



# Subjective Well-Being and Stress Coping Strategy among Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse

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**Abstract:** The impact of Child Sexual Abuse has long-term and short-term effects on Adult Survivors especially Women Survivors. Adults who have experienced Sexual Abuse in their childhood are referred to as “survivors” of Child Sexual Abuse. The terminology “survivor” indicates the strength of the individual to survive such a traumatic event in life. The present study aims to explore some of the major components such as Stress Coping Skills and Subjective Well-Being of the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse and the relationship between these components. These components were considered to play a major role in the psychological well-being of the individual. To achieve the purpose of the study, 100 women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse were selected from Chennai City by using convenient sampling technique. Subjective Well-Being Scale developed by National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences (NIMHANS), Bangalore was used to measure the level of Subjective Well-Being. Stress Coping Scale developed by NIMHANS was used to measure the level of Stress Coping Skills, Problem focused and Emotional focused Stress Coping Strategies. An Interview Schedule was designed to collect the Demographic Profile and details about the experience of Sexual Abuse. The data collected using these tools were statistically analysed by t-test, correlation and ANOVA using SPSS software version 21. The results of the study revealed that the Women Survivors who were educated and working had better Subjective Well-Being than those who were less educated or illiterate and not working. Also Women Survivors who had better Stress Coping Strategies exhibited better Subjective Well-Being which indicated positive significant correlation between Subjective Well-Being and Stress Coping Skills. The study also suggested that there is a strong requirement for more empathetic understanding and therapeutic intervention for the psychological problems which these survivors are facing.

**Key words:** Child Sexual Abuse, Effects of Child Sexual Abuse, Stress Coping Skills and Subjective Well-Being.

## INTRODUCTION

Majority of the important aspects of life comprises women participation. A woman faces various difficulties ranging from verbal abuse to physical torture every day in life and become the victim of discrimination. The fear factor doesn't allow many women to overcome their problems, instead they hide their problems and suffer emotional trauma. Over the past many years, it has been very difficult to express what exactly women were going through and their experiences. Nowadays, equality and law enforcement have empowered many women in various walks of life to come out of such stigma and to seek justice. One among the major struggles is sexual harassment. The important concern about sexual harassment is that, it is very difficult to understand the context and event of sexual harassment as it involves various ranges of behaviours.

Sexual harassment can be referred to behaviour or motives which are intimidating in sexual nature or unwelcoming inappropriate exchange of sexual favours. It is a form of illegal and social assault. In Indian jurisdiction, Sexual harassment is defined as unwelcome sexual gesture or behaviour whether directly or indirectly as sexually coloured remarks; physical contact and advances; showing pornography; a demand or request for sexual favours; any other unwelcome physical, verbal/non-verbal conduct being sexual in nature.

Sexual harassment is a cruel act that has been witnessed in many different circumstances including position of powerful authority over the victim; persistent unwelcome sexual remarks about the looks, especially when seniority in designations like age wise, working position, in home, schools, public places, wash rooms, etc. Even an eve teasing or passing awkward comments which create embarrassment on the basis of gender are considered to be harassment. Women and children are most commonly victimised when it comes to sexual abuse. There are several long-term and short term effects of Sexual Abuse. It results in affecting the individual's psychological health. One of the dimensions that have strong influence over Subjective Well-Being is seen to be Stress Coping Strategy and Skills of the individual. The present study aims to explore the Subjective Well-Being and its relationship with Stress Coping level among the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse. Adult Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse are those who are considered to be strong enough, resilient and survive such a traumatic event during their childhood.

Subjective Well-Being is defined as People's self-assessment of overall quality of the individual's life. Researches in positive psychology have revealed that there are correlation between average income and average subjective well-being; rising income does not always increase the subjective well-being. The genetic inheritance are substantially determined and strongly associated with health. Subjective well-being is very important for a positive, healthy lifestyle and psychological wellness of

an individual. Literature shows several mental disorders and physical difficulties resulting from a traumatic event over many decades. The mental health of women and children has started to decode slowly for the past few years in the field of research. Women have made considerable progress in their well-being and to shape their own life facing so many odds from the society. Over 75 years of independence, women have overcome several challenges and headed their life with shining contributions to the development.

