

Research Paper

A Qualitative Evaluation of Homesickness in Female Students of Legal Education

Rashi Rajesh Nambiar^{1*}

ABSTRACT

The study aims to appraise the phenomenon of pursuing education away from home and the feelings and aspects associated with it. A qualitative approach was adopted where in a focus group discussion was conducted with seven participants (n = 7). All participants were female students of legal education. The data collected was analysed through a thematic analysis which contributed to the development of major themes like disparities in culture, major inconveniences, autonomy, coping mechanisms etc. It was then concluded that as female law students studying away from home, they face not only homesickness but also challenges such as competition and academic pressure within the field which are seemingly related to experiences of homesickness.

Keywords: *Homesickness, Legal Education, Students, Competition*

Homesickness is a mental state caused by a major life transition. Fisher and Hood (1987) define this as “a complex cognitive motivational-emotional state concerned with grieving for, yearning for, and being preoccupied with thoughts of home.” Fisher et al. (1985) discovered the primary focus of homesickness is on the former home environment, with less dominant features including feelings of insecurity and dissatisfaction in the new environment.

Despite the fact that the American Psychiatric Association (2013) happens to not include homesickness as a formal diagnostic term in the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, intense homesickness is most commonly classified as an adjustment disorder with mixed anxiety and depressed mood (Sun et al., 2016).

Although the general public has traditionally viewed the transition to college as a positive adventure and opportunity for personal development, students face a number of challenges, including managing their lives independently, making new friends, and adjusting to new routines and academic criteria (Johnson & Sandhu, 2007; Thurber & Walton, 2012). Intense homesickness among college students may result in decreased adaptability to the new setting as well as increased levels of emotional disturbance and absent-mindedness (Fisher & Hood, 1987; Sun et al., 2016).

¹Student, Mithibai College of Arts, Chauhan Institute of Science & Amrutben Jivanlal College of Commerce and Economics, Mumbai, Maharashtra, India

*Corresponding Author

Received: November 21, 2023; Revision Received: June 27, 2024; Accepted: June 30, 2024

A Qualitative Evaluation of Homesickness in Female Students of Legal Education

It is widely acknowledged that law school is a difficult time in the lives of aspiring lawyers (Elkins, 1988; Glenn, 1996; Shanfield & Benjamin, 1985; Taylor, 1975). The fact that depression and anxiety are identified as concerns among law students is consistent with the current Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th ed (DSM-IV). This label specifies “depressed mood,” “anxiety,” and “mixed anxiety and depressed mood.” (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). If law school is viewed as being a difficult “adjustment” for students, the move away from home is likely to worsen these circumstances (Dammeyer & Nunez, 1999). This study aims to understand this exact phenomenon.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The adjustment to college life is difficult not only for the college student, but also for family and friends. While some college students who live close to home can return for weekend get-togethers with friends or family members, students who study far away from home do not have this luxury. For these students, interaction with their domestic environment ranges from close contact to severing ties and is frequently influenced by specific circumstances at their college or home (Firmin et al., 2009).

According to medical and psychological research, homesickness causes behavioural, cognitive, and physical symptoms. Physical symptoms include stomach pains, insomnia, an eating disorder, headaches, and recurrent exhaustion. Cognitive symptoms include thoughts fixated on the homeland and, at times, undesirable thoughts about the host environment, idealising home, and being distracted. According to Van Tilburg et al., these symptomatic behaviours include the development of apathy and listlessness, a lack of initiative, and a lack of interest in the host context (Hack-Polay, 2020).

The mental health of students is directly related to their overall well-being and academic performance. Academic pressure, relationship issues, competition, adjustment issues, and other factors make student life stressful. Many students experience low mood and lack of motivation during their university years, owing to the personal and academic challenges they face (Deb et al., 2020).

Leaving a strong family and social support network to attend college, according to Beck's (1983) formulation, could be especially dramatic for sociotropic individuals. Getting out from under the roof of “mom and dad” and beginning one’s adult life, on the other hand, could be particularly energising to autonomous individuals, according to Beck (1983) (Beck et al., 2002).

