



## Empirical Study of Depression, Anxiety and Stress Among University Student Capstone Project

**Sakreet Kaur, Danish Khurshid, Cathrine Jongwe, Aman Raj**

Requirement for Award of the Degree of, Bachelor Of Arts

**Dr. Hilal Ahmad Dar**

Department Of Social Science and Languages Lovely Professional University Phagwara, Punjab (India)- 144402

### KEYWORDS

anxiety, depression, stress, quality of life, university students, psychological issues mental health and well-being.

### ABSTRACT:

**Aim:** Depression, anxiety and stress among university students are phenomenon observed across the world especially in developing countries. This research thrives to reveal depression , anxiety and stress and socio demographic characteristics of university students as a problem in the society at the same time giving possible solutions.

**Subject and Method:** Depression, anxiety, and stress scale (DASS -21) was used for the data collection.

**Results:** The end results prove that the male students are the ones with more depression, anxiety and stress compared to female students. Young adults (university students) are the ones more vulnerable to stress and depression as there are in a transition period of identity formation (Alvi et al 2010). Most of them experience emotional, behavioral, sexual, academic and social conflict (Kaya et al 2007) . This is due to the fact that they try to mix academic and sexual life at the same time resulting to high rate increase in depression which leads to suicidal deaths. These suicidal deaths are a result of the failure to manage academic, social conflict and sexual life together.

**Aim:** Depression, anxiety and stress among university students are phenomenon observed across the world especially in developing countries. This research thrives to reveal depression , anxiety and stress and socio demographic characteristics of university students as a problem in the society at the same time giving possible solutions.

**Subject and Method:** Depression, anxiety, and stress scale (DASS -21) was used for the data collection.

**Results:** The end results prove that the male students are the ones with more depression, anxiety and stress compared to female students. Young adults (university students) are the ones more vulnerable to stress and depression as there are in a transition period of identity formation (Alvi et al 2010). Most of them experience emotional, behavioral, sexual, academic and social conflict (Kaya et al 2007) . This is due to the fact that they try to mix academic and sexual life at the same time resulting to high rate increase in depression which leads to suicidal deaths. These suicidal deaths are a result of the failure to manage academic, social conflict and sexual life together.

**Conclusion:** In a nutshell depression, anxiety and stress plays a bigger role in the frequent suicidal deaths of young adults (university students) . The results suggest an urgent need of some preventive measures to help improve the mental health of the university students.

**Aim:** Depression, anxiety and stress among university students are phenomenon observed across the world especially in developing countries. This research thrives to reveal depression , anxiety and stress and socio demographic characteristics of university students as a problem in the society at the same time giving possible solutions.

**Subject and Method:** Depression, anxiety, and stress scale (DASS -21) was used for the data collection.

**Results:** The end results prove that the male students are the ones with more depression, anxiety and stress compared to female students. Young adults (university students) are the ones more vulnerable to stress and depression as there are in a



transition period of identity formation (Alvi et al 2010). Most of them experience emotional, behavioral, sexual, academic and social conflict (Kaya et al 2007) . This is due to the fact that they try to mix academic and sexual life at the same time resulting to high rate increase in depression which leads to suicidal deaths. These suicidal deaths are a result of the failure to manage academic, social conflict and sexual life together.

Conclusion: In a nutshell depression, anxiety and stress plays a bigger role in the frequent suicidal deaths of young adults (university students) . The results suggest an urgent need of some preventive measures to help improve the mental health of the university students.

The results suggest an urgent need of some preventive measures to help improve the mental health of the university students.

## Introduction

In the dynamic landscape of higher education, university life offers a myriad of opportunities and challenges for students. Amidst the pursuit of knowledge and personal growth, an increasing focus has turned towards understanding the mental health dimensions of this transformative period. This study delves into the intricate interplay of depression, anxiety, and stress among university students, recognizing the profound impact these psychological factors can have on academic performance, social dynamics, and overall well-being.

As the academic environment becomes more demanding, students often find themselves navigating a complex web of expectations, social pressures, and personal aspirations. The prevalence of mental health issues, particularly depression, anxiety, and stress, has emerged as a critical concern warranting careful examination. Through this research, we aim to unravel the underlying factors contributing to the mental health challenges faced by university students, shedding light on potential coping mechanisms and interventions that can foster a healthier campus atmosphere.

By comprehensively exploring the experiences of university students in the realm of mental health, this study aspires to contribute valuable insights to the ongoing discourse surrounding student well-being. In doing so, we hope to inform universities, policymakers, and mental health practitioners, fostering an environment that nurtures both academic success and the holistic development of students.

