Research Paper

Examining Depression among Male and Female College Students

Priyanka Guleria[1]*

ABSTRACT

The current research aims to study depression among male and female college students. The current research participants include a total of 80 students (40 male and 40 Female). Age range of both the student groups ranged from 20 – 22 years. Mean age of male and female students was 21.05 and 20.08 respectively. All these students had urban and semi – urban middle class socioeconomic background and were unmarried. All the students were studying in the third year of B. Sc (Bachelor of Science) course in Degree College Hamirpur, Himachal Pradesh, India. The data was collected through the "Personal Information Form", "Hindi version of Beck's Depression inventory". T – test was used to compare the means of the two groups. Results showed that female students reported significantly higher depression than male students.

Keywords: *College Male and Female students, Depression.*

D epression is defined as the emotional state of defection, feeling of worthlessness and guilt, and usually apprehension.

According to Annemarie Given (September, 2021); Many students experience changes in their mental health during college.

Anxiety turned out to be the most prevalent and serious issue for college students especially for female students while a growing prevalence of depression was found among male students during college. It is of great significance to adopt collegiate policies reflecting the gender differentials (Wenjuan Gao et al. 2020).

According to the data given by National Alliance on Mental Illness, over 40% of college students experience increased feelings of stress over the past year, nearly 73% of students living with a mental health condition experienced a crisis related to that condition on campus.

According to Paul R. Albert (2015), the prevalence of major depression is highly in women than in men; in 2010 its global annual prevalence was 5.5% and 3.2% respectively, representing a 1.7-fold greater incidence in women.

[1]Research scholar, Department of Psychology, SAM Global University, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India.
*Corresponding Author

Analysis of moderating variable revealed variation in the magnitude of gender differences in depression, not the direction of the gender difference. That is, among different subgroups, all odds ratios for diagnoses were >1.0 and all effect sizes of symptoms were positive. This emphasizes the consistency with which females have higher levels of major depression and depression symptoms than men (Rachel H. Salk, Janet S. Hyde and Lyn Y, 2017).

According to a recent survey by Cosmos Institute of Mental health & Behavioral Science (CIMBS), among college going students in the National Capital Region of Delhi, women are more prone to anxiety and depression than men. As per the survey, out of every 10 students who suffer from depression, 7 are women.

According to Kumar S. et al. (2019), Overall prevalence of depression among student population was 74.60%. Among them 4% were severely depressed, 58% of females and 40% of males.

Khalil et al. (2010) found that clinical features of depression among teenage women exposed that fatigue and lack of energy (more than 80%) were the main reasons of depression.

Weidner, Kohlman, Dolzauer and Burns (1996) examined the health behaviors of college students during times of high stress. They observed that during stressful simulation, health behaviors of the students deteriorated, students exercised less, ate fewer nutritious foods, and made less of an effort to avoid substances such as drugs and alcohol. Earlier a similar study was conducted by Rawson, Bloomer and Kendall (1994) among college students. The results showed that stress, depression and physical illness are interrelated.

Dyson and Renk (2006) revealed that when a student attends college, it is a time of considerable anxiety and stress.

Besides other stressors, students may wonder whether they will be able to meet their own expectations as well as those of their parents and friends (Blimling and Miltenberger, 1981). Harris and Ammerman (1986) conducted a study on student depression and found that it is one of the most serious mental health concerns. They also revealed that depression in students is often related to academic and social problems.

 However, Griffin and Felsenthal (1983) in an earlier study noted that serious depression in students can have additional causes, such as loss of a parent or a good friend, or loss of more internal factors such as self-respect or self-esteem. Regardless of the reasons for the depression, they also point out that it will almost always be accompanied by feelings of failure and a lack of self-confidence.

Aszman (2001) observed that the rate of occurrence concerning the depressive symptoms is higher in the case of students coming from families at lower social levels owing to the fact that they are exposed to higher stress.

Similarly, Lempers and Clark-Lempers (1997) revealed that as a consequence of difficult financial situations and material problems of the family, the depressive syndromes in the students become more frequent.