The move away from home for continuing education, whether in or out of state, is the first step in the transition to completely independent living; the move away from home is related to changing opinions and the creation of new ways of viewing the world. Of course, living away at college does not constitute true residential independence. According to Whittington and Peters (1996), young adults residing in college dorms lack not only residential independence but also financial independence (Mulder & Clark, 2002).

Student housing is an excellent location for observing social events such as coping with interaction and the need for privacy. While sharing rooms with other occupants can deprive one of privacy, these situations can also promote social interactions and assist students in developing strong relationships. Though sharing space results in more efficient resource use,

A Qualitative Evaluation of Homesickness in Female Students of Legal Education

it can cause issues, particularly in terms of territorial and private spaces, leading to dissatisfaction (Khajehzadeh & Vale, 2016).

Individual factors such as perfectionism (Northam & Bluen, 1994) and parental expectations and pressure may all contribute to a competitive approach to academic learning (Franken & Brown, 1995). Individual students and their peers may suffer as a result of this. The drop in well-being during legal education (Sheldon & Krieger, 2004) may be due to students believing they must compete against an already very high-achieving cohort, rather than the cohort of students with a wide range of abilities in high school. Environmental factors may also influence their goals and competitive behaviour in law schools such as pedagogy, structure of learning activities etc. (Hom, Berger, Duncan, Miller, & Blevin, 1994). Competitive learning environments rely on students outperforming their peers and viewing them as a basis for evaluation (Covington & Omelich, 1984; Stallman, 2012).

Research on differential causes of stress in academic conditions in females as a minority in the field of law indicate multiple factors, including organisational as well as personal, which can either elevate or prevent conflict resolution and stress. A combination of these is most likely to result in negative consequences more prevalent in females involved in such male-dominated careers (Clark & Rieker, 1986). There are biases towards another gender in an institutional setting where the institute, the office bearers, and the discipline resonate more with masculinity. Women have had to fight for their place in the legal profession, and much has changed over time at the bar and bench, in law schools and firms (Variath & Khare, n.d.).

Young adults and adolescents who receive parental and peer support learn how to successfully develop active coping strategies. Van Tilburg, Vingerhoets, and Van Heck (1997) discovered that the most effective coping methods of homesickness are to do something fun to forget about it, followed by seeking social support. Emotional and ruminative coping strategies are the least effective, and they can lead to more severe feelings of homesickness (Van Tilburg et al., 1997; Nijhof & Engels, 2007).

Expressing feelings of homesickness (Fisher, 1989; Hamdi, 1974; Taylor, 1986), contacting family members (Ellis, 1957; Hamdi, 1974; Taylor, 1986), writing about experienced homesickness (Pennebaker, Colder, & Sharp, 1990), and participating in active tasks rather than passive and mental tasks (Fisher, 1989) are some proposed strategies of dealing with homesickness. The coping strategies employed by the homesick are primarily emotional in nature. Because the homesickness situation is generally uncontrollable due to the inability to return home on time (Van Tilburg, Vingerhoets, & Van Heck, submitted), emotion-focused coping is found to be more functional than problem-focused coping (Auerbach, 1989). When the situation is perceived to be relatively unchangeable, individuals attempt to cope by forgetting the old environment or focusing on positive aspects of the new environment, resulting in lower intensities of homesickness feelings. Mental escape, on the other hand, is more common in situations of short-term homesickness. People in these situations will soon return home. As a result, there will be a solution to their problems in the near future, and confrontational coping will be unnecessary. Furthermore, because home is so prominent, attention will be drawn to the old environment, resulting in ruminations about home, dislike for the new environment, and intense feelings of longing for the old environment (Van Tilburg et al., 1997).