Subjective Well-being has played a key role in this journey to get over the struggles and challenges. Literature also reveals that there is influence of Subjective Well-Being over the quality of life through affecting sleep quality, socialization, emotional stability, mental status, physical health, etc. Women have shown signs of adopting several Stress Coping Strategies based on their resilient skills and personal experiences. Positive and negative evaluation needs to be established for understanding the Subjective Well-Being of an individual.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Aim**

The present study aims to explore the relationship between the Subjective Well-Being and Stress Coping Skills of the Women survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.

### **Objectives**

- To measure the Subjective Well-being of Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse
- To measure the Stress Coping Skills of Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse
- To compare the Subjective Well-being and Stress Coping Skills of Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse
- To analyse the Demographic Profile such as Age, Educational Status and Working Status of Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse in reference to their Stress Coping Skills and Subjective Well-being

### **Research Design**

In the present exploratory research, 100 Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse of age above 18 years were selected from Chennai City to participate in the study. Convenient sampling technique was used.

### **Hypothesis**

1. There will be significant difference among the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse in their level of Subjective Well-being.
2. There will be significant difference among the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse in their level of Stress Coping Skills.
3. There will be significant relationship between the level of Subjective Well-being and the level of Stress Coping Skills among the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.
4. There will be significant difference among the Age of the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Subjective Well-being.
5. There will be significant difference among the Age of the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Stress Coping Skills.
6. There will be significant difference among the Education level of the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Subjective Well-being.
7. There will be significant difference among the Education level of the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Stress Coping Skills.
8. There will be significant difference among the Working Status of the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Subjective Well-being.
9. There will be significant difference among the Working Status of the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Stress Coping Skills.

### **Tool used**

- Subjective Well-being Scale developed by National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, Bangalore was used to measure the level of Subjective Well-Being.
- Stress Coping Scale developed by National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences, Bangalore was used to measure the level of Stress Coping Skills. The Stress Coping check list explores the Problem focussed and Emotional focussed copying strategy. Problem focussed covers the problem solving skills. Emotional focussed covers positive distraction, negative distraction, acceptance, faith, denial and social support.
- An Interview Schedule was designed to collect the Demographic Profile and details about the experience of Sexual Abuse.

### **Statistical Analysis**

The data collected using these tools were statistically analysed by t-test, correlation and ANOVA using SPSS software version 21.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

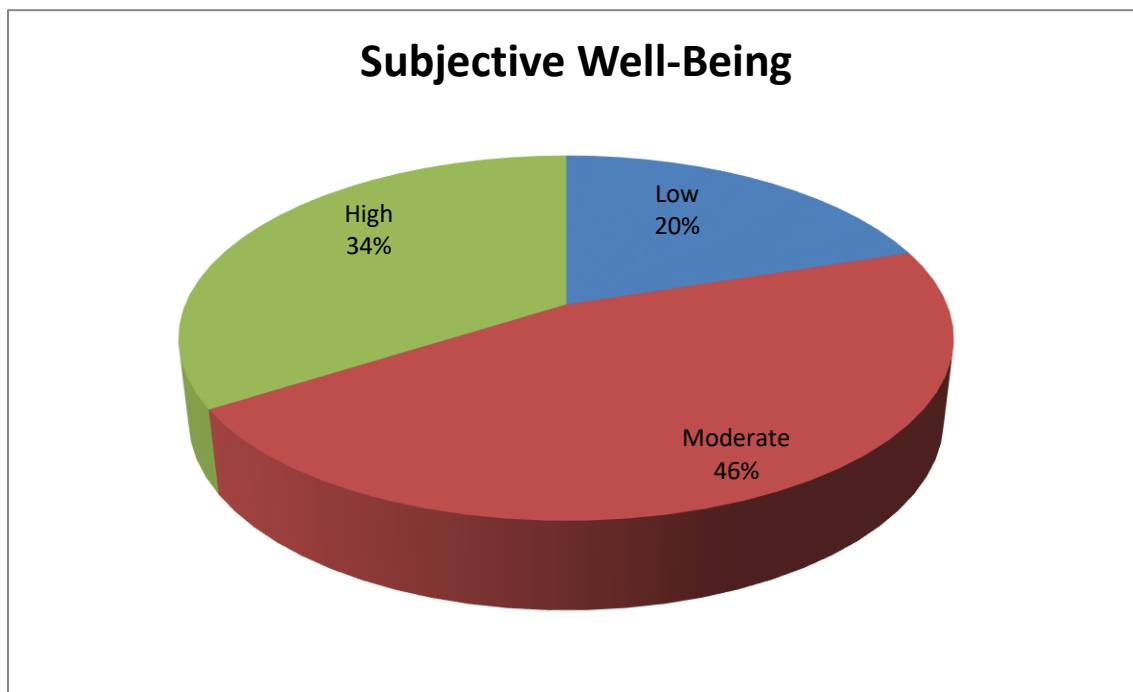


Figure 2: Distribution of the participants by their level of Subjective Well-being

