

## IMPLICATION OF SOCIAL ISOLATION ON MENTAL HEALTH DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: A LOOK AT ITS RELIGIOUS AND SPIRITUAL COPING

### *IMPLICAÇÃO DO ISOLAMENTO SOCIAL NA SAÚDE MENTAL DURANTE A PANDEMIA DE COVID-19: UM OLHAR SOBRE SEU ENFRENTAMENTO RELIGIOSO E ESPIRITUAL*

### *IMPLICACIÓN DEL AISLAMIENTO SOCIAL EN LA SALUD MENTAL DURANTE LA PANDEMIA DE COVID-19: UNA MIRADA A SU AFRONTAMIENTO RELIGIOSO Y ESPIRITUAL*

Amna GOHAR<sup>1</sup>  
Alonso Bezerra de CARVALHO<sup>2</sup>  
Carlos da Fonseca BRANDÃO<sup>3</sup>

**ABSTRACT:** China was the center of Covid-19 which rapidly spread out all over the world. The rapid outbreak of Covid-19 in Asian countries has severely affected psychological and social life of people. Which also has a great influence on religion and faith. Spiritual and religious coping is an effective approach for mental relaxation and belief on the creator specifically during the Covid-19 outbreak. The main purpose of this study is observing the situation of Asian countries existing literature on human psychology and social life further it also explores religious and spiritual coping during Covid-19. Different studies were retrieved from online sources. In which the published articles were classified according to three themes such as human psychology, religious and spiritual coping and social life during Covid-19. It is evident from the literature that covid-19 has a great influence on human psychology. Majority people suffered from anxiety and depression in these tough days of life. Also, most of the people suffered from fear, depression, stress, loneliness during lockdown which effects their social life. The positive point was found that religion and spirituality helping people to reduce their stress and create positivity in their life. Spirituality helps out people in mental relaxation at times of crisis and epidemic situations while religious copings and strong believe on creator reduce anxiety and depression.

**KEYWORDS:** Religiosity. Spirituality. Human psychology. Social life. Covid-19.

**RESUMO:** A China foi o centro da Covid-19, que rapidamente se espalhou por todo o mundo. O rápido surto de Covid-19 nos países asiáticos afetou gravemente a vida psicológica e social das pessoas, situação que tornou o enfrentamento espiritual e religioso uma abordagem eficaz para o relaxamento mental. O objetivo principal deste artigo é observar

<sup>1</sup> São Paulo State University (UNESP), Marília – SP – Brazil. Doctoral student in the Postgraduate Program in Education. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9356-3560>. E-mail: [amna.gohar@unesp.br](mailto:amna.gohar@unesp.br)

<sup>2</sup> São Paulo State University (UNESP), Marília – SP – Brazil. Professor of the Department of Didactics and the Postgraduate Program in Education. Doctorate in Education (USP). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5106-2517>. E-mail: [alonso.carvalho@unesp.br](mailto:alonso.carvalho@unesp.br)

<sup>3</sup> São Paulo State University (UNESP), Marília – SP – Brazil. Professor of the Department of Linguistic, Literary and Educational Studies and the Postgraduate Program in Education. Doctorate in Education (UNESP). ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-2254-0692>. E-mail: [carlos.brandao@unesp.br](mailto:carlos.brandao@unesp.br)

como a questão foi abordada nos países asiáticos. Para tanto, foram selecionados diferentes estudos publicados em fontes digitais. É evidente nos textos que a Covid-19 teve um grande impacto na vida das pessoas. A maioria delas passou a sofrer de ansiedade, depressão, medo, estresse, solidão durante o isolamento, afetando a sua vida individual y social. O ponto positivo encontrado foi a espiritualidade teria contribuído para que as pessoas tivessem um relaxamento mental nas situações mais críticas da pandemia, reduzindo a ansiedade e a depressão e enfrentando as situações com mais fé e esperança no Criador.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Religiosidade. Espiritualidade. Psicologia humana. Vida social. Covid-19.