A Qualitative Evaluation of Homesickness in Female Students of Legal Education

Social media has developed as a mighty mode of communication around the world, and its widespread use has altered how individuals interact and communicate online. Surpassing the boundaries of private communication, social media is redefining how organisations reach their audiences and communicate with individuals (Hendricks & Schill, 2015). It has become an integral part of almost all industrial sectors' strategies, and higher education institutions are also prioritising social media to connect with a large audience (Kumar & Nanda, 2019). Social networking sites can assist students in learning about their peers and college, which can lead to satisfaction and affiliation with the University. College adjustment is linked to students' sense of belonging, or whether they feel included in their college community. For example, student perceptions of belonging have been linked to feelings of social acceptance and academic competence (Pittman & Richmond, 2008). As a result, social networking sites may aid in the progression to college by assisting students in socialising in their new environment and establishing a sense of connection with their institutions (DeAndrea et al., 2012).

Popular culture in college media contributes a lens through which to view college that may or may not be accurate, manipulating the expectations of college for those who plan to attend or are currently attending college. Students are constantly exposed to the “ideal” college life through college movies, novels, and TV shows, believing college to be one way and then feeling disappointed when the reality of college sinks in (Byers, 2005). College students who watch more fictional college media are more likely to be positive about partying and socialising in college (Nuñez, 2018). Campus life in India offers the best opportunities for romantic relationships among the young adult student population. The campus environment is like a home away from home, especially for outstation students, who meet so many like-minded people their own age (Bhatia, n.d.).

METHODOLOGY

Design

Using qualitative methodology seemed the most insightful way to improve understanding of students' adjustments to attending universities far from home. A qualitative design provides a more in-depth exploration of student perspectives on this topic than other research approaches, such as surveys, could typically provide (Flick, 2002; Firmin et al., 2009).

Sample

The sample consisted of 7 female students of law pursuing graduation at a university in India. Purposive sampling was used for this sample. Purposive sampling involves a class of non-probability sampling techniques. Purposive sampling, also accepted as judgmental, selective, or subjective sampling, relies on the researcher's judgement when selecting the units to be studied (e.g., people, cases/organisations, events, or even pieces of data). The sample size is usually quite limited, especially when matched with probability sampling techniques (Rai & Thapa, 2015).

Ethical considerations

The participants were sent an informed consent form prior to the discussion which included details about the discussion, the topic and informed them about the data recording procedure. All of the data, including their identities were kept confidential throughout the process of data analysis.

METHOD

In light of the research available in the current literature, improving our knowledge of how learners understand their experiences can systematically aid a foundation on which further research problems can be studied. As a result, a qualitative focus group discussion seemed apt for this study (Firmin et al., 2009). Focus group interviews are a research methodology where data are produced through group interaction around a topic selected by the researcher. The dynamic interaction between group members, whereby individual comments are stimulated by comments made by other group members, enables the exploration of views, opinions, experiences and attitudes (Berg, 2001). The resultant synergetic group effect (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990) enables participants to draw from one another and the group to collectively brainstorm (Stallman, 2012).

Analysis

The data gathered was analysed using thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a type of qualitative analysis that is used to analyse classifications and present data-related themes (patterns). It depicts the data in great detail and deals with a variety of subjects through interpretations (Boyatzis, 1998). It adds a systematic component to data analysis and enables the researcher to link the analysis of the frequency of a theme to that of the entire content (Alhojailan, 2012). Hence, as this study seeks to explore through interpretations, thematic analysis was thought to be the best alternative.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Despite the fact that all outstation students encounter certain levels of homesickness, the participants in this study shared experiences unique to their situations. The major themes that emerged included those of ...

Disparities in societal cultures

Several differences were noticed by the participants between their hometown and place of university. These differed from place to place and person to person. A common one that surfaced was that of the issue of the safety of women. As all the participants were female, they noticed increasing concerns and questions from parents in terms of curfews and other social plans. There is a higher sense of security in one's hometown whereas on campus, parents grow restless and uninformed about their children's whereabouts. One of the participants mentioned,

“Yeah, so basically that like here [home], I was allowed to come back by one o'clock at night, but I know for a fact like my parents used to check up on me at like 6:00 PM 7:00 PM there if I'm coming back from [place] to see if I've reached or just general stuff like, yeah, safety for women was one thing. I noticed mainly evidently.”

