



DEPRESSION, ANXIETY AND STRESS AMONG COLLEGE GOING STUDENTS IN RELATION TO GENDER

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Abstract: The present study aims to find gender differences in depression, anxiety and stress among college going students of three districts, Barnala, Sangrur and Patiala of Punjab. The study was delimited to 200 college going students (B.A./ B.Sc First Year) of Punjab. Data was collected by using Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale - 21 Items (Dass-21) by Lovibond, S.H. & Lovibond, P.F. (1995). To find gender differences in depression, anxiety and stress among college going students, t-value was calculated. Results of the study indicated significant gender differences in depression, anxiety and stress among college going students. Female college going students are found to be more depressed, more anxious and more stressed than male college going students.

I. INTRODUCTION

II. College going students have a higher prevalence of mental health problems than other age groups as they experience many stressful activities during their academic period. Although all college students face many stressful events like academic stress, cut throat and hard competition, more tough syllabus, college assignments and projects, daily challenges of life, residing in hostels or paying guest houses, parental and peer pressure, etc but female students are more prone to psychological distress. Previous research studies have already proved that in general, females tend to suffer more from mental problems than males for two reasons. First, the physiological differences between females and males (such as genetic vulnerability, hormone

and cortisol levels, etc.) may be reflected emotionally and behaviorally (Hankin and Abramson, 1999). For instance, females and males responded to stress differently as a consequence of their differential sensitivity to events (Afifi, 2007). Females were more vulnerable to stress and pain than males, so they might experience greater sadness and anxiety (Chaplin et al., 2008). It has been evidenced that women were more likely to struggle with mental disorders such as depression, anxiety and stress. Gao et al. (2020) examined the gender differences in college students' depression, anxiety, and stress over the four academic years. The study was conducted on 1892 undergraduate students from 15 universities in China, with 898 females and 994 males. According to results anxiety turned out to be the most prevalent and serious issue for college students, especially for female students; while a growing prevalence of depression was found among male students during college. Opankovic (2021) assessed the differences between the genders in depression, anxiety, and stress. Out of 563 surveys, a total of 161 were included in further analyses. The results of study implied that female participants exhibited higher levels of depression, anxiety, and stress during the COVID-19 pandemic. Hossain et al (2022) also found that female students have more levels of depression, stress, and anxiety than their counterparts. Hataway (2023) highlighted in her paper that depression and anxiety are common in young students but female students were harder hit with depression and anxiety than their male counterparts, which reflects the larger social pattern of mental health problems hitting women more intensely. So as more and more college going female students are found to be having higher incidence of depression, stress and anxiety, the current study aimed to evaluate gender differences in depression, anxiety and stress among college going students of Punjab.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

-To examine depression, anxiety and stress among college going students in relation to their gender.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The study was delimited to 200 college going students (B.A./ B.Sc First Year) of three districts of Punjab. Students from colleges affiliated to Punjabi University Patiala were randomly selected from both male and female college going students of Science and Arts Stream of Sangrur, Patiala and Barnala districts of Punjab.

SOURCES OF DATA

The investigator collected data by using Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale - 21 Items (Dass-21) by Lovibond, S.H. & Lovibond, P.F. (1995).

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

Mean, SD and t-value was calculated to find gender differences in depression anxiety and stress among college going students.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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Main objective was to study and compare level of depression, anxiety and stress among college going students in relation to their gender (Male/Female). Table 1 shows the scores of mean for depression, anxiety and stress of male and female college going students along with their SD, SE as well as t-value indicating the significance of difference between their means.

Table - 1

Depression, Anxiety And Stress Among College Going Students In Relation To Their Gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	SE	t-ratio
Depression	Male	102	13.76	7.92	1.25	3.15**
	Female	98	17.67	9.66		
Anxiety	Male	102	13.54	7.08	1.18	2.20*
	Female	98	16.14	9.48		
Stress	Male	102	13.66	8.16	1.22	2.77**
	Female	98	17.05	9.24		

* Significant at 0.05 level

**significant at 0.01 level

Table 1 reveals that mean score of depression of male college going students is 13.76 whereas the mean score of depression of female college going students is 17.67. Value of Standard deviation is calculated 7.92 and 9.66 respectively. The t-value signifying the difference between scores of depression of male and female college going students is 3.15 which is significant at 0.01 level. It means female

college going students are more depressed than male college going students. Table 1 also reveals that mean score of anxiety of male college going students is 13.54 whereas the mean score of anxiety of female college going students is 16.14. Standard deviation is calculated 7.08 and 9.48 respectively. The t-value signifying the difference between scores of anxiety of male and female college going students is 2.20 which is significant at 0.05 level. So it is found that anxiety level of female college going students is higher as compared to level of anxiety of male college going students. It is also revealed that mean score of stress of male college going students is 13.66 whereas the mean score of stress of female college going students is 17.05. Standard deviation is calculated 8.16 and 9.24 respectively. The t-value signifying the difference between scores of stress of male and female college going students is 2.77 which is significant at 0.01 level. So it can be said that female college going students have higher level of stress as compared to male college going students.

From above table it is clear that level of depression, anxiety and stress is found higher in female college going students. It is found from DASS Severity Rating Index that both male and female college going students have moderate level of depression but females are having higher scores of depression than males. Female college going students have severe level of anxiety whereas male college going students come have moderate level of anxiety. Male college going students have normal level of stress whereas females have mild level of stress.

CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of statistical analysis of data, following conclusions are drawn:

There are found gender differences in depression, anxiety and stress among college going students. Female college going students are found to be more depressed, more anxious and more stressed than male college going students. The reasons behind these gender differences may be because women tend to be more prone to stress, which can increase their anxiety and of course, depression too. Inequality in power and status, financial insecurity and uncertainty of future may increase the risk of depression in women. Discrimination at work places in the form of lower pay than men, lack of flexibility around working hours, job insecurity and lack of potential for career progression makes women unhappy. Differences in brain chemistry and hormone fluctuations causes anxiety among women. Hormonal changes due to reproductive processes cause anxiety among women. Conditions of mental health,

including depression, anxiety, and stress can affect women's ability to handle daily situations in life and their choices. Mental health of women is important because it's a vital part of and impacts their thoughts, behaviors and emotions. So attention should be paid to females at early stage to improve their mental health.

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