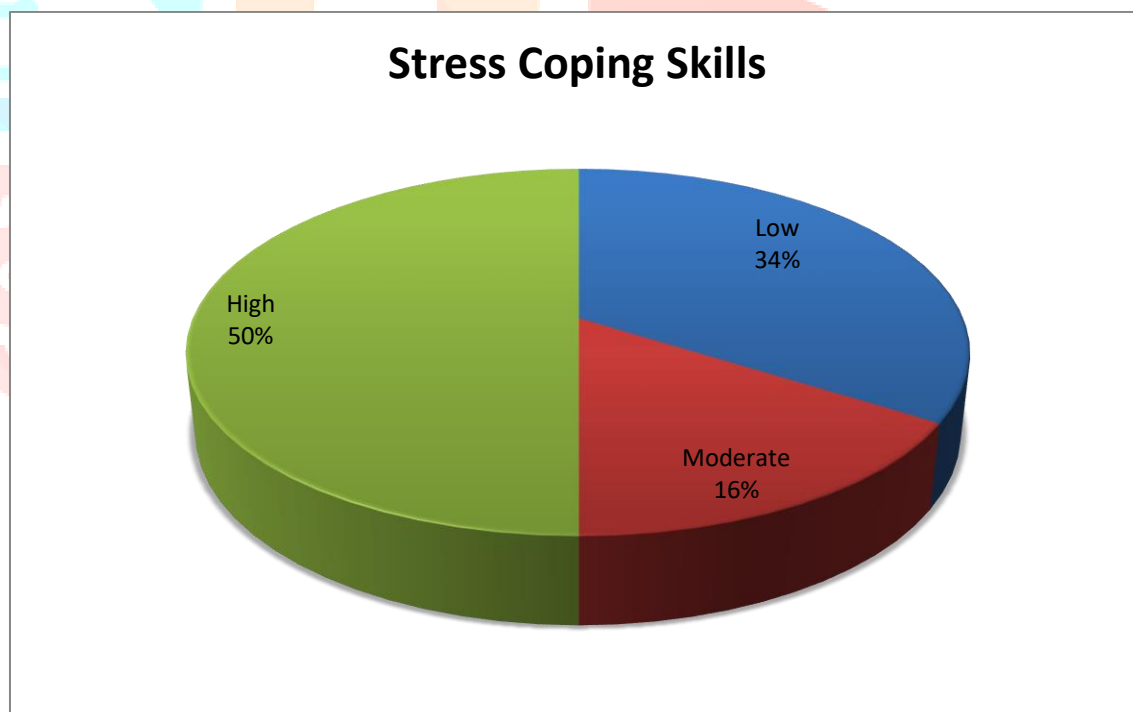


Figure 1: Distribution of the participants by their level of Stress Coping Skills

Table – I: One sample t-test among the level of Subjective Well-being of the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	Sig.	Statistical Inference
Subjective Well-Being	100	1.668	.54622	99	.000	t = - 6.078 P < 0.01 Significant

It is seen from Table I that the mean value is 1.67, Standard Deviation is .55 and t-value is 6.08 with respect to of the level of Subjective Well-Being among the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse. The p value is less than 0.01 and significant. The hypothesis which stated that there will be a significant difference in the level of Subjective Well-Being among the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse is accepted. The result shows that there is significant difference among Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse in their level of Subjective Well-Being.

**Table – II:** One sample t-test among the level of Stress Copying Level of the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	df	Sig.	Statistical Inference
Stress Copying Level	100	.6717	.28654	99	.000	t = 5.993 P < 0.01 Significant

It is seen from Table II that the mean value is .67, Standard Deviation is .29 and t-value is 5.99 with respect to of the level of Stress Coping Skills among the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse. The p value is less than 0.01 and significant. The hypothesis which stated that there will be a significant difference in the level of Stress Coping Skills among the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse is accepted. The result shows that there is significant difference among Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse in their level of Stress Coping Skills.

