

Pandemic perspectives: How students navigate social relationships

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ABSTRACT

The development of social bonds helps to keep the social fabric of society intact. However, The Covid-19 outbreak has caused mayhem on social relationships and has changed the manner individuals interact with one another. Face-to-face communications were typically limited to primary members amid the apex of Covid-19 restrictions because some 'weak' ties were lost, and connections grew more confined to those closest. The case study approach was used in this qualitative work to understand students' perceptions of many facets of social relationships (family, relatives, teachers, classmates, coworkers, friends, and strangers) and how the Covid-19 Pandemic affects their interpersonal relationships. Six Post graduate students at Kashmir University participated in the study and were purposively selected and interviewed. The data for this study was collected by semi-structured interviews. The face-to-face interview with PG students at Kashmir University lasted up for forty-five minutes per student focused on the individuals' stories and interpretations of their viewpoints about social relationships and experience of change in social relationships brought about by the Covid-19 outbreak. The results of this research lead to the conclusion that the existence of social ties has a great beneficial influence on psychological and physiological health, adding to an individual's overall well-being, but the lack of social relationships increases the likelihood of psychological discomfort. Social relationships provide freedom of self-disclosure to expose one's personal difficulties and feelings. The loss of in-person interactions as a result of the Covid 19 outbreak, as well as the total shift to virtual connections, had been a major difficulty. Increased virtual relations has created societal chaos and diminished value system. A significant drift in norms of interaction has been found.

Introduction

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of social relations became increasingly evident as individuals grappled with the challenges of isolation and uncertainty. Social connections played a crucial role in providing emotional support, alleviating feelings of loneliness, and fostering a sense of belonging in a time of physical distancing. As Pfefferbaum and North (2020)

emphasized, social relationships served as a vital buffer against the negative psychological impacts of the pandemic, offering individuals a source of resilience and coping. The ability to maintain meaningful connections through virtual means underscored the adaptive nature of social relations, highlighting their significance as a fundamental aspect of human well-being during times of crisis. Covid-19, the global pandemic, has harmed people's physical, emotional, social, and economic wellbeing. It has had a considerable impact on social structure, resulting in several alterations in social order. According to Umberson & Montez, (2010) existing associations between family members, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and other associates are referred to as social relationships. Positive characteristics such as emotional support from others, as well as negative aspects such as conflict and stress, have an impact on the integrity of social ties (Fiske, 2002; Janicki-Deverts & Cohen, 2011). Impact on social interactions is one aspect that requires a critical study to determine the changes in the social structure brought on by the pandemic, as the most severely harmed due to pandemic were social bonds and relationships. A psychological framework called social connectedness theory, commonly referred to as social integration theory, emphasizes the significance of social ties and relationships in affecting human behavior and well-being. The social connection theory holds that humans are fundamentally social beings that want to form and maintain relationships with other individuals. Several categories, such as family, friends, community, and society, may be used to categorize these links. According to social connection experts, pleasant, peaceful, and easy social contacts are important in a person's life and have a big impact on their health, modifying their behavioral, psychological, and physiological states. The Covid-19 epidemic is disrupting social interactions, and potentially resulting in major health implications (Fernandes et al., 2020; Choube et al., 2022). Decision-makers are urged to put in place educational efforts targeted at enhancing the sociological health of the general public (Naser et al., 2021). This is designed to increase general public social relationships and communication. The Covid-19 outbreak has both positive and negative consequences for students. In terms of positive outcomes, the pandemic made them feel more connected to their family members, that children valued their time with their relatives, and that family ties remained strong; in terms of negative outcomes, students had to deal with the anxiety of being a potential source of illness for the elderly in their homes, and that they were more concerned about being a burden to others as a result of Covid-19 infection than about being alone or estranged from them (Alghamdi, 2021). The Covid 19 pandemic has caused mayhem on social relationships and altered how people interact with one another. As a result of less social contacts as a result of school closures and social alienation, some children's social and emotional capacities have deteriorated. It has profoundly transformed the nature of social connections by requiring people to utilize social distancing methods (Calbi et al., 2021).

