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## **Psychological Wellbeing, Anxiety, Stress, Depression and Aggression among College Students**

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### **Abstract**

The transitional character of college life makes college students an especially vulnerable group to stress and other mental health problems. Students must learn to cope with new environment for the first time, continue to excel academically, and acclimate to a new social setting. These stressors sometimes result in anxiety, depression, or occasionally aggressive behavior among themselves. The college years are a crucial time in one's life since psychological well-being is vital for individuals to have a good life. The present study aims to investigate the level of psychological wellbeing, depression, stress, anxiety, and aggression in the light of gender difference. Standardized tools were used to measure psychological well-being, stress, depression, aggression, and anxiety. A sample of 60 college students between the ages of 18 and 25 were used for the study, of which 30 were male and 30 were female. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between stress and aggression. No significant relationship could be found between psychological well-being, depression, anxiety, aggression, and stress, although they were found to be negatively correlated. According to the study, male college students were found to have higher levels of psychological wellbeing than female college students. Thus, it is possible to suggest that increased awareness of mental health issues, which is frequently attained in higher education, leads to a decline in stigma and, in turn, to a minor increase in the prevalence of mental health conditions. One could argue that each educational and social level ought to receive the right awareness and help.

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**Keywords:** Psychological Wellbeing, Aggression, Depression, Stress, Anxiety, College Students

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### **Introduction**

“Give me a child, and I'll shape him into anything.” — B. F. Skinner

When we discuss an adult's psychological wellbeing, we are not only referring to one component; rather, there are numerous factors that are connected to the overall mental health of an adult. College students frequently experience mental health issues, which typically start before they enrol in classes, in the case of pre-matriculation illnesses, are linked to college attrition, and are frequently left untreated. In order to better understand college students' psychological health, this study will also examine their levels of stress, anxiety, sadness, and aggression.

An investigation on the possible relationships between stress, anxiety, and depression was conducted with 374 college students in Steubenville, Ohio. According to the findings, academic success, peer pressure, and post-graduation plans were the top three issues. Transfer students, upperclassmen, and those living off-campus had the highest levels of stress, anxiety, and depression (Beiter et al., 2015). 100 undergraduates participated in the study, which was done by Udhayakumar & Illango (2018) found that the students were feeling "high level" positive wellbeing and "high" levels of anxiety and depression, according to the findings. The correlations between the wellbeing, anxiety, general health, and self-control scores were all significantly positive. Additionally, it was discovered that overall health scores greatly indicated how the students will behave in terms of anxiety, despair, and self-control.

In a study with 483 university students, it was discovered that, respectively, 72.9, 86.3, and 79.3% of them had psychological discomfort, anxiety, and depressive symptoms. Additionally, over half of the group experienced low self-esteem (57.6%), little optimism (56.7%), and low self-efficacy (62.7%). The most significant predictors of stress, according to regression analyses, were life satisfaction, self-esteem, optimism, self-efficacy, and psychological discomfort (Saleh et al., 2017).

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### **Psychological Well-being**

“Psychological Well-being refers to the simple notion of a person's welfare, happiness, advantages, interests, utility, and quality of life” (Burriss et al., 2009). Ryff (1989) has defined psychological wellbeing consists of 6 factors; autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relation with others, purpose in life and self-acceptance.

Greater psychological well-being and less suffering were favourably related with optimism, health values, and religiosity and adversely associated with spirituality and the number of sexual partners, according to a study involving 353 university students. The findings also showed that a variety of protective and risk factors affect university students' psychological health and distress (Burriss et al., 2009). In a study involved 204 college students, researchers observed that students with poor psychological health (such as sadness, anxiety, and stress) may be less likely to interact with one another in class and the results came out as the students who were more sad, nervous, and agitated reported participating in college courses less actively (Carton et al., 2015). According to a series of path studies conducted in a sample of 265 college students revealed that stress entirely mediated the relationship between three aspects of psychological well-being, namely autonomy, environmental mastery, and life purpose, and socially dictated perfectionism Chang (2006).

