

Media Coverage and Perception of Frontline Soldiers about Fear, Courage and Hope against Novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Aim of the Study: Since the distinguishing proof of infection to work now, Covid-19 has top news and subject of conversation among different foundation of media. Nevertheless, Frontline Soldiers (FLS) are serving individuals in sparing their lives without concentrating their own lives. The study investigated media inclusion and view of FLS about fear, courage and hope against Coronavirus.

Methodology: The researchers adopted blended strategy to close aftereffects of substance of media of a quarter of a year (March, April, May 2020) and meetings of FLS (N=17) including (9 doctors, 3 medical caretakers and 5 paramedic staffs) chose from three emergency clinics of Pakistan. Moreover, researchers planned number scale to compute level of fear, courage and hope among FLS, where scale 1= most reduced degree of fear, courage and hope and 5=highest degree of fear, courage and hope was countered.

Findings: The discoveries of the study uncovered that media inclusion was more elevated level of fear and less courage and hope among public during the chose three months. Then again, FLS discovered more significant level of fear in the periods of March however before long degree of courage and hope expanded because of much of the time experienced positive and recouped cases.

Conclusion: The investigation inferred that media keeping up custom of refinement that causes fear among public. Although close to home experience make more courage and hope as contrast with media inclusion. Besides study presumed that media has not never-ending consequences for public and handy experience makes strong mental recognition then media inclusion about any issue.

Keywords: Media Coverage, Frontline Soldiers, Perception, Fear, Courage, Hope, Covid-19.

Introduction

Covid-19 disease caused by coronavirus, a new virus which spread primarily through droplets generated when infected person sneezes or coughs or discharge from the nose or through droplet of saliva (WHO 2020; Bouey 2020; Safdar 2020). Most infected people of covid-19 experience mild to moderate

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respiratory illness (Wang et al., 2020). Older people those having underlying medical problems like diabetes, chronic respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease and cancer are more likely to increase serious illness (WHO, 2020; The Chinese Preventive Medicine Association 2020).

Coronavirus (Covid-19) affects people in various ways. Most people infected with coronavirus develop mild to moderate illness and recover without hospitalization (Yang et al., 2020; Challse & Dhungana 2020). The most common symptoms of infected person include fever, dry cough and tiredness and less common symptoms includes sore throat, conjunctivitis, loss of taste or smell, aches and pains, diarrhea, headache and a rash on skin or discoloration of toes or fingers whereas serious symptoms includes chest pain or pressure, shortness of breath or difficulty in breathing and loss of speech or movement. Covid-19 disease takes 5-6 days to show symptoms from the day when someone infected with and can take up to 14 days (WHO, 2020; Tecirli et al., 2020; Gupta & Kannoja 2020; Huang et al., 2020).

On December 31, 2019, novel coronavirus eventually identified when Wuhan Municipal Health Commission (WMHC) of China reported a cluster of cases of pneumonia in Wuhan (WHO, January 5, 2020; Chan et al., 2020). On January 4, 2020 WHO reported on social media about disease with cluster cases with no death (WHO January 4, 2020; Mahase 2020; Unhale et al., 2020). On January 5, 2020, WHO published first “Disease Outbreak News” on newly unknown virus (WHO, January 5, 2020; Phelan et al., 2020). After highlighted coronavirus in China, this epidemic outbreak all over the world and captured 220 countries of the world. From very first reported case on 31 December, 2019 in Wuhan to till now, the counting of active cases reached to 5 million with 0.32 million deaths (Khanagar et al., 2020). Majority of cases reported in Europe and America (WHO, May 20, 2020; Shuja et al., 2020).

Media Coverage

Media is vital source of information in the current era. Advancement in technologies and bulk flow of information, now media is working 24/7 to inform, entertain and educate public among various issues (Safdar et al., 2018; Shabir et al., 2015). To inform public about coronavirus and covid-19 pandemic media has imperative role. Media is informing public about worlds’ situation about covid-19 moment by moment. Counting of affecting, recovering and death persons is updating by media on daily basis to aware public (Safdar et al., 2016a; Safdar et al., 2016b; Shabir et al., 2015a). From bulk literatures, it has proved that media has power to affect masses (Shabir et al., 2015b). Media coverage style (framing) plays important role in shaping public opinion. Current research study conducted to analyze media coverage about covid-19 outbreak and shaping of public opinion about fear, courage and hope in this pandemic time.