Therefore, as emphasized by Wang et al. (2020), studying people's perspectives allows researchers and policymakers to identify factors influencing social behaviors, mental well-being, and adherence to public health measures. By acknowledging the diverse ways in which people interpret and respond to social relations during a pandemic, we can develop more targeted and empathetic strategies to address the social, emotional, and psychological dimensions of public health crises. People with higher levels of perceived social support had much less depressed symptoms and were less likely to develop depression, and that having more face-to-face and phone/video contact was linked to fewer depressed symptoms, even when adjusted for each other, and that in-person contact had a stronger effect than digital contact, these relationships survived when the number of genuine weekly face-to-face or virtual social contacts was considered (Sommerlad et al., 2021). Efforts to prevent the spread of Covid-19 demanded a significant shift in social contact, which presented both challenges and possibilities, while part of the damage may be self-healing after the pandemic, deliberate attempts to rebuild in ways

that promote higher resilience in social and communal interactions provide opportunity. (Long et al., 2021). We feel social isolation when social opportunities and interactions exist, but we lack the ability to harness the power of social connectedness in everyday life. Prospective remedies aimed at minimizing the negative health effects of isolation should anticipate our genesis as a social creature (Hawkley & Cacioppo, 2010).

Review of literature

Society is made up of social relationships such as cooperation, assistance, and acceptance. Some bonds are deep, while others are feeble. Social relations are loosely described as the ties that exist between individuals who have repeated contacts that the individuals feel to have personal importance. This definition encompasses ties among families' members, friends, neighbors, employees, and other connections, but excludes social contacts and exchanges that are ephemeral, incidental, or regarded to be of minor importance (Shruti, 2021). The pandemic's impacts on one's perception of the other's relationship as a potential risk, as well as the containment and upkeep of social separation, have clearly had a significant impact on social relations networks (Díaz, 2020). From the beginning of time, these social connections and relationships have been engrained in human civilization. During global crises such as pandemic outbreaks, social requirements may be especially important (O'Donnell et al., 2022). In consequence, Eric Kleinberg argued that we have entered a new era of social turmoil. Hardly people are talking about the extent of social unhappiness connected with loneliness and the cost of social separation currently. As a result, the absence of such profound coherent relationships leads to unpleasant anxiety situations in both the physique and intellect. Isolation, anxiety, sadness, panic attacks, psychological problems, health risks, and a variety of other concerns have an influence on an individual's life and community (Singh & Singh, 2020). The in-depth survey conducted by Choube et al. (2022) revealed that almost over 60 % of those surveyed agreed that Covid-19 had a significant impact on their everyday lives, and that it has caused significant changes in the attitudes of their immediate family, relatives, and friends. Furthermore, 50 % of those polled said that after the lockdown, they understood Covid-19 had harmed their social relationships. Furthermore, they believed that they were generally unhappy because of the changes brought about by the outbreak of Covid-19 in society in general and social relations in particular. According to the research study which intended to investigate the effect of coronavirus on social relationships, 59.6 % of respondents believe that the curfew has reduced social bonds, while over 30.0 % believe that family relationships have been stressed as a result of the curfew (Naser et al., 2020). Face-to-face communications were typically limited to primary members amid the apex of Covid-19 restrictions because some 'weak' ties were lost, and connections grew more confined to those closest. Covid-19 regulations had an impact on people 's interpersonal social networks as well as the framework of broader societal connections (Long et al., 2022).

Method

Background

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted various aspects of individuals' lives, including their social relationships. The implementation of social distancing measures, lockdowns, and the shift to virtual communication has reshaped the dynamics of human connections. Within this context, the experiences of individuals during the pandemic merit special attention.

Research questions:

1. To what extent do students believe that social relationships are necessary for a happy and meaningful life?
2. How does students perceive Covid-19 Pandemic affecting social relationships?

Approach and design

The study adopted qualitative research approach and more specifically case study design was employed to capture the richness and complexity of individual experiences. Qualitative techniques frequently produce detailed reports that are required for interpretivists to properly comprehend situations (Willis et al., 2007). To analyze and explain the functioning notions of social interactions, we conducted a case study in the University of Kashmir. The goal of a case study is to allow investigators to collect and analyze data about a specific situation or circumstance. Case study information is utilized thoroughly and in-depth discuss a situation in real life (Yin, 2012).

