

Perceived Stress Among Undergraduate Students Regarding Mode of Examination During Covid-19

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ABSTRACT

The spread of the novel coronavirus(covid-19) around the globe has changed our lives in a very drastic way. From infants to the older generation, every age group, from students to the working-class everyone is hit hard with this new threat that emerges all around the globe. The student population was highly stressed about their education and career and their examination in this time of uncertainty. The present study aimed at finding out the correlation between stress levels during Covid-19 Pandemic among Undergraduate Students of Assam regarding offline mode of examination. **Methods and Materials:** Descriptive-correlational research design was used for conducting the present study. The study was conducted among undergraduate students of Assam in studying various colleges in various streams. The population of the study includes all the final year undergraduate students studying in various government and private colleges of Assam. A total of 300 college students, 150 male, 150 females were selected from various randomly selected colleges. In the present study, simple random sampling has been used to collect the required data. A Self-structured Questionnaire prepared by researchers of the present study was used to collect the data. There are 30 closed-ended questions were included in the questionnaire. **Results:** Study findings showed that there is a significant positive correlation between stress level and mode of examination among undergraduate students during Covid-19 Pandemic (<0.05), study findings also showed that there is no significant difference between male and female student's stress level regarding mode of examination. **Conclusion:** The finding of the study indicated that there is a significant positive correlation between stress level and mode of examination among undergraduate students during the Covid-19 Pandemic. study findings also showed that there is no significant difference between male and female student's stress levels regarding the mode of examination. Not having accurate information and guidance from government and university and feeling of uncertainty this pandemic brings student population is highly affected on an emotional and mental level and the discussion of colleges to conduct the exams in offline mode and more specifically conducting important exams in this hard time give the majority of undergraduate student's high level of stress.

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The spread of the novel coronavirus(covid-19) around the globe has changed our lives in a very drastic way. This pandemic brings a lot of negative aspects which changes the way we live very rapidly, and humans all around the world were left with no choice other than to live with this new normal. From infants to the older generation, every age group, from students to the working-class everyone is hit hard with this new threat that emerges all around the globe. Due to the covid-19 pandemic, every country in the world started locking down everything, hotels, restaurants, jobs, educational institutes to prevent the spreading of the virus. Many people lost their lives, jobs, earning sources. With this lockdown, all the educational institute change their way of teaching from offline to online in a very short period. Lack of preparedness, sources, and experience of online teaching and learning started causing lots of stress, anxiety to the students as well as teachers everywhere. University students have been additionally affected by a sudden move to online learning, the closure of campuses, and dramatic societal changes that have upended their experiences of higher education. Ihm et al., 2021.

The nature of stress caused by this pandemic somehow different because no one was prepared for such type of environment. Generally, stress is a physical and mental reaction to any event that occurred around the individual. It is a feeling of physical and emotional tension, which may cause feelings of frustration, irritation, nervousness, anger, etc. Stress may be caused due to internal and external factors. COVID-19 pandemic is such an external factor which leads several other external and internal factors and cause positive or negative experience based on cognitive and emotional factors (Rahe and Arthur,1978). Further, Richard Lazarus developed the transactional theory of stress and coping (TTSC) (Lazarus,1966; Lazarus and Folkman,1984), which present stress as a product of a transaction between a person including multiple systems: cognitive, physiological, affective, psychological, neurological) and his or her complex environment. Accordingly, Mechanic (1978) stated that whether a stressor is experienced as discomforting is influenced by a variety of personal and contextual factors including capacities, skills and abilities, constraints, resources, and norms. To cope up with stress, the individual adopts his/her strategy but in this unwanted situation, all individuals fail and suffer a lot especially in the educational environment.

The whole education system needs to change its nature completely to deal with this situation and run accordingly, learning and teaching mode changes from physical mode to online virtual mode. With this new environment with very little experience, students were asked to change and adapt their way of learning, attending class, giving exams, in a very short period. Attending online class, giving exams with laptops and mobile devices from home environment with new rules and regulation, with various difficulties like lack of knowledge of using technology, proper network, availability of resources has quickly become the core cause of stress among students. Many were not confident and comfortable to give their much important exams, which were determining factors for their future in this manner. Students started feeling anxious, stress, and panic about this situation which affected their mental health as well. The focus of this research is to find out the stress among several Universities of Assam final year students who were asked to give their exam during this pandemic through online and offline (anyone can choose) mode.