Frontline Soldiers

In the panic situation, hospitals’ staff including doctors, nurses, and paramedics is working as front-line soldiers to tackle and eradication of this panic disease. Working in shadow of danger may create many illusions in the mind. Working with infected people, increase the chance of being infected. So keep in mind the concept of fear of being infected from corona positive persons, the researcher tries to measure level of fear, courage and hope among front line soldiers.

Current Study

Media is vital source of information and majority of public rely on media to get any information related to any issue. Since the discovery of the disease to till now, millions of people are getting information about coronavirus from various kinds of media on daily basis to become up to date from covid-19 situation in the world. From available studies it has been proved that media has power to affect people shape public opinion, hence keeping in mind, the researcher tried to measure level of fear, courage and hope among the front-line soldiers.

On the other hand, frontline soldiers who are working in various hospitals to look after infected people are also concern of study to measure their level of fear, courage and hope while working under the shadow of danger where the chance of being infected is very high.

Research Methodology

Researcher adopted mixed method to analyze media presentation about coronavirus and opinion of frontline soldiers. Data collection about media perception was based on content analysis while researcher conducted interviews to gather data from doctors, nurses and paramedics' staff. Respondents agreed to be interviewed on the condition anonymity. Hence researcher kept their identification concealed. Furthermore, researcher gathered television news data of three months (March, April & May 2020). This was the time when government of Pakistan took serious action to tackle covid-19 and causes of corona positive started increase in the state.

Data Collection

Current research study dealt with media coverage and mental perception of frontline soldiers about fear, courage and hope in eradication of novel coronavirus (Covid-19). Study analyzed that how media presenting worlds' corona situation on daily basis and how front line soldiers are fighting against this virus where the chance of being infected is very high.

Procedure

Firstly, to measure the media coverage about coronavirus, researcher prepared coding sheet and content of media about coronavirus divided into three segments including "Fear, Courage & Hope". Furthermore, researcher measure news content about coronavirus from 12PM to 9PM news (every hour's news headlines from 12PM noon to 9 PM night) just because in this duration time media gives more coverage to corona issue.

Secondly to measure hospitals' staff's opinion, researcher conducted detailed interview. Researcher approached doctors, nurses and paramedical staff of three hospitals (quarantine centers) including Civil Hospital Bahawalpur, District Hospital Lodhran and Nishtar Medical Hospital Multan. Researcher conducted interviews of (N=17) individuals including 9 doctors, 3 nurses and 5 paramedical staffs.

Scale Measurement of Fear, Courage & Hope

Furthermore, researcher prepared scale consisted on three segments i.e., fear, courage and hope. Each segment was numbered 1 to 5 to measure the level of fear, courage and hope among hospitals' staffs over time from March to May 2020 where 1 indicate lowest level and 5 indicate highest level of perception about fear, courage and hope.

1=very low, 2=low, 3=moderate, 4=high, 5=very high

Table 1: Scale to measure fear, courage & hope among respondents

															March 2020				
Fear					Courage					Hope									
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5					
															April 2020				
Fear					Courage					Hope									
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5					
															May 2020				
Fear					Courage					Hope									
1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5					

Results

Researcher divided result section in four parts. In first part selected sample is elaborated i.e., selected hospitals, respondents' frequency and demographics of respondents' detail are discussed. On the second part media coverage is elaborated that from March to May 2020, how media presented the issue of coronavirus while in the third part, researcher elaborated perception of frontline soldiers about covid-19 during the months of March, April and May 2020 and in the fourth part, researcher analyzed both media coverage and perception of frontline soldiers to conclude results.

Table 2: *Selected Hospitals & Respondents*

Sr.	Hospital Under Studies	Respondents
1	Civil Hospital Bahawalpur	6 (35%)
2	District Hospital Lodhran	5 (30%)
3	Nishtar Medical Hospital Multan	6 (35%)
	Total	17 (100%)

The table 2 shows the hospitals under study and selected respondents' frequency with percentage from selected hospitals. Researchers tried to get equal representation from selected three hospitals of Punjab, Pakistan.