Participants

The cases for qualitative study are deliberately selected and incorporates the use of replication and the most widely acknowledged range of case numbers for research appears to be 2-4 as the lowest and ten, twelve, or fifteen as the highest (Perry, 1998). Six Post graduate students of Kashmir university were purposively selected and interviewed. The sample was selected to illustrate the value of social relationships when they experience it being separated from family members during a pandemic lockdown, therefore it was imperative to learn how they understood social ties. Purposive sampling focuses on individuals who possess specific qualities that will make them more qualified to contribute to pertinent research (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Purposive sampling aims to help answer the research questions by concentrating on specific aspects of a population that are of interest. The purposeful technique leans heavily on the expertise, judgement, and intelligence of the researcher and provides greater flexibility to execute and extract the finest information possible from the samples (Rai, & Thapa,2015).

The data for this study was collected by semi-structured interviews. The face-to-face interview with PG students of Kashmir University lasted up for forty-five minutes per student focused on the individuals' stories and interpretations of their understanding and experience of change in social relationships brought about by the Covid-19 outbreak.

Data analysis procedure

The collected data was analysed by Narrative analysis. Narrating one's own experiences appears to be an appropriate channel for transferring one's own perspectives to others (Rosenthal & Fischer-Rosenthal, 2004).

Findings**Social Relationships**

Social connections include people and their social relationships that make up a system. People who have strong relationships, whether familial, love or friendship can have longer and better lives. They provide us a sense of belonging, purpose, and support, as well as enhanced health and quality of life. Social ties establish an environment in which one freely communicate ideas and feelings. Well-being and social connections are inextricably linked. People who feel more connected to others have lower levels of anxiety and sadness (Holt-Lunstad et al., 2015; Hawkey & Cacioppo, 2010). Research suggests that a child's ability to interact with the social environment

is substantially determined by his or her experiences in intimate connections (Hartup,1989). The more we communicate with others on a personal level, the more "interpersonal" our relationship becomes. When we interact effectively, our objective is to consider one another as actual humans, not objects, and to connect with one another as varied individuals with whom we have formed a distinct relationships environment, rather than as people performing roles (Gamble & Gamble, 2013). Within the social networks and communities, relationships provide people a sense of support, acceptance, and belonging. Greater emotional well-being, pleasure, and fulfilment in life are experienced by people when they feel connected and welcomed. An increase in social connection is commonly linked with pleasant emotional states such as pleasure and fulfillment (Berscheid & Regan, 2016).

"Being a member of a society, one has to develop various relationships with the other individuals. These relationships are of various types; these could be with our family members, with the friends, with the colleagues at our workplace. Social relations in the perspective of dependency may lack the closeness, when we occasionally meet our needs or may be interdependent, as of personal relationships. These are the connections between the people who interact with each other and could only be perceived by them for their personal meaning."
Subject 4

Self-disclosure

Relationships particularly with family, are unquestionably crucial for a happy and meaningful existence. Family is what makes us happy and comfortable, and they are always there to support through thick and thin, they make us able to withstand in ups and downs. Their unconditional love and support make us stronger, provides us happiness, reduces stress, fosters a sense of well-being, and inspires us to achieve our life's objectives. Family members teach, support, and share the pleasures and tragedies of life. In the therapy of stress and depression, self-disclosure (the revealing of personal feelings) is essential. Listening closely and responding in a helpful manner is an effective way to develop positive feelings and establish ties. As a result, the absence of such significant social ties causes unpleasant states of discomfort in both the mind and body. Strong and good family relationships are rewarding.

