

A Comparative Study of Anxiety in Adult Students in Kolkata

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Severe fear and persistent, acute worry about everyday events are the characteristics of anxiety. Even though anxiety is frequently accepted as a normal emotion, when it becomes excessive, it might be diagnosed as a mental disease. It is necessary to investigate a variety of elements that impact anxiety levels in order to develop more effective care and rehabilitation policies. The purpose of the study is to determine the anxiety levels of adult college students in Kolkata. **Methodology:** Adult students enrolled in Kolkata-based private and public colleges participated in this survey. All study participants who met the inclusion and exclusion criteria provided written consent before being included in the study. The Beck anxiety inventory was used to gather anxiety data, and the t-test was applied to analyse the results. **Findings:** Out of 320 participants, more students attending private colleges reported feeling more anxious than those attending government universities. In addition, compared to male students, more female students experience higher levels of anxiety. **Conclusion:** There is a noticeable difference in the anxiety levels of government college students and private college students. Compared to government college students, private college students experience greater anxiety. The anxiety levels of adult male and female students varied considerably. Student anxiety is higher among females than males. The findings can be used in collaboration with the students, teachers, and health support services that provide facilities, resources, etc. The findings of the research also have practical implications for college students, and through this, the teachers and administrators also got an idea of what is going on in the life of a particular student.

Keywords: Anxiety, Gender, College Type, Adult Students

Anxiety is defined by psychologists as an unidentified fear that is directly related to an item. Negative feelings such as excessive fear, apprehension, uneasiness, concern, etc. might result from an anxiety disorder. According to **Barlow's theory (2002)**, anxiety serves as a warning or preparation for impending bad events in a person's life. Anxiety disorders are a collection of several problems, and each aspect of these disorders requires appropriate consideration and comprehension. Due to this anxiety illness, where a person's actions and emotions are noted, physical symptoms might also be identified. While mild anxiety can be uncomfortable and disrupt daily life, extreme anxiety can cause major problems.

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LITERATURE REVIEW

According to **Basu et al. (2016)**, depression, stress, and anxiety are widespread psychiatric disorders. In the world, a large population experiences anxiety. According to the study, affluent nations have a higher prevalence of anxiety disorders than developing nations. Studies by **Blanco et al. (2008)** and **Milojevich and Lukowski (2016)** have shown that many students today experience mental health problems. University students deal with a variety of stressors and anxiety on a regular basis. In **2009**, **Boujut et al.** emphasised that many students today experience moderate, low, and severe degrees of depression. The study also reveals that college students frequently experience feelings of stress, anxiety, and overwhelm. **Saleh, D., Camaro, & Romo (2017)** also noted that university students experience high levels of stress and anxiety as well as relatively low levels of self-esteem. The decision of which institution to attend, the choice of the master's degree, the first day of college, the freedom of timely organisation, etc., raise the stress levels of the students, which lowers their self-efficacy, optimism, and view of life.

Even though anxiety disorders are among the most widespread illnesses in the world, only 40% of sufferers receive the right care. **Ladouceur et al. (1999)** highlighted the relationship between anxiety features and anxiety sensitivity and the relationship between this sensitivity and anxiety disorder and depression. A significant number of people have experienced stress and anxiety since the COVID-19 outbreak. According to a survey done by The Centre of Healing (TCOH), more than 74% of Indians suffer from stress and 88% from anxiety. According to **Deb et al. (2015)**, adults in Kolkata who are under scholastic and work pressure have higher levels of developmental anxiety. The study reveals that more than 12.35% of students in Kolkata have high levels of stress, while more than 37% of pupils in the city of joy have high levels of anxiety. The survey also shows that in Kolkata, two-thirds of people experience high levels of stress, and among them, one-third experience anxiety. Due to their academic pressure, parental pressure, domestic responsibilities, etc., girls are more likely than boys to suffer from negative mental health.

According to **Balogun et al. (2017)**, 20% to 40% of students experience anxiety. Students who are somewhat or severely worried perform academically in a very subpar manner. According to the study, anxiety levels are positively connected with pupils' poor performance. Depression, stress, and anxiety are widespread issues among college students, claims **Bhujade, V. M. (2017)**. They experience more difficult issues than students did decades ago. The fear of failure, time management issues, peer pressure, academic excellence expectations, developing a sense of self, impaired thinking, inferiority complex, inability to express emotions, and other common but complex issues that students today deal with contribute to their anxiety levels rising dramatically.