A drastic change the participants had to face was that of lifestyle. As the town, city or state changes, so does the way of life. In some places, people work faster, are busier, hustle more than others; students can take a while to adjust to this change as they have been used to a different kind of culture altogether. This can prove to be a bit of a shock and they may take a long time to settle in and become used to the kind of lifestyle that people follow around their university.

“So basically, the major difference I can tell you is that it's very fast paced, [city]. It took me a really long time to just adjust to the time. The time, how the time passes in this city is just

A Qualitative Evaluation of Homesickness in Female Students of Legal Education

like one time you wake up one moment and the next moment is nighttime again, and you don't even realise where the day is gone.”

Cultures differ from individualist to collectivist. As western culture influences the more prevalent collectivistic culture in India, people nowadays look out for themselves more than others. For those moving from an area where society seems more together as a whole to a less collectivist one, it becomes difficult to understand this change. On a positive note, they may learn to grow independent and take care of themselves better through this shift in lifestyle.

“I think, is that in [hometown], whenever you need something in like public, you know, there are always people to help you. But here it's a very ‘each is own’ vibe in [city]. Like you can, like, uh, you are on your own and you have to just bring, it's like, I think it's a major city vibe. Like you just have to struggle and get to where you are. It's a very ambitious city.”

Major inconveniences faced by outstation students

For students residing in hostels during the course of their college, stepping out is a difficult task due to the restrictions placed on them regarding their in-times etc. Other than for their lectures, they don't have as much freedom to leave their hostels for non-academic purposes and if they do, they must go through an entire procedure of seeking permission formally, which may not have been the case at home. If they do have the chance to leave, chances are there aren't many student-friendly places they can choose to spend time at. In addition to that, students mentioned being extremely busy and hardly getting time to participate in non-academic activities.

“Since, [university name] is a closed campus going out also, so even if you're bored in the campus for more than a month, you don't have a lot of options and you don't have, again, you don't have the convenience to go out also and you know, just hang out at a nearby place, because all of that is not allowed.”

Another inconvenience faced by outstation students is that of travelling, whether it be within the city or to and back from their hometowns. Travelling for these students may have to be on a budget and may involve using various modes of public transport. For short distances within the city, participants found it tiresome to roam due to the difference and incompetence in the functioning of the services provided. In addition, travelling back and forth from their hometowns can be extremely exhausting.

“You have to negotiate with the cab people. You have to, uh, literally negotiate at every single point and the cab people, they constantly cancel on you. So, it's super, super irritating. Like you could have a flight into two hours and they wouldn't give a shit. Our uni does not have proper shuttle service. So that's inconvenient. It's all over the place.”

The food and water available in universities, hostels and surrounding areas are different from those available at home. Some have a hard time adjusting to these extreme changes and may not react well to them. Food and water taste different and that itself can be enough to cause distress in students. They expect a change in this arena but the extent of this change varies from person to person. One of the participants said,

A Qualitative Evaluation of Homesickness in Female Students of Legal Education

“Everything was inconvenient for me, especially water. Like I initially stopped drinking water altogether because I couldn't get used to the taste. And same with the food. I feel like I, at some point, developed an eating disorder because I was not able to adapt to the whole food and water situation.”

Students are bound to have certain complaints with regards to the services provided in their universities and hostels. To formally address these issues, there seems to be tedious procedures they have to follow which may take an extremely long period of time with no guarantee of the expected change. A participant spoke about this specific issue.

“The issues are just to get some certain changes implemented or make certain improvements. There's like a full ladder of people I have to approach certain levels that you have to go up to, and that takes like a lot of time as any other thing that happens in the public life. So that is an issue because things don't get done fast enough. It's expensive, very much so yet facilities are sometimes not quite often, rather, more often than not are sub par or below average.”