"To very greater extent good social relations lessen the negative influence of stressful life events and these relations develop in us the sense of being cared and how to care in return. Social relations nourish our behavior in a culturally appropriate way." Subject-2

"A rising level of self-disclosure or the openness to expose one's personal difficulties and feelings, is required to build a deep relationship. People who have family nonetheless feel lonely without that self-disclosure. Subject-3

Covid-19 pandemic and social relationships

The pandemic outbreak has radically changed and transformed social relationships. Covid-19 has an influence on social connections in both good and bad ways. It has driven family members to line up closer together, while friends, extended family members, coworkers, and relatives have been compelled to line up further away. Due to Covid-19 pandemic, social ties were reduced to phone calls and text messaging, shifting actual engagement to virtual form. The lockdown has taken away things like intimacy, companionship, sympathy, empathy, and unity. Hence the Covid-19 outbreak has changed the manner individuals interact with one another. Lockdowns reduced intensive social encounters with friends, making them more infrequent or temporary. As a result, during the pandemic, good interactions between siblings, including key developmental interpersonal interactions such as closeness and personal self-disclosure, may have risen.

“The norms of interaction mostly wishing and greeting someone where we used to hug and shake hands before covid-19 were totally changed due to the suggested S O Ps (Standard Operating Procedure). I believe that the ties between parents and siblings were better than they were prior to the pandemic. During lockdown, we were able to spend quality time together.” Subject 1

“This pandemic has made everyone realize each aspect of our lives. Relationships with family members melted one’s heart by taking care of each need of one another through these tough times. Spending more time with family strengthened bonds. Everyone came to know the bliss of being together apart of everything. One could only take care of his family during the pandemic only when he spent time with them. I think having a good family relationship holds a key to happiness in these life testing events.” Subject 4

“A mix of positive and negative changes was apparent. Remaining in touch with people virtually and discussing things improved one’s mental health, reduced anxiety and expanded horizons on different things. But Psychological wellbeing was only possible if the people one wanted to interact with were available to avoid the negative impacts.” Subject-4

How do you perceive the relationships with your family members (Parents and Siblings) during this period of Covid-19 Pandemic?

“I believe that the ties between parents and siblings were better than they were prior to the pandemic. During our home quarantine, we were able to spend quality time together.” Subject-1

“One good thing that has come out of the pandemic is that it has strengthened family bonds.” Subject-3

Teachers and classmates

Strong relationships with teachers and school workers may considerably increase students' motivation and, therefore, stimulate learning. Students that have more solid relationships are more academically engaged, have stronger social skills, and demonstrate appropriate behaviors. Teachers' presence is critical since they play a significant role in our success. Peers are the people we spend most of our academic lives with, and they have a significant impact on the rest of our lives.

“One may learn a lot about professional relationships and teamwork from peers/classmates. Before you enter the job market, your peers can provide you with some real-world experience.” Subject-2

“Strong relationships with teachers and school personnel can significantly boost students' motivation and, as a result, encourage learning. Students that have more strong relationships have more academic engagement, better social skills, and exhibit appropriate behaviors.” Subject-3

Similarly, coworkers assist us in learning concepts such as obligation, loyalty, competition, compassion, and leadership. A positive work environment always makes one happy and resilient. Teachers, students, and employees are all participating in the learning process, which should always be enjoyable. These change as people progress through life. As teachers assist students in resolving disagreements in a mature manner, trust, and conscious communication increase over time. The teachers help you focus and attain your best potential as a decent person. Due to the onset of covid-19 pandemic except for families, the rest of the strong connections (friends, classmates, co-workers) were weakened.

"The virtual connection with batchmates, teachers and others were interesting but not more than in person. To attend classes in online mode was another challenge to be achieved. There was a huge time lag between the attendees of a certain meeting. Also, the technical issues raise some conflicts. The student teacher gap got reduced and everyone could not keep a balance." Subject-4

"I feel the relations with teachers and classmates as supportive relationships, as they are always there for you, increase your sense of belonging and purpose, boost your happiness, reduce your stress, improve your self-confidence, and help you cope with traumas." Subject-1

Strangers

During pandemic, strangers were normally avoided, although certain groups were established to offer food and other necessities to the poor. People did not want somebody unfamiliar to get into physical touch with them. Isolation and social separation meant staying away from strangers in particular. With the onset of Covid-19 individuals were more worried about others than they were about themselves, they are much more concerned about relatives than they are about strangers, and they are generally concerned about wellness difficulties than they are concerning monetary difficulties (Maaravi & Heller, 2020).