The empirical study of depression, anxiety, and stress among university students is a critical exploration into the mental health challenges faced by this demographic. This research delves into the prevalence, contributing factors, and potential interventions related to these psychological conditions. By employing empirical methods, such as surveys and psychological assessments, scholars aim to uncover patterns, risk factors, and variations within university populations.

Researchers seek to quantify the extent of depression, anxiety, and stress experienced by university students. This empirical approach enables the identification of key variables that may influence mental health outcomes, including academic workload, social relationships, and lifestyle factors. Moreover, the

findings of such studies contribute to the development of evidence-based strategies for prevention and intervention. By shedding light on the specific challenges faced by university students, this research aims to inform educational institutions, mental health professionals, and policymakers in creating a supportive environment that fosters the holistic well-being of the student population.

Depression, anxiety, and stress among university students often extends over demographic differences, such as gender and cultural backgrounds. The research will also investigate coping mechanisms employed by students and their effectiveness in mitigating psychological distress. By building a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of mental health challenges in university settings, researchers and practitioners can tailor interventions to address the unique needs of students, ultimately promoting a healthier and more resilient student body.

In the dynamic landscape of higher education, university life offers a myriad of opportunities and challenges for students. Amidst the pursuit of knowledge and personal growth, an increasing focus has turned towards understanding the mental health dimensions of this transformative period. This study delves into the intricate interplay of depression, anxiety, and stress among university students, recognizing the profound impact these psychological factors can have on academic performance, social dynamics, and overall well-being.

As the academic environment becomes more demanding, students often find themselves navigating a complex web of expectations, social pressures, and personal aspirations. The prevalence of mental health issues, particularly depression, anxiety, and stress, has emerged as a critical concern warranting careful examination. Through this research, we aim to unravel the underlying factors contributing to the mental health challenges faced by university students, shedding light on potential coping mechanisms and interventions that can foster a healthier campus atmosphere.

By comprehensively exploring the experiences of university students in the realm of mental health, this study aspires to contribute valuable insights to the



ongoing discourse surrounding student well-being. In doing so, we hope to inform universities, policymakers, and mental health practitioners, fostering an environment that nurtures both academic success and the holistic development of students.

Longitudinal studies may be employed to track changes in mental health over time, offering valuable insights into the dynamic nature of psychological well-being during the course of a university education. This temporal perspective helps pinpoint critical periods of vulnerability and resilience, contributing to the development of timely and targeted interventions. In the dynamic landscape of higher education, university life offers a myriad of opportunities and challenges for students. Amidst the pursuit of knowledge and personal growth, an increasing focus has turned towards understanding the mental health dimensions of this transformative period. This study delves into the intricate interplay of depression, anxiety, and stress among university students, recognizing the profound impact these psychological factors can have on academic performance, social dynamics, and overall well-being.

According to the WHO definition, "Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" (Huber, M et al. 2011). Many people perceive health as being physically well and free of any diseases, and thus they have neglected the importance of mental health. Therefore, mental health is an irreplaceable aspect of health. Poor mental health will lead to many life-threatening diseases such as cardiovascular disease deaths, deaths from external causes or even cancer deaths, which were only associated with psychological distress at higher levels Dhakal, B. P & William, P. (2020). Depression, anxiety, and stress levels in the community are considered important indicators of mental health. Failure to detect these emotional disorders will, unfortunately, lead to increased psychological morbidity with undesirable impacts all through their professions and lives (Firth, J et al., 2019). The university students are the future of our society, they represent society's investment for the future thus their mental health is an important factor not only for them in their own right but also for society as they are the ones who are contributing to the larger part of society. Psychological problems like stress, depression and anxiety among college students are increasing every year. There are many reasons for such psychological problems. The most common problems for these kinds of emotional disorders are greater academic demands, changes in social and family life, and a new and different environment. Other problems for depression and stress are time pressure, tough competitions, the pressure of academics and fear of failure. In India, a study was conducted to focus on the prevalence of current depression, anxiety, and stress-related symptoms among young adults, ranging from mild to extremely severe, which was 18.5%, 24.4%,

and 20% respectively.

Clinical depression was present in 12.1% and generalized anxiety disorder in 19.0%. Co-morbid anxiety and depression were high, with about 87% of those having depression also suffering from anxiety disorder Harikrishnan, U., & Ali, A. (2018). Research conducted in Malaysia showed that the prevalence of moderate to extremely severe levels of depression, anxiety and stress among undergraduate students was ranging from 13.9% to 29.3%, 51.5% to 55.0% and 12.9% to 21.6% respectively (Manap, R et al., 2019). All things considered, the environment of education has long been viewed as a distressing factor (Teh, C. K., et al., 2015). University students have been shown to be more inclined to emotional disorders, especially stress and depression, as compared to their non-university peers. Therefore, we conducted a cross-sectional study to determine the severity of depression, anxiety and stress among undergraduate students.