In addition to these inconveniences are less major ones such as that of not getting enough privacy. As students have to share rooms, they may constantly be surrounded by their roommates or other students around the campus with almost no time to and by themselves. This may pose a problem in especially crowded situations. Furthermore, weather changes as geographical location changes; students may take a while to adapt to severe changes in the weather conditions.

Development of autonomy post shifting

With the absence of parents or an immediate authority figure to aid them in their daily life, students gain a sense of autonomy and learn to do things by themselves. This can be difficult for some, or a much awaited change for the others. Autonomy may be experienced in terms of travelling, finance and decision making and being accountable for those choices.

“I enjoy having to have my own space. I enjoy having to be responsible for just myself. I enjoy having to do whatever I'm doing, being responsible for the consequences of my actions. In the sense that whatever I'm doing impacts just me and through the entirety of the day, whatever I do is just for myself and my day plan gets planned according to that, according to my own schedule.”

Participants discussed meeting new people with different personalities and seeing that as an opportunity to learn about new things and figure out their likes and dislikes. This elevates their ability to deal with a wider range of problems and encourages them to make their choices about who they wish to keep in their company. As a participant mentioned,

“You are out on your own and now you have to, uh, interact and deal and kind of pick and choose the people that you want around you. And that requires a certain amount of decision making and, uh, and that requires independence.”

With increased independence, some students also noticed themselves as having more liberty and privacy. When one finds people with thought processes similar to theirs, especially pursuing the same course, they may be willing to do or talk about things they previously felt restricted to. Moving for college also gives students the freedom to partake in various activities which may not have been possible in their hometowns.

A Qualitative Evaluation of Homesickness in Female Students of Legal Education

“So at least in, uh, hostel, I can go to library and I can sit there. At least no one will come and nag me for whatever I'm doing. Even if I'm wasting time there, so that is enough privacy for me. That's why I stay in library all the time. So I think I got a lot of privacy in hostel than at home.”

This however, varies from student to student as their perceptions of their privacy are likely to fluctuate.

What one misses about home

When the participants felt homesick, they spoke about missing several things. These ranged from people in their lives to the inanimate things to abstract concepts like time. The first point mentioned by all participants was their family and friends. They miss their parents, siblings, grandparents, close friends etc. In addition to missing people, the participants miss the comfort and familiarity that these relationships provide them with. As the time spent with the important people in their lives reduces, they become nostalgic about the times they spent together before this drastic change of leaving home. The participants also feel homesick about the security and reliability they find in their close relationships.

“The only thing which makes me homesick is the reliance and that cocoon. That thing that, uh, your room and your family gives. So like when you're with your family, you don't have to worry about anything.”

A close second was food. Almost all participants regularly feel homesick about the food they receive at home. One of the participants expressed this by saying,

“I'm a very finicky eater. So in college there'll be like two, three days I, I don't eat at all. So my mom is like very particular about my food schedule and stuff.”

Participants mentioned having free time at home; as the students return home after examinations and during breaks, they have a lot of time on their plate with not a lot of college-related work to get done. These are times they feel comfortable and able to do a lot of things that were otherwise not possible to do in college due to restrictions or a busy schedule. With a large amount of work at hand in college, be it upcoming projects or assignments or examinations, students may hardly find the time to relax and indulge in leisure activities. This however is not the situation at home.

“Having the time, having, you know, the, just the energy and also the freedom to waste a lot of time and not be guilty about it because I, when I'm in my house, I just waste my time. I, I just take three hours making coffee. I watch shows and it's just it, and I live my life and I honestly enjoy it.”

Moreover, convenience to do things and go places, certain specific food items, weather, not socialising and being by oneself were a few more points that came up in discussion and are greatly missed.