### ***Depression***

Depression was defined by Chand & Arif (2022) as “depression is a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest.” Another definition by [Bibring & Edward \(1948\)](#) states that “Depression is the emotional expression of a state of ego-helplessness and ego-powerlessness to live up to certain strongly maintained narcissistic aspirations”.

A study revealed that 53% of college students reported having depression since starting their studies, with 9% saying they had thought about suicide in the same time period (Furr et al., 2001). In a study by (Brandy, et al., 2015), the findings showed that 48% of students had clinically significant depressive symptomatology, while 45% of students showed higher than normal levels of stress. There were significant correlations between depression symptoms and social support ( $p < 0.01$ ) and depressive symptoms and stress ( $p < 0.01$ ). Stress levels were correlated with less social support ( $p < 0.01$ ). Loneliness, interpersonal mistrust, and neuroticism were consistently and positively related to depression. Loneliness seems to come before depression, according to two-panel cross-lagged correlational analyses (Rich et al., 1987).

### ***Stress***

According to Selye (1936) stress is a “non-specific responses that be resulted from a variety of different kinds of stimuli”. Stress was also defined by Baum (1990) as a “negative emotional experience accompanied by biochemical, physiological, and behavioural changes directed toward adaptation either by manipulating the situation to alter the stressor or by accommodating its effects”. In a study conducted at Chuangchun University of Science and Technology, 800 students participated. The findings revealed a substantial positive association between college students' work situations and mental stress, as well as a positive correlation between their study environments and mental stress. Economic situations, personal variables, and mental stress all have positive correlations, although there are significant variances across people in each of these categories (Ji et al., 2011). Female college students experienced more academic stress than male college students according to bivariate correlations and multiple regression models, gender, locus of control, and life satisfaction were important predictors of academic stress (Karaman et al., 2019). Although men's stress levels peaked in their sophomore year and then began to decrease, women's levels of stress fell with each grade level. The most often mentioned sources of stress were academic factors, whereas relationships, home, and community concerns also contributed significantly to high levels of stress (Bush et al., 1985).

### ***Anxiety***

According to Khan et al., (2016) “Anxiety is an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts, and physical changes”. Another definition by Foa et al. (2005) states anxiety as, “Anxiety refers to multiple mental and physiological phenomena, including a person's conscious state of worry over a future unwanted event, or fear of an actual situation. Anxiety and fear are closely related.”

In a study by Pisarik et al. (2017), provided a contextual and developmental viewpoint on anxiety about careers that can direct counsellors in the use of therapies for lowering anxiety related to job choice and development. A study by Patterson et al. (2019) pointed to a link between anxiety, participation in group exercise, and peers' active lifestyles. Being a member of a racial or ethnic minority ( $R^2 = .174$ ,  $F = 7.650$ ,  $p < .0001$ ) and having personal networks made up of more people who exercise frequently ( $R^2 = .100$ ,  $p = .025$ ) were related to higher anxiety scores in this sample, whereas group exercise membership and flourishing scores were related to lower anxiety scores. In a study conducted by Gao et al. (2020), significant positive correlations were found between anxiety and introversion. The degree of anxiety among female freshman was also related to their eating patterns, drinking patterns, and academic performance. In the first three years of college, both male and female students experienced modest anxiety on average. In the first and second years, female students scored considerably higher on the anxiety scale than did male students, and there was no discernible gender difference in the mean depression and stress scores of students.

### ***Aggression***

According to Baron & Richardson (1994) aggression is define as “behaviour that is intended to harm another individual who does not wish to be harmed”. Aggression was defined as “intentionally harming another person's social relationships, for instance, by gossiping about another person, excluding others from our friendship, or giving others the (silent treatment)” (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995).