Anxiety is one of the major mood disorders, according to **Tahmasebi et al. (2017)**. It is a psychologically arousing emotional state of mind that emphasises nervousness, palpitation, tension, an increasing heartbeat, and the feeling of apprehension. They claimed that anxiety disorders, which affect 15% to 20% of people, are among the most prevalent and deadly conditions in human society. Students who are under a lot of pressure find it difficult to eat healthy foods, which results in a zinc shortage in the body and mood issues. According to **Walters et al. (2018)**, students in the "emerging adulthood" age range of 18 to 25 are most at risk for substance misuse. Students in this age group experience a lot of pressure from their families, their careers, marriage, and other factors, which causes them to be more stressed, anxious, and sad. To relieve this strain, they overindulge in alcohol, which negatively affects their academic performance or attendance in class. Cocaine and other

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narcotics are commonly accessible to college students. They get restless because drugs, alcohol, and other substances are readily available, which makes them feel incredibly comfortable but shortens their lifespan. As a result, they experience extreme tension, anxiety, and even depression. According to **Walters et al. (2018)**, there is a link between substance use and neuroticism in college students that has a detrimental impact. According to the five-factor model of personality, the main components of the broader qualities of neuroticism are anxiety, impulsivity, and depression. As a result, it is clear that anxiety and drug addiction among college students are closely associated.

According to **Eysenck, M. W., and Fajkowska (2018)**, anxiety arises from intense fear or the uncertainty of a future situation. Generally speaking, anxiety is connected to future orientation. Since depression results from goal loss, prior orientation is strongly connected with depression. These two can be distinguished relative to one another rather than absolutely. There are some differences between anxiety and depression, even though it has been discovered that those with moderate to high levels of anxiety are more likely to experience depression. The study discovered that depression and anxiety are connected to memory bias and attentional bias, respectively. In a study to assess depression and anxiety in teenagers, **Klein et al. (2017)** discovered two things: 1. Interpretive bias and attentional bias are connected to depression and anxiety; however, the connections are quite weak. 2. The attentional bias and interpretative bias in depression and anxiety have predicted an absolute variance.

According to **Hooda, M., and Saini (2017)**, anxiety is bad for students. Since anxiety is one of the worst mental illnesses that can ruin a student's normal life, parents and instructors need to take extra care to lower the degree of anxiety among the pupils. Academic performance will be good, and life adjustments will be much simpler if teachers or parents provide guidance to youngsters from the start on how to lower anxiety levels. It has been discovered that procrastinating negatively impacts students' psychological and behavioural well-being. Anxiety, stress, serious health issues, etc., are all observed to be caused by procrastination, and these kinds of emotions may lead to further procrastination. It has been noticed that when anxiety is light, it helps us focus on our work, but when anxiety is moderate to severe, it interferes with people's ability to concentrate and pay attention, making it difficult for them to concentrate on their studies or other tasks.

According to **Reddy et al. (2018)**, the frightening statistics are primarily the result of academic stress. According to studies, students experience anxiety, impulsivity, and sadness, all of which have an impact on their academic performance. High levels of stress and anxiety can develop in students for a variety of reasons, including excessive alcohol use, drug addiction, unprotected sexual activity, irregular eating and sleeping schedules, and nutritional deficiencies. The study also demonstrates that the educational system has a significant detrimental effect on students. The students' stress and anxiety levels are raised by the extensive syllabus, overcrowded seminars, monotonous lectures, and uninspiring syllabus subjects. According to the report, academic stress is having a negative impact on students' mental health day by day, which is why anxiety is growing.

According to **Lattie et al. (2019)**, anxiety, stress, and depression are widespread among students. A third of students, or 31%, have experienced mental health issues. The study used digital mental health treatments and discovered that many college students suffer from anxiety and depression but lack access to competent counselling services, leaving those students untreated. The study demonstrated the efficacy and acceptance of digital mental

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health interventions among the students and demonstrated how they can effectively treat depression, anxiety, and stress.

