

Survey of Student Anxiety Levels During the COVID-19 Pandemic

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ABSTRACT

Background: Anxiety among students in higher education has been an increasing concern due to the restrictions and changes imposed by the emergence of the pandemic - Covid-19. **Objective:** Our study aims to assess anxiety among college students because of the COVID-19 pandemic. **Methods:** We conducted questionnaire surveys with 209 students at Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar College, University of Delhi, New Delhi, to understand the effect of a pandemic on their anxiety level because of Online Classes. The data was analyzed through the mean method. **Results:** Of the 209 students, 130 (62%) indicated increased anxiety due to the COVID-19 outbreak. There were more male (91/209, 42.6%) participants than female (118/209, 57.4%) participants. Multiple stressors were identified that contributed to the increased levels of confusion, anxiety, and depressive thoughts among students. This included difficulty in concentration (187/209, 89.4%), disruptions to sleeping patterns (154/209, 73.6%), uncertainty about future goals (170/209, 81.33%), and increased pressure in academics (166/209, 79.4%).

Keywords: Covid-19, Anxiety, Effects on College students

The emergence of COVID-19 has significantly strained the global healthcare, economic, and social systems. The epidemic inflicted enormous psychological strain on individuals worldwide in addition to the risk of infection and potential mortality. Several studies have covered the pandemic's short- and long-term impacts on global social and psychological health. These negative consequences could be linked to socioeconomic effects or prevention, depending on how COVID-19 infection affects a person's mental health.

University students' anxiety levels are already a public health problem. University students' mental health deteriorated due to the pandemic's uncertainty and anxieties. The research on the association between university students' stress and anxiety levels throughout COVID-19 has grown significantly. There have been studies undertaken throughout the world looking at university students' levels of stress and anxiety.

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In addition to being an essential and regular part of a student's life, college helps develop a person's personality and serves as a springboard to the outside world. The most challenging students to deal with was the uncertainty around the coronavirus. Getting the entire educational system on its head took little work. It is yet unclear still needs to be determined if this will affect us, how long it will persist, or how terrible things may get. Moreover, it is too simple to get catastrophized and descend into extreme fear and terror. Students' mental health has been on a roller coaster, with most of the dips coming from an unanticipated and incredible viral outbreak—the Nobel Corona Virus, which triggered a pandemic.

Our research intends to show the intense link between vital anxiety and the Covid 19 epidemic among Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar College university students in Delhi. We predict that university students' anxiety will directly correlate with the pandemic's effects. The potential outcomes allow us to portray university students' fear as realistically as possible.

We also propose a link between this worry and psychosocial elements, including a decline in social connections, a fear of illness, a lack of resources, and the move to online learning.

METHODS

Study Design

The degree of anxiety experienced by Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar College students during the covid epidemic due to online lessons was measured by a self-prepared questionnaire through a survey. The 20 questions primarily examine centration levels, bodily symptoms, and degree of clarity regarding future objectives. First, by utilizing a self-prepared questionnaire and looking at the prior pattern of anxiety inventories and questionnaires, our study aims to ascertain the students' degrees of anxiety. It was distributed online using Google Forms, which allows for the electronic storage of all data while ensuring privacy.

The questionnaire focuses on aspects including mentality, concentration, stability, bodily symptoms, studies, and future objectives. Even their sleeping habits and feelings of pessimism owing to COVID-19 were probed. These concepts came from previously published research that identified key elements influencing the mental health of college students. Through a 4-point Likert scale, participants were asked 20 questions to determine the influence of COVID-19 on various aspects with a rating of 0 (none), 1 (mild), 2, and 3. (severe). Answers were recorded objectively. Later, the mean approach was used to determine the results.

Covid- 19 students' anxiety questionnaire

- Q1. Do you easily lose the balance of your mind even under ordinary pressure of studies?
- Q2. Do you have a feeling of uncertainty of your goals?
- Q3. Do you weep under the pressure of studies?
- Q4. Do you think that you are having trouble in sleeping or that you are not getting enough sleep?
- Q5. Does your day start with a pile of confusion?
- Q6. Do you overwhelm yourself so much that you leave the work incomplete?
- Q7. Do you experience physical weakness on a regular basis?
- Q8. When you're studying, do you usually work under pressure?
- Q9. Do you find yourself worried because of online classes and pending assignments?
- Q10. Are you often confused in situations where you have previously failed?