**Table – III:** Correlation for the level of Stress Copying and Subjective Well-Being among Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse

Variable		Stress Copying Level	Subjective Well-Being
Stress Copying Level	Pearson Correlation	1	.880**
	Sig. (2 tailed)		.000
	N	100	100
Subjective Well-Being	Pearson Correlation	.880**	1
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000	
	N	100	100

It is seen from Table III that the correlation value between Subjective Well-Being and Stress Coping Skills is .880 which indicates positive correlation and significant at 0.01 level. The hypothesis which stated that there will be significant relationship between the level of Subjective Well-Being and level of Stress Coping Skills among the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse is accepted. The result shows high degree of correlation between the level of Subjective Well-Being and level of Stress Coping Skills

**Table – IV:** Correlation between the Subjective Well-Being Subjective Well-Being and Stress copying Strategies (Problem focussed and Emotional Focussed) and among Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse

Variable		Subjective Well-Being
Stress Copying Level (Problem Focussed Strategy)	Pearson Correlation	.617**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000
	N	100
Stress Copying Level (Emotional Focussed Strategy)	Pearson Correlation	.806**
	Sig. (2 tailed)	.000
	N	100

It is seen from Table IV that the correlation value between Subjective Well-Being and Problem Focused Stress Coping Strategy is .617 and the correlation value between Subjective Well-Being and Emotional Focused Stress Coping Strategy is .806 which indicates positive correlation and significant at 0.01 level. The result shows high degree of correlation between Emotional Focussed Stress Copying Strategies and Moderate correlation between Problem Focussed Stress Copying Strategies with the level of Subjective Well-Being among the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.

**Table – V:** Correlation between the various Emotional Focussed Stress Copying Strategies and Subjective Well-Being among Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse

Variable - Stress Copying Level		Subjective Well-Being
Emotional Focussed Strategy - Positive Distraction	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	.777** .000 100
Emotional Focussed Strategy - Negative Distraction	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	.385** .000 100
Emotional Focussed Strategy - Acceptance / Definition	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	.709** .000 100
Emotional Focussed Strategy - Religion / Faith	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	.207* .039 100
Emotional Focussed Strategy - Denial / Blame	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	.787** .000 100
Emotional Focussed Strategy - Social Support	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2 tailed) N	.784** .000 100

\*\* Correlation is Significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

\* Correlation is Significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

It is seen from Table V that the correlation value of Subjective Well-Being with Positive Distraction Stress Coping Strategy is .777, with Denial Stress Coping Strategy is .787 and with Social Support is .784 which indicates high degree positive correlation and significant at 0.01 level. The correlation value of Subjective Well-Being with Acceptance is .709 which indicates moderate correlation and significant at 0.01 level. The correlation value of Subjective Well-Being with Negative distraction is .385 which indicates low degree of correlation and significant at 0.01 level. The correlation of Subjective Well-Being with Religion/Faith is .207 which indicates significant correlation at 0.05 level.

**Table – VI:** One-way analysis of variance among the Age of the respondents with regards to their level of Subjective Well-Being.

SL.NO	Subjective Well-Being	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.	Statistical Inference
1.	Between Groups	3	23.710	7.903	28	S1 = 1.1214	.29982	.000	F = 130.185 P < 0.01 Significant
2.	Within Groups	96	5.828	.061	22	S2 = 1.2636	.20587		
					28	S3 = 2.1286	.24624		
					22	S4 = 2.1818	.20386		

S1 = 20-24 years, S2 = 25-29 years, S3 = 30-34 years, S4 = 35-39 years

It is seen from Table VI that the mean value of age group 20-24 years is 1.12, age group 25-29 years is 1.26, age group 30-34 is 2.13 and age group 34-39 years is 2.18 with respect to the level of Subjective Well-Being among the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse. The F value is 130.185 among the age of Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Subjective Well-Being. The p value is less than 0.01 and significant. The hypothesis which stated there will be significant difference among the Age of the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Subjective Well-Being is accepted. It shows that there is significant difference among the Age of the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Subjective Well-Being.

**Table – VII:** One-way analysis of variance among the Age of the respondents with regards to their level of Stress Copying Skills.

