

A Statistical Study on Mental Wellbeing: Measuring Stress and Anxiety Levels Among Youth

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Abstract

In today's increasingly competitive academic landscape, students are under immense pressure to perform well. This pressure does not solely stem from academic demands but is significantly heightened by expectations from parents and society. As a result, university students' mental health has emerged as a critical global public health concern. This study aims to investigate the impact of stress and anxiety on students' mental health, with a specific focus on a group of students enrolled in a private university in the Punjab region of India. The research explores various dimensions of academic stress, emotional well-being, and how students cope with increasing demands in their educational environment.

The study highlights that stress and anxiety among students are multifaceted issues influenced by academic workload, time constraints, performance expectations, and personal responsibilities. One of the key findings is that students often struggle with time management, leading to poor sleep patterns and difficulty balancing academic and extracurricular activities. These challenges contribute to a heightened sense of stress and fatigue, which, over time, negatively affects mental health. The survey data indicates that 21.8% of the participating students have been clinically diagnosed with a mental health disorder, a figure that underscores the severity of the problem.

Moreover, the findings reveal that a significant number of students find it hard to relax, even during their leisure time. This inability to mentally disconnect from academic stress reflects chronic anxiety and constant psychological pressure. The research also shows that young students tend to become easily overwhelmed by responsibilities, particularly when these responsibilities involve managing coursework, meeting deadlines, and preparing for exams. Many of them report feeling emotionally drained and lacking the coping skills needed to manage these demands effectively.

Despite these concerning trends, a major barrier to addressing student mental health is the prevailing social stigma around seeking psychological support. The fear of judgment or being perceived as weak prevents many students from reaching out for professional help, thereby compounding the issue. This reluctance not only delays necessary intervention but also allows stress and anxiety to escalate, leading to more serious mental health outcomes over time.

The implications of these findings are significant. If left unaddressed, the high levels of stress and anxiety experienced by

students can disrupt their academic performance, impair their social relationships, and hinder their overall personal development. Therefore, it is imperative that universities take proactive steps to address these challenges. The development and implementation of comprehensive mental health services—including counseling, stress management workshops, and awareness campaigns—are essential. Additionally, fostering a supportive campus environment where mental health is openly discussed and prioritized can help reduce stigma and encourage students to seek help when needed.

In conclusion, the study sheds light on the critical need for educational institutions to recognize and respond to the mental health challenges faced by students. By addressing key risk factors and promoting mental well-being, universities can help students build resilience, enhance academic success, and support healthier developmental pathways for the youth.

Keywords: Mental health, stress, anxiety, youth, psychosocial factors, intervention.

Introduction

Mental health is a cornerstone of overall well-being and significantly influences an individual's ability to learn, work, and maintain relationships. Among college-going students, mental health plays a critical role during a life stage marked by increasing independence, academic pressure, social change, and career uncertainty. College life is often idealized as a time of growth and exploration, but for many students, it also introduces stressors that can trigger or exacerbate mental health conditions, particularly stress, anxiety, and depression.

In recent years, growing concern has been raised about the mental wellbeing of university students globally. Factors such as academic overload, social isolation, financial burdens, peer pressure, and concerns about the future have been shown to contribute significantly to elevated levels of stress and anxiety. The World Health Organization recognizes mental health issues among youth as a public health priority, and several studies indicate that many disorders begin before the age of 24 — making the college years especially crucial for detection and support.

Despite increased awareness, many students do not seek help due to stigma, lack of awareness, or limited access to mental health services. As a result, there is an urgent need to assess and monitor the mental wellbeing of college students, identify key risk factors, and develop effective interventions tailored to their needs.

