



Values, Thinking Too Much, And How Stressed Out Middle-Aged Working Women Felt during the Pandemic

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ABSTRACT: This research looked at middle-aged working women during the pandemic to see whether there was a connection between values, ruminating, and stress. We've all had it rough since the epidemic broke out, and now we're all under extra pressure. Because they are expected to juggle job and family duties, working women have been a frequent target of discrimination. Research shows that women are more prone to ruminating, which compounds the already harmful effects of stress. The study's findings that values had a negative correlation with both ruminating and feeling stressed suggest that values may play a protective role against these mental health issues.

KEYWORDS: Values, Rumination, Perceived Stress, Middle-aged Working Women, Pandemic

I. INTRODUCTION

Our lives have been profoundly altered by the epidemic. We've all been struggling to deal with the increased pressure that the epidemic has brought to bear on our society. Over 700 households in India's National Capital Region were surveyed, and the results showed that the negative effects of the pandemic on women's mental health and productivity lasted significantly longer than those on men. Women in today's society are expected to do more than their fair share of the heavy lifting at home, in the office, and in the care of their families. It's natural for women to feel overburdened by the time constraints and responsibilities that come with juggling so many duties. When they are unable to live up to the standards set by their peers and their families, they may also feel like a failure. Studies have linked high levels of stress to emotional distress including melancholy and nervousness. Stress-related sorrow and anxiety are more common among women than males, according to a 2008 study.

Women already feel extra pressure to balance their careers, households, relationships, children, health, and the stress of global epidemics. One's physical health is negatively affected by the increased demands of both home and work, and one's mental health may suffer as a result of the stress and burnout brought on by an inability to strike a healthy work-life balance. It has been especially difficult for women who are the primary carers for their ageing parents. Additionally, women are taking on more childcare and home-schooling tasks.

We want to learn how middle-aged working women's Values, Ruminating, and Perceived Stress are all connected in this investigation. The epidemic has exacerbated the already pervasive stress in the impoverished globe. Mental health, cardiovascular health, diabetes, obesity, and other metabolic disorders are all affected by long-term stress. According to Moore and Cooper (1996), perceived stress is "a multifaceted concept with a wide range of etiological factors, and it includes various physical, psychological, and social aspects that are dependent on social context." Men and women react differently to stressful situations. A person's level of perceived stress is the result of their own internal mental and emotional dialogue regarding their own stress levels. It encompasses emotions associated with the uncertainty and helplessness of living a life over which one has little control. Perceived stress, as contrast to actual stress, puts the spotlight on how a person perceives the amount of stress in their lives and how well they cope with it.

According to a well-known hypothesis in psychology called the response styles theory, women are more likely to dwell on their depression and stress than men are. The RST defines rumination as an excessive preoccupation with one's own emotional suffering and the factors that may contribute to or exacerbate that distress. People who



ruminate frequently are more likely to develop major depressive episodes and have more severe initial symptoms of depression. Moreover, rumination may prolong current depressive episodes by making them more difficult to overcome. The tendency to dwell on negative thoughts has been linked to the development of both depression and anxiety. Therefore, studies have linked ruminating with a variety of depressive states.

Everyone is under a lot of stress right now because of the growing epidemic. As a result of the confinement rules and the possibility of working from home, women are taking on more responsibility, which in turn leads to more time spent brooding and ruminating. Aldao et al. (2014) found that rumination affects how people deal with traumatic experiences. The tendency to dwell on negative thoughts has been connected to an amplification of stress feelings. Those who have a habit of dwelling on the past or worrying about the future are more likely to feel overwhelmed by their to-do lists. As a result, working women who struggle to balance their professional and domestic responsibilities may experience increased ruminative thinking and stress.