In a study by Loudin et al. (2003), males, pupils who displayed more overt aggression, and people who expressed a larger fear of criticism exhibited relational aggression more than their peers did. Students who took more perspectives than their counterparts reported using less relationship aggression. Lower levels of empathic care were linked to higher levels of relational aggressiveness for males exclusively, according to an interaction between gender and empathetic regard. According to a study conducted by Lopez et al., (1986), with 204 college students, the results found that high-angry students

endorsed illogical views to a much greater extent than low-angry students, assessed typical adverse college situations as significantly more frequent and severe elicitors of anger, and were significantly more likely to express and suppress anger.

In a study with (N-160) it was found that the link between internalising symptoms of depression and social anxiety and college students' ER abilities was fully mediated by hostility/anger, but not by generalised anxiety symptoms, the study found (GAD) (Asberg, 2013).

### *Purpose*

The purpose of this study is to investigate the psychological well-being, Depression, Aggression, Anxiety and Stress among male and female college students of Chandigarh, belonging to the ages of 18-25 years.

### *Hypothesis*

There will be no significant relationship between psychological well-being and Aggression, Anxiety and Stress and Depression among male and female college students.

## **Method**

### *Sample*

The sample consisted of a total of 60 college going students (N=60) with (Males 30 and Females 30) from Chandigarh in the age 18-25 years.

### *Measures*

The following standardized tests were used:

**Psychological wellbeing (PWB)** developed by Ryff (1989) is an 18 item questionnaire to assess psychological functioning along with 7 point Likert scale with responses ranging from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree" across six psychological domains: self-determination and independence (autonomy), selection or creation of contexts that suit personal needs and values (environmental mastery), openness to new experiences and opportunities for self-improvement (personal growth), having warm, satisfying, trusting relationships (positive relations with others), finding meaning in one's current and past activities (purpose in life), and having positive attitudes toward the self and one's past (self-acceptance).

**DASS-21 (Depression, Anxiety and Stress)** designed by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995) is a self-report questionnaire consisting of 21 items, 7-point Likert scale with response options ranging from 'Did not apply to me at all' to 'Applied to me very much or most of the time'.

**Buss and Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPAQ)** designed by Buss and Perry (1992) is a 29-item in which participants rank certain statements along a 5-point Likert scale that ranges from "extremely uncharacteristic of me" to "extremely characteristic of me". It measures four factors: physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, and hostility.

### *Procedure*

The participants received the questionnaire via Google forms and were informed about the purpose of the research. Standardized psychological tests were administered on the participants. Each participant was thanked for their participation and was assured of the confidentiality of their responses.

## **Analysis of Data**

### *Results*

N, Mean and Standard Deviation is shown in table 1, while table 2 depicts the correlation between psychological well-being, depression, anxiety, stress, and aggression. Table 3 highlights the effects of psychological well-being, depression, anxiety, stress, and aggression.

**Table 1 shows N, Mean and Standard Deviations of all the variables**

|                    | Psychological well being | Depression | Anxiety | Stress | Aggression |
|--------------------|--------------------------|------------|---------|--------|------------|
| N                  | 60                       | 60         | 60      | 60     | 60         |
| Mean               | 89.4                     | 15.4       | 14.6    | 14.2   | 80.0       |
| Standard deviation | 12.9                     | 11.8       | 11.4    | 10.5   | 18.8       |

**Table 1 shows N, Mean and Standard Deviations of all the variables**

| Psychological well being | Depression | Anxiety | Stress | Aggression |
|--------------------------|------------|---------|--------|------------|
|--------------------------|------------|---------|--------|------------|

**Table 2 shows correlation of all variables**

|                          | Psychological well being | Depression | Anxiety       | Stress  | Aggression |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|------------|---------------|---------|------------|
| Psychological well being | —                        |            |               |         |            |
| Depression               | -0.162                   | —          |               |         |            |
| Anxiety                  | 0.038                    | 0.792 ***  | —             |         |            |
| Stress                   | -0.093                   | 0.788 ***  | 0.831 **<br>* | —       |            |
| Aggression               | -0.123                   | 0.178      | 0.240         | 0.285 * | —          |