Table 3: *Demographics Characteristics of Respondents*

Sr.	Respondent Name	Age	Gender	Experience in Years	Designation	Specialty	Hospital
1	A	45	M	21	Doctor	Immunologist	CHB
2	B	39	M	14	Doctor	Cardiologist	CHB
3	C	52	M	30	Doctor	Critical Care Medical Specialist	CHB
4	D	56	M	33	Doctor	Endocrinologist	DHL
5	E	44	M	21	Doctor	Immunologist	DHL
6	F	41	F	20	Doctor	Gastroenterologist	DHL
7	G	37	M	15	Doctor	Immunologist	NMHM
8	H	51	M	29	Doctor	Infectious Disease Specialist	NMHM
9	I	47	F	24	Doctor	Gynecologist	NMHM
10	J	31	F	9	Nurse	Practitioner	CHB
11	K	33	F	13	Nurse	ICU Registered Nurse	DHL
12	L	29	F	8	Nurse	Staff Nurse	NMHM
13	M	34	M	14	Paramedic	Physician's Assistant	CHB
14	N	29	M	13	Paramedic	Medicine	CHB

15	O	27	M	8	Paramedic	Emergency Medical Technician	DHL
16	P	30	M	11	Paramedic	Physician's Assistant	NMHM
17	Q	37	M	17	Paramedic	Physician's Assistant	NMHM

Table 3 shows the demographics characteristics of respondents interviewed from selected hospitals/quarantine centers. Researchers tried to give representation to both male and female doctors, nurses and paramedics staff working in selected hospitals/quarantine centers. The selected respondents were sufficient experience in the field of medical.

Media Coverage

To know about the media coverage about covid-19, researchers selected 1500 news headlines from March to May 2020 consisted 10 news headlines daily of 12 PM noon to 9 PM night of five news channels of Pakistan. The results elaborated through figure 1.

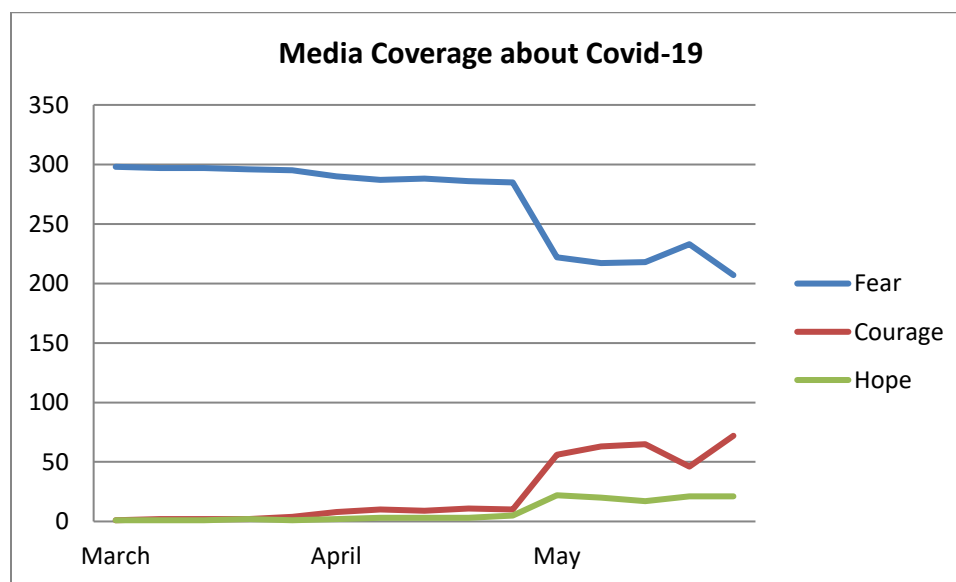


Figure 1: Media coverage about Covid-19 during March to May 2020

Results from collected data showed that in the month of March 2020 when issue of coronavirus raised, at that time level of fear was very high in media coverage and sensationalism and frequently reporting on increasing infected cases and increase counting in deaths rate created high fear among public. In the month of March, media coverage about corona cases around the world especially in Europe was very horrid. It seems that no one can escape from corona and everyone is going in the mouth of death after infection.

While in the month of April, 2020 media showed this disease can never eradicate soon so there is need of courage and hope of life should never forget. But at the same time rapidly increased cases maintained fear. The 1st agenda of media was there is danger of coronavirus everywhere. Various types of lock-down i.e. partial lock-down and smart lock-down also created fear that there is chance of get infection just because bulk numbers of cases were reported daily but media started to courage public with the hope that by adopting measures everyone can save himself or herself from being infected from coronavirus.