**RESUMEN:** China fue el centro de la Covid-19, que se extendió rápidamente por todo el mundo. El rápido surto de Covid-19 en los países asiáticos ha afectado gravemente la vida psicológica y social de las personas, una situación que ha hecho del afrontamiento espiritual y religioso un enfoque eficaz para la relajación mental. El objetivo principal de este artículo es observar cómo se abordó el tema en los países asiáticos. Por ello, seleccionamos diferentes estudios publicados en fuentes digitales. Es evidente por los textos que el Covid-19 tuvo un gran impacto en la vida de las personas. La mayoría de ellas comenzó a sufrir ansiedad, depresión, miedo, estrés, soledad durante el aislamiento, afectando su vida individual y social. El punto positivo encontrado fue que la espiritualidad pasó a contribuir para que las personas tuvieran una relajación mental en las situaciones más críticas de la pandemia, reduciendo la ansiedad y la depresión y afrontando situaciones con más fe y esperanza en el Creador.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** Religiosidad. Espiritualidad. Psicología humana. Vida social. Covid-19.

## Introduction

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the global population faced the most pandemic situation of Covid-19. The invisible virus ended life of many people around all the countries. The unpredictable disease has blowout having no recovery treatment and any medicine. In which globally up to 178,118,597 confirmed cases of Covid-19 have been recorded, the death ratio is 3,864,180 and 103,552,567 people recovered successfully and now 2,412,226,768 vaccine doses have been administered. Currently in Asia total 54,583,340 coronavirus cases were recorded in which active cases are 1,856,413 whereas 769,514 was died and 51,957,413 are recovered from the disease (WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, 2021). The death ratio of Covid-19 patients is published on daily basis in increasing trend that effects individual psychologically and emotionally. It has a decisive impact on human psychology at all ages (CHEW *et al.*, 2020). Similarly, Covid-19 outbreak increase the level of stress, anxiety, depression, fear about health and loved ones (WANG *et al.*, 2020). In this scenario spirituality and religion

can be a good healer in societies. It can help people in time of crisis and bereavement to create positivity in emotions and wellbeing of people (ÖZVEREN; KIRCA, 2019). Through religious and spiritual coping individual can remove their stress and create mental relaxation peacefully.

In the psychological sphere, it is evident that traumatic stress disorder, loneliness and anger are increasing on daily basis after quarantine (BROOKS *et al.*, 2020). Different types of Stress were faced by people during critical condition such as fear of disease, death, ambiguity, loss of social life, imprisonment, scarce evidence, contradictory instruction, loss of social activities, discontinuation from nature, aloneness, despair, low self-esteem, financial loss and hindrances to supplies of food and water (BROOKS *et al.*, 2020). Covid-19 pandemic has major consequences on individual physical and mental health. These psychiatric consequences have short- and long-term effects which will cause depression, anxiety, fatigue, insomnia and post-traumatic stress (ROGERS *et al.*, 2020).

Social distance and isolation are considered safety measures to reduce covid-19 outspread through which government can minimize health risk (USHER; BHULLAR; JACKSON, 2020). While social distancing has considered best safety measures to reduce health consequences on the other hand it has caused many issues such as job loss, lack of medical treatment and failing in mental health (ROGERS *et al.*, 2020). Increasing stress during social isolation creates tough time for professional medical (BANERJEE, 2020). Mostly people become susceptible to negative thoughts, anxiety and fear that also increase in cases and deaths. The only best strategy in the current situation to reduce mental stress is digital technology through which an individual has access to contact family, attend online classes, virtual workplaces and the use of religious and spiritual beliefs (KOENIG, 2020).

Religion has a positive impact on mental health of individuals who have a strong belief. In Islam spirituality can be defined as a core theme which contains beliefs (In Allah and His prophets, the day of judgment, etc.), knowledge and doings of daily livings. Similarly, in Islam people are following the set of rituals and codes of conduct striving to become closer to Allah and to find purpose of sending in this world. So positive religious coping is positively correlated with life satisfaction and positive affect while negative religious coping is positively correlated with negative affect (HABIB; HUSSAIN; HABIB, 2020). *The Prophet (ﷺ) said, "If you hear about the outbreak of plague and disease in a land, do not enter it; whereas if the plague breaks out in a place where you are living, do not leave that place"* (Narrated by Saud-Sahih al-Bukhari, 5728). Aisha said *"I asked Prophet (ﷺ) about the plague. He told me that it was a Punishment sent by Allah on whom he wished, and*