Note. \*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*\*  $p < .001$

**Table 3 show Independent T- test**

|                         | Group  | N  | Mean | Median | SD   | T- stats |
|-------------------------|--------|----|------|--------|------|----------|
| Psychological Wellbeing | Female | 30 | 88.8 | 90.0   | 13.7 | 0.722    |
|                         | Male   | 30 | 90.0 | 89.5   | 12.2 |          |
| Depression              | Female | 30 | 17.1 | 16.0   | 11.8 | 0.267    |
|                         | Male   | 30 | 13.7 | 13.0   | 11.7 |          |
| Anxiety                 | Female | 30 | 16.1 | 14.0   | 11.9 | 0.336    |
|                         | Male   | 30 | 13.2 | 11.0   | 10.9 |          |
| Stress                  | Female | 30 | 14.3 | 14.0   | 10.6 | 0.961    |
|                         | Male   | 30 | 14.1 | 12.0   | 10.6 |          |
| Aggression              | Female | 30 | 83.4 | 84.5   | 20.0 | 0.168    |
|                         | Male   | 30 | 76.7 | 79.0   | 17.3 |          |

## Discussion of Results

The results found a negative but non-significant relationship between Psychological Well-Being, Aggression, Anxiety and Stress and Depression, which supports our hypothesis that there will be no significant relationship between Psychological Well-Being and Aggression, Anxiety and Stress and Depression among male and female college students. Further, the result found out that there is a significant positive correlation between Depression and Anxiety ( $r=0.792$ ,  $p<.001$ ) as well as between Depression and Stress ( $r= 0.788$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Furthermore, Anxiety and Stress also bear a significant positive correlation ( $r= 0.831$ ,  $p<.001$ ). About stress and aggression, a significant positive correlation has been found ( $r= 0.285$ ,  $p< .05$ ). From the study we can observe that the male population were higher at psychological wellbeing than females ( $t=0.722$ ), it was also found that the females were higher on Depression ( $t=0.267$ ), Anxiety ( $t=0.336$ ) and Aggression( $t=0.168$ ) as compared to males among the studied population. No significant difference was found between males and females when it came to Stress ( $t=0.961$ ).

It found in a study that Psychological Well-being Inventory (SPWB)—autonomy (AU), environment mastery (EM), personal growth (PG), positive relationships with others (PR), purpose in life (PL), and self-acceptance (SA)—were moderately negatively correlated with depression and anxiety as measured by the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS), (Liu, Shono, & Kitamura, 2009). Another study on Bangladeshi University it was found that a moderate to poor mental health status was present in 53% of participants, who also experienced depressive symptoms and moderate to severe anxiety in 40% of participants (Faisal et al., 2021). According to research study by Dalky & Gharaibeh (2018), college students experience significant levels of stress, severe levels of anxiety, and moderate levels of depression.

## Conclusion

The study investigated the relationship between gender disparities and psychological health, depression, stress, anxiety, and aggression. Standardized tools of PWB, DASS-21, BPAQ was assessed to measure stress, depression, aggression, and anxiety were all assessed. Thirty men and thirty women from Chandigarh who were enrolled in college (N=60) and were between the ages of 18 and 25 took part in the study. The results showed that depression and stress, as well as depression and anxiety, have a strong positive connection. Stress and anxiety were also strongly and positively correlated with one another. Stress and aggression have been linked in a significant favorable way. A negative correlation between psychological well-being and aggression, anxiety, stress and depression was found although this correlation was not statistically significant which aligned with our hypothesis. According to the study, men in the population had higher levels of psychological health than women had. It was also discovered that among the population under study, women had higher levels of depression, anxiety, and aggression. Stress levels were found to be similar in both males and females.

Depression, anxiety, and stress are prevalent mental health issues among college students. One explanation could be the increased level of responsibilities and academically competitive environment of college life and social life issues that comes with college enrollment. In order to evaluate a decrease in the severity of depression, anxiety, or stress, as well as Aggression in the students, it is important to educate them about the realities of mental health-related disorders as well as provide right mental health support in colleges. Students' experiences with mental health issues must be examined, along with possible solutions for addressing the rise in such needs on college campuses.

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