Coping mechanisms

The coping strategies used to deal with feelings of homesickness varied and were unique to each person based on what worked for them. A common one was that of calling home and speaking to someone about it. This could be a person within college, who is likely to

A Qualitative Evaluation of Homesickness in Female Students of Legal Education

understand how one is feeling and empathise, or friends and family back home. A participant says,

“So the first thing is of course, call home. Uh, second is you can talk, talk it out to your friends because even they're in the same boat as you. It's like you just start crying and another person starts crying with the same reason of being homesick. So I think talking it out makes it very good.”

Another common strategy used by the participants was that of watching something, a movie, a web series etc. They are able to distract themselves from the negative feelings of homesickness when they engage in something they enjoy, one of which is to watch something they like.

“I'll watch something. Uh, that'll entertain me and like take my mind away for a bit.”

Some participants see being by themselves as the solution. They avoid people and plan to deal with these negative emotions independently. They wish to be left alone; after which they may do something else which helps them process the feeling of homesickness. This is similar to how one participant chooses to cope with homesickness-

“I would, uh, isolate myself or just go to bed as like, go to sleep and not think about it, or, I mean, it just, whenever there, it's in extreme sometimes. So whenever that happens, in extreme, I just avoid, just get my mind blank, don't think about it, or distract myself or something.”

Other ways to deal effectively when feelings of homesickness struck were to listen to music, several strategies like mind spilling and countdowns.

Changes in social relationship

Most participants have managed to keep their relationships with their families intact. The same can't be said for their relationship with their extended family. With their parents, some students feel they are unable to provide as much support and lack reliability after the move away from home. In such cases, parents begin to perceive situations differently for the students. There are times when the students may miss out on some important information due to their absence at home. When this happens, they may end up feeling a little detached from their close ones.

“I do manage to like stay connected with them all the time, but I feel like I'm not doing enough to be there for them enough. Like my mom would probably just omit information. Sometimes she should be telling me just because I'm living alone and she doesn't wanna burden me with her problems. Or sometimes my sisters would do that and so then I'd feel very disconnected with them.”

Other social relationships include those of friendships. Most of the participants seemed to have been able to maintain a few friendships where the rest have been missed out upon due to the distance and lack of contact. One participant shared their experience by saying,

“I have just not been able to maintain contact with people virtually as such. So that has impacted and affected my friendships with the people from school time. So being at college,

A Qualitative Evaluation of Homesickness in Female Students of Legal Education

I haven't paid enough attention or haven't worked on my friendships with the friends back at home, but that's been there. Long distance friendships haven't been working out.”

With friends and family, another noticeable change was that of reduced frequency of talking. With a lack of opportunities for the students to speak with their near and dear ones, a lot of time would be spent catching up on instances when having met after a longer period of time.

Competitiveness and hustle culture

When discussing the times the participants felt homesick the most, all responded with an answer along the lines of academic stress. Law courses are known to be extensive, lengthy, strenuous and taxing for its students; the participants tend to call back home when these things about their course prove to be true. In times when students have assignments due, research papers due and examinations on their way, they are most likely to experience feelings of missing home. They may feel an inability to complete work due to time constraints; the participants at times feel very distressed despite enjoying what they are learning.

“So that is the time when I call back home and I'm like, I enjoy what we are doing. I am actually excited about, oh, I'm doing law, but I'm not sure if I'm in for it. Is this hustle culture, this having to do it within this limited restrictive period of time, then being tested on it. It is very mentally taxing and it takes a toll on your body, on your mind, on your mental health.”

The participants also feel immense pressure to constantly do well, and constantly be better than everyone in order to achieve something substantial. A participant mentioned,

“In terms of the pressure that they place in you, like P2 said, the competitive pressure, the just the academic performance that you are expected, um, to like match to get a good job or whatever. The job pressure's already there and we're in our second year.”

As students of legal education, the participants have had numerous experiences dealing with toxic competition. One way in which this competition manifests itself is in the form of group tasks. It is mentioned by a participant that,

“You're constantly like, um, interacting with people, be it in form of groups, and sometimes your marks are attached with what one person will do in a group. And, uh, that that can easily just piss you off because ultimately you want those marks because you want to be the best.”