"I didn't have that much interaction with the strangers during this pandemic because whole Kashmir was under lockdown, but I receive messages from friends about helping people whom I don't know and I tried my best to help everyone." Subject-5

"The Covid-19 pandemic forced us to rely entirely on digital devices, and during this unprecedented period, people linked online with strangers all around the world to exchange their thoughts, experiences, and opinions about the pandemic. People were electronically exposing their emotions with strangers and unknowns." Subject-1

Friends

Friendships have a huge influence on one's mental health and well-being. Friendships relieve stress, provide comfort, and joy, and protect us from feeling lonely. Pleasure friendships are primarily intended to bring happiness or delight. The virtue friendship was considered the best by Aristotle (1999) because the people involved are advantageous and enjoyable, but the friendship is distinguished by three key characteristics. The reason the people are friends in the first place is that they value one the other's virtues. Friendships are drawn to and kept connected by a friend's attributes (such as sincerity, empathy, compassion, justice, and resilience). Such friendships are anticipated to survive longer since desirable traits might be presumed to be a consistent practice of doing and being. (Anderson & Fowers, 2020).

"Friends in one way or other affiliate to our happiness. As we see that whenever a person encounters a problem, the first thought that strikes the mind is to get in contact with a friend. Having the same age friends, help us to connect with ourselves. It allows us to share our emotions with each other. Our friends can make us optimistic, narcissist, pessimist, reckless at the same time in only seconds' gap. These people are specialist at everything, that hits our life." Subject-3

"In my opinion the shared experience of going through a global crisis encouraged empathy and understanding among friends." Subject-1

"Individuals had varying comfort levels regarding social interactions and exposure to the virus. This led to conversations about boundaries and expectations within friendships, ensuring that everyone felt safe and respected." Subject-4

Virtual connection

As long as an online communication is enjoyable, it can help people feel involved and supported. When individuals are happy with their interactions, interacting virtually with significant friends and family members may provide a strength to deal with loneliness, even though it is not a cure-all for personal emotions of loneliness and psychological stress (Juvonen et al., 2021). Using social media to face the situation aggressively lowered their pain and worry while increasing their happiness. However, distant relationships do not always have the same meaning and importance as face-to-face or tactile connections, such as when a someone is psychologically and emotionally upset (Dahlberg, 2021).

“Text less, call more, quality counts more than quantity. While it may be good to cultivate a diverse network of friends and acquaintances, you may feel a greater sense of belonging and well-being by nurturing close, meaningful relationships that will support you through thick and thin.” Subject-3

“Diminished contacts. Fear of being never missed or loved. Societal chaos. Maximized use of virtual things which ultimately leads to confusions. Diminished value system.” Subject-2

Consequence of social withdrawal

The continuous exhibition of all sorts of lonesome behavior when confronted with established and new individuals is referred to as social withdrawal. By the time children reach adolescence, social disengagement has matured into a complete risk factor for loneliness and low self-esteem. It is uncertain if the existence of friends, or even a single significant connection, shields withdrawn children from having negative feelings concerning oneself and their interaction with peers (Rubin et al., 2002). Due to social distancing measures, the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated the divides by replacing the tradition of “shaking hands” with the culture of “waving hands” from two meters distance, and has developed a feeling of individualism rather than socialism in individuals and populations worldwide. People grew increasingly self-centered as a result of the safety precautions, and this gradually weakened the threads that held society together. People were focused on themselves and their families, and none was able to fulfil their responsibilities to the larger society. Social disengagement is the decision to limit interaction with people who are essential in one’s life. The social withdrawal caused by covid-19 has had a negative impact on our lives. The effects for mental health are already present and obvious. Anxiety, panic attacks, sleeplessness, and other psychological disorders are on the rise. These are not simply a direct result of the pandemic, but they are also heavily influenced by the consequences of extended social withdrawal.