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- Q11. Do you have difficulty in concentration while studying?
- Q12. Do you get the feeling of heaviness in your head?
- Q13. Do you want to run away to some distant place as you are tired of your studies?
- Q14. Do you generally feel that you're helpless?
- Q15. Do you face a lot of confusion or conflicting thoughts in your mind?
- Q16. Do you face difficulty in making decisions?
- Q17. Do you generally get so restless that it gets difficult to hold yourself at one place or thing?
- Q18. Do you lose the presence of your mind even by not being able to solve questions?
- Q19. Do you get restless and excited easily?
- Q20. Do you get the feeling of urination or latrine before taking tests or exams?

Participants

Participants were chosen from Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar College, University of Delhi, student body.

In reaction to the COVID-19 epidemic, the University of Delhi shuttered all its campuses on March 1, 2020, and held all of its classes virtually. The Union Territory of New Delhi issued a stay-at-home directive the same month. All interviews were done around 11 months after the March 2020 stay-at-home decree. Through text messaging, undergraduate research students attracted participants. Participants must have been enrolled as undergraduate students at the institution and between 18 and 22 at the time of the interviews to meet the inclusion requirements.

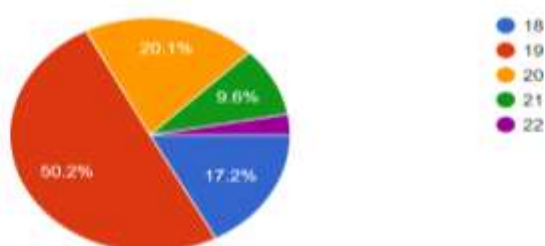
Procedures

Under the direction of a psychology professor, two undergraduate psychology majors created the questionnaire. None of the forms were distributed physically; instead, they were circulated online. All the scores— individually and collectively—are recorded on Google forms. The participants were initially required to answer questions about their gender, age, and other demographic data. They were then exposed to the 20 items, each needing an objective response on a 4-point Likert scale. Participation was voluntary, and participants were not compensated.

Data Analysis

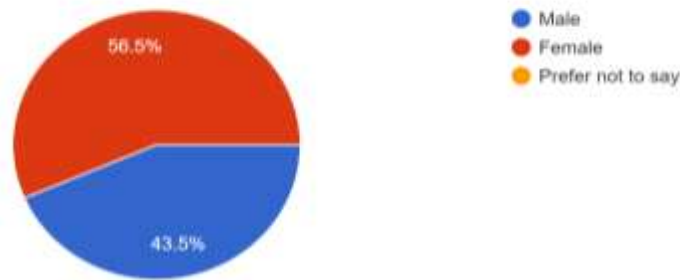
First, descriptive data were generated to summarize the participants' demographics (such as age and gender). Of the participants, 50.2% were of the age of 20, 20.1% were 19, 17.2% were 18, 9.6% were 21, and 2.9% were 22. A mean score was calculated to gauge the participants' overall degree of stress and anxiety throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Numerous stressors were discovered and commented upon in light of these scores and the responses selected by the participants to particular queries.

Age
209 responses



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Gender
209 responses



RESULTS

Score interpretation

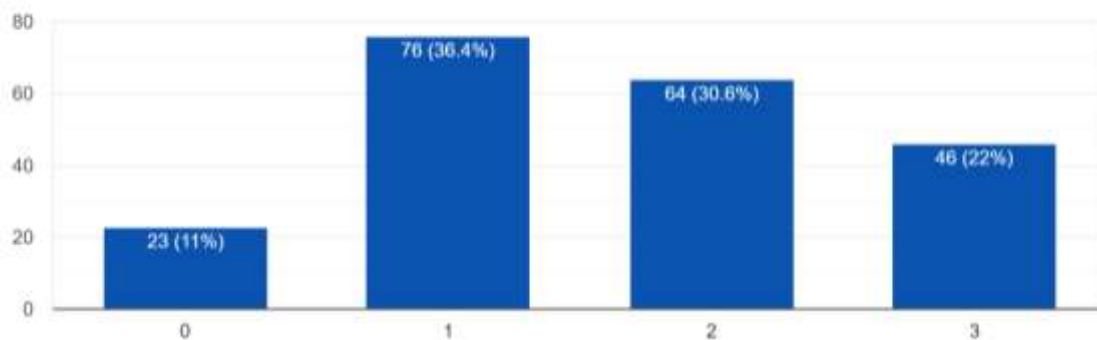
By adding up the points for each item, scoring is made simple. Answer interpretation is made on a 4-point Likert scale—scores for each question ranging from 0 to 3. The overall score is between 0 and 60.

