

Gender-Based Analysis of Psychological Factors among College Students

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ABSTRACT

The study was calculated to be a gender-focused investigation of psychological factors between college students. The goals of the study were to (i) explore the gender-based analysis of psychological factors among college students. (ii) To differentiate the gender-focused analysis of psychological characteristics among college learners. The sample of the research was 20 boys and 20 girls' students. The participants consisted of 40 boys and girls Students. A simple random-sampling strategy was applied for the determination of participants. The nature of the study was quantitative and descriptive approach was applied. A survey was conducted to gather the data from the participants of the study. As, survey was implemented, and for this purpose, a questionnaire was developed for collection the data regarding psychological aspects respectively. An adapted questionnaire, validity of tool was checked repeatedly by the researcher. Mean used to identify gender-based analysis of psychological factors among college students. T-test was implied to differentiate the gender-focused analysis of psychological factors among college students. It was concluded that there is exists a significance difference among psychological factors affecting boys/male and girls/female college learners. From the study and interrelated conclusions, the researcher recommends further research in the area of sector-oriented analysis of psychological factor among college students.

Keywords: Analysis, psychological factors, male, female, college students

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the concept of education from a psychological perspective is essential in elucidating how psychological issues impacts students' academic performance. There are many psychological factors identified by different researchers. This study delves into the intricate relationship between psychological factors, specifically sadness/depression, worry/anxiety, tension/stress and academic performance. Pekrun, and Linnen brink-Garcia, (2014) elaborated that emotions and social interactions significantly impact learning in which "positive emotions" comprising interest and enjoyment may increase engagement and retention, while "negative emotions" including "worry/anxiety and phobia/fear" can hinderearning. Further, Miele, (2009) addresses how various motivational and emotional factors, including interest, enjoyment, anxiety, and fear, influence student engagement and academic performance, also highlights the significance of social factors in shaping the learning environment. Ozcan, (2021) examines the key elements that influence students' academic performance from the perspective of teachers and identifies several factors, including home environment which was considered a support and resources available at home, including parental involvement, play a significant role. However, the recent research of Dar, and Lone, (2023) identified that mental health

issues, particularly depression, stress, and anxiety affect the academic achievement of learners at the level of higher secondary.

According to Cassady, and Johnson, (2002) high levels of worry/anxiety and stress may negatively affect on centration, memory, and overall academic performance. Chronic stress impairs cognitive function, leading to lower achievement and College students often experience significant stress ,making it essential to address these emotional factors to improve academic outcomes. Anxiety and depression have been established to have a substantial non-positive correlation with academic achievement as Khesht-Masjedi, Shokrgozar, Abdollahi, Habibi, Asghari, Of oghi and Pazhooman, (2019)concluded that learners with higher levels of worry/anxiety and depression have the tendency to exhibit lower grades andpoorer academic performance which was also endorsed by Dar,andLone, (2023). Depressive symptoms such as fatigue, lack of motivation and difficulty concentrating can directly intervene with a learners' capacity to execute better academically (Katherine,2017).McCurdy, Scozzafava, Bradley, Matlow, Weems and Carrion,(2023)concluded that anxiety can lead to avoidant behaviours during school tasks and impair focus, which affects overall academic performance and anxiety can lead to avoidant behaviours during school tasks and impair focus, which affects overall academic achievement. Beharu, (2018) investigated the numerous psychological aspects that influence the academic achievement of learners at university level and highlighted that anxiety negatively impacts academic performance. The researcher concluded that students who exhibit higher levels of "anxiety" during exams usually struggle to recall information and perform under pressure, leading to lower grades. It was also concluded that learners with higher "self-efficacy" have greater tendency to plan goals, persist through challenges, and achieve better academic achievement. Therefore, the research is emphasized on exploring the effect of various psychological factors among boys/male and girls/female learners enrolled in college.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The mental well-being of college students has become an area of growing concern, with increasing numbers experiencing stress, anxiety, and other psychological challenges. However, there is a lack of comprehensive understanding regarding how these psychological factors differ between male and female students. Gender may influence how individuals perceive, manage, and express their psychological experiences, yet many existing support systems and interventions do not account for these differences. This research aims to examine the psychological aspects disturbing college learners, with a focus on identifying gender-based variations. By doing so, the research seeks to inform more tailored mental health interventions that can better address the distinct needs of male and female students, improving overall student well-being.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted by bearing the objectives given below:

- (i) To find out the gender-based analysis of psychological factors among college students.
- (ii) To demonstrate the comparability of the gender-oriented analysis of psychological factors among college students.

