

Students' Beliefs, Worries, and Perceived Impacts Regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic

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INTRODUCTION

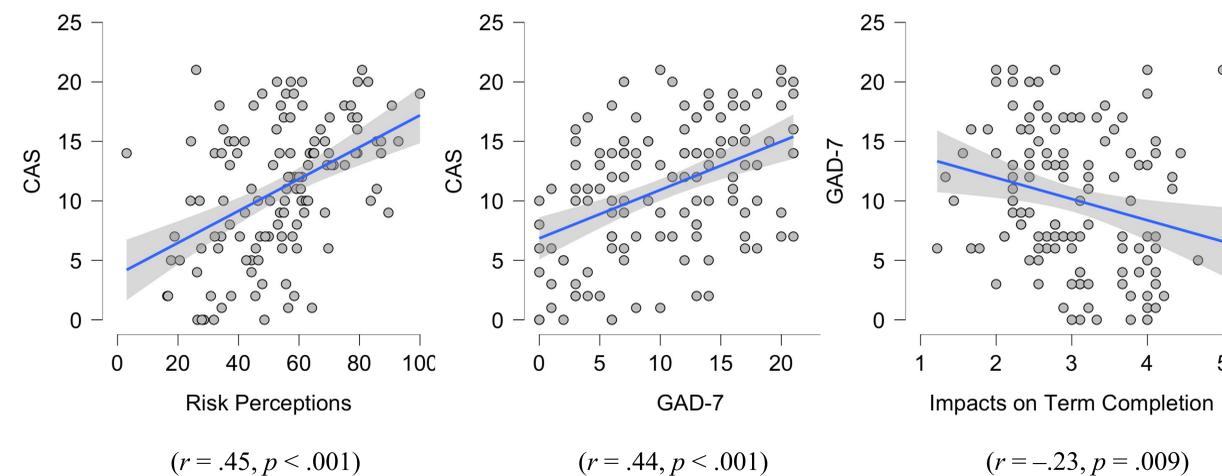
- Most college students experienced high risk perceptions and increased anxiety about contracting COVID-19 during its initial outbreaks (Baloran, 2020; Ding et al., 2020; Jiang, 2020; Roy et al., 2020).
- University students spent less time to study during the lockdown, and some even believed that the COVID-19 pandemic might lead to the discontinuation of their education (Kapasia et al., 2020).
- Our study aimed to examine the interrelationships between the beliefs and worries university students in Canada have about the COVID-19 pandemic and its perceived impacts on successfully completing their academic studies.

METHOD

- **Participants:** 125 undergraduate students at UNBSJ
 - 107 females, 18 males
 - Mean age: 21.92 years ($SD = 6.02$)
- **Measures:** an online survey consisting of demographic questions and four assessment scales:
 - *Perceptions of COVID-19*
 - *COVID-19 Anxiety Scale (CAS)*
 - *Generalized Anxiety Disorder 7-Item Scale (GAD-7)*
 - *Perceived Impacts of COVID-19 on Term Completion*

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

Correlation Tests



- **Correlation Tests:** Students who perceived higher risks of COVID-19 infection also worried more about the COVID-19 pandemic; higher levels of COVID-19-related anxiety were associated with higher generalized anxiety levels; higher generalized anxiety levels were associated with more negative perceived impacts of the pandemic on term completion.
- **Regression Tests:** Only age and year of study were found to significantly predict the variability in the perceived academic impacts; age was positively associated with the perceived impacts, whereas year of study was negatively associated with it. This means that younger students and students who were in upper years of university study expected more negative impacts of the pandemic on their term completion.

Conclusion

This study suggests that future research should validate the associations between risk perceptions, anxiety, and the perceived academic impacts, and investigate any possible causal relationships between them in experimental settings. Also, public health officials and academic institutions are suggested to come up with practical ways to help post-secondary students manage their risk perceptions of COVID-19 infection, in hopes of helping them maintain psychological well-being during the pandemic.

Regression Tests

Age

$(\beta = .27, p = .004)$

Perceived Impacts on Term Completion

$(\beta = -.24, p = .008)$

Year of Study

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