For interpretation, the following principles are used: Anxiety levels range from 0 to 9 (average or nonexistent), 10 to 18 (mild to moderate), 19 to 29 (moderate to severe), and 30 to 60 (extreme).

Causes of anxiety among students during the pandemic

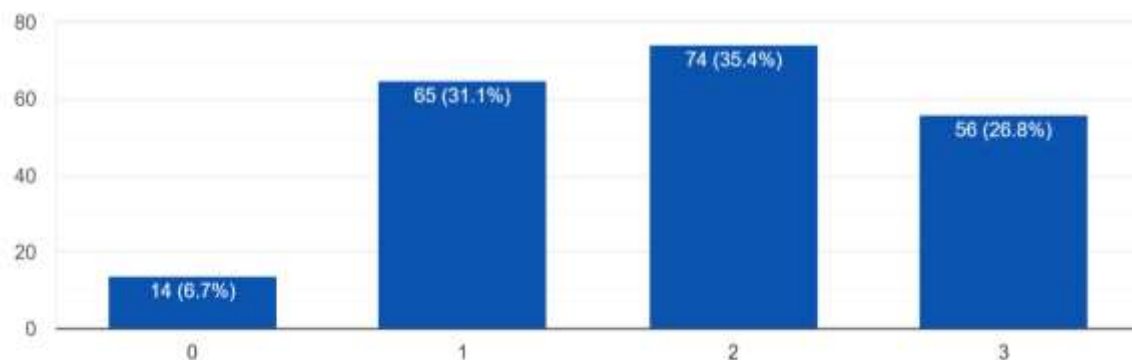
Q11. Do you have difficulty in concentrating while studying?

209 responses



Q15. Do you face a lot of confusion or conflicting thoughts in your mind ?

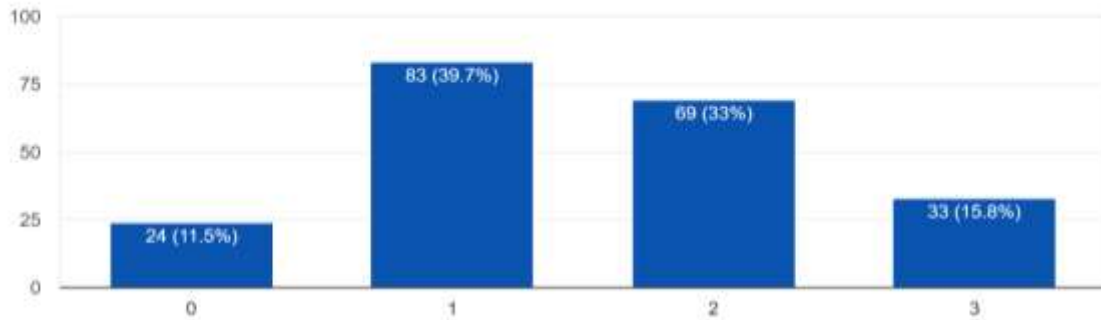
209 responses



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Q18. Do you lose the presence of mind by not being able to solve questions?