Allah made it a source of mercy for the believers, for if one in the time of an epidemic plague stays in his country patiently hoping for Allah's Reward and believing that nothing will befall him except what Allah has written for him, he will get the reward of a martyr" (Sahih al-Bukhari, 3474). In another place the Holy prophet (PBUH) said, "Cleanliness is half of the emaan and emaan leads a man to heaven". Abu Malik at-Ash'ari reported: Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said: "Cleanliness is half of faith that leads a man to heaven" (Sahih Muslim, 223). Muslims has a strong faith on Allah and those who have a strong faith they always respond sensibly to all trails of life. They are always encouraged to strive for medical treatment (Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). According to Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) "Allah has not created any disease without appointing a remedy for it, with the exception of one disease that is old age" (Narrated Usamah ibn Sharik: Sunan Abi Dawud, 3855).

Muslims has optimal ways to prevent their selves from viral diseases by following rules and regulation of Islam. Such as ablution (wudhu') an Islamic ritual that is performed before every prayer, five times a day. In which a person washes his mouth, nose, ears, face, hair, hands, ankles, forearms, and feet, each thrice. On the other hand, due to pandemic Muslim faced negative impacts upon religious practice in remarkable ways, which includes cancelling pilgrimages, Tablighi jamaat ijtemah (gathering) and disallowed festivals and celebrations involving group interactions. Somehow it suffers people mentally and socially.

**Table 1 – Covid-19 religious coping in Islam**

	<b>Safety measures and consequences</b>	<b>Religious coping in Islam</b>	<b>Reference</b>
<b>Covid-19</b>	Social isolation	When you heard about plague don't go out from that land and don't enter in a land where a plague is breakout.	According to Prophet (PBUH) (Narrated by Saud-Sahih al-Bukhari, 5728).
	Face and hand Hygiene	Abolution 5 times a day for prayer. The Messenger of Allah used to perform ablution for every prayer.	(Narrated by Anas bin Malik Sunan Ibn Majah, 509)
	Avoid Greetings while meetings	The Prophet (ﷺ) sent word to him: 'Go back, for we have accepted your oath of allegiance	Amr and his father said that in Sunan Ibn Majah 3544
	No treatment	Allah has not made a disease without appointing a remedy for it, with the exception of one disease, namely old age.	According to Prophet (PBUH) (Narrated Usamah ibn Sharik- Sunan Abi Dawud 3855).

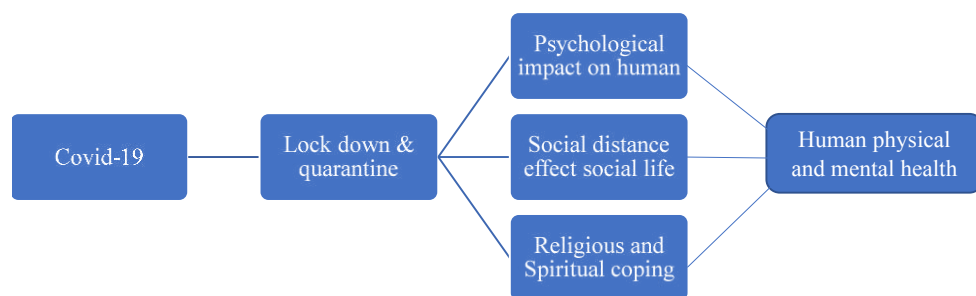
Source: Prepared by the authors

This review paper drags out the positive coping of religiosity and spirituality in relation to human psyche and social life during pandemic. Further the paper analyzes the results of social isolation/lockdown on humans' psyche. This paper comprises the review of related online articles from Asian countries randomly which measuring the above variables in the context of Covid-19. 19 articles were selected for review in total. It is concluded that spirituality helps out people in mental relaxation at times of crisis, epidemic situations and religious copings reduce mental health.

### Methodological and thematic analysis of selected articles

The total 19 articles from Asian countries randomly were included in this review. Researcher collect relevant articles for review, giving priority to the religious and spiritual studies available online and briefly summarizing the salient themes. Three broad themes were identified across the 19 publications, and were used to organize the review: religious and spiritual coping, impact of Covid-19 on human psyche, impact of COVID-19 on social life. The current article explores the impact of lockdown on individual mental and physical health it also expresses the consequences that effect individual health in different ways.