Ultimately, the goal of this study is not only to identify challenges but also to inform evidence-based strategies and interventions. By unravelling the complexities of the academic and mental health landscape, researchers contribute valuable insights to universities and mental health professionals, guiding the development of targeted initiatives to foster a supportive environment for students' psychological well-being.

## Methodology

### Participants and sampling

The paper investigates students' depression, anxiety and stress level and their quality of life. The data was collected from 10th November to 25<sup>th</sup> November 2022. We participants were connected through offline medium, and they were asked for the participation on a voluntary basis. A total number of 30 responses were collected. All participants were fully informed about the aim of the study and the confidentiality of the data, and they were also assured that the data would be used only for the purpose of the research and refusal to participation would not affect their current and future course of study in any way.

### Instruments

In this study two questionnaires were used to collect the data, depression, anxiety and stress scale-21 items (DASS-21) and quality of life scale-16 items (QOLS).



## Analysis Result

**Table: - 1** sociodemographic data of student

| Variable                |          | Frequency | Percent (%) |
|-------------------------|----------|-----------|-------------|
| Gender                  | Male     | 17        | 56.7        |
|                         | Female   | 13        | 43.3        |
| Residence               | Rural    | 18        | 60          |
|                         | Urban    | 12        | 40          |
| Religion                | Sikh     | 17        | 56.7        |
|                         | Hindu    | 13        | 43.3        |
| Parent education        | Higher   | 11        | 33          |
|                         | Graduate | 19        | 67          |
| History of severe fever | Yes      | 1         | 3           |
|                         | No       | 29        | 97          |

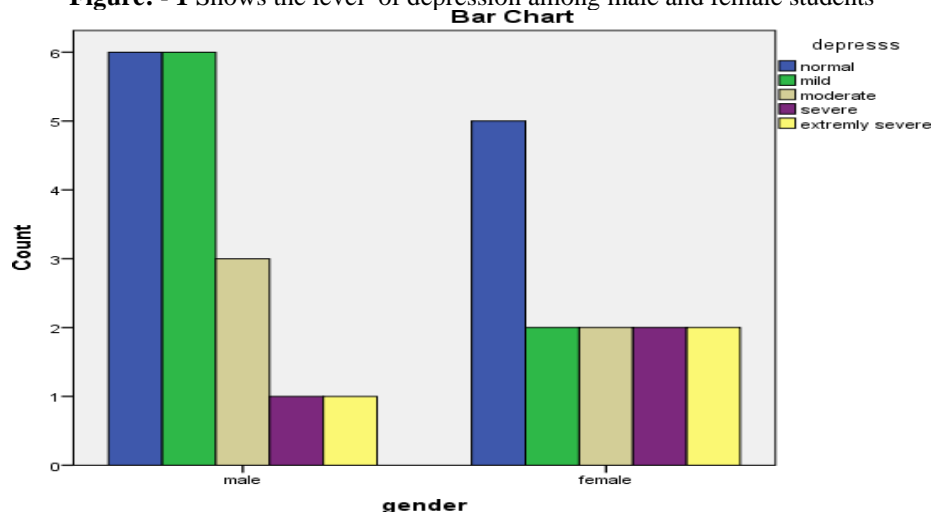
**Table:-2** Shows the Depression, anxiety and stress scores on DASS -21 scale

| Variables  | Normal   | Mild    | moderate | severe  | Extremely severe |
|------------|----------|---------|----------|---------|------------------|
| depression | 11(36.7) | 8(26.7) | 5(16.7)  | 3(10)   | 3(10)            |
| Anxiety    | 9(30)    | 4(13.3) | 4(13.3)  | 4(13.3) | 9(30)            |
| stress     | 4(46.7)  | 9(30)   | 5(16.7)  | 2(6.7)  | -                |

**Table: -3** shows the Depression, anxiety and stress among male and female students on DASS- 21 scale

| Variables  |        | Normal | Mild | Moderate | Severe | Extremely severe |
|------------|--------|--------|------|----------|--------|------------------|
| depression | Male   | 6      | 6    | 3        | 1      | 1                |
|            | Female | 5      | 2    | 2        | 2      | 2                |
| Anxiety    | Male   | 6      | 3    | 4        | 1      | 3                |
|            | Female | 3      | 1    | 6        | 3      | -                |
| Stress     | Male   | 9      | 5    | 2        | 1      | -                |
|            | Female | 5      | 4    | 3        | 1      | -                |

**Figure: - 1** Shows the level of depression among male and female students



This study found that females, students with a history of severe fever, and students with graduate-educated parents had higher levels of distress than males, students without a history of severe fever, and students with higher-educated parents. There was no significant difference in distress between rural and urban students, or between Sikh and Hindu students.

