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Research Article

The Nature and Correlates of Pandemic/Lockdown Fatigue: A Cross-Sectional Explanatory Study

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ABSTRACT

Lockdown fatigue due to the pandemic transpires when individuals are asked to make behavior changes over a long period of time. This experience is considered to be difficult than short-term changes. Similar to any other deviations in lifestyles, people can follow the new rules for a short period of time. Teachers and personnel in the academe were not exempted from this dilemma. Researches revealed that pandemic fatigue significantly affects the teacher's psychological well-being. Results showed that in terms of the definite work, due to the online distance learning format, teachers experience struggle with technological concerns and issues during their online teaching which leads to the feeling that the work duty is increasingly difficult and the work pressure is ever-increasing. Teachers during the pandemic felt very exhausted of all the webinars, writing modules and checking outputs both online and offline. Fatigue connected with COVID-19 can have implications on teachers' capacities to teach efficiently and deliver emotional support for students. In spite of the difficulty and disturbances, strategic and goal-oriented teaching must still continue. Future researchers may focus on respondents specifically those who currently have a full-time work as a teacher and simultaneously work as a full-time mother teaching their own children.

Keywords: *fatigue, lockdown, pandemic, teacher education*

Introduction

The Covid-19 pandemic brought negative impact into the lives of many people which led to anxiety disorders (Savitsky et al., 2020). It was found out that anxiety and depression

progressing from events of uncertainties most likely will lead to negative physiological disorders. For instance, the adverse feeling and experiences brought about by the world-wide pandemic may have effects on education (de

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Oliveira Araújo et al., 2020). This may lead to anxiety among older individuals which may cause serious mental or physical health problems. Throughout the pandemic, many are tired of being restricted due to limitations on social occasions. They are likewise exhausted of wearing face masks, physical distancing, away from families and friends, and are increasingly fed up with the “new normal” schedules. Individuals are encountering a sort of burnout that specialists are calling pandemic fatigue, which can lead to careless behaviors and may contribute to significant increase in cases (Berg, 2021).

Lockdown/pandemic fatigue happens when individuals are exposed to situations that may lead to behavior changes over a long period of time, which is much tougher than short-term changes. Similar to any other lifestyle changes, people can follow the new rules for a short period of time, but maintaining the new behaviors can be difficult. People get tired and resort to the usual behaviors they had, and when the necessities are coming from sources outside themselves, it adds a whole other layer of complexity (Marple, 2021).

It has appeared as a challenging adversary for governments that are reckoning on a high degree of public collaboration with the latest rounds of limitations to flatten the infection curve. Too much pandemic fatigue, authorities say, can fuel a vicious round. An exhausted public tends to let its guard down, causing more infections and limitations that in turn compound the fatigue. (Meichtry & Sugden, 2020).

Many studies revealed the effects of different stress causing events which lead to the fatigue of educators and academicians. However, the effects of the fatigue among educators have not yet been explored. It is here that this study is considered important.

Literature Review

A study among 10,000 teachers revealed that 92.8% of educational professionals suffered emotional exhaustion, stress, anguish, or anxiety due to confinement and distance education. Unnecessary administrative responsibilities, unclear instructions, absence of sustenance in teleworking, and lack of

technical means were the main problems pointed out by teachers. Possible difficulties facing such policies include poor online teaching infrastructure, lack of teacher training, information gap, and complex home environment (Zhang et al., 2020). The educational challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic showed that hundreds of Illinois teachers were heavily exhausted from “pandemic fatigue” and considered quitting the teaching profession. According to a statewide survey of some 1,300 teachers, because of the stress and safety concerns caused by teaching amid the pandemic, one out of three teachers said that COVID-related stress had caused them to contemplate switching professions or retiring. This is something that the state data show is already occurring at the highest pace in five years. In 2019 alone, hundreds of teachers already retired from service. Seventy-six percent of teachers said their workload is heavier this year than in 2019 (Chicago Sun Times, 2020).

Professional educators who observe a shortage of resources when associated to job demands experience stress (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). These teachers may have undesirable views and feelings about the change, or they may have optimistic principles and feelings but experiences insufficient resources or over-whelming barriers (Ajzen, 2005). In either case, their ability to enact successful teaching will be tested and will likely result in stress.