The COVID-19 considered the biggest global crises of the century and the greatest challenge that mankind has faced since the World War. With this unwelcomed threat, humankind faces

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lots of problems and was left with only one choice to bring changes to the behavioral, social pattern. Feelings of unpreparedness, the uncertainty of future, fear, loneliness, boredom, financial loss of the family, loss of job and its security, the safety of own and loved ones, lack of accurate information, necessities like food, water in many areas, especially poor places bring psychological stress among people not only in India but also all over the world. It was observed that college-going students are one of the vulnerable groups in this regard. Because of the sudden declaration of lockdown and uncertainty of the whole academic phenomena they fail to cope up themselves. College students are experiencing moderate to the high level of stress in the context of the covid-19 pandemic situation and preventive and protective measures should be taken by the authority figures to address these issues. Bijulakshmi et al, 2020. Due to sudden lockdown none of the education bodies around the world got a proper time to prepare a proper plan for online education and students were also not prepared to take online classes. This results in creating stress in students. College student's mental health has been a major rising concern with a significant number of students experiencing high stress and anxiety.

A sudden change in learning and teaching causes lots of stress in educational bodies in every part of the globe. With the uncertainty and unpreparedness, the academic authorities and decision-makers sometimes fail to make clear-cut decisions regarding a new way of teaching, rules, and regulations, and more importantly, reopening of educational institutions well as the conduct of the examination. Students and academics have been through drastic changes in education due to the COVID-19 crisis. As a result, students start to worry about these changes in their education styles and their impact on their academic performances. Alsaady et al, 2020. With very less information and unstable decisions, students started feeling anxious, stressed, and start panicking.

COVID-19 (Coronavirus) has affected human life in a very drastic way and is negatively affected the global economy. This pandemic has affected millions of peoples, who are either sick or died due to the spread of this virus. COVID-19 being a new viral disease affecting the world for the first time, vaccines are not yet available in the medical science. This virus is spreading exponentially region-wise. Countries are banning people to step outside of their home and restricted mass-gathering to break the exponential curve. Many countries imposed strict lockdown to control the spread of this highly communicable disease. COVID-19 has impacted our day-to-day life (health, social, and economy), businesses, disrupted the world in every area. This virus creates significant knock-on effects on the daily life of citizens all around the world as well as on the global economy. Rehman, U., 2021.

Research revealed that lots of studies have been taken place after the lockdown on people's mental health, more specifically, on stress among students in every corner. There was very little, or no research that took place in the state of Assam in general and undergraduate students of the state. There were lots of colleges, universities, higher education institutes University all around the state. This research paper specifically focuses on the Sixth Semester Undergraduate Students of several Universities of Assam who appeared in the B.A/B.Sc. /B. Com Examination-2021 concerning their feelings about this new normal. How they were dealing with stress about their academics and examinations taking place.

Statement of the Problem: To observe the stress level during Covid-19 Pandemic among Undergraduate Students of Assam regarding mode of examination.

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Objectives of the Study:

- To find out stress among undergraduate students during Covid-19 Pandemic among Undergraduate Students of Assam.
- To observe the stress during Covid-19 Pandemic among Undergraduate Students of Assam regarding mode of examination.
- To compare the stress level. during Covid-19 Pandemic between male and female Undergraduate Students of Assam.

Hypothesis

- There is no significant relationship between mode of examination and stress level among undergraduate students.
- There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate student's stress levels.

METHODS AND MATERIAL

Method: the study was conducted in the state of Assam, India. The descriptive-correlational method was used in the present study.

Population: All the students appeared in BA/BSc/B.Com. 6th Semester Examination 2020 in the various colleges of Assam was included as the population of the study.

Sample and Sampling Procedure: A total of 300 students were selected as the sample of the study. The random sampling method was used to collect the data. The sample was selected randomly studying in various colleges of Assam.

Tools: A Self-structured Questionnaire was used to collect the data. The different dimensions of the Questionnaire were Theory, Practical, Institutional support in Learning (offline & online), Availability of sources for online learning, Governmental Notification, Uncertainty for future, Absence of f2f interaction, Impact of Media, Collaboration among agencies about their different SOP, Home environment and Mode of examination. There are 30 closed-ended questions were included in the questionnaire. The validity of the questionnaire was established by the opinion of the experts in the concerned field.