Figure 1 – Covid-19



Source: Prepared by the authors

## Results

### Literature addressing impact of covid-19 on Human psychology

In total six research articles were studies from different Asian countries in order to examined the psychological impact on human life during covid-19. Reviewed researches

showed that covid-19 has a significant psychological impact on general and also on medical staff human psyche in remarkable ways. It is also noted that female has a high level of anxiety than male. (CUI *et al.*, 2020; ALKHAMEES *et al.*, 2020; TEE *et al.*, 2020; SALMAN *et al.*, 2020; GROVER *et al.*, 2020; THOMAS *et al.*, 2020). Their results are summarized in the Table below (Table 2).

**Table 2 – Covid-19 influence on Human psychology**

Country or region	Research Population	Research Instrument	Research Methodology	Results	Reference
<b>China</b>	Medical staff (Nurses)	the Self-Rating Anxiety Scale, Perceived Stress Scale-14 and Simple Coping Style Questionnaire.	Cross sectional survey	Pearson correlation showed a positive correlation of the anxiety with stress score ( $r=0.443$ , $P<0.001$ ) and stress ( $r=-0.503$ , $P<0.001$ ).	Cui, et al., 2020
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	General population	psychological impact and mental health status using the Impact of Event Scale-Revised (IES-R), and the Depression, Anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21).	online-based survey	results showed that nearly one-fourth of the sampled general population experienced moderate to severe psychological impact.	Alkhamees et al., 2020
<b>Philippines</b>	General population	Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scales (DASS-21) and the Impact of Events Scale-Revised (IES-R) ratings.	online surveys	Results showed one-fourth of respondents reported moderate-to-severe anxiety and one-sixth reported moderate-to-severe depression and psychological impact.	Tee et al., 2020
<b>Pakistan</b>	Health workers	Generalized anxiety scale (GAD-7), patient health questionnaire (PHQ-9) and Brief-COPE	web-based, cross-sectional	Females had significantly higher anxiety ( $p = 0.003$ ) and depression ( $p = 0.001$ ) scores than males.	Salman et al., 2020
<b>India</b>	General Public	perceived stress scale, Patient	Online survey	40.5% of the participants had	Grover et al., 2020

		Health Questionnaire-9, Generalized Anxiety Disorder-7, Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale		either anxiety or depression. Moderate level of stress was reported by about three-fourth (74.1%) of the participants and 71.7% reported poor well-being.	
<b>United Arab Emirates</b>	Adults' residents	PHQ-8 items, GAD-7 items, Brief RECOPE-14 items	Online survey	Covid-19 has impact on individual mental health that cause psychological disorders	Thomas et al., 2020

Source: Prepared by the authors

### Religious and spiritual coping during Covid-19 pandemic

In total eight research articles were studies from different Asian countries in order to examined the religious and spiritual coping during covid-19 pandemic. Related literature show that religion has an important role in reducing stress and anxiety. Religion and spirituality are considered the way to heal individual in difficult situations. They play significant role to remain positive in these days and motivates people towards positivity. According to these religious and spiritual studies Muslims remain more positive due to religious guidance. (MAHMOOD *et al.*, 2021; CHOW *et al.*, 2021; JÚNIOR *et al.*, 2020; RABABA *et al.*, 2020; THOMAS; BARBATO, 2020; TABIK *et al.*, 2020; MAHAMID; BDIER, 2021; DURMUŞ; DURAR, 2021). Their results are summarized in the Table below (Table 3).

**Table 3** – Religious and spiritual coping during Covid-19 pandemic

Country or region	Research Population	Research Instrument	Research Methodology	Results	Reference	
<b>Pakistan</b>	Muslims		Online survey	Cross-Sectional survey	Religion and spirituality considered significant healer to reduce anxiety	Mahmood et al., 2021
<b>Malaysia</b>	Medical health workers	(Brief RCOPE M) and (HADS M)		Cross-sectional study	Positive religious coping is vital in reducing anxiety and depression.	Chow et al., 2021
<b>China</b>	General			Review	Review shows that Spirituality is a common way that	Júnior et al., 2020