HYPOTHESIS

H₀₁: There is no significant difference of psychological factors regarding gender at college level.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Muhammed, Terna and Saanyol, (2018)classified depression as psychological illness that grounds the sensitivity of hopelessness/sadness, overwhelming disappointment, lack of excitement about anything and this may exhibit a non-positive influence on an individuals' self and long-lasting sadness/depression guides to terrible consequences for the person. Wagner, Wagner, Kolanisi, Makuapane, Masango, and Gomez-Olive, (2022)in across-sectional study explores the occurrence of sadness/depression between first-year students and its influence on academic achievement and found that depression symptoms have a substantial non-positive affect on academic achievement between undergraduate learners of first-year ata university situated in South Africawith10% of participants displayed symptoms of severe sadness/depression. Hopelessness/depression is a condition in which an individual feels unsatisfied/frustrated, unhappy/sad, and desperate/hopeless, dejected, and tends

to have lack of interest towards life (Trangle et al., 2016). Kazmi and Muazzam, (2020) explained that dejected/depressed people may feel hopeless, empty, sad, worried, anxious, worthless, helpless, guilty, irritable, restless, and hurt and also concluded that sadness/depression between grown-ups is a prevalent health issue and a growing communal phenomenon as well. Greenberg, (2017) elaborated that hopelessness/depression is perceived as a down phase of mind and sensation of complete desperateness/hopelessness and vulnerable/helplessness. Tomko, et al., (2015) also endorsed, along with these, a dejected /unhappy/depressed person has also tendency to exhibit episodes of stress/anxiety, annoyance/anger, violence, lack of cognitive focus and societal isolation. Ali, Dhirani and Fawad, (2024) discussed that depression affects cognitive functions such as memory, attention, and concentration. These impairments make it difficult for students to absorb and retain information, leading to poor academic performance.

Khesht-Masjedi, et al., (2019) show that girls generally report complex levels of nervousness/anxiety and depression equated to males/boys, which can affect their academic outcomes differently. However, girls might still perform better academically, potentially due to stronger coping mechanisms or societal expectations. Somatic complaints are pervasive indicators of depression that exhibit psychological depression through physical symptoms that is negatively correlated with academic achievement (Kurtovic, Vrdoljak, and Hirnstein, 2021). Positive affect is inversely related to depression (Werner-Seidler, Banks, Dunn, and Moulds, 2013) as greater levels of positive affect are generally correlated with minor levels of depressive symptoms. Individuals experiencing greater levels of positive sentiments are less likely to suffer from depression. Nickerson, Diener, & Schwarz, (2011) studied the relationship among positive affect (cheerfulness) and various sub-variables relevant to college performance among undergraduate learners at twenty-one academically chosen universities and colleges in the USA and found that “positive affect” is usually positively associated with the learners’ self-rated academic capabilities, self-predicted probabilities of numerous positive college results, and self-reported subjective college outcomes.

Carmona Halty, Salanova, Llorens, and Schaufeli, (2021) investigated how “psychological capital” intercedes the association among study-oriented positive sentiments and academic achievement. The researcher concluded that psychological capital, which comprises efficacy, hope, optimism, and resilience is a key psychological resource that can influence students’ academic outcomes. Positive emotions include feelings such as joy, interest, and enthusiasm that students experience during their studies and these positive emotions are known to enhance motivation and engagement in academic tasks. Ali, Dhirani and Fawad, (2024) examined this relationship among undergraduate students at the Institute of Business Management in Karachi, Pakistan, using the Beck depression inventory-II and students’ CGPA. Their findings revealed that depression significantly lowers academic performance with female students outperforming males despite similar depression levels. This aligns with previous studies, such as those by Hyse nbegasi, Hass and Rowland, (2005) and that of Mahmoud, Staten, Hall, and Lennie, (2012), which also found depression to detract from academic productivity by impairing cognitive functions like concentration and memory. These consistent findings across diverse contexts highlight the need for institutional support systems, including regular mental health screenings and counselling services, to alleviate the adverse influences of depression on learners’ academic success and overall well-being.