The procedure of Data Collection: Online mode of data collection was used to collect the required data. Data were collected through Google form, WhatsApp, and e-mail.

Analysis and Interpretation: In the present study, descriptive statistics were implied using the frequencies option and within that Mean and Standard deviation were observed. Descriptive statistics help describe and understand the features of the sample data. To measure the correlation between mode of examination and stress level among male and female undergraduate students Pearson correlation method was used. To measure the difference between the stress level of male and female undergraduate students t-test has been used.

RESULTS

Table 1- Frequency and percentage distribution of Gender (N=300)

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	150	50.0
Female	150	50.0
Total	300	100.0

Figure-1. Bar diagram of the frequency distribution of Gender.

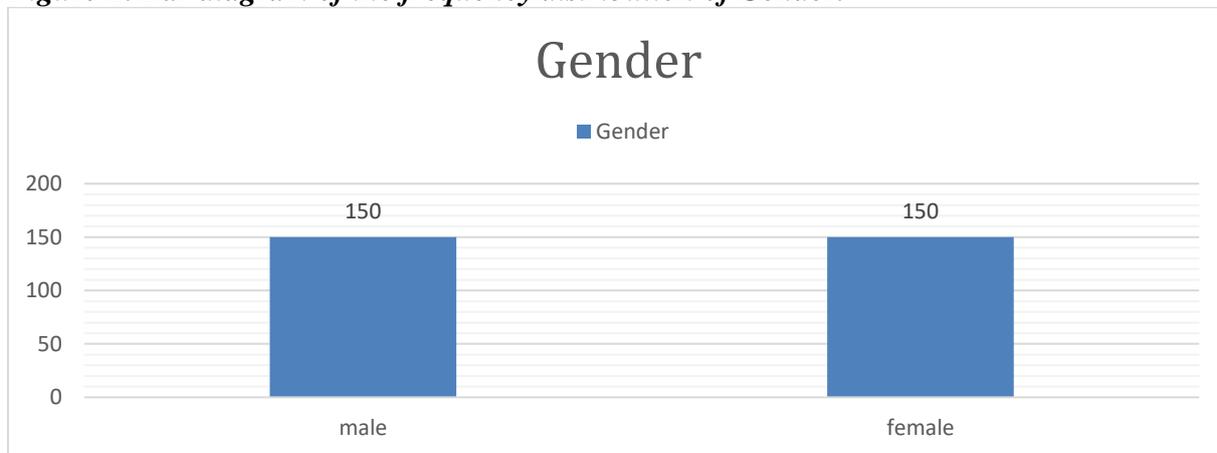


Table 1 Indicate that there is an equal number of male and female undergraduate students in the present study sample. Out of 300 total samples, 150 were male undergraduate students and 150 were female undergraduate students.

Table 2- Descriptive statistics of given variables (N=300)

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Stress Level	300	3.99	1.188
Mode of exam	300	1.42	.494
Gender	300	1.50	.501

The above table shows the Descriptive statistics of all the variables of the present study. The data of the present study, it is indicating that there is a high level of stress among undergraduate students of Assam with a mean value of 3.99. and present study also shows that undergraduate students of this study prefer to give online examination rather than offline examination, with a mean value of 1.42, where 1 is coded as offline mode of examination and 2 is coded as an online mode of examination.

Table 3-: Correlation Between mode of examination and undergraduate student stress level (N=300)

		Stress Level	Mode of exam
Stress Level	Pearson Correlation	1	.121*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.037
	N	300	300
Mode of exam	Pearson Correlation	.121*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.037	
	N	300	300

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Analyzing both the variable mode of final examination and stress level among undergraduate students using the Pearson correlation method it is found out that there is a significant correlation between the two variables at the 0.05 level. Indicating that there is a significant positive correlation between the mode of final examination and stress level among undergraduate students hence the null hypothesis created by researchers was rejected that there is no significant correlation between mode of final examination and stress level among undergraduate students.

To study the difference between male and female stress level t-test has been used to detect the difference between both the gender.

Table 4-: t-test between male and female undergraduate student's stress levels.

