EXPLORING EFFECTS OF NOSTALGIA AMONG SAUDI RETIRED PEOPLE DURING THE QUARANTINE OF COVID-19

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ABSTRACT: This study aimed at exploring the psychological effects of the COVID -19 pandemic and how nostalgia can reduce the negative effects of COVID-19 pandemic among Saudi retired people. To achieve that, a qualitative case study research design was used to collect data through semi-structured interviews with 10 participants. The findings showed that Saudi retired people experienced negative psychological effects due to COVIC -19 quarantine in three ways: anxiety prevalence, depression prevalence, and insomnia prevalence. Additionally, the findings revealed that nostalgia can reduce the negative effects of COVID- 19 quarantine in two ways: Desire of Social connectedness and Rebirth Positive Emotions and Optimism. This study has some theoretical and practical implications.

KEYWORDS: Nostalgia, COVID -19, Pandemic, Quarantine, Social distancing

1. INTRODUCTION

Perceiving one's life full of importance is a seal of healthy psychological functioning. The sensitivity that one's life has implication is well thought-out as a basic shock absorber against existential anxiety [1] and is linked with life quality [2], psychological well-being [3], and overcoming trauma or illness [4]. With an increasing realization of the advantages of perceiving life as purposeful, it, in addition, turns into vital to appreciate those human potentials that facilitate life to be in this manner. Therefore, studies on psychological sciences have been highlighted the ways that make people feel that their lives meaningful. Recently, research [5,6] discusses the concept that nostalgia, a passionate yearning for the past, is one reason that makes people feel and think that their lives are precious.

Traditionally, nostalgia was considered to be a disease with symptoms such as anorexia, weeping bouts, heartbeat disorder, sharp differentiation in atmospheric pressure wreaking havoc in the brain [7] However, in the 20th century, Nostalgia gained a separate theoretical status. Modern definitions of Nostalgia also reveal their conceptual differences. In order to understand the notion of nostalgia, we have to discuss these definitions. "Nostalgia" as "a sentimental longing for the Past". Nostalgia is actually a healthy passionate experience that involves recalling delightful memories of people and occasions. It is an emotional yearning and love for the pleasant past. psychodynamic approaches claimed that nostalgia is an unconscious desire to come back to a life stage in the past, and it was identified as "a repressive compulsive disorder ". later, nostalgia was considered as a depression, marked by loss and grief, though still equated with homesickness [8]. nostalgia is linked to terms such as warm, old times, yearning, and childhood. It is also associated not only to a specific region, but it refers to different objects. Recent psychology research has found it to be largely a guilt-free pleasure, offering benefits to mental, social, and even physical well-being [9]. It is also suggested to be a psychological treatment to get rid of anxiety and depression [8].

There are some sources that can induce the feeling of nostalgia among people such as pleasant recollection, music, TV, loneliness, dissatisfaction from present circumstances, low self-esteem [10]. These situations have been parts of specific events of people's lives where can instantly bring out special feelings. They also play a significant role among people, so it's not surprising that people tend to have strong connections to them. They were most fruitful in forming people's personalities and shaping their choices and styles [11]. On the other hand, negative effects can emerge from nostalgia like loneliness, low self-esteem, and tension.

Research has argued that nostalgia can improve social connectedness and make people's life meaningful. It makes people feel better about their lives as well. Nostalgia can be divided into two main types concerning the feelings evoked whether good or sad. The first type is restorative nostalgia, which includes a desire to review the past with the intention of rebuilding it. It makes you want to relive the way things used to be in the past. the second type is the reflective nostalgia that consents the fact that the past is gone, and instead of trying to remake a delightful past experience, enjoys the emotions evoked by its remembrance [9].