Main Challenges in Studying the Mental Health of College Students

1. **Stigma and Underreporting** : One of the primary obstacles in studying mental health among youth is the stigma associated with it. Students often hesitate to disclose mental health struggles for fear of being judged, misunderstood, or labeled as weak. This leads to underreporting in surveys and assessments, skewing the data and making it harder to draw accurate conclusions.
2. **Diversity of Student Populations** : College students come from varied socio-economic, cultural, and educational backgrounds. Mental health symptoms and their interpretation can differ significantly across cultures and communities, making it difficult to design standardized tools or draw generalizable conclusions.
3. **Lack of Longitudinal Data** : Most studies on student mental health are cross-sectional, capturing a snapshot in time. Longitudinal studies, which track mental health trends over time, are more effective in identifying causes, effects, and outcomes, but are harder to conduct due to logistical challenges like student attrition.
4. **Measurement Tools and Subjectivity** : Mental health is inherently subjective and relies on self-reported data. While tools like the PHQ-9, GAD-7, and PSS are widely used, they may not fully capture the complexity of individual experiences. Additionally, responses may vary depending on the student's mood at the time of assessment.

5. **Rapidly Changing Environments :** The college experience is dynamic — academic stress, relationships, financial pressures, and transitions such as moving away from home can fluctuate quickly. These constant changes affect mental wellbeing and complicate the analysis of trends or causality.
6. **Digital Overload and Social Media Influence :** The impact of digital media on mental health is an evolving area of concern. Students are deeply embedded in online environments, where cyberbullying, comparison culture, and excessive screen time may affect mental wellbeing. However, quantifying and analyzing these factors remains challenging.
7. **Limited Institutional Support and Data Access :** Many universities lack robust mental health monitoring systems or are hesitant to share internal data due to privacy concerns. This limits researchers' access to comprehensive datasets and insights into the effectiveness of current mental health services.
8. **Ethical Considerations :** Research involving mental health must be conducted with high ethical standards to protect participants. Ensuring informed consent, anonymity, and the emotional safety of students during assessments can be complex, especially when dealing with at-risk individuals.
9. **Inconsistent Use of Technology :** Although technology offers opportunities to track mental health (e.g., via apps or online surveys), inconsistent access and digital literacy across student populations can introduce bias in data collection.

Literature Review

Numerous studies have found a high correlation between stress and college students (Schafer, 1996; Fisher, 1994; Altmaier, 1983; Greenberg & Valletutti, 1980). Stress is a mental or physical phenomena that arises from one's engagement with the environment and is produced by one's cognitive appraisal of the stimulation, according to Lazarus & Folkman (1984). The presence of the stressor determines whether stress exists. According to Feng (1992) and Volpe (2000), a stressor is something that makes it difficult for a person to adjust or that stimulates their body or mind. Environmental, psychological, biological, and social variables are all potential causes of stress.

Oku, Owoaje & Monjok (2015) assessed the mental health of the medical trainees in Nigeria. The results indicated that the mental health of about 61% of the trainees was good whereas that of 39% was poor. The reasons identified for poor mental health were ill-treatment by the instructors, insufficient monthly allowances and the taxing medical training.

Uner (2015) examined the mental health status of the students of University and the various factors that influence the mental health. The results suggested an association between academic achievement and a negative event in the last year and mental health.

Stress symptoms have long been recognized by researchers (Malach Pines and Keinan, 2007; Ongori, 2007; Ongori and Agolla, 2008; Agolla, 2009) as including low energy, taking over-the-counter medications, high blood pressure, depression, increased appetite, difficulty concentrating, restlessness, tension, and anxiety, among other symptoms. Stress is likely to affect a person who is dealing with one of these factors. However, this might also rely on the person's resilience and how they view the circumstances. However, depending on each student's resilience and past experiences with various scenarios, the detrimental effects of stress on an individual might differ significantly from one student to the next. However, depending on each student's resilience and past experiences with various scenarios, the detrimental effects of stress on an individual might differ significantly from one student to the next. According to Stevenson and Harper, 2006; Jaramillo et al., 2005 findings, the perspective of the individual influences whether or not the stressor has a negative effect, i.e., whether it causes the individual to experience physical or psychological symptoms of stress (Jaramillo et al., 2005; Stevenson and Harper, 2006).