While constantly having to be in this competitive environment and working towards being better than fellow students, participants stated these times as being those of intense homesickness.

Gender based discrimination in law

Historically, law has been a male-dominated profession and so, female students of law face constant discrimination. This is not particularly evident in the form of the education they are provided with but it is visible when it comes to their internships and job prospects where male students are given preference and often favoured over their female counterparts. This is possibly due to the perception that women do not have what it takes (the qualities one is required to possess) to reach a position of success in a profession like law. These qualities

A Qualitative Evaluation of Homesickness in Female Students of Legal Education

are said to be more prevalent in men. Recent changes, however, have been made in the judiciary to encourage and facilitate equality in gender with regards to education in law.

False media representation of outstation students

Media has greatly romanticised college life and moving away from home. Students often see others having the time of their lives in college. This view however was not shared by some of the participants. Many believed it to be fake and that the reality of college and campus life being poles apart. A participant mentioned,

“I feel like it's all a facade. College is like not even one percent of what media portrays it to be.”

Another aspect in which the media seemed to portray inaccurately the elements of college life is that of romance. Media has taught us that moving to another city for higher education presents numerous chances of finding a significant other. The participants disagreed with this particular idea as well by saying,

“One thing I wanna specifically add is the relationship aspect that media shows that, okay, college is the place you're gonna find love and everything. Like I know it's just been like physically a year on campus, but again, it was all bullshit.”

Media has definitely created some expectations for outstation students which has eventually led to disappointment due to the inaccuracy and falsity that has been portrayed.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to explore students' feelings of homesickness, its causes, how they cope with it and their perception of it. Several themes of importance emerge from the discussion such as that of media representation and the nature of courses of legal education and the impact it has on the students. Homesickness, as stated by Fischer (1989), even though experienced by the majority, can turn into a severe concern. Hence it becomes important to understand how students feel during such times and what impact it has on them as well as their close ones. While outstation students have a lot to adjust to due to the change in their environment, the nature of their course also has a significant impact on their ability to deal with extreme emotions. As female students of law studying away from home, not only do they have to deal with homesickness but also difficulties like competition, academic pressure and gender inequality within the field come to the surface.

Limitations

At the time of the study, the participants were in their hometowns; it is possible their expressions of homesickness may be varied than if they were situated in their university, away from home. The demographics of the sample was limited to the Indian population, hence, a cross- border approach can be adopted in order to understand the differences in western cultures well. Additionally, the sample size was 7 which is relatively small.

Future scope

A study with a larger sample size could bear more reliable results with the potential of being generalised more accurately. A comparative study may also be conducted to understand how the difference in cultures has an impact on one's coping strategies. This can be relevant as indigenous populations are likely to have their own set ways of dealing with such emotions and feelings.