Family conflicts, poor relationship with parents also may lead to the evaluation of depressive symptoms in adolescent age (Formoso, 2000).

Depression is also prevalent in developing countries. In China, according to an article by Wei Hu and colleagues in Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology (2002). Depression costs 51 million Renminbi. Depression is also common in Zimbabwe, where it is known by a shona word "Kufungisisa" which means "thinking too much." (Patel, V., Simunyu, E., & Gwanzura, F. 1995)

A study conducted by Siripongpan et al. (2022) on first year university students revealed that 7.0% and 51.1% of them were suffering from depression, and pathological stress, respectively. In addition, the prevalence of depression and pathological stress was higher in female samples than in other gender groups.

Health experts understanding of depression has evolved significantly in the last few decades. There are many reasons for depression. Beck (1979) stated that certain individuals are vulnerable to depression because from an early age, they have possessed negatively biased cognitive schemes of themselves and their experiences. This negative thought pattern may lead to symptoms of depression. Depression is considered to be an adaptive response to psychological stress rather than an illness.

Research Tools
Hindi version of Beck's Depression Inventory (Rajwinder Kaur, 1994) is used for measuring attitudes and symptoms associated with depression. It is a 21-item scale with the total score ranging from 0 to 63. The original scale (Beck, Ward, Mendelson, Mock and Erbaugh, 1961) is also a 21item scale.

The BDI is reported to possess adequate internal consistency (Upmanyu and Reen, 1990-1991; Vredenberg, Krames and Flett, 1985). The psychometric characteristics of this questionnaire have been well documented in the Indian set up (Upmanyu, Upmanyu and Dhingra 1991, 1993; Upmanyu and Reen, 1990, 1991; Upmanyu and Singh, 1984. Kumar (1990) reported that the alpha coefficient of the BDI was 88.

Data Collection
Hindi version of Beck's Depression Inventory was administered to the subjects individually. The scale was administered according to standard instructions.

A cover sheet was used to collect information regarding demographic characteristics of the subjects. This included gender, age, income, religion, type of family, marital status and residential background. Subjects were assured that their results would be kept confidential and would be used only for research purposes.

SCORING OF Beck's Depression Inventory
This scale consists of 21 items having 4 or 5 options for the respondents to tick. The statements were ranked to reflect the range of severity of the symptoms from neutral (0) to maximal (3) severity. If 2A, 2B options were marked by the students, but the statements would be scored two. The scores of all categories were added to give depression scores. Higher the scores, greater would be the depression of the respondents.

Statistical Analysis
Scores were subjected to "T" test to compare the males and females with regard to depression. Mean score, Standard Deviation and T-value for male and female college students is shown in the table ahead.

Depression among College Male & Female Students

Variable	Female College Students	Male College Students	T-Value
Depression	M=15.425 SD=3.8822	M=13.3 SD=3.9	2.47

***P<0.05*

CONCLUSION

The statistic measures how many standard errors the coefficient is away from zero. Generally, any t-value greater than +2 or less than – 2 is acceptable. "*The higher the t-value, the greater the confidence we have in the coefficient as a predictor. Low t-values are indications of low reliability of the predictive power of that coefficient.*" https://www.allbusiness.com/barrons_dictionary/dictionary-t-value-4942040-1.html

The table shown above demonstrates that in terms of depression, a significant difference emerged between the male & female college students (t=2.47 df=78, p<0.01). Higher mean scores of the female students (M=15.42) than male students (M=13.3). This indicates that female students differ from male students in terms of emotional state of dejection, feeling of worthlessness & guilt and usually apprehension.

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Conflict of Interest
The author declared no conflict of interest.

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AUTHORS PROFILE

Priyanka Guleria is a research scholar in the Department of Psychology in SAM Global University, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, India. She holds an M. Phil degree in Psychology from Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla, a degree in M.A Psychology from HNB Garhwal University, Srinagar, M.A. in Education from Periyar University Salem and B.A from Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla. She is also a trained Psychologist specializing in Guidance & Counselling with a PG Diploma in Guidance & Counselling from Himachal Pradesh University. She is lifetime member of Counsellors Council of India and is a registered counsellor with National Career Service.