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A Glimpse of University Students' Family Life Amidst the COVID-19 Virus

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ABSTRACT

This essay uses a small-scale set of data derived from university students whom I can contact during this period. The variables were particularly pertinent to their family life amidst the COVID-19 virus, including, but not limited to, learning experience with online courses, evaluation on the Government measures against the COVID-19 virus spread, perception of the influence of the pestilence on their own thoughts and behaviors. A simple calculation of frequency was adopted to present the situation related. Results showed a unique experience of the students in the situation of the COVID-19 virus, and reflection on those results was available.

KEYWORDS

University student; family life; COVID-19

It has been nearly one month since I came to Xiamen City Fujian Province of China for transfer of work on 29 February 2020 from Wenzhou City where the spread of the COVID-19 virus is relatively concerning as compared to other cities exclusive of many cities in Hubei province. I first took medical quarantine for 14 days at a hotel and afterward lived as usual with freedom walking around. I thought of this kind of measure as necessary and effective, as well as other ones (e.g., wearing facemasks, regular hand hygiene, and staying at home). And washing hands regularly may be more important than facemask use in preventing influenza transmission (Saunders-Hastings et al., 2017). Everyone's lifestyle has changed since the existence of COVID-19 virus. I did an online survey among my students these two days reflecting their family life as they were now staying at home and taking part in online courses. Twenty questions were designed to have a glimpse of their family life amidst the COVID-19 virus, including, but not limited to, learning experience with online courses, evaluation of the Government measures against the COVID-19 virus spread, perception of the influence of the pestilence on their own thoughts and behaviors. Ninety-four students filled in this online survey and provided answers to the questions related. They came from Gansu, Zhejiang, Fujian,

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Guangdong, and other 16 provinces in mainland China. The following paragraphs center on the results of this survey.

In terms of the students' learning experience of online courses, mobile telephone (93.85%) and laptop (75.38%) were the two types of electronic equipment that were used by the majority of them for accessing the online course, apart from the pad (16.92%) and desk computer (13.85%). 81.91% of the students regarded online courses as necessary before they were allowed for returning to the campus. As for the online course, live telecast, rather than recorded broadcast, of the courses was the first choice of the majority of the students (76.60%). Nearly half of the students took the online courses with a length of 30–60 minutes (46.15%), followed by 91–120 minutes (21.54%) and 61–90 minutes (16.92%). Among them, a course delivered online within 30–60 minutes was most fond of by the students (72.34%), followed by others, for example, of 61–90 minutes (14.89%) and of less than 30 minutes (7.45%).

Regarding the students' activities in their spare time, watching TV (73.4%), reading books (68.09%), writing papers (64.89%), and playing computer games (56.38%) were frequently engaged by the students. The degree of care of the students about the severity situation of COVID-19 virus varied. Exactly 38.30% of the students searched for news about the epidemic per day, and 26.6% of them did so usually. And part of them sometimes (24.47%) or occasionally (10.64%) initiated searching for news about the epidemic situation. Overall, some students (39.36%) felt somewhat boring during at home, and 26.60% of them perceived family life during the special time as so-so and 15.96% not boring. Whereas, 10.64 and 7.45% of the students felt extremely boring or extremely enriched.

Although personal hygiene was highly emphasized, there was a small proportion of the students (14.89%) who thought that they did not pay more attention to personal hygiene than before. To be noted, 75.53% of the students deemed that wearing facemasks when going outside would be compulsory and beneficial for themselves even when the epidemic is under control and vanishes. The importance attached to the facemasks use was consistent with how the student felt about the COVID-19 virus transmission. In this sense, 82.98% of the students were fearful of this emergent public health event and 52.13% of them chose not to go to Hubei provinces or other cities where the epidemic was serious.

In general, most of the students (91.49%) positively evaluated the effectiveness of the measures and interventions taken by the central and/or local governments. Regarding their own contribution to this public health event, 84.04% of the student perceived themselves to be contributive, say, in the aspects of personal hygiene, donation, and being volunteers. Some students also pointed out that staying at home was contributory. Only 15.96% of the students perceived that they did not contribute to this big event.

The results showed a different learning experience in the situation of COVID-19 virus from the time when they were on campus before. Gradually they get used to taking courses via the Internet. Particularly, activities unique to the COVID-19 virus spread include donation, personal hygiene, their preference for traveling to the cities ever in major transmission, and their feeling about this public health event. It can be seen that the large-scale transmission renders the students become careful about their personal health and conscious about what they can do for society. Noted, many students perceived staying at home is a form of a contribution to controlling the COVID-19 virus transmission apart from other behaviors, like donation and being volunteers. Yang et al. (2006) revealed that common people got anxious during the SARS crisis. According to the statement of the students, it is the same case this time as 82.98% of the students felt fearful of this emergent public health event. Similarly, a recent study showed that people's negative emotions and sensitivity to social risk have increased since the official declaration of COVID-19 (Li et al., 2020). According to the previous findings, it is believed that the effective preventive actions of government and recovery information in effect could ameliorate people's risk perception of their self-interests and their families (Shi et al., 2003). It is inferred that the role of the government is of utmost importance. This accord with the social administration pattern in China. Nowadays, the influence of COVID-19 virus has become worldwide, and as compared to other countries, China has attained the lowest scores in terms of the insufficient reactions from the government, but achieved a relatively high level of trust from its citizens (Roth et al., 2020).

Overall, this emergent public health event is influencing everyone's life. The glimpse of university students' family life amidst the COVID-19 virus reflects the reactions and perceptions of them in a special period. I hope the spring will come soon and smile blossoms in people's faces after the outbreak.

Notes on contributor

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