REFERENCES

- Alhojailan, M. I. (2012, December). Thematic Analysis: A Critical Review of Its Process and Evaluation. *West East Journal of Social Sciences*, 1(1). <http://westeastinstitute.com/journals/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/4-Mohammed-Ibrahim-Alhojailan-Full-Paper-Thematic-Analysis-A-Critical-Review-of-Its-Process-And-Evaluation.pdf>
- Beck, R., Taylor, C., & Robbins, M. (2002). Missing home: Sociotropy and autonomy and their relationship to psychological distress and homesickness in college freshmen. *Anxiety, Stress & Coping*, 6(2). doi:10.1080/10615806.2003.10382970
- Bhatia, A. (n.d.). The Dynamics of Love: Impact of Residential Setting and Gender on Intimate Relationships, Self-consciousness and Self Disclosure among Delhi University students.
- Clark, E. J., & Rieker, P. P. (1986). Gender differences in relationships and stress of medical and law students. *Academic Medicine*, 61(1). doi:10.1097/00001888-198601000-00004
- Dammeyer, M. M., & Nunez, N. (1999). Anxiety and Depression Among Law Students: Current Knowledge and Future Directions. *Law and Human Behaviour*, 23(1). <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1022374723371>
- DeAndrea, D. C., Ellison, N. B., LaRose, R., Steinfield, C., & Fiore, A. (2012, January). Serious social media: On the use of social media for improving students' adjustment to college. *Internet and Higher Education*, 15(1). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.iheduc.2011.05.009>
- Deb, S., Thomas, S., Bose, A., & Aswathi, T. (2020). Happiness, Meaning, and Satisfaction in Life as Perceived by Indian University Students and Their Association with Spirituality. *Journal of Religion and Health*, 59. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10943-019-00806-w>
- Firmin, M. W., Johnson, C. B., & Basham, S. Y. (2009). Far from Home: A Qualitative Analysis of Altered Social and Familial Interactions by Students Attending College Significant Distances from Home. *Enrollment Management Journal*, 3. https://digitalcommons.cedarville.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1107&context=psychology_publications
- Hack-Polay, D. (2020, May). Global South expatriates, homesickness and adjustment approaches. *Public Health Reviews*, 41(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40985-020-00122-9>
- Khajehzadeh, I., & Vale, B. (2016). Shared student residential space: a post occupancy evaluation. *Journal of Facilities Management*, 14(2). doi:10.1108/jfm-09-2014-0031
- Kumar, V., & Nanda, P. (2019). Social Media in Higher Education: A Framework for Continuous Engagement. *International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education*, 15(1). DOI: 10.4018/IJICTE.2019010107
- Mulder, C. H., & Clark, W. A. V. (2002). Leaving Home for College and Gaining Independence. *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space*, 34(6). <https://doi.org/10.1068/a34149>
- Nijhof, K. S., & Engels, R. C. M. E. (2007, October). Parenting styles, coping strategies, and the expression of homesickness. *Journal of Adolescence*, 30(5). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.adolescence.2006.11.009>
- Núñez, R. (2018). College in the media: the relationship between repeated exposure and college expectations. *Educational Media International*, 55(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/09523987.2018.1439706>
- Rai, N., & Thapa, B. (2015). A Study on Purposive Sampling Method in Research. https://d1wqtxts1xzle7.cloudfront.net/48403395/A_Study_on_Purposive_Sampling_Method_in_Research-with-cover-page-v2.pdf?Expires=1661439657&Signature=JKmCHN

A Qualitative Evaluation of Homesickness in Female Students of Legal Education

-VsGUQ9gDXwq7JBN73m6RMvBCPIVFKtF5PvYraPIP47M~0Cuq-Ogyli9vkBrf
GvpXUL2ZSfUe3Wsu4pGvtg8bSwmNnosTkp2BzLeB0

- Stallman, H. (2012). A qualitative evaluation of perceptions of the role of competition in the success and distress of law students. *Higher Education Research & Development*, 31(6). <https://doi.org/10.1080/07294360.2012.655241>
- Sun, J., Hagedorn, L. S., & Zhang, Y. (2016, November). Homesickness at College: Its Impact on Academic Performance and Retention. *Journal of College Student Development*, 57(8). <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2016.0092>
- Thurber, C. A., & Walton, E. A. (2012). Homesickness and Adjustment in University Students. *Journal of American College Health*, 60(5). <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2012.673520>
- Van Tilburg, M. A. L., Vingerhoets, A. J. J. M., & Van Heck, G. L. (1997). Coping with Homesickness: The Construction of the Adult Homesickness Coping Questionnaire. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 22(6). doi:10.1016/s0191-8869(97)00010-x
- Variath, A., & Khare, A. (n.d.). A Socio-Legal Study of Women in Legal Education: A Case Study of National Law Universities in India. <https://www.mpdnlu.ac.in/assets/pdf/1.%20A%20Socio%20Legal%20Study%20of%20Women%20in%20Legal%20Education.pdf>

Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Nambiar, R.R. (2024). A Qualitative Evaluation of Homesickness in Female Students of Legal Education. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 12(2), 4698-4710. DIP:18.01.419.20241202, DOI:10.25215/1202.419