

Impact of Social Media during Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract

The Government of India was forced to impose lockdown during ongoing pandemic of COVID-19. Most of the people found themselves in catch-22 situation to reduce their social relations drastically. The present study investigates about the role of social media to mitigate negative impact during Covid19 outbreak. The data was collected by providing a weblink of google forms on various Whatsapp groups. The individual respondent had been used and 60 respondents were selected to collect data. With the help of Cronbach's Alpha test, it is found that various items of questionnaire is highly reliable. Cluster analysis and regression analysis was carried out to know the perception of online-users' towards the impact of psychological first aid (PFA) made by social media on community resilience during covid-19 pandemic. The Regression analysis concluded that there was a significant impact of independent variable .i.e. PFA effect of social media on community resilience.

Keywords: COVID -19 Pandemic, Online users, Social media

Introduction

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic created a serious health crisis all over the world. It is matter of great concern as it is highly contagious. The whole world is confronting the high fatality rate. As it is advised by health officials to maintain social and physical distance, social media has played an unprecedented role. It has provided the Psychological First Aid (PFA) when majority of countries all over the world were in lockdown period. It played a significant role to the isolated people. The Psychological First Aid (PFA) comprises six core principles; these are to promote safety, calm, connectedness, self- and group-efficacy, hope, and help (Australian Psychological Society, 2009). The concept of psychological first aid for individuals exposed to highly traumatic events has been used in the field of crisis management and disaster mental health (Reyes, 2006), Mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) explained that any type of local or outside support that aims to protect or promote psychosocial well-being and prevent or treat mental disorder (WHO, 2007). It includes basic commonsense principles of support to promote normal recovery, such as helping people to feel safe, connected to others, calm and hopeful, with access to physical, emotional and social support, and able to help themselves. The Psychological first aid aims to reduce initial distress, meet current needs, promote flexible coping and encourage adjustment. The Psychological first aid is useful as the first thing that you might do with individuals or families following a disaster. It is most widely used in the first hours, days and weeks following an event. Psychological first aid is based on an understanding that people affected by disasters will experience a range of early reactions (physical, psychological, emotional, behavioral) that may interfere with their ability to cope .

Five basic principles that have received broad empirical support for facilitating positive adaptation following trauma guided the selection of PFA strategies and techniques: (a) promoting sense of safety, (b) promoting calming, (c) promoting sense of self-esteem (d) promoting connectedness, and (e) instilling hope (Hobfoll et al., 2007).

(A) Promoting Sense of Safety: Psychological safety as a shared belief that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking. In order to protect their personal image, individuals within teams tend to adopt passive behaviors concerning their personal relationships (Edmondson, 1999). Edmondson (2003) states that an individual may have four negative feelings while intercommunication in teams (a) An individual may have feeling of ignorant when he/she asks a question someone (b) Feeling of incompetent when someone admits an error or asks for help or accepts the probability of failing to complete a particular task (c) if someone who criticizes past or present events, may be called as pessimistic (d) Stay away to provide feedback in order to prevent to be seen as impertinent. Psychological safety is a feeling of safety that an individual has to express themselves without hurtful consequences.

During inter-personal communication, an individual may not speak out comfortably due to threat of criticism. It is social media which provides safe platform to an individual to express themselves without hurtful consequences. Behaviorally, psychological safety leads an individual in open communication, voice their concerns, and seek greater feedback; all of which are interpersonally risky behaviors (Pearsall & Ellis, 2011).

(b) Promoting Calming: Usually, Individuals experiences less anxiety when interacting online as compared to offline. It helps to sharpen the social skills in which an individual feels a safer environment (Ulhs, 2017). Social networking sites may provide an outlet for those with social anxiety disorder to share how they are feeling (on sites like Tumblr). Platforms that allow for anonymous "blogging" may allow those with social anxiety to feel less alone and look at their situation in a more light-hearted way.

(C) Promoting Sense of Self –Esteem: People with lower self-esteem spend more time on Facebook (Kalpidou, Costin, & Morris (2011), Mehdizadeh (2010) Tazghini & Siedlecki (2013). It is better explained by using social compensation theory. Social compensation theory states that people who experience difficulties in social relations, such as individuals with low self-esteem, socially anxious individuals, and introverts, are more motivated to use social networks in order to compensate for their unsatisfactory face-to-face interactions (McKenna, Green, & Gleason, 2002)

(D) Promoting Connectedness: Social connectedness is a feeling of closeness, a perceived bond between others, and a sense of belonging with one's family members, peers, and community (Barber and Schluterman, 2008). Social connectedness as a potential source of support which may facilitate the stress coping process (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Social networking sites may help those with social anxiety to more easily initiate and establish social connections. These sites may make it easier for the people with social anxiety disorder to become involved in connecting with others.