Research indicates that nostalgia signifies three primary psychological roles: generating a positive effect, enhancing positive self-esteem, and serving as a source of social connectedness. Wildschut et al. [12] claim that Nostalgia encourages social connection. Nostalgia is a great way of improving well-being. It helps in coping hard times, helps you in providing your life more meaning and sense of continuity. Studies have found Nostalgia is purely a social emotion that promotes social connectedness, in turn, improves self-esteem and leads to elevated optimism [8]. Nostalgia constructs positive passionate. Wildschut et al. [12] presented that Nostalgia results in improving positive self- worth.

Other research classifies nostalgia regarding triggers into two kinds: external triggers and internal triggers. Cases of external triggers are music fragrances Flavors, occasions experienced in adolescence. Internal triggers such as unsatisfactory and discomforting circumstances, for example, negative effect social exclusion loneliness [5].

In September 2019, COVID- 19 (an infection caused by Coronavirus strains) has been considered to be a serious pandemic based on the World Health Organization announcement, increasing awareness of widespread danger, raising stress, and anxiety among people [13]. In early 2020, this pandemic has been rapidly beginning to spread throughout the world where the countries all over the world were obliged to be placed under mass quarantine. The rapid spread of this unprecedented pandemic has caused crucial mental problems such as depression anxiety, stress, and depression [14].

Besides the medical consequences, the psychological and social effects of this pandemic is incontrovertible. Research

has concentrated on exploring the way society defines the effect of emerging infectious illnesses and highlighting the significance of the ability to overcome such crises on the emotional level [15]. Despite this pandemic has newly emerged, several studies have been investigated its risks in many countries. for instance, a study from China, the first influenced country in the world, has found that the pandemic may cause disorders in the brain such as depression, stress, anxiety, tension, and behaviors such as tobacco consumption [16]. In addition, applying a stringent quarantine in that country is impacting many aspects of people's lives, provoking a vast variety of psychological problems, such as panic feeling, experiencing anxiety, and depressed mood [17]. However, we should assume that this pandemic psychologically does not affect the whale population equally. Some studies have been conducted to examine the level of psychological effect on people due to COVID-19 [18,19]. for example, adults have revealed high rates of psychological symptoms regarding the COVID-19 outbreak [19]. Similarly, in a survey of psychological distress in China with more than 52,000 people, people between 18 and 30 years and those above 60 showed the highest posttraumatic distress index scores [17]. Pappa et, al. [20] have conducted a study to monitor the rates of mental health issues among healthcare workers during the COVID-19 outbreak in China. The study found that healthcare workers experience a considerable rate of anxiety and depression due to this pandemic.

In Saudi Arabia as all other countries, the increasing number of cases has been alarming. Therefore, the Saudi Government declared a state of emergency and ordered a lockdown in which all citizens were confined to their homes, creating an unprecedented situation [20]. These decisions may lead people in Saudi Arabia to negative psychological effects such as loneliness, anxiety, and depression as proved in other countries. However, to date, the effect of the current pandemic on the psychological well-being of people, especially retired old people, in Saudi Arabia has not discussed yet. Thus, this study aims to explore the psychological effects of COVID-19 pandemic among Saudi retired people. Additionally, since nostalgia can help people to overcome loneliness, anxiety, and depression, and it has been found that this pandemic causes these psychological effects, this study wants to understand how nostalgia can reduce COVID-19 negative effects. So, the following research questions were formed from the objectives of the study:

- What are the psychological effects of COVID-19 pandemic on Saudi retired people?

- How can nostalgia reduce the negative effects of COVID-19 from Saudi retired people?

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2. MATERIALS AND METHODS
2.1 Research design
This paper was a qualitative research in nature that aimed to explore the psychological effects of COVID-19 among Saudi retired people and how nostalgia can reduce the harmful effects of this pandemic. To achieve that in an optimal way, a case study research design was used to collect the data needed to answer the research questions. This research design was chosen based on two main concepts: 1) it is utilized when the phenomenon has not proved yet [21]. So, this study looked for exploring the

psychological effects that emerged from the COVID-19 outbreak where a very limited number of studies discussed this issue. 2) a qualitative case study research was used if the researcher wants to understand a specific problem in details. In this study, it was aimed to understand the psychological effects of COVID- 19 and how nostalgia can overcome these effects.