The subjects were asked, *what in your experience have been the consequences of social withdrawal on your life as a result of Covid-19 Pandemic?* The participants responded as;

“The pandemic impacted everyone in one way or the other. The wish to visit someone was only getting worse particularly in areas in contaminated zones. I think the relations got fonder and deeper. The way people care about each other speaks itself, how everyone was involved to protect his/her loved ones. It overall had a positive impact and paved a way to value relationships. It proved to everyone how important it was to spend the precious time together.” Subject-4

“When you retreat from society and isolate yourself from others, it can be challenging to participate in activities that you typically like and to get through the day. Some of the negative repercussions of this isolation include feelings of loneliness, difficulties in maintaining relationships, and sleep disturbances.” Subject-6

Social participation and health

Social support (empathy, concern, affection, love, trust, acceptance, encouragement, or care) improves one's quality of life and acts as a buffer against adversity and is great remedy for stress. There is currently a considerable amount of data suggesting that the strength and supportiveness of social relationships is connected to the health of those who live in such social situations. Social support predicts mental well-being both independently and as a mediator of the consequences of social stress (Turner & Turner, 2013). Social support must create a sense of belonging as well as closeness, to be wellness-promoting and it must assist individuals in becoming more confident and self-efficacious (Berkman, 1995).

Do you agree that social support received via social participation is a key factor in overall health?

"Yes. Emotional support, humor, and amusement are all provided by social participation. Participating in social events makes you feel as if you are a valuable member of a society, which gives you a sense of purpose and belonging. Social activities might help alleviate the anxiety that comes with feeling socially isolated." Subject-1

"Yes. It boosts our confidence and helps us to realize our own hidden competencies. It has direct influence on our psychological health which in turn affects our overall health." Subject-2

"Yes, the social support provided via physical interaction cannot be replicated by virtual interaction. The support that a family or neighbor may give throughout physical therapy is certain to aid in the patient's recovery." Subject-6

Suggestions for the development of good social relations

- Improve your ability to listen to others and understand what they are saying.
- Give time to others.
- Expect less from others.
- Be mentally present when you are with someone.
- Learn to give others a smile even if you do not want.
- Develop good understanding.
- Be empathetic.
- Try to self-regulate one's emotions.
- Be cooperative.
- Maintain contact with people.
- Participate in group activities.
- Begin with little steps.
- Be open to sincere praise.
- Try to assist everyone in need.

Results and discussion

Social relations are the connections that exist between persons who have repeated encounters that participants feel to have personal importance. The connections made by two or more individuals that facilitate the exchange of emotions and ideas, as well as a sense of belonging, purpose, and acceptance. It covers relationships between family members, friends, neighbors, coworkers, and other associates. Nobody can avoid the connection of relationships. The social relationships have become a fundamental part of human survival. It is normal for a person to need to interact with other members of society. According to social scientists, comfortable and easy social ties are vital in a person's life and have a significant influence on behavioral and general

well-being (Berscheid & Regan, 2016). Social ties are distinct from social contacts, which are transient and accidental in nature. Most social scientists believe that informal social interactions, rather than formal relationships are more significant in a person's life or social network. Social relationships span from partners to colleagues, friends, and strangers (Long et al., 2022).

Social connectedness is an enduring and ubiquitous experience of the self in relation with the world, as compared with social support, adult attachment, and peer affiliations, which represent more discrete, current relationships (Lee & Robbins, 2000). Social connectedness is a stable individual difference that reflects the awareness and internalized experience of interpersonal closeness in relationships with family, friends, strangers, community, and society (Lee & Robbins, 2000). Social connectedness can be conceptualized as the way an individual views himself or herself to the social world, as emotionally connected or disconnected. Lee and Robbins describe connectedness as the ability to feel comfortable within a social context larger than family, neighbors, or friends (Agyiri, 2022). It has been discovered that those that are socially connected had reduced levels of anxiety, despair, and loneliness. They have access to resources that can help reduce stress and foster resilience, such as emotional support, helpful advice, and knowledge exchange (Özmete & Pak, 2020).

The "Relational Model of Social Connectedness" developed by Lee and Robbins (1995) is one model of the social connectedness theory. According to this concept, social connection is a multidimensional construct made up of the elements of belonging, engagement, and flow.

1. **Belonging:** The idea of belonging is when someone feels linked to and welcomed by others. Within social networks or groups, it involves the impression of social support, acceptance, and inclusion.
2. **Engagement:** Engagement is the term for proactive involvement in interpersonal relationships and social activities. It concerns how emotionally involved, driven, and interested people are to interact with others.
3. **Flow:** A condition of intense participation and immersion in social activities is referred to as "flow."