(E) Instilling Hope: During the ongoing global pandemic, there is likely to be an adverse impact on our mental as well as physical health. Due to lockdown, individuals were forced to remain indoors along with the anxieties and uncertainties associated present and future uncertainties. Various Bollywood celebrities tried to instill hope among people through social media platforms. Superstar Shah Rukh Khan (SRK) had posted a song titled "Sab Sahi Ho Jaayega" from his Twitter account. The song was sung by SRK himself. Bollywood actor-filmmaker Satish Kaushik released a motivation video on Twitter. He sang a song "When life gives you banana" to motivate people and stay positive during the lockdown. Motivational movie dialogues, songs, reading materials and sharing inspirational quotes spread the positivity among people through social media platform.

Objectives of the study

- 1) To know about perception of online users towards the Psychological First Aid (PFA) provided by Social Media during Covid 19 pandemic.
- 2) To study the impact of PFA made by social media during covid19 pandemic

Hypothesis

H1: There is a significant impact of social media among online users during Covid19 pandemic.

Research Methodology

The present study was carried out in order to study the impact of social media in providing the psychological first aid (PFA) during ongoing Covid-19 Pandemic. During the extensive review of literature, it is found that not much work was carried out in this area. The present study is exploratory study in nature.

Population: Population included different age group of 18 years to 65 years. They are all interested to participate in online- survey regarding impact of social media.

Sample size: 250 respondents.

Sample Elements: Individual respondent will be the sample element.

Sample Techniques: Non Probability purposive sampling technique was used to collect the data.

Tools for Data Collection: Online survey was conducted with the help of google forms. Weblink was shared through various Whatsapp groups and e-mail ids.

Tools for Data Analysis

- Cronbach's alpha method of reliability was used to check the consistency of questionnaire.
- Cluster analysis was used to find out the perception of people towards the role of social media during covid19 Pandemic.
- Regression test was used to measure the impact of independent variables on dependent variables.

Data Analysis

Reliability Testing: Cronbach's Alpha is designed as a measure of internal consistency of items in the questionnaire. It varies between zero and one. The closer alpha is to one, the greater the internal consistency of the items in the questionnaire. Total number of questions or items in the questionnaire is 21. The value of Cronbach's Alpha is .923. It means there is high internal consistency of various items in the questionnaire.

Cluster Analysis: From Stage 1 – agglomeration schedule in hierarchical clustering, it is observed that difference between the rows is maximum between the 2nd row and 3rd row from the bottom is 28.966. Therefore, it is concluded that there would be two clusters. In Stage 2- There are two clusters. The interpretation of final clusters of table 2 is given below:-

- (a) **Cluster 1:** Online users think that the social media provides a safe platform to exchange ideas and opinions freely. People belonging to this group favors that all ideas shared on social media platform are accepted without any interruptions. It helps to provide an open mindset to the online communities. It helps give feedback to each other. It helps to relieve anxiety about the spread of coronavirus. It helps them to overcome panic among individuals regarding covid-19. It creates awareness among public by sharing health messages. Online communities promote communication while maintaining social distances. It helps to overcome panic among individuals regarding covid-19. Social media creates awareness among public by sharing health messages. Online communities promote communication while maintaining social distances. It provides a medium to ease negative feelings generated among individuals during covid19 pandemic lockdown and generates positive feelings. It provides an opportunity for self-expression and helps to cope-up feeling of low-esteem among individuals. It provides inner-self respect. The individuals are self-motivated and provides positive outlook towards future. Online communities helps to stay connected with each other and remain well informed. It helps to connect all the age-group of individuals. Feeling of being cared and loved is generated by each others through online communication. Communication can be made any time. Social media provides social support to online users. Social media helps to provide communities resilience during Covid19 pandemic.
- (b) **Cluster 2:** Online users have indifferent attitude towards safe platform to exchange ideas and opinions freely. People belonging to this group also favors that all ideas shared on social media platform are accepted without any interruptions. People in this group disagree with that it provides an open mindset to the online communities. They opined that physical communication is much better than online communication. It does not provide an effective feedback to each other. They believed that it is not able to relieve anxiety about the spread of coronavirus. Rather social media spreads fake news and rumors. They agree that it helps to overcome panic among individuals regarding covid-19. It helps to create awareness among public by sharing health messages. People of this group also agree that online communities promote communication while maintaining social distances. It is unable to overcome panic among individuals regarding covid-19. Social media is not an effective method to create awareness among public by sharing health messages. Online communities does not helps to promote communication while maintaining social distances. People disagree that it is a medium