Experiencing two months of living in such horrible situation, level of fear in media coverage started decrease. Now the agenda of media found more positive towards courage and hope. Now media started to realize that public should fight against coronavirus together as a one nation and hoped that the time is not far when we will get rid of this disease. Continuously increased numbers in positive cases with recovered cases and two months experience of fighting with this disease, started creating more courage and hope among public by media.

Perception of Frontline Soldiers

To know about the perception of frontline soldiers (FLS), the researcher collected data from (N=17) including doctors, nurses and paramedics staff of three government hospitals of Pakistan. Researcher conducted detailed telephonic interviews to know about perception about covid-19 and level of fear, courage and hope among them.

The researcher set the questions in the sequence from March 2020 when government of Pakistan take initiative-imposed emergency in the country and established testing laboratories and make quarantines centers. All doctors, nurses and paramedics staff ordered to be present and government imposed lock-down in the country on March 13, 2020. This situation created horrible condition because media frequently coverage about rapidly increase in positive cases and deaths at large scale especially in Europe and Iran. It was time when media and front line soldiers were imposed heavy duty to inform and serve the public. As the virus was new, hence its knowledge and measurements were also limited.

Almost all the respondents agreed that in the start of this situation they were much afraid. One doctor said “At that time it was much difficult for me to make me available for service especially at quarantine centers” second doctor said “I was surrounded in fear just because it was assumed that there is no escape from death after corona positive”, other one said “It was combination fear, courage and hope when I started duty at quarantine center” other said “when I was going on duty on call at that time my family members see-off me with tears as I am going on a war and there is no chance to come back”.

The fear element was much higher in nurses and paramedics than doctors. They complaint lack of medical facilitation like shortage of face masks, dresses etc in the start when government imposed emergency. They said there was restless situation and everyone was securing himself or herself. No one knows that what will happen next. One said I never seen such situation in my whole service. Almost all respondents agreed that in the start, media was only source of information and world’s condition showed by the media was also much critical.

But after working few days, they started to realize that the situation is not as much horrible as media is showing. In this way level of courage started increase among front line soldiers. The candle of hope was also somewhere in mind that we will tackle and eradicate this disease. They said in the month of April the level of courage started increasing when infected cases started to become recover. Now it was time when fear level started decreased and level of hope started increased.

They said with the passage of time, where positive cases creasing, the recovers cases also increasing day by day. Experiencing three months has increased their courage and they hope that soon the vaccine will be developed and this disease will be eradicated from the world. The researcher also taken their opinion about fear, courage and hope for three months i.e. March to May 2020 by using scale consisted on indicators from 0 to 5 where 0 indicate no fear and 5 indicate high level of fear, courage and hope. The result of scale is given Figure 2.

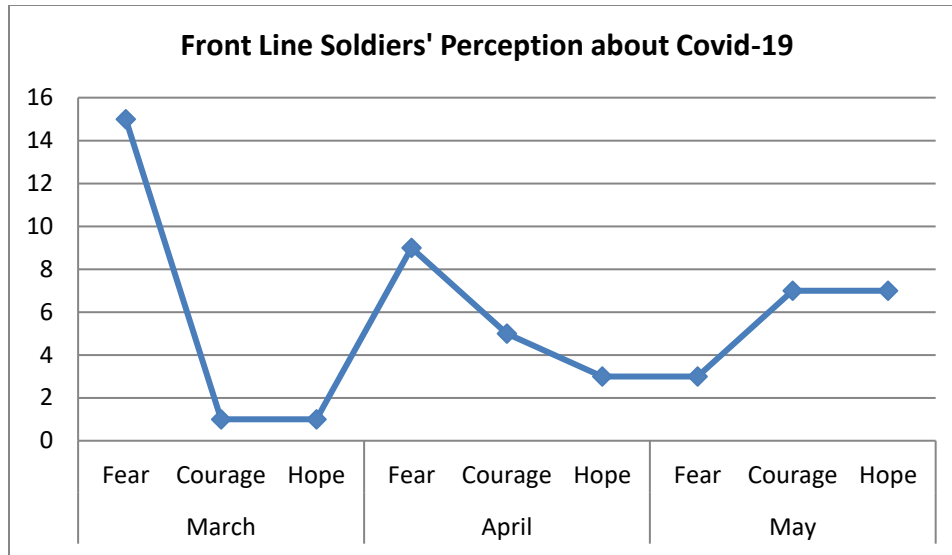


Figure 2: FLS perception about Covid-19 during March to May 2020

The figure 2 shows the perception of frontline soldiers about fear, courage and hope during the months of March, April and May 2020. As figure shows that in the month of March, there was much fear among frontline soldiers and they were very less courage and hope to tackle this issue. Whereas in the month of April, their fear decreased and level of courage increased and element of hope also increased that they will overcome this issue. As the number recover cases increased and increased in knowledge about tackling this virus, in the month may fear found decreased and courage and hope increased. From detailed interviews and from scale results, it is found that with the passage of time, the fear is decreasing and courage and hope is increasing among medical staff. They have courage that they will fight against this disease till the end and hope that soon medicine of this virus will be available for general public.