This model proposes that the process of social connection is dynamic and reciprocal, with each element impacting and supporting the others. The Relational Model of Social Connectedness emphasizes the value of social relationships and connections in fostering happiness, fulfillment, and favorable psychological consequences. It contends that improving a person's feeling of community, promoting active participation, and enabling flow experiences can improve their sense of social connectivity and general quality of life. This sense of connectedness allows people to maintain feelings of being "human among humans" and to identify with those who may be perceived as different from themselves (Kohut, 1984). A person struggling to feel connected begins to feel different and distant from other people. He or she may find it hard to accept social roles and responsibilities, leading the person into greater isolation.

Relationships promote social cohesiveness, which results in positive interpersonal consequences such as wellness, economic success, contentment, and so on (Díaz, 2020). The development of social bonds helps to keep the social fabric of society intact. Siblings assist in compensating damaged connections and are a richer complement in repairing adjustment difficulties by giving an alternate framework for enjoying gratifying social interactions (Parke et al., 2002). Siblings may be a significant source of comfort for individuals who have experienced stressful circumstances, (Dunn, 2002) and children who have had unpleasant life situations express being more involved and connected with their siblings as a result of the distressing occurrences (Dunn et al., 1994). Cousins are a friend and a sibling rolled into one. We can go to them for guidance or to discuss a problem. They will listen, laugh, and give shade when we most need it. The

effectiveness of teachers' connections with pupils is assumed to be shaped by their intentions, opinions, and behavior (Fredriksen & Rhodes, 2004). We have a concept in our life called happiness, and most of it comes from our family and friends. People with one or more close friendships appear to be more content. Friendship is a crucial and beneficial component in the lives of children, teenagers, and younger adults (Rubin & McDonald, 2018). It is rather unnatural to separate the differential effects of parents, siblings, classmates, and companions because most youngsters are involved in each of these interactions (Denham et al., 2002). The presence of social bonds has a higher positive impact on psychological and physiological health, contributing to an individual's total well-being; nevertheless, the absence of social interactions increases the chance of psychological discomfort, loneliness, and lack of attention. Participants' descriptions of social ties show that their notion of social relationships is tied to the communal sharing form of social relations (Haslam & Fiske, 1999) which represents a sense of togetherness, collective identity, compassion, and solidarity. The findings of this study suggest that persons with a bigger network of active relationships are more satisfied and happier with their lives. Supportive relationships increase the sense of belonging and purpose, promote happiness and reduce stress, build self-confidence and self-worth, and help to cope with traumas.

Societies have transformed as a result of Covid-19 outbreak and social relationships are a major predictor of Covid-19 dissemination (Fraser & Aldrich, 2021). Most people's regular encounters during lockdowns were with intimate family and friends (Diaz, 2020). Because of the difficulties caused by the coronavirus pandemic, families and their interactions are quite often put under tremendous strain (Luttik et al., 2020). Global social interconnectedness has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 epidemic. Due to constraints on gatherings, many noticed that their in-person interactions with family, friends, and neighbors have diminished. The pandemic has shown how important social bonds are under difficult times. In conclusion, due to the absence of in-person availability of friends, youngsters have resorted to their siblings to discuss personal facts and thoughts, as well as recognize the pleasures of mutual interests with family (Cassinat et al., 2021). The onset of the pandemic led individuals to stay at home, and with the suspension of educational settings, younger children experienced social withdrawal as a result of the loss of in-person relationships with classmates (UNESCO, 2020). The Covid-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on academics, and the implications extend beyond instruction to other issues like as student housing and relationships with peers and teachers (Prada-Trigo et al., 2022).

The narratives support the conclusion that principles of interaction system have been severely affected as a result of the covid-19 outbreak, as physical separation tactics to prevent the transmission of the virus profoundly altered these standards of interaction, notably those employed to transmit trust, affinity, empathy, and respect. To avoid Covid-19 transmission, individuals willingly limited their social engagement with friends (38.1%), with coworkers or classmates (36.1%), and intentionally decreased their relationship with members of the family (11.1%). Individuals who intentionally restricted their engagement with others reported lower felt social support than those who did not (Saladino et al., 2020). A combination of undesirable and deviant social behavior and social withdrawal can have serious consequences (Hymel et al., 2002).