Positive psychological and physiological reactions to stress may be influenced by holding strong values, according to research. It has long been acknowledged that finding happiness, authenticity, and significance in one's life may be achieved by living in accordance with one's basic principles. Values have been linked to a decrease in both psychological and physiological stress responses, suggesting that they may play a role in facilitating coping. Stress was shown to be inversely associated to intrinsic work values including success, recognition, responsibility, and worth of work, as stated by Knoop (1994). Creswell and coworkers (2005) discovered that those whose values were validated had much lower cortisol responses to stress than the control group. According to research by Khodarahimi, Hashim, and Mohd-Zaharim (2012), stress is inversely related to moral principles. Therefore, values may serve as a defence mechanism

Valued Living Questionnaire The Valued Living Questionnaire is a reliable and valid self-report instrument that may be used to assess value-action congruence. The importance of each of ten different factors in one's life (including family, friends, work, and free time) is quantified on a scale from 1 to 10, with 1 representing "not at all important" and 10 representing "extremely important." Then, they take the same set of 10 value domains from the previous week and give each one a number from 1 to 10, where One means "not at all compatible with my personal value" and 10" means "completely consistent to my value." The Composite Score is an extra measure if values-action consistency outside the sums of both the Importance and Continuity Subscales; it is calculated as the mean product of both importance and reliability scores. The Importance Subscale was used throughout this investigation..

- **Rumination Response Scale** For a more in-depth evaluation of the impact of depressed ruminating, Nolen-Hoeksema developed the Ruminative Response Scale. It's the gold standard for gauging the effects of ruminating. It has 22 questions with Likert-type scale responses from 1 to 4.
- **Perceived Stress Scale** The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) is the gold standard for evaluating stress in the realm of psychology. It quantifies how difficult one finds one's current circumstances to be. The items were created to elicit feelings of uncertainty, lack of control, and overload in the lives of the responders. A variety of open-ended questions concerning present stress levels are also included in the scale.

Perceived stress, ruminative thinking, and the significance of values were all found to be moderate among working women in this research. There are many sources of stress for working women, both at home and in the job. There are more Indian women in the labour force now than ever before. Because of the time commitments required by their jobs, women often find it difficult to maintain a work-life balance. However, the degree to which one focuses on their ideals in life may minimise their susceptibility to stress and their tendency to dwell on their difficulties and disappointments. Women who scored highly on values may have been less prone to stress and ruminating on negative events.

Perceived stress and ruminating were shown to be positively correlated. In recent years, ruminating has been identified as a key element in the maintenance of a wide range of mental diseases. Similarly, ruminating has been demonstrated to have an effect on stress levels (and stress has been shown to cause depressed rumination). Values were shown to significantly predict lower levels of perceived stress. Contemplation of one's ideals may be a helpful stress reliever in trying times. According to research by Creswell, Welch, Taylor, Sherman., taking time to think about what's really important in life helps mitigate the negative effects of stress on the body and mind.



Values and ruminating were shown to have a statistically significant inverse relationship. The connection between Values and Ruminating has received little attention from researchers. Women who place a higher value on their values tend to have fewer ruminative thoughts, as shown by the strong inverse association. One possible way to reduce the amount of time spent brooding over a difficult circumstance is to remain true to one's ideals. According to, ruminating too much is associated with feeling down. Furthermore, a person's values may aid in stress management, negative emotion regulation, and the suppression of obsessive thoughts.

There is a shortage of data on felt stress and related variables in the overall Indian population since most research have been undertaken among certain subsets of the population. Community-based treatments and therapies for managing stress may be developed with the aid of knowledge on the variables linked with stress in Indian people. In addition, identifying people and groups at risk for stress-related risk factors early may allow for the implementation of timely strategic interventions aimed at preventing adverse behavioural and health consequences. Values-related rumination research is also underdeveloped. It's possible that researchers may zero down on this question in the future.

II. CONCLUSION

The COVID-19 pandemic prompted the use of social isolation strategies in an effort to slow the spread of the disease. It was predicted that lonely and socially isolated elderly people would have worse health and psychological results. However, there is little evidence to back up this prediction among older persons living in the community. Although there is a growing amount of research documenting the effects of the COVID-19 epidemic on the elderly, there is a dearth of qualitative studies that reflect the lived experience of seniors in Canada's communities. The purpose of this research was to learn more about how seniors living during the initial six weeks of the epidemic. Independent seniors (aged 65 and above) were interviewed in semi-structured one-on-one sessions. All all, inductive theme analysis was used to 22 separate interviews. Two overriding themes, the perceived danger and problems of the pandemic, and dealing with the epidemic, emerged from this iterative process. Participants discussed the risk of catching the virus as well as the difficulties of their living situations, their lack of social support, and their financial stability.

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