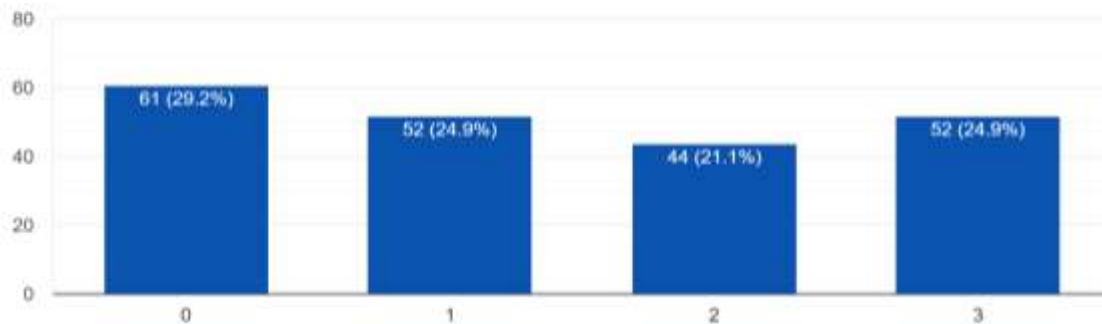
209 responses



1. Difficulty in concentration: The overwhelming majority of participants (187/209, 89.4%) reported having trouble focusing on academic work, presumably due to multiple forms of distraction. Students (participants) in a survey by NCBI (Govt. of India) described their homes as distracting settings and places to unwind rather than study. Participants acknowledged that their family members interrupted them more frequently. The use of social media, video games, the internet, a monotonous lifestyle, and prolonged screen time while taking online classes were other variables.

Q4. Do you think that you are having trouble in sleeping or that you are not getting enough sleep?

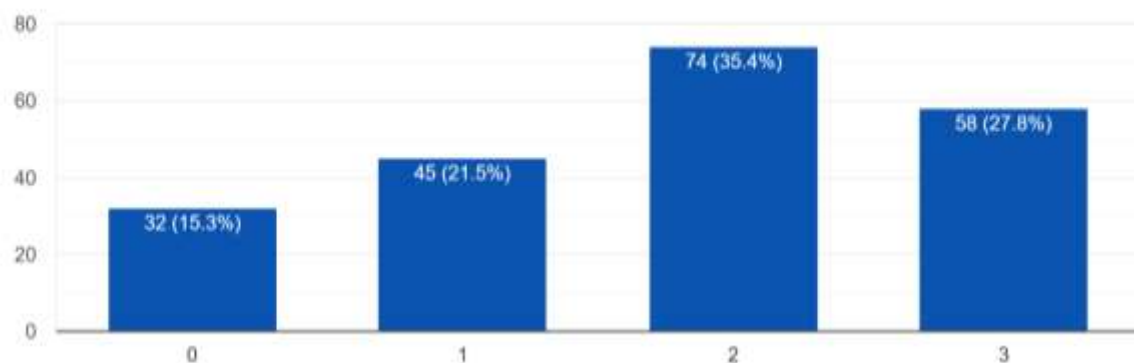
209 responses



2. Disruptions to sleeping patterns: Most individuals (154/209, 73.6%) said the COVID-19 outbreak had altered their sleep schedules. According to a survey by NCBI (Govt. of India), students tended to sleep in or get up later than they had in the past. Additionally, students reported having trouble falling asleep and having poor sleep quality.

Q2. Do you have a feeling of uncertainty of your goals?

209 responses

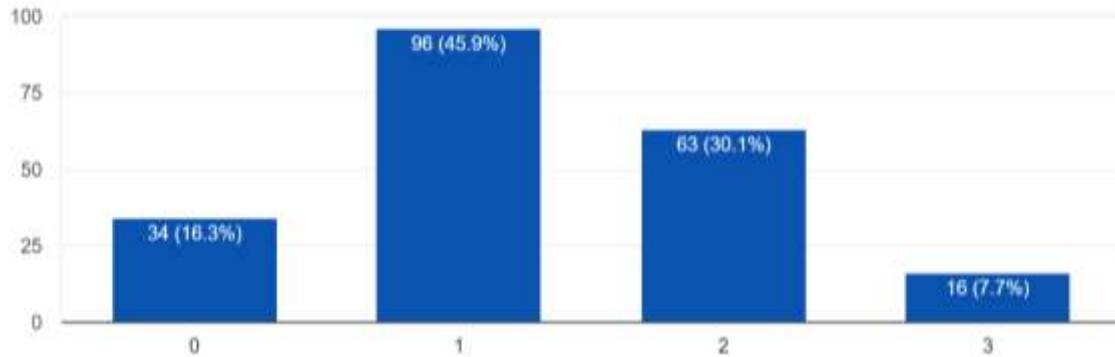


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3. Uncertainty about future goals: The majority of participants (177/209, 84.9%) acknowledged being anxious about the unpredictability of their future objectives. Meanwhile, a substantial majority of participants (186/209, 89.2%) believed that they had trouble making decisions, and (41/209, 19.3%) had difficulty doing so.

