



The Role of COVID-19 and Online School on Anxiety Levels

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Introduction

It is undeniable that the current pandemic due to the COVID-19 has led the mass public to be susceptible to living through a continuous traumatic stressor (Estes & Thompson, 2020; Salari et al., 2020). Undergoing a public health disaster that the world has not experienced in decades to the magnitude that is considered a global pandemic, the stress and anxiety is to be expected (Pfefferbaum, B., 2020). Not only is there an increase in stress due to a disease outbreak, but the strain of quarantine has also added to the severity and potentially detrimental effect on public mental health. According to an article named “Preparing for the aftermath of COVID-19: Shifting risk and downstream health consequences,” they predict that there will be a negative downstream of mental, as well as physical health, effects probably nationwide, and the health field should be preparing for the potential long-term consequences that the pandemic has inflicted (Estes & Thompson, 2020). We believe that COVID has also harmed students. In this particular study, we will be focusing on college students, the pandemic has led many students to do online school and force everyone to remain quarantined. This will lead to higher levels of anxiety in these students. The purpose is to see the relationship between the struggle of online school and anxiety levels. Our topic is about the levels of anxiety disorders that college students get in regards to going to school while dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hypotheses

Focusing only on college students, we predicted that the sudden transition to online school combined with quarantine will lead to higher levels of anxiety in these students.

Method

Participants

The main audience and the population were college students. This ranged from the associate’s level to the bachelor’s level. The mean age was $M = 24.56$ with a standard deviation for females ($SD = 6.56$), and males ($SD = 13.00$). From the entirety of the sample population, 15.56 % were male, 75.56 % were female, and 8.89% were non-binary.

Measures

We conducted a Likert-type Scale. The reliability for this scale works well because the conditions are consistent; the only downfall would be that many people will answer as “neutral” due to wanting to rush through the survey. We conducted restricted questions. This is a multiple-choice style questionnaire in which it asks what the most appropriate answer is from the choices given (Gravetter & Forzano, 2019). We used the Beck Anxiety Scale to measure the anxiety in the participants.

Procedure

We used a survey research design to perform the study, specifically for college students who are experiencing going to school online during COVID-19. The study was carried out by having students complete an internet survey. We also emailed a link to students to fill out the questionnaire. At the very beginning of the Google Form, prior to starting the questionnaire, the informed consent and overall summary introduced the participant into the study. If the participant continued, they clicked a separate button that indicated that they read and agreed to the informed consent. After they clicked next, it redirected all the participants to the next page where they completed the rest of the form. The only task the participant completed was filling out the questionnaire on the Google Form.

Results

Table 1

Independent t-test for Total of Symptoms and Whether or Not a Person Had Previous Experience in an Online Classroom

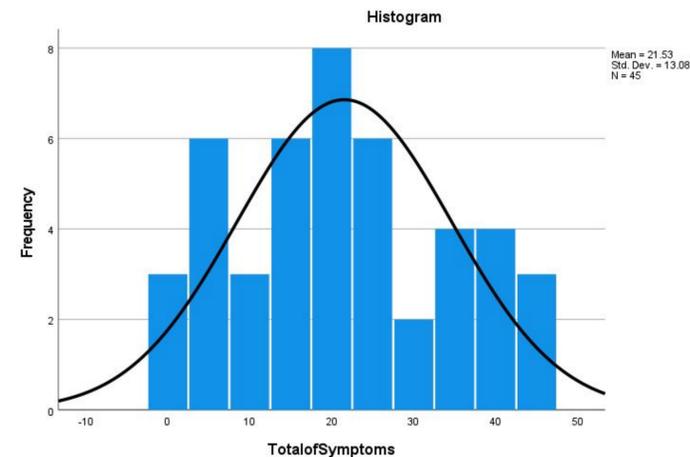
Independent Samples Test		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances	t-test for Equality of Means		Sig. (2-tailed)		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	SED	Lower	Upper
Total of Symptoms	Equal variances assumed	1.37	0.25	-0.35	43	0.73	-9.43	6.67
	Equal variances not assumed			-0.36	42.18	0.72	-9.20	6.45

Note. Using equal variances not assumed, $f(42.18) = -0.36, p = 0.72, p > 0.05$.

We used Equal variances not assumed because the sample sizes are not equal, $N = 26$ for no, $N = 19$ for yes, $t = -0.36, df = 42.18, p = 0.72$. There was not a significant difference in mean Total of Symptoms scores, between those that did have online experience ($M = 20.74, SD = 11.803$) and those that did not have prior online experience ($M = 22.12, SD = 14.15$), $f(42.18) = -0.36, p = 0.72, .$

Figure 1

Histogram of the Frequency of the Total of Symptoms



Note. For the total of symptoms, it provides the descriptive statistics for that particular variable, $M = 21.53, SD = 13.10, N = 45$.

Discussion

We believed that COVID was harming college students and this prolonged change will lead to higher levels of anxiety in these students. However, after a thorough analysis of the results collected from our participants, we concluded that the findings were not significant and did not indicate that a transition to online school will increase anxiety levels. Therefore, we must accept our null hypothesis - the change in the type of school due to COVID will not significantly impact college students’ anxiety levels. We discovered that there was not a significant relationship between Fall GPA and Total of Symptoms, Table 3, $N = 45, r = -0.12, p = 0.41, p > 0.05$. We also correlated Spring GPA and Total of Symptoms, Table 4, and discovered that there was not a significant relationship between, $N = 45, r = -0.16, p = 0.31, p > 0.05$.

Limitations

There may be confounding variables influencing our results for the main possible design flaws, such as economic problems, personal problems, and lack of socialization. When only focusing on the change to online school, it limits the anxiety levels to a single variable; however, many individuals suffer from various variables. Our study showed a bias due to only women taking our questionnaire.

Implications

Our outcome indicated the results were not a significant transition from in-person to online learning, as we expected. This could be due to the pandemic being so unprecedented. The knowledge of this ongoing pandemic will still need an endless amount of research to compare the short-term and long-term effects of online courses due to COVID-19. Future researchers should take advantage of the fact that, as the pandemic continues, they will have more reliable resources and studies available to explore and examine.

References

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