Furthermore, it should be noted that, in difficult situations, teachers may play an additional and crucial role. They can offer psychosocial support to learners such as generating a safe and helpful communication where students may express their emotions and experiences and including specific structured psychosocial activities in the teaching/learning process that can strongly provide assistance to the most affected students (Inter-Agency Standing Committee, 2007a). Because of this, teachers' workload can be too much for the educators which may lead to a work experience that can be characterized by considerable levels of stress and physical complaints (Bogaert et al., 2014). Finally, Kirchner et al. (2021) explained that it is

imperative to motivate, transform, and develop confidence among educational managers and teachers.

A study conducted by Fauzi et al. (2020) showed that teachers face problems in the Covid-19 pandemic such as not having enough opportunities, internet connectivity and communication problems, planning, implementation and assessment of learning, and cooperation among parents and other members of the community. Mailizar et al. (2020) explained that the teacher, academic institutions, curriculum and learners were the four components of problems experienced by educators in the time of Covid-19. Rasmitadila et al. (2020) also argued that teachers had to endure challenges such as technical barriers, student's conditioning, student's participation in education and online education experience in distance education which is adapted in the Covid-19 pandemic.

Theoretical Framework

A model by which job demands and resources proposed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007) can be understood in various contexts in terms of their effects on teacher stress and burnout which can be considered as an important factor during a pandemic. In the job resources-demands model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), job demands are understood to be fluid, and job resources are seen to include both contextual resources provided by employers (e.g., supportive leaders) as well as personal resources such as teacher efficacy and self-care practices. Because of this, this model showcases the flexibility for application even in unusual contexts such as a pandemic (Sokal, Eblie Trudel & Babb, 2020).

Job demands-resources model of burnout (JD-R) proposes that the development of burnout follows two processes. First process, demanding aspects of work (i.e., extreme job demands) lead to constant overtaxing and in the end, exhaustion. In the second process, a lack of resources complicates the meeting of job demands, which further leads to withdrawal behavior. The long-term consequence of this withdrawal is disengagement from work (Bakker et al., 2001).

Methods

The study utilized a cross-sectional descriptive research design performed under correlational research which attempted to determine the significant associations between psychological state, hope, and pandemic fatigue. In this type of design, relationships between and among a number of facts are sought and interpreted.

Participants

The 150 participants from different public and private school teacher of Marikina City have been informed about the inclusion criteria for the study and asked to complete a questionnaire for the following criteria: (a) teachers, and (b) who experiences psychological distress during the lockdown/pandemic fatigue.

Instruments

Demographic Questionnaire

A questionnaire about demographic profile was administered to the participants to obtain their age, gender, name of school where they are currently employed and civil status.

Pandemic Fatigue Scale

The Pandemic Fatigue Scale (PFS) is a psychometrically accurate measuring instrument used to identify related emotions and perceptions. It also reveals the effects of Pandemic Fatigue on four important COVID-19 related health protective behaviors namely: physical distancing, hygienic behavior, mask wearing, and information seeking. The researcher determined that Pandemic Fatigue consists of two distinct, but significantly correlated dimensions, and considered to be essential predictor of deviation from health protective behaviors, even when controlling for other relevant emotions and perceptions. Furthermore, it will also show that Pandemic Fatigue is related to several flexible emotions and perceptions that could be highlighted through interventions, providing initial insights on how to deal with Pandemic Fatigue and, in turn, reinvigorate the public—not only during the COVID-19 pandemic, but also in future pandemic related challenges and scenarios (Lilleholt et al., 2020).

Psychological Well Being Scales

This is an 18-item questionnaire intended to measure six aspects of wellbeing and happiness: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (Ryff et al., 2007; adapted from Ryff, 1989). Research which applied the 18-item PWB Scale has shown that experiences of daily discrimination are associated with deteriorating wellbeing. In contrast, adults have better wellbeing when they remember to have experienced relationships with their parents in childhood marked with support and affection (An & Cooney, 2016). In addition, several studies have found that better wellbeing is associated with education (Ryff, Keyes, & Hughes, 2003; Keyes, Shmotkin, & Ryff, 2002). Because education is both an indicator of status and a path out of poverty (Card, 2001), PWB may be an important link to socio-economic mobility.

Adult Hope Scale (AHS)

It is a 12-item scale made to assess the participant's level of hope. The scale is divided into two subscales that comprise Snyder's cognitive model of hope: (1) Agency (i.e., goal-directed energy) and (2) Pathways (i.e., planning to accomplish goals). Among the 12 items, 4 refer to the Agency subscale and 4 refer to the Pathways subscale. The remaining 4 items serve as fillers. Each item is answered using an 8-point Likert-type scale ranging from Definitely False to Definitely True.