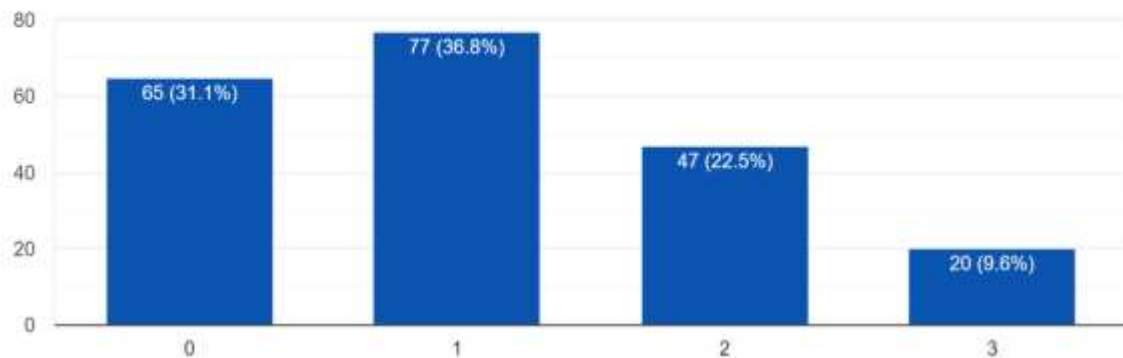
Q1. Do you easily lose the balance of your mind even under ordinary pressure of studies?

209 responses



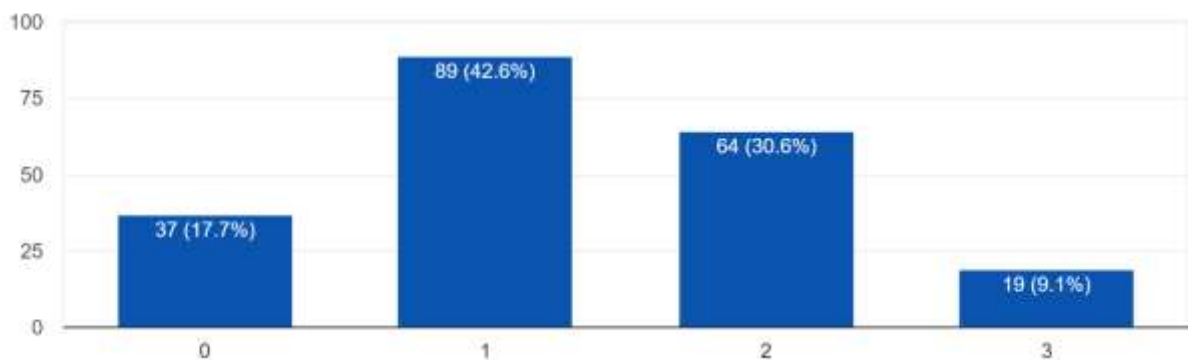
Q3. Do you weep under the pressure of studies?

209 responses



Q8. When you're studying, do you usually work under pressure?

209 responses



4. Increased pressure on academics: Most participants (166/209, 79.4%) acknowledged feeling more academic pressure. Most students (174/209, 84%) agreed that they often experience anxiety even under normal academic pressure, while (144/209, 69.3%) admitted

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crying when stressed. According to a study, uncertainty about grades in an online learning environment was another significant stressor.

CONCLUSION

One group that is especially prone to mental health issues is college students. The results of this study highlight the impact of transformations associated with the pandemic on this particular population's mental health and well-being. Our research indicates that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant detrimental influence on several academic, health, and lifestyle-related outcomes. We conducted online survey interviews throughout the pandemic and discovered that most people had more anxiety due to COVID-19. Additionally, the median results indicated that our subjects experienced high-stress levels.

Concerns about schoolwork and future objectives were the most noticeable of the pandemic's effects, followed by attention problems. Findings on how the pandemic has affected sleeping are another cause for concern because this factor is known to be correlated with anxiety.

Anxiety might be partly attributed to actions made by teachers and the university to facilitate the students' abrupt switch to online study.

Alarmingly, the majority of individuals (166/209, 79.4%) acknowledged feeling more academic pressure, and the majority of participants (154/209, 73.6%) said the COVID-19 outbreak had affected their sleep habits. Most individuals (177/209, or 84.9%) also acknowledged that they were anxious about their future objectives' uncertainties.

Our survey shows that both men and women are experiencing higher levels of anxiety. There are 118 females out of 209, with a mean anxiety score of 32.4. Similarly, 91 guys out of 209 had practically identical anxiety scores, 32.5 out of 60. Both results show higher levels of anxiety among college students.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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