People in today's technological society are more preoccupied with virtual interactions than with people they interact with in person (Tahir et al., 2022). The outbreak completely altered the face-to-face interaction system into virtual pattern. People also encountered "forced affection", this feature might also be accentuated using modern gadgets, which could lead to a depersonalization of interactions, pushing a feeling of intimacy, at least electronically (Saladino et al., 2020). Technology has been used by many people and groups to keep up virtual social relationships. Platforms like social networking, video conferencing, and online communities have facilitated

connections and assisted in bridging the gap caused by physical measurements of distance. During the lockdown, most of the youth reported expanding usage of social media to self-regulate mood (Cauberghe et al., 2021).

Physical distancing (covid-19) measures have changed the norms of interaction. When catastrophic events touch whole communities, social groups are compelled to assist one another, whether by need or choice, transforming the society into a source of sympathy and solidarity (Di Nicola & Ruspini, 2020). Isolation, stress, sadness, panic attacks, mental diseases, health risks, and a variety of other concerns all have an influence on the individual's and society's lives (Singh and Singh, 2020). Therefore, relationships' stability is crucial for individual's social and emotional development. This is crucial not just for the growth of interpersonal skills and interactions with others, but also for the development of the self-perception of how individuals fit into the societal environment (Hartup, 1989).

The narratives further revealed that Covid-19 outbreak is unlike any other in that it has resulted in considerable social role shifts, social estrangement, economic instability, mortality, and ill health of people and communities. More virus outbreak stress, life upheavals, and a lack of social bonds are linked to worse mental health. Poor social relationships tend to amplify the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic regardless of age (Birditt et al., 2021). Social isolation tends to increase the consequences of life transition on worse mental health. As a result, depending on their interpersonal qualities, these concerns may possibly draw family members together in good and/or harmful ways. This suggests that social relationships may be a crucial target for therapies aiming at alleviating pandemic-related stress across the entire life span (Birditt et al., 2021). Family routines may ease pressures on the executive functioning system during the Covid-19 outbreak by establishing consistent relationships that give stress reduction and promote tolerance (Bates et al., 2021). Individuals' wellbeing can be influenced by subjective impressions, and motivating people to continue social connections may be an effective technique to assist them retain their well-being during high-stress conditions (Macdonald & Hülür, 2021). Given the severe impacts of the pandemic, little is known about how beneficial attributes might arise from the outbreak on the well-being and satisfaction of emerging adults (Gallegos et al., 2022). If suitable measures are not implemented to solve the social crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, it may exacerbate disparity, prejudice, and short- and long-term unemployment (Mofijur et al., 2021).

Conclusion

The importance of interpersonal relationships in advancing human welfare is emphasized by the social connectedness theory. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted both the benefits of having close relationships and the disadvantages of social isolation. Since social connectedness is crucial for fostering psychological well-being and happiness, it may be advantageous to understand and cultivate it in everyday life as well as during emergencies like the pandemic. The pandemic has brought attention to the harmful effects of social isolation and a lack of connection. People who had experienced loneliness or had weak social relationships were more likely to have mental health problems including anxiety and sadness. Social bonds bring distinct advantages. They promote emotional, material, and physical well-being. Social relationships offer emotional support and encouragement through difficult times. They also provide us happiness. Because our friends delight us, interacting with them is interesting, relaxing, and joyful. In truth, we enjoy some of our most memorable and wonderful times with family and friends. Furthermore, social contacts give us with material benefits when we are in need. People we know can help us meet

our financial, food, shelter, and transportation needs. We tend to share our resources with others we care about. Furthermore, social bonds are beneficial and genuinely improve our wellbeing.

Research limitations / implications

The generalizability of case studies is limited but opens new questions to be explored by further research into the change in social relationships in the viewpoint of adults and elderly.

Practical implications

Narratives from the participants are a powerful tool for social scientists and academicians to identify the factors responsible for drastic changes in social relationship patterns and expected changes in behaviour patterns of individuals / social beings.

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