Data Gathering Procedure

The participants are the teachers who are experiencing pandemic fatigue. Forty

questions were designed for an online survey about the emotions and perceptions, showing the effects of Pandemic Fatigue on important COVID-19 related health protective behaviors. Teachers were chosen regardless of years of experience and institution level whether they are employed in private or public schools. The teachers were requested for their voluntary involvement in the study prior to the online administration of the research instruments. The investigation was conducted using the google forms sent to the email or personal messenger of the participants.

Data Analysis

Data was analyzed using frequency and mean percentage which is a descriptive statistical treatment used to interpret the teachers' responses. In interpreting the data between demographics and pandemic fatigue, the researcher used t-test to look for the significance of correlation, between psychological well-being and hope, the researcher utilized multiple regression.

Findings and Results

Table 1 shows that the p-value of psychological well-being is 0.032995 which supports the Hc that there is a significant association (correlation) between psychological state and pandemic fatigue. On the other hand, there is no significant association (correlation) between hope and pandemic fatigue.

Table 1. Regression Summary for Dependent Variable: Pandemic Fatigue

N=150 b*	Std. Err of b*	b	Std. Err. of b	T (147)	p-value
Intercept		-1.202099	1.958991	-0.103165	0.917973
Psychological Well-being	0.175389	0.081693	0.381592	0.381592	0.032995
Adult Hope Scale	0.75117	0.081693	0.236199	0.919504	0.359338

Table 2 reveals that the demographic profile clearly shows that there is a significant correlation between gender, age and civil status to the pandemic fatigue of teachers. Among those profile gender and civil status has marked significant correlation. This supports the hypothesis mentioned Pandemic fatigue significantly exist across demographics (gender, age, and civil status).

Discussion

The research findings showed that pandemic fatigue significantly affect the teachers' psychological well-being. Thus, in terms of definite work, due to the online format, teachers experience struggle with technological bugs during their online teaching which led to the feeling that the work duty is increasingly becoming more difficult and the work pressure is ever-increasing. The competences that teachers have is not enough to resolve these challenges, which makes them more and more disappointed with work. Being incapable to address the pandemic fatigue they are experiencing; teachers can easily be led to the deterioration of professional identity. Over time, teachers are predisposed to sleeplessness, tension, irritability, fatigue, and other negative emotions, resulting in varying degrees of job burnout. When the degree of teachers' job burnout would be more serious, it could affect the implementation of teaching activities and instructions (Moueleu et al., 2019).

On the other hand, the results showed that there is a significant correlation between demographic profiles of teachers and pandemic fatigue. Among those profile teachers who fall on the age 40 years old and above experience difficulties teaching through distance learning. Similarly, the current educational fallout from COVID-19 showed that hundreds of Illinois teachers worn out from "pandemic fatigue" and are on the verge of quitting. According to a survey of some 1,300 teachers statewide, because of the stress and safety concerns caused by teaching amid the pandemic. One out of three teachers said that COVID-related stress had caused them to contemplate switching professions or retiring, something that state data show is already

occurring at the highest pace in five years. Hundreds more teachers have already retired this year as compared with 2019. Seventy- six percent of teachers said their workload is heavier this year than in 2019 (Chicago Sun Times, 2020).

Conclusion and Recommendations

Teachers during the pandemic felt very exhausted from all the webinars, writing modules, and checking outputs both online and offline. Fatigue connected with COVID-19 can have implications on teachers' capacities to teach efficiently and deliver emotional support for students. In spite of the difficulty and disturbances, teaching must still continue. It is where the resilience and positive attitude of Filipino educators are highly evident and manifested.

The study shows pandemic fatigue has significantly affected the teacher's psychological well-being. Demographic profiles of the respondents' clearly states as well that fatigue significantly exists between gender, age, and civil status. Most of the respondents were female and are married which clearly shows that aside from teaching online and other clerical works that teacher are supposed to do, they experience fatigue relating to teaching their own child in answering their modules. The future researchers may focus on respondents who are working full time as teachers and are full-time mothers teaching their own children as well. Age can also be a focus on how pandemic fatigue influence the so-called baby boomer of this generation on how they try to cope up with this shifting from face-to-face teaching to distant learning. A meta-analysis can be performed as well on how the Department of Education tries to lessen the pandemic fatigue that teachers are significantly experiencing and how effective the intervention would be.

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