Research Methodology

A questionnaire-based poll of young candidates who are the students of undergraduate programmes in private organizations, was used as the mechanism to generate results. Both primary and secondary data sources were used to gather the information.

Objectives of the study:

- To learn coping mechanisms to reduce stress among young people.
- To conduct research on the signs and symptoms of stress in young people.
- To determine the impact of students' stress and anxiety levels on their mental health

RESEARCH DESIGN

Young male and female students from a private institution in the Punjab region make up the sample, which is chosen at random. There were 110 answers to the survey, which was given to 150 youth.

Tools for data collection : The two sections are used to create a questionnaire. Young people's stress and anxiety levels are highlighted in the second segment, whereas the mental health assessment is highlighted in the first. Both primary and secondary sources of information are used to accomplish the goal. In addition to student interviews, standardized questionnaires were used to gather the primary data.

Data Collection:

Data Sources:

(i) Secondary data from books, periodicals, magazines, and the internet; (ii) primary data from questionnaires (iii) Direct Communication

A five-point scoring system served as the foundation for the majority of the questionnaire.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Mental Wellbeing Assessment: 1. I frequently experience stress related to my studies. (1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree)

110 responses

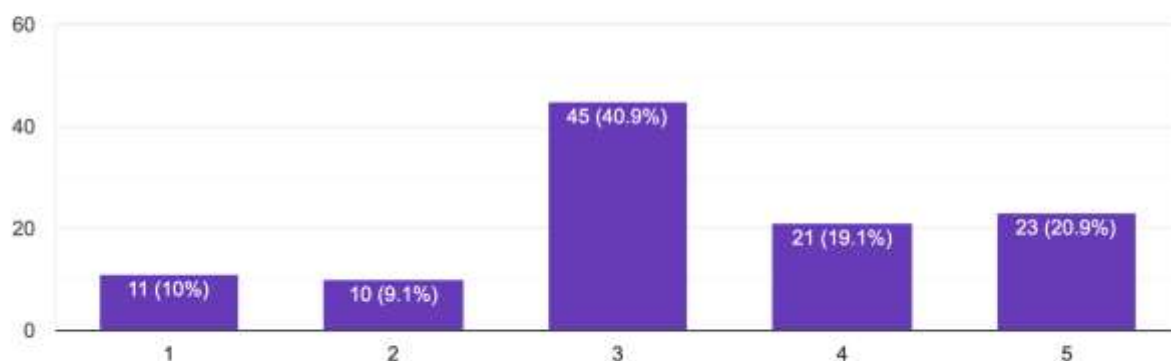


Figure 1

The above data suggests that a higher-than-average number of students regularly encounter stress-related challenges. This indicates that stress is a common and recurring issue among students, affecting their well-being and academic performance. The frequency and intensity of stress highlight the need for better coping strategies and mental health support.

Mental Wellbeing Assessment: 3. I often experience anxiety before exams or assessments. (1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree)

110 responses

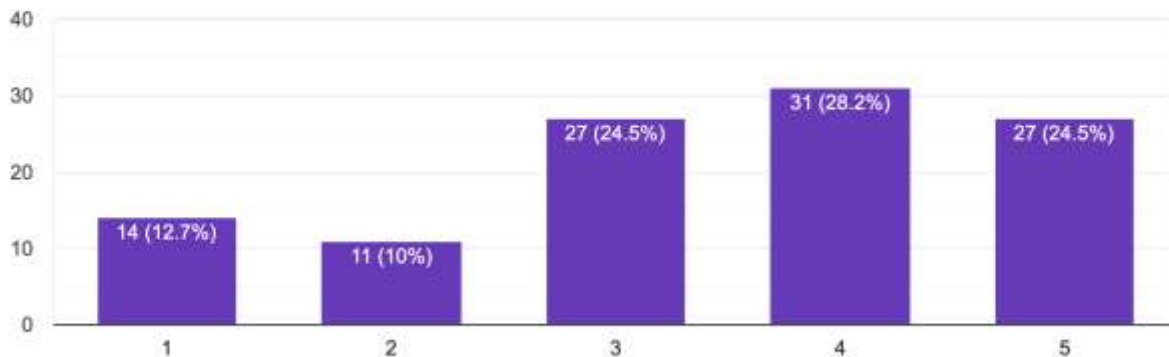


Figure 2

The data indicates that over 70 percent of students experience anxiety and stress during examination periods. This highlights a widespread issue affecting academic performance and mental health. The high percentage emphasizes the need for effective support systems, stress management techniques, and awareness to help students cope during exam times.