Umisara, Yono and Augustine, (2024) examines the significant psychological challenges that contribute to develop anxiety among university students and identifies three primary factors: low self-confidence, a disliking and apprehension related to evaluation. Various researchers work on psychological factors and discussed anxiety as psychological factor. Mendoza, Trujillo-Guiza, Forero, and Baez, (2024) investigate the predictors of anxiety symptoms in adults. It identifies mental and physical health as the most significant predictors of anxiety severity, with poorer health strongly correlating with higher anxiety levels. The research also highlights that stressful life events, while associated with anxiety, play a less robust role compared to health indices. Additionally, cognitive factors such as executive functions and social cognition were studied, revealing that while executive function impairments correlate with higher anxiety, social cognition shows only a weak association. Mendoza, et al., (2024) underscores that mental and physical health are crucial in understanding and managing anxiety symptoms, particularly in preventing the escalation of sub

threshold anxiety to more severe forms. According to Beharu, (2018) these psychological factors were known to have a direct influence on learners' academic outcomes, with self-efficacy being positively correlated with better performance and lower anxiety. Alvi, Assad, Ramzan and Khan, (2010) conducted research study at Wah Medical College and examined the occurrence of worry/anxiety and tension/depression between medical learners, revealing that nearly half of the students experienced anxiety, while overdone third were affected by depression while many students suffered from both conditions simultaneously.

Ayub and Lodhi, (2016) investigated the psychological barriers that impede verbal communication capabilities among learners at the graduate level in Bahawalpur, Pakistan. The research identifies key psychological aspects comprising worry/anxiety, non-positive self-esteem, and personality complexes that significantly affect students' ability to speak English fluently. The results of the research reveal that a large percentage of learners' experience anxiety due to fear of negative evaluation, comparison with peers, and an ingrained belief in their inadequacy in speaking English. Nyland, Ybarra, Sammut, Rienecker, and Kameda, (2000) explore how psychological category and worry/anxiety sensitivity interact to affect academic achievement. The research examines the combined effects of individuals' psychological types such as introversion versus extraversion and their sensitivity to anxiety on their academic performance. The study finds that both psychological type and anxiety sensitivity play significant roles in determining academic success. For example, students with high anxiety sensitivity who also have certain psychological traits may experience greater challenges in academic settings. The authors suggest that understanding these interactions can help in developing tailored interventions to support students' academic achievement by addressing their psychological type and anxiety sensitivity. Bisson, (2017) investigates how worry/anxiety and sadness/depression affect college students' academic achievement and examines the influence of "social support" as a moderating factor. The study finds that both anxiety and depression non-positively affect academic achievement, heading to minor grades and abridged academic engagement.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study was quantitative in nature and follows descriptive approach. According to Slevitch, (2011) the quantitative study is considered as a systematic inquiry of any phenomena by the gathering numerical data and the use of statistical, computer approaches and mathematical. The survey method was employed to fulfil the study objectives, which was the gender-oriented investigation of the "psychological factors" at college level students. The variable of the research was psychological factor which was further divided into three sub-variables. A survey was used to collect the data. The descriptive statistics comprising as mean and inferential statistics including t-test was used to compare the groups in order to find out the gender-oriented investigation of psychological factors at college level students.

SAMPLE OF STUDY

The population of study comprised of male and female students of college. There were 40 male and female students in total in which 20 were female and 20 were male students.

INSTRUMENTATION

The research was carried out by administering a survey questionnaire. The "questionnaire" was comprised of four sections in which first part was of demographic data. Second part of the "questionnaire" was comprised of psychological factor in which the statements regarding depression was addressed. The third part of the "questionnaire" was comprised of statements regarding anxiety. However, the fourth section of the questionnaire was composed of statements regarding stress. The overall questionnaire was of 45 items addressing the psychological factors, in which 20 items were of depression, 15 were of anxiety and 15 were of stress. The instrument was initially sent to the experts for validation purpose, and the internal consistency was measured to address the reliability.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics of Psychological Factors

Variables	Sub-variables	No. of Items	Mean	Overall Mean
Depression	Comprised Depressed Affect	5	2.802	3.005
	Somatic Complaints	5	3.042	
	Positive Affect	5	2.860	
	Interpersonal Activity	5	3.316	
Anxiety	Cognitive Anxiety	5	2.758	2.991
	Physiological Anxiety	5	3.102	
	Perceived Control	5	3.114	
Stress	Acute Stress	5	2.762	2.894
	Episodic Stress	5	2.944	
	Chronic Stress	5	2.978	