Media & FLS Analysis

In this level, the researchers analyzed the results collected from media coverage and collected from selected sample. The research was aimed to know about media perception and frontline soldiers' perception about fear, courage and hope about coronavirus. The analysis is shown in figure 3.

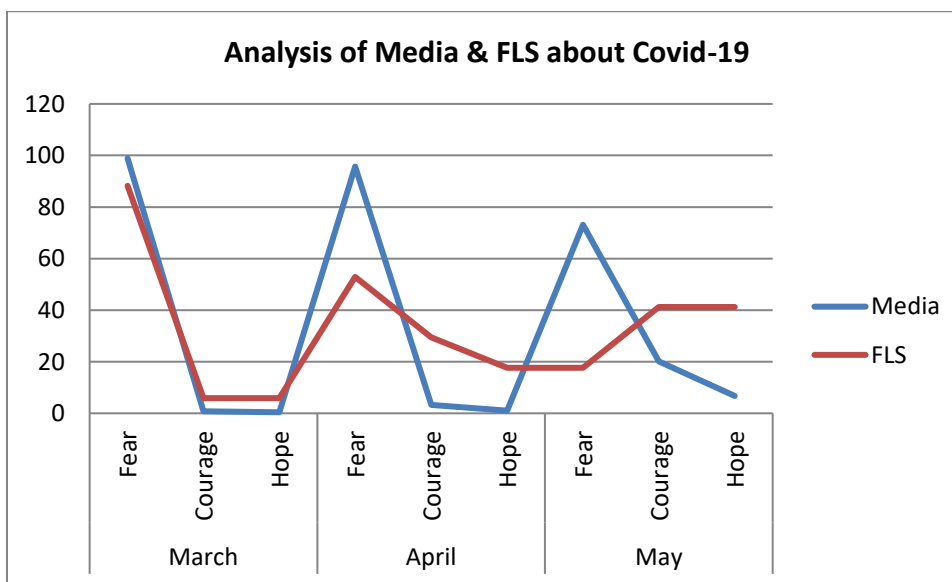


Figure 3: Analysis of Media & FLS about Covid-19 during March to May 2020

Figure 3 shows the analysis of media coverage and perception of frontline soldiers working in various hospitals of Pakistan. As the results shows that in the month of March, the media coverage was much horrible and created much fear while element of courage and hope found very less in media coverage during the month of March 2020. The same situation noted among frontline soldiers during the month of March but in the month of April a noteworthy difference noted among media coverage and frontline soldiers. Media followed the trend of sensationalize and created more fear but in this month, fear found less and courage and hope found more among frontline soldiers. While in the month of May, to somehow media courage the public and created hope of better future. But still fear found high in media coverage. Whereas significant level of fear found decreased among frontline soldiers and found more courage and hope among them.

Conclusion

The research study was about war against coronavirus theoretical and practical perspectives. It was analysis of media and medical staff working in hospitals. From the results, it is concluded that media has maintained its coverage style with sensitization in last three months of March to May 2020 and continuously broadcast panic situation in the world and element of fear found more high with consistency. As media is key source of information, so in the start fear also found among medical staff working in various hospitals and quarantine centers but with the passage of time and gaining practical experience it found that fear become decreases and courage and hope increased among medicals staff who are working as frontline soldiers. They found by their experience that covid-19 disease is not much dangerous as much media is portraying. From this research, it is also concluded that definitely media is key source of information but not having everlasting and long term effects. In various situations, experience plays important role to know any scenario rather than media.

Implications

From results of this research study, it is suggested that government should make rules and regulations to bound media to adopt development journalism and avoid sensationalism. There should be regular programs where doctors inform public about current and future perspectives. There should be specialized media programs that educate public to work using precautionary measures.

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Conflict of Interest

Author has no conflict of interest.

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