2.2 Participants
In this study, purposive sampling was utilized to select the participants employing the snowball strategy to enable the researcher to obtain a lot of information about the phenomenon discussed in the study and to facilitate the process of choosing the participants. The participants were selected based on their availability, appropriateness, and possession of features needed for the study [21]. To optimally choose the participants, the following criteria were taken into consideration: 1) only Saudi retired people were included, and 2) only males were involved.

2.3 Data Collection
To collect the data, Semi-structured online interviews with 13 participants were used. Choosing this method was appropriate for this study to give a full understanding of the phenomenon [21]. the number of participants was obtained based on the data saturation technique. Based on Lincoln and Guba [22], the participants' number generally to be interviewed depends on the data saturation reached. the interviews were done online through Skype Software, ranged from 15 to 25 minutes for each session, and tape-recorded. The interviews included 10 questions and taking notes during the interviewing process. The questions were formed and refined after synthesizing related works and consulting some expertise in the same field in the Department of Psychology at Majmaah University.

This process was conducted by transcribing and checking the interviews and the note-taking verbatim. The thematic analysis by Braun and Clark [23] was utilized to analyze the data following these steps:

1) familiarizing with the data, 2) extracting the initial codes, 3) looking for themes, 4) double-checking the themes, 5) modifying and naming the themes, and 6) generating the report.

3. RESULTS
After analyzing the participants' interviews with regards to the first research question, three main themes emerged: 1) Anxiety prevalence, 2) Depression prevalence, 3) Insomnia prevalence.

3.1 Anxiety prevalence
The participants of the study mentioned that they experienced anxiety during the latest quarantine. It has been a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Almost half of the participants experience anxiety because they stay at home. For example:

Participant 1 described his feeling of stress during the quarantine of COVID-19. He said: " I hear News that this virus kills many people every day. I am afraid of that. I feel that the virus will come to me soon". Similarly, participant 5 said: " as you know that I am an old man, and the virus is more dangerous when infecting those people. Therefore, I feel anxious…. What increases my anxiety is sitting alone at home I could not contact my friend's relatives and even my sons. It is really terrible".

The participants admitted that one of the negative effects of the COVID-19 pandemic is anxiety prevalence. This is in

line with the viewpoint of Wang, Zhao and Liu (2020) who conducted a study in China to explore the impact of anxiety on Chinese university students after the COVID-19 outbreak. The study assured this pandemic causes a feeling of anxiety for Chinese students. Similarly, Ozamiz-Etxebarria [24] examined the psychological state of the general population in Spain and found that revealed that one-third of participants have acknowledged that anxiety is a major symptom for the lockdown of COVID-19. The study revealed that a positive relationship has found between the time spent in lockdown and the rate of anxiety.

3.2 Depression Prevalence

The next theme that emerged from this paper is depression prevalence. A total of 6 participants reported that staying at home all the time, even with their family members made them feel depressed. Even though they acknowledged that their homes are provided with several facilities and entertainment tools, they seemed to suffer from depression. It is obviously described by participant 9 who said: " I spend all the time at home. This leads me to be depressed. I try to sit with my family, but I still feel depressed."

Another participant reported that he would feel sad when he was sitting all the time at home. He mentioned that he was confused about touching everything inside the home, which provoke depression for him because he thought that he will be infected by the virus. He said:

" no solution to this pandemic. It is very bad. I lost hope with everything. Really, I feel sad. I have a confusion about everything around me. No one can help us. We have to pray all the time to get rid of this pandemic".

Regarding depression, Saudi retired people admitted that they could be depressed and moody due to the quarantine. In the same vein, Qiu et al. [17] argue that extreme lockdown triggers psychological problems such as depression. This line of thought is advocated by Shigemura et al. [16] who found that revealed that the quarantine may cause mental disorders such as stress disorders, anxiety, depression.