In a study he conducted at WBSU, Pramanik, G. (2019), discovered that more than 32% of the students who use social media excessively are more likely to experience stress and anxiety. Poor performance in school, the workplace, and personal life is caused by excessive social media use, along with some adjustment issues, the inability to cut back, mood changes, withdrawal, etc. Students' excessive use of social media has a bad effect not only on their physical health but also on their mental health. The use of social media among students and anxiety are intricately related. Professor Hampton made the point that students who engage in excessive social media use feel compelled to participate actively in it in order to allay their "fear of missing out" on other activities. When they see something that one of their friends has posted on Facebook, they become extremely worried. Depression, mood problems, and heart disease can all develop in those who experience high levels of stress and anxiety.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Objective

To study the anxiety level of young adult students of Kolkata.

Hypotheses

- There will be no significant difference in the degree of anxiety of young adult students studying in private and government colleges.
- There will be no significant difference in the degree of anxiety of young male and female adult students.

Sample

In this study, the level of anxiety is measured among male and female adult students of private and government colleges located in Kolkata City. The study included adult students in the age range of 20 to 25. A random sample of 320 individuals, ages 18 to 25, was taken from several colleges located throughout the city of Kolkata. 160 male and 160 female adults made up the sample. Once more, the sample was divided into two groups: adult college students from government (N = 160) and private (N = 160). As a result, the gender and college categories were used to divide the sample into two groups. Students who are suffering from chronic physical illnesses like heart disease, benevolent loss, or any preexisting ongoing treatment, were excluded from study.

Variables

Anxiety (dependent variable), gender and type of college (independent variables).

Tools

BAI (Beck Anxiety Inventory)- BAI is used for students to check the anxiety level that are existing in them (Beck A.T., 1988).

Statistical methods

To determine whether there is a statistically significant difference in the anxiety levels of young adult male and female students attending Kolkata's private and public colleges, a t-test is employed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: anxiety profile of Students based on college type

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value
Anxiety	Government	160	23.29	11.60	158	3.9393
	Private	160	27.93	9.35	Significant at 0.05 level of significance	

From Table 1, it has been found that the value ($t = 3.9393$, P value = .0001) is significant at the 0.05 level of significance, which indicates a significant difference in the degree of anxiety between government college and private college adult students. The mean score of private college students ($M = 27.93$) is much higher than that of government college students ($M = 23.29$). It highlights that private college students are more prone to anxiety than government college students. So, the hypothesis that there will be no significant difference in the degree of anxiety between government and private college adult students is rejected.

Table 2: anxiety profile of Students based on gender.

Variable	Groups	N	Mean	SD	df	t-value
Anxiety	Male	160	23.23	11.24	158	4.0465
	Female	160	27.99	9.75	Significant at 0.05 level of significance	

From Table 2, it has been found that the t-value ($t = 4.0465$, P value = .0001) is significant at the 0.05 level of significance, which indicates a significant difference between male and female students for anxiety. The mean score of male adult students ($M = 23.23$) is less than the mean score of female adult students ($M = 27.99$) for the level of anxiety. It highlights that female adult students are more prone to face higher anxiety than male adult students. So, the hypothesis that there will be no significant difference in the degree of anxiety between male adult students and female adult students is rejected.

CONCLUSION

Government college students and private college students have a significant difference in their anxiety levels. Private college students are more anxious than government college students. Male and female adult students differ significantly in anxiety levels. Female students are more anxious than male students.

Limitation

It is not possible to take all the data from each of the students while conducting the study; only those students are involved who wanted to take voluntary participation. Sometimes, participants are not even aware of some of the issues; a lack of self-awareness and memory recall issues might create a hindrance while collecting data.

Strength

Students come from different educational backgrounds, social strata, cultures, and disciplines, which help to capture a wide range of perspectives and experiences of anxiety. The findings can be used in collaboration with the students, teachers, and health support services that provide facilities, resources, etc. The findings of the research also have practical implications for college students, and through this, the teachers and administrators also got an idea of what is going on in the life of a particular student.

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Conflict of Interest

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