually been noticed that career or vocational/professional problems are often not given as much importance as all other different aspects of life (Spengler, Bluestein, & Strohmmer, 1990). Technically in human life

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Received: March 30, 2025; Revision Received: May 19, 2025; Accepted: May 23, 2025

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all aspects are interrelated and at a point of time supplement and affect each other positively or in a negative manner. Dysfunctional career thoughts that are generally negative self-beliefs and cognitions not only affect our lives in general but more specifically put our happiness at stake. We can't really argue the fact that even if no direct relationship exists these negative career beliefs affect our emotions, feelings and everything else that is relevant which makes its reach even wider. And moreover, the existence of COVID-19 has taken it in altogether different direction. No matter how hard the time was people always had a ray of hope deep down inside them that one day things will fall in place, but the detrimental effects of COVID-19 has damaging effects not only on all aspects of life but also plans and dreams that always gave one the strength to carry on. We have still not come out of the dark and evil world that has been formed around us during COVID-19 but life has to find a way. If something that has always been fed during all this bad time was the negativity among all human beings. Negative thoughts concerning health, safety, success, society or individually for career or a source of income have made human life even more complicated. Considering the overwhelming effects of COVID-19 the whole idea of career decision making took a back seat during COVID-19 and hopes were traumatized to the supreme level.

A positive relationship between career indecisiveness and personality and emotional cognitions has been reported (Gati, et al., 2011; Oztemel, 2012; Saka, Gati, & Kelly, 2008). A countless number of research have reported that the factor that usually contributes to the career indecisiveness on part of an individual has a lot to do with dysfunctional career thoughts (Sampson et al 1998; Saunders, Peterson, Sampson Jr, & Reardon, 2000; Walker & Peterson, 2012). Apart from anything else dysfunctional career thoughts are considered to be the most influential aspects that determine whether an individual is able to make a wise career decision or not (Railey & Peterson, 2000). Individuals who have dysfunctional career thoughts of a moderate level often try to avoid making career decisions and try their best to not get into the situation where they are required to do so. The reason behind such behavior is simply the negative self-beliefs, self-doubts, and the tendency to make comparisons that never let them take an initiative on professional front. Not appearing for an interview without any valid reason or not applying for jobs even after knowing the fact that one could do so are the best examples of dysfunctional career thoughts as it saves one from decision making. Kleiman, et al., (2004) opined that if people intentionally choose to take a back seat when the opportunity comes across, they are more likely to remain unaware of the exact ways to deal with them even when they wish to do so. It is more like learning from your own experiences and moving ahead being the confident you. This exercise is not one-time strategy but doing so very often works wonders and brings out the best in the individual.

Objective of the Study

The current research paper is an attempt to measure the most prevalent dysfunctional career thoughts among youth during the world pandemic COVID-19.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A countless number of psychologists and researchers have firmly described dysfunctional career thoughts as dysfunctional cognitions (Corbishley & Yost, 1989); dysfunctional career beliefs (Krumboltz, 1990); dysfunctional self-beliefs (Borders & Archadel, 1987); faulty self-efficacy beliefs (Brown & Lent, 1996) so on and so forth. Maladaptive career beliefs and assumptions (Lustig & Strauser, 2003; Strauser, Lustig, Keim, Ketz, & Malesky, 2002) that take one towards dysfunctional cognitions and perceptions eventually take away the zeal to try that may take one towards success in life. Research (Sampson, et al., 1996) has proven

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that the end result of such behavior is that the person starts keeping themselves at a distance from things that can prove beneficial in the long run.

Sud & Kumar (2005; 2006) found that dysfunctional carer thoughts are negatively correlated with achievement motivation and has a negative correlation with text anxiety. It indicates that negative self-beliefs tend to make an individual more susceptible towards anxiety and makes one doubts their abilities without a valid rationale. Dysfunctional carer thoughts may affect any sort of decision making that is related to career to a greater extent (Sampson et al., 1996) that if not timely taken care of in the long run may prove to be one of the major reasons of failure.

World Health Organization declared that the Universal pandemic (WHO, 2020d) COVID-19 has affected humanity and human life on a large scale, and it is a risk to civilization (Taylor, 2019). A countless number of people were forced to stay at home as they were either fired or they didn't dare step out of their homes due to the threat COVID-19 caused to human lives (Charles & Anderson-Nathe, 2020; Coibion et al., 2020; Lee et al., 2020; Sarkar, 2020). The unimaginable something that shocked people made them victims to terrible mental health issues like depression, anxiety attacks, hopelessness and great disappointment (Goyal et al., 2020; Lai et al., 2020; Lee, 2020; Lee et al., 2020; Mamun & Griffiths, 2020; Pappas, 2020; Xiang et al., 2020).

Many researchers have time and again reported fact that anxiety and depression are interrelated aspects (Taylor, 2019). Banerjee (2020) has defined anxiety as feeling of discomfort and uneasiness that is primarily concerned with times to come. During COVID-19 the never-ending fear of how one would survive through jobless days and will manage to be good provider to the family have kept demonizing all and to our surprise it has not ended yet.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The multiple regression models were employed to explore the relationships between independent variable and the dependent variables.

Population and Sample

In total 300 students were invited to participate, out of which 117 students from Engineering and Humanities branch of Alakh Prakash Goyal Shimla University (India) agreed to fill the online forms and to share the details.