## Discussion

The findings of this study suggest that certain

demographic factors may be associated with increased risk of distress among students. Females, students with a history of severe fever, and students with graduate-educated parents may be more vulnerable to distress due to a number of factors. For females, distress may be related to gender roles, societal expectations, and increased exposure to sexual harassment and violence. Students with a history of severe fever may be more likely to experience distress due to the physical and emotional impact of the illness, as well as the stigma



associated with it. Students with graduate-educated parents may be more likely to experience distress due to the high academic expectations placed on them, as well as the pressure to succeed. It is important to note that these findings are based on a small sample size and should be interpreted with caution. More research is needed to confirm these findings and to examine the mechanisms by which these demographic factors may be associated with distress.

### Implications

The findings of this study have a number of implications for practitioners and policymakers. First, it is important to be aware of the increased risk of distress among certain demographic groups of students. This awareness can help practitioners to identify students who may be at risk and to provide them with support. Second, it is important to develop interventions that are tailored to the specific needs of students from different demographic groups. For example, interventions for females may focus on coping with gender roles and societal expectations, while interventions for students with a history of severe fever may focus on managing the physical and emotional impact of the illness. Finally, it is important to advocate for policies that support students from all demographic backgrounds, such as reducing academic pressure and stigma associated with mental illness.

### Conclusion

In conclusion, depression, anxiety and stress have a high detrimental effect to students and society, which can lead to negative outcomes including university dropouts, increased suicidal tendency, relationship and marital problems, impaired ability to work effectively, burnout and also existing problems of health care provision. With that, there is a need for greater attention to the psychological well-being of undergraduate students to improve their quality of life.

### Acknowledgements

We would like to thank undergraduate students for their kind volunteering for the research and also our university, (Lovely Professional University), for the approval of the research.

### References

1. Abdallah AR, Gabr HM (2014) Depression, anxiety and stress among first year medical students in an Egyptian public university.
2. Int Res JMed Med Sci 2:11–19Adewuya AO, Ola BA, Afolabi OO (2006) Validity of the patient health questionnaire (PHQ-9) as a screening tool for depression amongst Nigerian university students.
3. J Affect Disord 96:89–93Ali BS, Rahbar MH, Naeem S, Tareen AL, Gul A, Samad L (2002)Prevalence of and factors associated with anxiety and depression among women in a lower middle class semi-urban community of Karachi, Pakistan.
4. J Pak Med Assoc 52:513–517Altaf A, Khan M, Shah SR, Fatima K, Tunio SA, Hussain M, Khan MA, Shaikh MA, Arshad MH (2015) Socio-demographic pattern of depression in urban settlement of Karachi, Pakistan.
5. J Clin Diagn Res9:9–13Alvi T, Assad F, Ramzan M, Khan FA (2010) Depression, anxiety and their associated factors among medical students
6. Huber, M., Knottnerus, J. A., Green, L., Van Der Horst, H., Jadad, A. R., Kromhout, D., ... & Smid, H. (2011). How should we define health?. *Bmj*, 343-448.
7. Dhakal, B. P., Sweitzer, N. K., Indik, J. H., Acharya, D., & William, P. (2020). SARS-CoV-2 infection and cardiovascular disease: COVID-19 heart. *Heart, lung and Circulation*, 29(7), 973-987.
8. Firth, J., Siddiqi, N., Koyanagi, A. I., Siskind, D., Rosenbaum, S., Galletly, C., ... & Stubbs, B. (2019). The Lancet Psychiatry Commission: a blueprint for protecting physical health in people with mental illness. *The Lancet Psychiatry*, 6(8), 675-712.
9. Teh, C. K., Ngo, C. W., binti Zulkifli, R. A., Vellasamy, R., & Suresh, K. (2015). Depression, anxiety and stress among undergraduate students: A cross sectional study. *Open Journal of Epidemiology*, 5(04), 260.
10. Harikrishnan, U., & Ali, A. (2018). Resilience, psychological distress, and self-esteem among undergraduate students in Kollam District, Kerala. *Journal of Social Work Education and Practice*, 3(4), 27-36.
11. Manap, R., Hamid, S. A., & Ghani, M. A. (2019). Depression, anxiety and stress among undergraduate students. *e-BANGI*, 16, 1-7.
12. Morrison, K. M., Shin, S., Tarnopolsky, M., & Taylor, V. H. (2015). Association of depression & health related quality of life with body composition in children and youth with obesity. *Journal of affective disorders*, 172, 18-23.