The third theme regarding the first research question is Insomnia prevalence. Six participants acknowledged that the quarantine that emerged from the COVID-19 outbreak affected them negatively and they started to stay awake and thinking all night. Participant 4 commented: " I can't sleep and stay awake. I don't exert effort all day I am sitting at home". Other participants supported their peers' claims regarding insomnia due to the lockdown. Participant 10 admitted: " staying awake all night. I am thinking about how this virus will leave." Participant 7 said as well: " I am suffering from lack of sleep. I just sleep 4 hours a day." In this study, the participants expressed that they experience insomnia when staying all the time at home. This is in line with Morin and Carrier (2020) who reported that examined the severity of symptoms based on the degree of infection of COVID-19 among health care workers. Their findings revealed that those who work in the healthcare section have a higher rate of insomnia.

To overall, the findings of this study regarding the first research question have shown that retired Saudi People were affected by COVID-19 quarantine in three ways: anxiety prevalence, depression prevalence, and insomnia prevalence.

Pertaining to the second research question, how can nostalgia reduce the negative effects of COVID-19 among Saudi retired people?, two main themes emerged from the findings: the desire of social connectedness and rebirth positive emotions and optimism.

The desire of Social connectedness

This theme is related to desire people to social connectedness. The feeling emerged due to the quarantine where 6 participants admitted that they feel nostalgic to the social connectedness. For example, participant 5 said: "When I sit alone, I miss the past. I remember sweet memories with my family and friends. I fond to come back to that past." In the same way, participant 7 expressed his feeling when he remembers his past. He said: " This lockdown made me forget all problems with my relatives. When life returns, as usual, I will visit them and try to do what we were doing in the past." The participants acknowledged that nostalgia may lead to positive affects particularly the desire to social connectedness. This is in agreement with Wildschut et al. [5] who hypothesized and proved that a positive relationship has been found between nostalgia and loneliness and claimed that sociable people have social connectedness from nostalgia than others. To be more precise, the findings showed that nostalgia to be a source of social connectedness.

Rebirth Positive Emotions and Optimism

The second theme that emerged from this study is rebirth positive emotions and optimism. The participants revealed that their loneliness during the lockdown leads them to experience nostalgia, which also lead them to rethink their relations with relatives or friends. They described the feeling of optimism and positive emotions. For example, participant 1 said: "I look back at the past, I remember events and smile. Sometimes, I laugh at that happy time. Really I miss every single moment in the past". Similarly, participant 4 admitted that nostalgia inspires the feeling of optimism. He said: " I am very optimistic when I live in nostalgic events. I wish to live those days again. It was a wonderful time."

In summary, rebirth positive emotions and optimism is another theme that emerged from the study. Saudi retired people expressed that nostalgia can be a strategy to reduce the effects of COVID-19 pandemic during their quarantine. This is incongruent with Cheung et al. (2013) who found that nostalgia can boost optimism.

4. CONCLUSION

This study was conducted in order to the psychological effects of COVID-19 pandemic on Saudi retired people and to explore how nostalgia can reduce the negative effects of COVID-19 pandemic during the quarantine. To achieve that a qualitative research design was employed in this study. Regarding the first objective of this study, three themes were emerged: anxiety prevalence, depression prevalence, and insomnia prevalence. In the second research objective, two themes emerged: the desire of social connectedness and rebirth positive emotions and optimism. The implications of this study are that, theoretically, this study supports previous studies that COVID-19 pandemic causes harmful effects on people, but this study extends that by focusing on retired people who were rarely explored in the literature. Most studies discussed healthcare workers. Practically, the Ministry of Health and Saudi authorities should take into consideration ways that can reduce the psychological effects on people in Saudi Arabia such as nostalgia. Psychologists in Saudi Arabia should think of nostalgia as a treatment for

depressed and anxious people due to this pandemic.

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