					people cope with illnesses and stress	
<b>Jorden</b>	Older adults	Brief Arab Religious Coping scale Arabic scale of death anxiety.	Descriptive study		Death anxiety is inversely correlated with religious copings and spiritual well-being.	Rababa et al., 2020
<b>United Arab Emirates</b>	Muslims and Christians	Questionnaire	Online survey		Muslims ( <i>N</i> = 339) reported significantly higher levels of positive religious coping compared to their Christian counterparts ( <i>N</i> = 204).	Thomas and Barbato, (2020)
<b>Iran</b>	Muslims	semi-structured phenomenological interview	Qualitative study		Spiritual/religious copings are strongly correlated with mental health and well-being.	Tabik et al., 2020
<b>Palestine</b>	Adults	Positive religious coping was assessed by the IPRC, Depression Scale (CES-D-10), Perceived Stress Scale (PSS)	Cross sectional study		Results revealed that positive religious coping was positively related to quality of life and lack of stress	Mahamid, and Bdier, 2021
<b>Turkey</b>	65 years old	Spiritual Well-being Scale (FACIT-Sp) and Coronavirus Phobia Scale (C19P-S)	Cross-sectional and correlational design		Moderate level correlation between spiritual well-being and coronavirus fear in individuals	Durmuş and Durar, 2021

Source: Prepared by the authors

### Covid-19 impact on social life

In total five research articles were studies from different Asian countries in order to examined the impact of covid-19 on social life during covid-19 pandemic. Related literature show that lockdown and isolation are the main reason of increasing stress and anxiety. Due to isolation a lot of people suffered from anxiety. It has a great impact on students' social life and mental abilities. Home quarantine and loneliness increase level of depression in young people. Also, social skills of students were affected due to less communication and no interaction. Majority of students were suppressed in their home in isolation and loneliness. That also effect their educational activities and studies in notable ways. Lockdown and quarantine were considered temporary solution for covid-19 which has a permanent effect on human psyche (ALFAWAZ *et al.*, 2020; BHAT *et al.*, 2020; CHATURVEDI *et al.*, 2020; GAN *et al.*, 2020; KILINÇEL *et al.*, 2020). Their results are summarized in the Table below (Table 4).



**Table 4 – Covid-19 impact on social life**

Country or region	Research Population	Research Instrument	Research Methodology	Results	Reference
Saudi Arabia	Students	Questionnaire	Cross sectional online Survey	Most of the respondents reports sufferings from anxiety, depression and insomnia during lockdown.	Alfawaz et al., 2020
Pakistan	General people	Questionnaire	Online survey	Lockdown is a temporary solution for Covid that cause social and psychological problems	Bhat et al., 2020
India	Students	Questionnaire	Online survey	Lack of social interaction effects learning and social skills.	Chaturvedi et al., 2020
China	General people	Questionnaire	Online	Quarantine increases stress among	Gan et al., 2020
Turkey	adolescents	Questionnaire	Cross sectional	home-quarantine during pandemic causes anxiety and loneliness in young people	Kılınçel et al., (2020)

Source: Prepared by the authors

## Conclusion

In the 20<sup>th</sup> century pandemic creates a negative impact on physical and mental health of the people throughout world. It was very hard for every individual in the world because the invisible disease spread-out all over the world in few months. It causes great psychological impact of on human social life, physical and mental health. It has a substantial psychological impact on general and professional medical staff human psyche in notable ways. Pandemic was the main reason of high level of stress, anxiety, fear, trauma and depression among students and all workers. To handle stress and anxiety everyone has required support from others and helped themselves by adopting coping mechanisms. Social distancing and quarantine Covid-19 increase depression and mental health problems in world population. It is sightseeing that social isolation and quarantine has effect on mental health. That sufferings of anxiety, depression and insomnia are reported by majority of the participants during lockdown. Human beings are social beings, reduce social interactions can create mental health problems. While other factors such as social interaction, routine changes and economic losses are reduced which led to psychological and emotional impact, and ultimately decrease self-

worth. There is a link between better mental health and religious copings when facing with stressful situations. Where religious copings were inversely related with a history of psychological illness. Positive coping of religion helps an individual to deal with anxiety and anxious feelings. Religious copings and trust in God, strongly correlated with less stress and vice versa. Religious and Spiritual copings are related to mental health consequences and predicts a faster remission from mental health problems. For that reason, it must be a part to use in clinicians for psychotherapy or treating clients. It may help to speed the resolution, specifically in time of pandemic or hazards. It might increase access to therapy for many individuals who consider Religious/spiritual important in their lives.

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