to ease negative feelings generated among individuals during covid19 pandemic lockdown. An individual can not be express properly on social media. Rather it increases the feeling of low-esteem among individuals. It fails to generate inner-self respect and does not provide positive outlook towards future. Online communities does not helps stay connected

Table 2: Final Cluster Centers

Items	Cluster	
	1	2
v1	3.45	1.98
v2	3.73	2.08
v3	3.09	1.16
v4	3.18	1.27
v5	3.27	1.24
v6	2.55	2.04
v7	3.18	2.06
v8	3.09	2.04
v9	3.00	1.10
v10	3.55	1.86
v11	3.64	1.88
v12	4.45	1.92
v13	4.73	1.98
v14	4.55	1.94
v15	4.27	1.90
v16	3.82	1.00
v17	3.36	1.20
v18	3.64	1.29
v19	3.45	1.27
v20	3.18	1.29

fully with each other. All the age-group people are not fully comfortable to use social media. It does not generate positive emotions among online users. Communication can not be made any time. It still has some limitations. Social media fails to provide social support to online users. Social media does not help to provide communities resilience during Covid19 pandemic.

Regression analysis

Regression analysis is used to describe the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables. Table 3 gives the model summary of regression analysis regarding perception of online-users' towards the impact of Psychological First Aid (PFA) made by community resilience can be explained with the help of Statement:1,2,5,6,10,11,13,15,16,17,18, 19 and 20 of the questionnaire (refer annexure). Therefore, these variables have significant significant impact of social media among online users during Covid19 pandemic. Rest of variables of questionnaire are insignificant.

ANOVA Analysis

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) is used to analyse the differences among group means in a sample. In table 4, F-value is 515.414 and which is significant at .000 level of significance, this signifies that the model of the present study is a good fit. Therefore,

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	42.740	15	2.849	515.414	.000 ^b
	Residual	.243	44	.006		
	Total	42.983	59			
a. Dependent Variable: v21						
b. Predictors: (Constant), v20, v8, v15, v6, v1, v10, v2, v11, v16, v5, v13, v19, v9, v17, v18						

The null hypothesis is accepted. There is significant impact of social media among Online users during covid19 pandemic.

Conclusion

In the present study, it is found in the cluster analysis that people lies in cluster 1 thinks that PFA effect of social media plays an important role in Community resilience. On the other hand, people lies in cluster 2 have mixed opinion PFA effect of social media plays an important role in Community resilience. There is significant impact of social media on community resilience. The present study is helpful for future research.

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Questionnaire

A list of 21 statements were made in order to measure the perception of online users' towards the impact of Psychological First Aid (PFA) made by Social Media on community resilience during Covid-19 Pandemic. The respondents have to agree or disagree (5=strongly agree to 1=strongly disagree) with each statement.

1. Social media provides a safe platform to exchange ideas and opinions freely.
2. All ideas are accepted without any interruptions.
3. It helps to provide an open mindset to the online communities.
4. It helps give feedback to each other.
5. A platform to relieve anxiety about the spread of coronavirus.
6. It helps to overcome panic among individuals regarding covid-19.
7. It creates awareness among public by sharing health messages.
8. Online communities promote communication while maintaining social distances.
9. It provides a medium to ease negative feelings generated among individuals during covid19 pandemic lockdown.
10. It is powerful platform to instill positive feelings among individuals.
11. It provides an opportunity for self-expression.
12. It helps to cope-up feeling of low-esteem among individuals.

13. It provides inner-self respect.
14. Individuals are self-motivated and provides positive outlook towards future.
15. Online communities stay connected with each other.
16. It helps to stay well informed.
17. It helps to connect all the age –group of individuals.
18. Feeling of being cared and loved is generated by each others through online communication.
19. Communication can be made any time.
20. Social media provides social support to online users.
21. Social media helps to provide communities resilience during Covid19 pandemic.