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Stress Level	Female	150	3.93	.949	.077
	Male	150	3.98	1.052	.086

In the above table Mean, SD of male and female undergraduate student's stress levels was presented by using an independent sample t-test. female participant's Mean value of the stress level was 3.93, SD was .949. The male participant's Mean value of the stress level was 3.98, SD was 1.052.

Table 5-: Independent sample t-test.

		Levine's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means							
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
										Lower	Upper
Stress Level	Equal variances assumed	.789	.375	-.461	298	.645	-.053	.116		-.281	.174
	Equal variances not assumed			-.461	294.885	.645	-.053	.116		-.281	.174

Levine's test was used to test equality variance. F value was .789 and a significant value of .375. The mean difference between the two genders was -.053 indicating that there is no difference between female and male undergraduate student's stress levels. Hence accepting the null hypothesis created by researchers that there is no difference between male and female undergraduate student's stress levels.

DISCUSSION

The present study was conducted in various colleges of Assam. sample of the present study was 6th-semester students from all various streams. The main purpose of this study was to observe the correlation of stress level during Covid-19 Pandemic among Undergraduate Students of Assam regarding mode of examination, also study the difference between male and female stress level regarding mode of the final examination.

Study findings showed that there is a significant positive correlation between the mode of final examination and the stress level of undergraduate students of Assam. Present study findings indicate that undergraduate students of Assam are highly stressed about the offline

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mode of examination in this present scenario, and they prefer more online mode of examination as online examination will be safe for them and their health. Students were stressed that they were not prepared academically as well as emotionally in this time of uncertainty. Also going for offline examination will put them in a vulnerable position to catch the virus also they fear for their family most specifically their parent's health.

From the questionnaires distributed among 300 students of undergraduate students at various colleges, it is found that they have difficulty in understanding the theoretical and practical knowledge of their syllabus. Mainly the science students who have the majority of their course work is based on wet lab work, they were not able to grasp and understand the practical part because of the situation. Responses from the students show that although their respected colleges were able to arrange and have sufficient resources to carry on the online classes and, but students were facing difficulties in focusing on online classes and in their syllabus. As well with the increasing number of cases in other states of India, gives them more stress and anxiety about their offline mode of exam and the safety of their family and their health.

Findings of the study also indicate that multiple guidelines regarding college reopen and final examination given by government education bodies and university during lockdown causes lots of confusion and anxiety around students due to lack of clarity and stable decisions regarding classes and examination. This new way of taking online classes, giving offline exams in between covid-19, causes lots of fear and stress among students. Studies indicate that majority of students were comfortable giving online exams rather than an offline exam.

Present study findings also indicate that there is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate student's stress levels regarding the mode of examination. Hence accepting the hypothesis created by the present study researchers that There is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate student's stress levels. Data showed that the majority of the sample were highly stressed about their mode of examination in this time of the pandemic.

Responses from the students reveal that they were scared and anxious about their education and future due to problems like an economic downfall, uncertainty. With no rigid coping strategies and accurate information, the covid-19 pandemic causes lots of disbalance to the students and their academics. Lack of mental stability and high stress impacting their focus level on their studies, with lots of negative news, and pressure for their future students were not mentally prepared for their final year examination. These exams were so important factors for their successful career, and they do not want to give this important exam of their life with less preparation and lack of mental stability and high stress in this time of the pandemic.

CONCLUSION

The study was conducted among various college students of Assam. The study was conducted to understand the correlation of stress levels among undergraduate students regarding their offline mode of examination. Studies of students got affected, theoretical and practical knowledge of various disciplines were not fully covered from online classes, and because of that student were not very confident to give exams and score good grades with this knowledge. The study finds out that although classes were held regularly via various online platforms and colleges have enough resources to provide online classes and

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examination but due to lack of mental stability in this time of pandemic students were finding it hard to focus on their academics and in time of uncertainty giving their one of the most important exams offline with lack of preparedness gives them a high level of stress. Present study findings also indicate that there is no significant difference between male and female undergraduate student's stress levels regarding offline mode of examination. Not having accurate information and guidance from government and university and feeling of uncertainty this pandemic brings student population is highly affected on an emotional and mental level and the discussion of colleges to conduct the exams in offline mode and more specifically conducting important exams in this hard time give the majority of undergraduate student's high level of stress.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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