Participants

The 117 students from Undergraduate Engineering and Humanities courses of Alakh Prakash Goyal Shimla University (India) participated in the survey. The data was collected during lockdown the peak period of COVID-19 (April- September 2020). The sample was split evenly between boys (79.4%) and girls (20.5%), with ages ranging from 19 to 26 years. Participants identified themselves as Himachal native (n = 23, 19.6%), outside Himachal (n = 56, 47.8%), foreign nationals (n = 38, 32.46%).

Measures And Procedure

The data was extracted, filtered and modelled using MS-Excel the most popular tool for data analytics. Data is encoded as per the coding scheme provided below for the variables.

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Variables:

- Gender: Male =0 Female =1
- Nationality: Indian =0 Foreign=1
- Locality: Himachali =0 non- Himachali =1
- COVID-19 Affected: (you/any member in family) – 0= not affected, 1 = family member affected, 2 = himself/herself affected
- Internet Availability: 0 = Poor, 1= Good, 2=High speed
- Job loss: 0= not affected, 1 – family member affected
- Family Income: 0= not affected, 1 – loss in income
- Opportunities available: 0= not available, 1 = opportunity is there but not related to his career filed, 2 = Career related job
- Anxiety level: 0= not affected, 1 = Normal, 2 = High

When a linear approach to modelling the relationship between one response and many explanatory variables is used it is known as Linear regression model. When we have more than one explanatory variable; the process is called multiple linear regressions.

Using multiple variable regression model, we found the relationship between COVID-19 and Anxiety Level. In fact, the model correlates all the nine variables to find the exact effect. Mathematically we can define our model as:

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1x_1 + \beta_2x_2 + \beta_3x_3 + \beta_4x_4 + \beta_5x_5 + \beta_6x_6 + \beta_7x_7 + \beta_8x_8 + \beta_9x_9$$

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

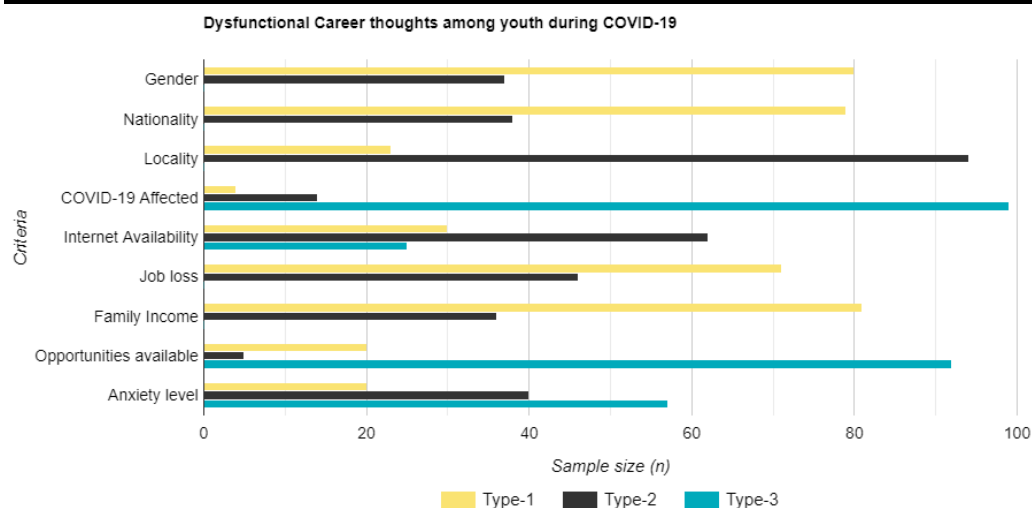


Figure 1 Summary of sampled data is as below which is already plotted in graph

- Gender: 80, 37, 0
- Nationality: 79, 38, 0
- Locality: 23, 94, 0
- COVID-19 Affected: 4, 14, and 99
- Internet Availability: 30, 62, 25
- Job loss: 71, 46, 0
- Family Income: 81, 36, 0
- Opportunities available: 20,5,92
- Anxiety level: 20, 40, 57

Table 1 Multiple variable regression model summary

Predictor	Coefficient	Estimate	Standard Error	t-statistic	p-value
ID- Constant	β_0	51.4	10.2	5	0
Gender	β_1	5	8.1	0.6	0.5
Nationality	β_2	-24	2.9	-8.1	0
Locality	β_3	25.7	4.7	5.4	0
COVID-19 Affected	β_4	3.5	1.6	2.1	0
Internet Availability	β_5	4.4	3	1.4	0.2
Job loss	β_6	-11.4	3.4	-3.3	0
Family Income	β_7	-17.2	7.8	-2.2	0
Opportunities available	β_8	-2.4	3.3	-0.7	0.5
Anxiety level	β_9	5.8	1.8	3.2	0

Using the outcome of multiple variable regression models, we can state that the Covid-19 has directly affected the Job loss, family income and job opportunities available in the market. It has indirectly increased the anxiety level among youth. The gender, nationality and internet availability can be considered as external factors which affect the opportunities available to the job seekers and have everlasting effects on many other aspects too. World Health Organization (WHO, 2020d) has aptly declared COVID-19 a world pandemic and proclaimed that the after-effects on youth will surely be seen for years to come and forthcoming generations would also observe the damage caused.

However, the fact that life eventually find a way out remains unchanged. Efforts must be made not only at individual level but at community level to motivate those who have been struck by COVID-19 as they understand its impact firsthand.

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Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Kumar, S. (2025). Dysfunctional Career Thought Patterns in Youth Amidst the Covid-19 Crisis. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 13(2), 1975-1981. DIP:18.01.182.20251302, DOI:10.25215/1302.182