Stress and Anxiety Levels: 1. I feel stressed by the amount of work or responsibilities I have. (1 = Strongly Disagree 2 = Disagree 3 = Neutral 4 = Agree 5 = Strongly Agree)

110 responses

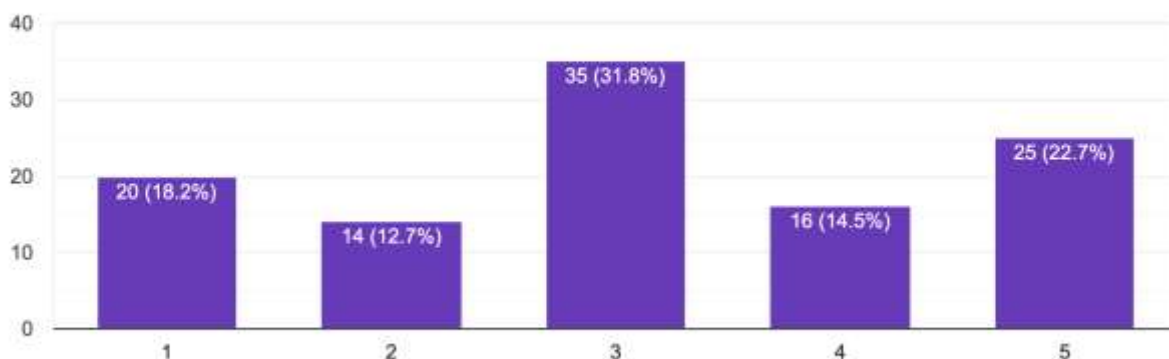


Figure 3

The data reveals that over 50 percent of young students experience increased stress when given responsibilities. This suggests that handling tasks or expectations may overwhelm them, affecting their mental well-being. It highlights the importance of gradually building responsibility, providing guidance, and developing coping skills to manage pressure effectively.

Findings

- The results of this study demonstrate how common stress and anxiety are among students, especially when they are under more pressure to perform well academically. More than 70% of students report feeling stressed and anxious during exam times, according to the research. This suggests that tests are a significant cause of mental stress, which may have an impact on both academic achievement and general wellbeing.
- Additionally, the evidence indicates that over half of young kids experience elevated stress whenever they

are assigned tasks. This suggests a potential lack of readiness or inadequate coping strategies to manage responsibilities and demands. For many students, the shift to responsibility management can be too much to handle, which can lead to emotional exhaustion and a decline in motivation.

- Furthermore, the overall findings show that more students than usual often face stress-related difficulties in their day-to-day academic lives. These results highlight the critical need for educational institutions to integrate programs that build students' emotional resilience, raise knowledge of stress management, and offer mental health support.
- In conclusion, the study highlights the growing concern about student mental health and stresses the value of skill development, supportive environments, and early intervention to assist students successfully manage both personal and academic challenges.

Suggestions

According to the results, it is critical to put mechanisms in place that assist students in properly managing their stress and anxiety. To promote emotional well-being, schools should regularly offer counseling services and mental health workshops. By establishing reasonable expectations, educators and parents can promote candid communication and lessen the strain of academics. Students can deal better if time management, relaxation methods, and stress-relieving pursuits like sports or meditation are introduced. Furthermore, with the right direction, progressively taking on more responsibility can boost self-esteem and lessen anxiety. In order to help kids build resilience and achieve academic success without sacrificing their mental health, it is essential to create a helpful and understanding environment.

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