Table 1 shows that the overall mean for depression is 3.005, suggesting that the participants exhibit moderate levels of depressive symptoms, with interpersonal activity scoring the highest, indicating a relatively higher engagement in interpersonal interactions, despite depressive feelings. The overall mean for anxiety is 2.991, showing moderate anxiety levels, with perceived control having the highest score, which may suggest that participants feel a moderate degree of control over their anxious thoughts and reactions. The overall mean for stress is 2.894, indicating a moderate level of stress, with chronic stress showing the highest score, possibly pointing to ongoing, long-term stress in the participants' lives. Across all variables (Depression, Anxiety, and Stress), the mean values suggest moderate levels of these psychological factors, with Interpersonal Activity (3.316), Perceived Control (3.114), and Chronic Stress (2.978) standing out as the highest scores within their respective categories. This suggests that, although participants experience moderate levels of sadness/depression, worry/anxiety, and tension/stress, they tend to maintain interpersonal connections and perceive some level of control over their anxiety. Chronic stress, however, may be an area of concern, indicating prolonged stress exposure. This analysis is gender-based, and further comparison or breakdown by gender could reveal specific trends and differences in how these psychological factors manifest across genders.

Table 2
T-test Statistics for the Psychological Factors

Gender	Mean	Df	T	Sig
Male	154.65	38	2.032	0.049
Female	143.20			

Table 2 presents a comparison of mean scores for psychological factors between male and female groups. Males have a higher mean score of 154.65 compared to females, who have a mean of 143.20. The degrees of freedom (df) for both groups are 38. A "t-test" was conducted to demonstrate if this variance in psychological factors between gender is statistically significant, resulting in a t-value of 2.032 with a significance level (p-value) of 0.049. Since the "p-value is less than 0.05", it can conclude that there exists a "statistically significant difference" in mean scores of psychological factors between males and females.

Table 3
T-Statistics for Mean Score of Depression among Gender

Gender	Mean	Df	T	Sig
Male	62.55			

Female	58.60	38	1.877	0.068
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Table 3 compares the mean scores of boys/males and girls/female groups. Boys have a “mean score of 62.55”, while girls have a “mean score” of 58.60. The degrees of freedom (df) for the test are 38. A t-test was conducted, yielding a “t-value” of 1.877 with a significance level (p-value) of 0.068. Since, the “p-value is greater than 0.05”, the “difference in mean scores between boys and girls” for psychological factors in terms of depression is not statistically significant.

Table 4
T-Statistics for Mean Score of Anxiety among Gender

Gender	Mean	Df	T	Sig
Male	46.05	38	1.119	0.270
Female	43.50			

Table 4 shows a comparison of “mean scores” between boy and girls groups. Boys/males have a mean score of 46.05, while girls/females have a mean score of 43.50. The degrees of freedom (df) are 38, and the t-test yielded a t-value of 1.119 with a significance level (p-value) of 0.270. Since the p-value is above 0.05, there is no statistically significant difference between the mean scores of males and females for psychological factors in terms of anxiety, indicating that the “observed difference is likely due to random variation rather than a meaningful effect”.

Table 5
T-Statistics for Mean Score of Stress among Gender

Gender	Mean	Df	T	Sig
Male	46.05	38	2.336	0.025
Female	41.10			

Table 5 compares mean scores between boys/male and girls/female groups, where boys/males have a mean score of 46.05 and girls/females have a lower mean score of 41.10. The degrees of freedom (df) are 38. A t-test was conducted, yielding a “t-value” of 2.336 and a significance level “(p-value)” of 0.025. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, this result is “statistically significant”, indicating a meaningful variance between the mean scores of males and females for psychological factors in terms of stress. Thus, “the difference in scores between the two groups” is due to meaningful effect.

DISCUSSION

The analysis indicates notable gender differences, with males scoring higher in specific psychological dimensions compared to females. This is consistent with studies like Fawzy, and Hamed,(2017), which suggest that gender differences in psychological experiences are more prevalent among college and university level students and also, it was also found that depression and stress were strongly correlated. The result of this study aligned with it. The study by Othman, Ahmad, El-Morr, and Ritvo,(2019) indicates the contextual factors involved behind the psychological factors and found the severe level of tension/stress among learners which also aligns the finding of the study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above findings, there are few “recommendations” suggesting targeted interventions. It is important to develop gender-specific mental health programs that address the unique psychological needs of males and females. Situational contentions should be addressed immediately and plans to resolve the issues may help to better mitigate the negative effect of psychological factors.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the analysis of the data reveals significant insights into the psychological factors affecting individuals based on gender. The findings indicate that males tend to experience psychological factors differently compared to females. Additionally, stress influences significantly in shaping overall mental health. These results underscore the requirement for targeted “interventions and support systems” that cope with these gender-specific challenges, eventually encouraging a healthier work setting for students.

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