SL.N O.	Stress Copying Level	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.	Statistical Inference
1.	Between Groups	3	7.519	2.506	28	S1 = .3939	.09311	.000	F = 395.262 P < 0.01 Significant
2.	Within Groups	96	.609	.006	22	S2 = .4026	.08545		
					28	S3 = .9327	.07220		
					22	S4 = .9623	.06196		

S1 = 20-24 years, S2 = 25-29 years, S3 = 30-34 years, S4 = 35-39 years

It is seen from Table VII that the mean value of age group 20-24 years is .3939, age group 25-29 years is .4026, age group 30-34 is .9327 and age group 34-39 years is .9623 with respect to the level of Stress Coping Skills among the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse. The F value is 395.262 among the age of Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Stress Coping Skills. The p value is less than 0.01 and significant. The hypothesis which stated there will be significant difference among the Age of the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Stress Coping Skills is accepted. It shows that there is significant difference among the Age of the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Stress Coping Skills.



**Table – VIII:** t-test between the Educational Status of the respondents with regards to the level of Subjective Well-Being.

SL. NO.	Educational Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.	Statistical Inference
1.	Literate	51	1.9373	.46129	.000	t = 5.799
2.	Illiterate	49	1.3878	.48633		P < 0.01 Significant

It is seen from Table VIII that the mean value of Literate group is 1.94 and illiterate group is 1.39 with respect to the level of Subjective Well-Being among the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse. The t value is 5.79 among the Educational Status of Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Subjective Well-Being. The p value is less than 0.01 and significant. The hypothesis which stated there will be significant difference among the Educational Status of the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Subjective Well-Being is accepted. It shows that there is significant difference among the Educational Status of the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Subjective Well-Being.

**Table – IX:** t-test between the Educational Status of the respondents with regards to the level of Stress Copying Skills

SL. NO.	Educational Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.	Statistical Inference
1.	Literate	51	.8319	.23244	.000	t = 6.927
2.	Illiterate	49	.5050	.23957		P < 0.01 Significant

It is seen from Table IX that the mean value of Literate group is .83 and illiterate group is .50 with respect to the level of Stress Coping Skills among the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse. The t value is 6.93 among the Educational Status of Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Stress Coping Skills. The p value is less than 0.01 and significant. The hypothesis which stated there will be significant difference among the Educational Status of the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Stress Copying Skills is accepted. It shows that there is significant difference among the Educational Status of the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Stress Coping Skills.

**Table – X:** t-test between the Working Status of the respondents with regards to the level of Subjective Well-Being

SL. NO.	Working Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.	Statistical Inference
1.	Working	52	1.7577	.51501	.087	t = 1.726
2.	Not Working	48	1.5708	.56755		P > 0.05 Not Significant

It is seen from Table X that the mean value of Working Women group is 1.75 and Non-Working Women group is 1.57 with respect to the level of Subjective Well-Being among the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse. The t value is 1.726 among the Working Status of Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Subjective Well-Being. The p value is greater than 0.05 and not significant. The hypothesis which stated there will be significant difference among the Working Status of the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Subjective Well-Being is rejected. It shows that there is no significant difference among the Working Status of the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Subjective Well-Being.

**Table – XI:** t-test between the Working Status of the respondents with regards to the level of Stress Copying Skills

SL. NO.	Working Status	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Sig.	Statistical Inference
1.	Working	52	.7401	.27517	.012	t = 2.553
2.	Not Working	48	.5976	.28283		P < 0.05 Significant

It is seen from Table XI that the mean value of Working Women group is .74 and Non-Working Women group is .59 with respect to the level of Stress Coping Skills among the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse. The t value is 2.55 among the Working Status of Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Stress Coping Skills. The p value is less than 0.055 and significant. The hypothesis which stated there will be significant difference among the Working Status of the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Stress Copying Skills is accepted. It shows that there is significant difference among the Working Status of the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse with regards to their level of Stress Coping Skills.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Individuals differ in their level of Subjective Well-Being and level of Stress Coping Skills among the Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.
- Women survivors who have better stress coping strategies exhibited better subjective Well-being which indicates positive significant association between the Subjective Well-Being and Stress Coping Skills

- Emotional Focussed Stress Copying Strategy influences the Subjective Well-Being than the Problem Focussed Strategy among the adult survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.
- Elder adult survivors of Child Sexual Abuse exhibited better Subjective Well-Being and Stress Coping Skills than young adult survivors.
- Women survivors who are educated and working have better subjective well-being than those who are less educated or illiterate and not working.

### SUGGESTIONS

- The study suggests that there is a strong requirement for more empathetic understanding and therapeutic intervention for the psychological problems faced by the survivors of Child Sexual Abuse.

### LIMITATIONS

- Convenient sampling technique was used for the study. Random sampling technique could bring better elaborated results.
- Sample size was less. Increased sample size can bring better results.

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